

## THOUGHTS ON THEOLOGY.\*

AT the present day Germany seems to be the only country, where the various disciplines of Theology are pursued in the liberal and scientific spirit, which some men fancy is peculiar to the nineteenth century. It is the only country where they seem to be studied for their own sake, as Poetry, Eloquence, and the Mathematics have long been. In other quarters of the world, they are left too much to men of subordinate intellect, of little elevation or range of thought, who pursue their course, which is "roundly

---

\* *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi von den Ältesten Zeiten bis auf die neuesten, dargestellt.* Von J. A. DORNER. a. o. Professor der Theologie an der Universität Tübingen. Stuttgart: 1839. 1 vol. 8vo. pp. xxiv and 556. [Historical development of the doctrine of the person of Christ, from the earliest to the latest times, &c.]

smooth, and languishingly slow," and after a life of strenuous assiduity find they have not got beyond the "Standards," set up ages before them. Many theologians seem to set out with their faces turned to some popular prejudice of their times, their church, or their school, and walk backwards, as it were, or at best in a circle where the movement is retrograde as often as direct. Somebody relates a story, that once upon a time a scholar after visiting the place of his Academic education, and finding the old Professors then just where they were ten years before, discussing the same questions, and blowing similar bubbles, and splitting hairs anew, was asked by a friend, "what they were doing at the old place?" He answered, "One was milking the barren Heifer, and the others holding the sieve."

To this rule, for such we hold it to be, in France, England, and America, at this day, there are some brilliant exceptions; men who look with a single eye towards truth, and are willing to follow wherever she shall lead; men too, whose mind and heart elevate them to the high places of human attainment, whence they can speak to bless mankind. These men are the creatures of no sect or school, and are found, where God has placed them, in all the various denominations of our common faith. It is given to no party, nor coterie, to old school, or new school, to monopolize truth, freedom, and love. We are sick of that narrowness which sees no excellence, except what wears the livery of its own guild. But the favored sons of the free spirit are so rare in the world at large; their attention so seldom turned to theological pursuits, that the above rule will be found to hold good in chief, and Theology to be left, as by general consent, to men of humble talents, and confined methods of thought, who walk mainly under the cloud of prejudice, and but rarely escape from the trammels of Bigotry and Superstition. Brilliant and profound minds turn away to Politics, Trade, Law, the fascinating study of nature so beautiful and composing; men, who love freedom and are gifted with power to soar through the empyrean of thought, seek a freer air, and space more ample wherein to spread their wings. Meanwhile, the dim cloisters of theology, once filled with the great and wise of the earth, are rarely trod by the children of Genius and Liberty. We have wise, and pious, and learned, and elo-

quent preachers, the hope of the church, the ornaments and defence of society; men who contend for public virtue, and fight the battle for all souls with earnest endeavor, but who yet care little for the science of divine things. We have sometimes feared our young men forsook in this their fathers' wiser ways, for surely there was a time when theology was *studied* in our land.

From the neglect of serious, disinterested, and manly thought, applied in this direction, there comes the obvious result; while each other science goes forward, passing through all the three stages requisite for its growth and perfection; while it makes new observations, or combines facts more judiciously, or from these infers and induces general laws hitherto unnoticed, and so develops itself, becoming yearly wider, deeper, and more certain, its numerous phenomena being referred back to elementary principles and universal laws, — Theology remains in its old position. Its form has changed; but the change is not scientific, the result of an elementary principle. In the country of Bossuet and Hooker, we doubt that any new observation, any new combination of facts has been made, or a general law discovered in these matters, by any theologian of the present century, or a single step taken by theological science. In the former country, an eminent philosopher, of a brilliant mind, with rare faculties of combination and lucid expression, though often wordy, has done much for psychology, chiefly however by uniting into one focus the several truths which emanate from various anterior systems, by popularizing the discoveries of deeper spirits than his own, and by turning the ingenious youth to this noble science. In spite of the defects arising from his presumption and love of making all facts square with his formula, rather than the formula express the spirit of the facts, he has yet furnished a magazine, whence theological supplies may be drawn, and so has indirectly done much for a department of inquiry which he has himself never entered. We would not accept his errors, his hasty generalizations, and presumptuous flights, — so they seem to us, — and still less would we pass over the vast service he has done to this age by his vigorous attacks on the sensual philosophy and his bold defence of spiritual thought. Mr. Coleridge also in England, — a spirit analogous but not

similar to Mr. Cousin,—has done great service to this science, but mainly by directing men to the old literature of his countrymen and the Greeks, or the new productions of his philosophical contemporaries on the continent of Europe. He seems to have caught a Pisgah view of that land of stream and meadow, which he was forbid to enter. These writers have done great service to men whose date begins with this century. Others are now applying their methods and writing their books, sometimes with only the enthusiasm of imitators, it may be.

We would speak tenderly of existing reputations in our own country, and honor the achievements of those men who, with hearts animated only by love of God and man, devotes themselves to the pursuit of truth in this path, and outwatch the Bear in their severe studies. To them all honor. But we ask for the theologians of America, who shall take rank as such with our historians, our men of science and politics. Where are they? We have only the echo for answer, Are they?

We state only a common and notorious fact, in saying, that there is no *science* of theology with us. There is enough cultivation and laborious thought in the clerical profession, perhaps, as some one says, more serious and hard thinking than in both the sister professions. The nature of the case demands it. So there was thinking enough about natural philosophy among the Greeks, after Aristotle; but little good came of it in the way of science. We hazard little in saying that no treatise has been printed in England in the present century of so great theological merit as that of pagan Cicero on the Nature of the Gods, or the preface to his treatise of Laws. The work of Aristotle is still the text book of morals at the first university in Christian England.

In all science this seems everywhere the rule. The more Light, the freer, the more profound and searching the investigation, why the better; the sooner a false theory is exploded and a new one induced from the observed facts, the better also. In theology the opposite rule seems often to prevail. Hence, while other sciences go smoothly on in regular advance, theology moves only by leaps and violence. The theology of Protestantism and Unitarianism are not regular developments which have grown harmoni-

ously out of a systematic study of divine things, as the theory of gravitation and acoustics in the progress of philosophy. They are rather the results of a spasmodic action, to use that term. It was no difficult thing in philosophy to separate astronomy from the magicians and their works of astrology and divination. It required only years and the gradual advance of mankind. But to separate religion from the existing forms, churches, or records, is a work almost desperate, which causes strife and perhaps bloodshed. A theological reformation throws kingdoms into anarchy for the time. Doctrines in philosophy are neglected as soon as proved false, and buried as soon as dead. But the art of the embalmer preserves, in the church, the hulls of effete dogmas in theology, to cumber the ground for centuries, and disgust the pious worshipper who would offer a reasonable service. It is only the living that *bury* the dead. The history of these matters is curious and full of warning. What was once condemned by authority, becomes itself an authority to condemn. What was once at the summit of the sublime, falls in its turn to the depth of the ridiculous. We remember a passage of Julius Firmicus, which we will translate freely, as it illustrates this point; "Since all these things," namely, certain false notions, "were ill concocted, they were at first a terror unto mortals; then, when their novelty passed away, and mankind recovered, as it were, from a long disease, a certain degree of contempt arises for that former admiration. Thus gradually the human mind has ventured to scrutinize sharply, what it only admired with stupid amazement at the first. Very soon some sagacious observer penetrates to the very secret places of these artificial and empty superstitions. Then by assiduous efforts, understanding the mystery of what was formerly a secret, he comes to a real knowledge of the causes of things. Thus the human race first learns the pitiful deceits of the profane systems of religion; it next despises, and at last rejects them with disdain." Thus, as another has said, "Men quickly hated this blear-eyed religion, (the Catholic superstitions) when a little light had come among them, which they hugged in the might of their ignorance."

For the successful prosecution of theology, as of every science, certain conditions must be observed. We must

abandon prejudice. The maxim of the Saint, CONFIDO, ERGO SUM, is doubtless as true as that of the Philosopher, COGITO, ERGO SUM. But it is pernicious when it means, as it often does, I BELIEVE, AND THEREFORE IT IS SO. The theologian of our day, like the astronomer of Galileo's time, must cast his idols of the Tribe, the Den, the Market-place, and the School, to the moles and the bats; must have a disinterested love of truth; be willing to follow wherever she leads. He must have a willingness to search for all the facts relative to divine things, which can be gathered from the deeps of the human soul, or from each nation and every age. He must have diligence and candor to examine this mass of spiritual facts; philosophical skill to combine them; power to generalize and get the universal expression of each particular fact, thus discovering the one principle which lies under the numerous and conflicting phenomena. Need we say that he must have a good, pious, loving heart? An undevout theologian is the most desperate of madmen. A whole Anticyra would not cure him.

This empire of prejudice is still wide enough a domain for the prince of lies; but formerly it was wider, and included many departments of philosophy, which have since, through the rebellion of their tenants, been set off to the empire of Reason, which extends every century. Theology, though now and then rebellious against its tyrant, has never shaken off his yoke, and seems part of his old ancestral dominion, where he and his children shall long reign. An old writer unconsciously describes times later than his own, and says, "No two things do so usurp upon and waste the faculty of Reason, as Enthusiasm and Superstition; the one binding a faith, the other a fear upon the soul, which they vainly entitle some divine discovery; both train a man up to believe beyond possibility of proof; both instruct the mind to conceive merely by the wind, the vain words of some passionate men, that can but pretend a revelation, or tell a strange story; both teach a man to deliver over himself to the confident dictate of the sons of imagination; to determine of things by measures phantastical, rules which cannot maintain themselves in credit by any sober and severe discourses; both inure the mind to divine rather than to judge; to dispute for maxims rather vehement than solid; both make a man afraid to believe

himself, to acknowledge the truth that overpowers his mind, and that would reward its cordial entertainment with assurance and true freedom of spirit. Both place a man beyond possibility of conviction, it being in vain to present an argument against him that thinks he can confront a revelation, a miracle, or some strange judgment from heaven, upon his adversary to your confusion. It seems, there is not a greater evil in the State, than wickedness established by Law; nor a greater in the Church than error [established] by Religion, and an ignorant devotion towards God. And therefore no pains and care are too much to remove these two beams from the eye of human understanding, which render it so insufficient for a just and faithful discovery of objects in religion and common science. 'Pessima res est errorum apotheosis, et pro peste intellectus habenda est, si vanis accedat veneratio.'"\*

Theology is not yet studied in a philosophical spirit, and the method of a science. Writers seem resolved to set up some standard of their fathers or their own, so they explore but a small part of the field, and that only with a certain end in view. They take a small part of the human race as the representative of the whole, and neglect all the rest. As the old geographers drew a chart of the world, so far as they knew it, but crowded the margin, where the land was unknown, "with shrieks, and shapes, and sights unholy," with figures of dragons, chimeras, winged elephants, and four-footed whales, anthropophagi, and "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders," so "divines" have given us the notions of a few sects of religious men, and telling us they never examined the others, have concluded to rest in this comprehensive generalization, that all besides were filled with falsehood and devilish devices. What is to be expected of such methods? Surely it were as well to give such inquirers at starting the result they must reach at the end of their course. It appears legitimate to leave both students and teachers of geology, mathematics, and science in general, to soar on the loftiest thoughts toward absolute truth, only stopping when the wing was weary or the goal reached; but to

\* Spencer's Discourse concerning Prodigies. London, 1665. Preface, p. xv.

direct the students and teachers of things divine, to accept certain conclusions arrived at centuries ago! If Faraday and Herschel pursued the *theological* method in their sciences, no harm would be done to them or the world, if they were required to accept the "standard" of Thales or Paracelsus, and subscribe the old creed every lustrum. The method could lead to nothing better, and the conclusion, the inquirer must reach, might as well be forced upon him at the beginning as the end of his circular course. The ridiculous part of the matter is this, — that the man professes to search for whatever truth is to be found, but has sworn a solemn oath never to accept as truth, what does not conform to the idols he worships at home. We have sometimes thought what a strange spectacle, — ridiculous to the merry, but sad to the serious, — would appear if the Almighty should have sent down the brilliant image of pure, absolute Religion, into the assembly of divines at Westminster, or any similar assembly. Who would acknowledge the image?

The empire of Prejudice is perhaps the last stronghold of the father of lies, that will surrender to Reason. At present, a great part of the domain of theology is under the rule of that most ancient czar. There common sense rarely shows his honest face; Reason seldom comes. It is a land shadowy with the wings of Ignorance, Superstition, Bigotry, Fanaticism, the brood of clawed, and beaked, and hungry Chaos and most ancient Night. There Darkness, as an Eagle, stirreth up her nest; fluttereth over her young; spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh her children; beareth them on her wings over the high places of the earth, that they may eat, and trample down, and defile the increase of the fields. There stands the great arsenal of Folly, and the old war-cry of the pagan, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," is blazoned on the banner that floats above its walls. There the spectres of Judaism, and Heathenism, and Pope, and Pagan, pace forth their nightly round; the ghost of Moloch, Saturn, Baal, Odin, fight their battles over again, and feast upon the dead. There the eye is terrified, and the mind made mad with the picture of a world that has scarce a redeeming feature, with a picture of heaven such as a good free man would scorn to enter, and a picture of hell such as a fury would delight to paint.

If we look a little at the history of theology, it appears that errors find easiest entrance there, and are most difficult to dislodge. It required centuries to drive out of the Christian Church a belief in ghosts and witches. The Devil is still a classical personage of theology; his existence maintained by certain churches in their articles of faith; and while we are writing these pages, a friend tells us of hearing a preacher of the popular doctrine declare in his public teaching from the pulpit, that to deny the existence of the Devil, is to destroy the character of Christ. In science we ask first, what are the facts of observation whence we shall start? next, what is the true and natural order, explanation, and meaning of these facts? The first work is to find the facts, then their law and meaning. Now here are two things to be considered, namely, **FACTS** and **NO-FACTS**. For every false theory there are a thousand false facts. In theology, the data, in many celebrated cases, are facts of assumption, not observation; in a word, are **NO-FACTS**. When Charles the Second asked the Royal Society, "Why a living fish put into a vessel of water added nothing to the weight of the water?" there were enough, no doubt, to devise a theory, and explain the fact, "by the upward pressure of the water," "the buoyancy of the air in the living fish," "its motion and the reaction of the water." But when some one ventured to verify the fact, it was found to be no-fact. Had the Royal Academy been composed of "Divines," and not of Naturalists and Philosophers, the theological method would have been pursued, and we should have had theories as numerous as the attempts to reconcile the story of Jonah with human experience, and science would be where it was at first. Theology generally passes dry-shod over the first question, — *What are the facts?* — "with its garlands and singing-ropes about it." Its answer to the next query is therefore of no value.

We speak historically of things that have happened, when we say, that many, if not most of those theological questions, which have been matters of dispute and railing, belong to the class of explanations of no-facts. Such, we take it, are the speculations, for the most part, that have grown out of the myths of the Old and New Testament; about Angels, Devils, personal appearances of the Deity,

miraculous judgments, supernatural prophecies, the trinity, and the whole class of miracles from Genesis to Revelation. Easy faith and hard logic have done enough in theology. Let us answer the first question, and verify the facts before we attempt to explain them.

As we look back on the history of the world, the retrospect is painful. The history of science is that of many wanderings before reaching the truth. But the history of theology is the darkest chapter of all, for neither the true end nor the true path seems yet to be discovered and pursued. In the history of every department of thought there seem to be three periods pretty distinctly marked. First, the period of *hypothesis*, when observation is not accurate, and the solution of the problem, when stated, is a matter of conjecture, mere guess-work. Next comes the period of *observation and induction*, when men ask for the facts, and their law. Finally, there is the period when science is developed still further *by its own laws*, without the need of new observations. Such is the present state of mathematics, speculative astronomy, and some other departments, as we think. Thus science may be in advance of observation. Some of the profound remarks of Newton belong to this last epoch of science. An ancient was in the first when he answered the question, "Why does a man draw his feet under him, when he wishes to rise from his seat?" by saying it was "on account of the occult properties of the circle."

Now theology with us is certainly in the period of hypothesis. The facts are assumed; the explanation is guess-work. To take an example from a section of theology much insisted on at the present day,—the use and meaning of miracles. The general thesis is, that miracles confirm the authority of him who works them, and authenticate his teachings to be divine. We will state it in a syllogistic and more concrete form. Every miracle-worker is a heaven-sent and infallible teacher of truth. Jonah is a miracle-worker. Therefore Jonah is a heaven-sent and infallible teacher of truth. Now we should begin by denying the *major* in full, and go on to ask proofs of the *minor*. But the theological method is to assume both. When both premises are assumptions, the conclusion will be,—what we see it is. Men build neither castles nor tem-

ples of moonshine. Yet in spite of this defect, limitation, and weakness, it is a common thing to subject other sciences to this pretended science of Theology. Psychology, Ethics, Geology, and Astronomy are successively arraigned, examined, and censured or condemned, because their conclusions,—though legitimately deduced from notorious facts,—do not square with the assumptions of theology, which still aspires to be head of all. But to present this claim for theology in its present state, is like making the bramble king over the trees of the forest. The result would be as Jotham's parable. Theology would say, come and put your trust in my shadow. But if you will not, a fire shall go out from the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

Now as it seems to us, there are two legitimate methods of attempting to improve and advance theology. One is for the theologian to begin anew, trusting entirely to meditation, contemplation, and thought, and ask WHAT can be known of divine things, and HOW can it be known and legitimated? This work of course demands, that he should criticise the faculty of knowing, and determine its laws, and see, *a priori*, what are our instruments of knowing, and what the law and method of their use, and thus discover the NOVUM ORGANUM of theology. This determined, he must direct his eye *inward* on what passes there, studying the stars of that inner firmament, as the astronomer reads the phenomena of the heavens. He must also look *outward* on the face of nature and of man, and thus read the primitive Gospel God wrote on the heart of his child, and illustrated in the Earth and the sky and the events of life. Thus from observations made in the external world, made also in the internal world, comprising both the *reflective* and the *intuitive* faculties of man, he is to frame the theory of God, of man, of the relation between God and man, and of the duties that grow out of this relation, for with these four questions we suppose theology is exclusively concerned. This is the *philosophical* method, and it is strictly legitimate. It is pursued in the other sciences, and to good purpose. Thus science becomes the interpreter of nature, not its lawgiver. The other method is to get the sum of the theological thinking of the human race, and out of this mass construct a system, without attempt-

ing a fresh observation of facts. This is the *historical* method, and it is useful to show what has been done. The opinion of mankind deserves respect, no doubt; but this method can lead to a perfect theology no more than historical Eclecticism can lead to a perfect philosophy. The former researches in theology, as in magnetism and geology, offer but a narrow and inadequate basis to rest on.

This historical scheme has often been attempted, but never systematically, thoroughly, and critically, so far as we know. In England and America, however, it seems almost entirely to have dispossessed the philosophical method of its rights. But it has been conducted in a narrow, exclusive manner, after the fashion of antiquarians searching to prove a preconceived opinion, rather than in the spirit of philosophical investigation. From such measures we must expect melancholy results. From the common abhorrence of the philosophical method, and the narrow and uncritical spirit in which the historical method is commonly pursued, comes this result. Our philosophy of divine things is the poorest of all our poor philosophies. It is not a theology, but a despair of all theology. The theologian, — as Lord Bacon says of a method of philosophizing that was common in his time, — “hurries on rapidly from particulars to the most general axioms, and from them as principles, and their supposed indisputable truth, derives and discovers the intermediate axioms.” Of course what is built on conjecture, and only by guess, can never satisfy men, who ask for the facts and their law and explanation.

Still more, deference for authority is carried to the greatest extreme in theology. The sectarian must not dispute against the “Standards” set up by the Synod of Dort, the Westminster Divines, or the Council of Trent. These settle all controversies. If the theologian is no sectarian, in the usual sense of that word, then his “Standard” is the Bible. He settles questions of philosophy, morals, and religion by citing texts, which prove only the opinion of the writer, and perhaps not even that. The chain of his argument is made of Scripture sentences well twisted. As things are now managed by theologians in general, there is little chance of improvement. As Bacon says of universities in his day, “They learn nothing but to believe; first,

that others know this which they know not, and often, [that] themselves know that which they know not. They are like a becalmed ship; they never move but by the wind of other men’s breath, and have no oars of their own to steer withal.” And again. “All things are found opposite to advancement; for the readings and exercises are so managed, that it cannot easily come into any one’s mind to think of things out of the common road; or if here and there, one should venture to ask a liberty of judging, he can only impose the task upon himself without obtaining assistance from his fellows; and if he could dispense with this, he will still find his industry and resolution a great hindrance to his fortune. For the studies of men in such places are confined and penned down to the writings of certain authors; from which if any man happens to differ, he is presently reprehended as a disturber and innovator.” And still farther. “Their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors, did, out of no great quantity of matter, and infinite agitation of wit, spin cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.”

There are two methods of philosophizing in general, that of the Materialists and the Spiritualists, to use these terms. The one is perhaps most ably represented in the *Novum Organum* of Lord Bacon, and the other in Descartes’ *Book of Method* and of *Principles*. The latter was early introduced to England by a few Platonizing philosophers, — now better known abroad than at home, we fancy, — whose pious lives, severe study, and volumes full of the ripest thought have not yet redeemed them, in the judgment of their countrymen, from the charge of being mystics, dreamers of dreams, too high for this world, too low for the next, so of no use in either. But this method, inasmuch as it laid great stress on the *inward* and the *ideal*, — in the Platonic sense, — and, at least in its one-sidedness and misapplication, led sometimes to the visionary and absurd, has been abandoned by our brethren in England. Few British scholars, since the seventeenth century, have studied theology in the spirit of the Cartesian method. The other method, that of Bacon, begins by neglecting that half of man’s nature which is primarily concerned with divine things. This has been found more

congenial with the taste and character of the English and American nations. They have applied it, with eminent success, to experimental science, for which it was designed, and from which it was almost exclusively derived by its illustrious author. We would speak with becoming diffidence respecting the defects of a mind so vast as Bacon's, which burst the trammels of Aristotle and the School-men, emancipated philosophy in great measure from the theological method which would cripple the intellectual energies of the race. But it must be confessed that Bacon's Philosophy recognises scarcely the possibility of a theology, certainly of none but a historical theology, — gathering up the limbs of Osiris dispersed throughout the world. It lives in the senses, not the soul. Accordingly, this method is applied chiefly in the departments of natural and mechanical philosophy; and even here Englishmen begin to find it inadequate to the ultimate purposes of science, by reason of its exceeding outwardness, and so look for a better instrument than the *Novum Organum*, wherewith to arm the hand of science.\* One of the most thorough Baconians of the present day, as we understand it, is Mr. Comte, the author of the course of positive Philosophy now publishing at Paris; and it is curious to see the results he has reached, namely, Materialism in Psychology, Selfishness in Ethics, and Atheism in Theology. It is not for us to say he is logically false to his principles.

Some of the countrymen of Bacon, however, have attempted to apply his method in other departments of human inquiry. Locke has done this in metaphysics. It was with Bacon's new instrument in his hand, that he struck at the root of innate ideas; at our idea of Infinity, Eternity, and the like. But here his good sense sometimes, his excellent heart and character, truly humane and Christian, much oftener, as we think, saved him from the conclusions, to which this method has legitimately led others who have followed it. The method defective, so was the work. A Damascus mechanic, with a very rude instrument, may form exquisite blades, and delicate filagree; but no skill of the artist, no excellence of heart, can counteract the de-

\* See Whewell's *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences*, etc. London, 1840. 2 vols. 8vo. See Preface to Vol. I.

fects of the *Novum Organum*, when applied to morals, metaphysics, or theology. Hume furnishes another instance of the same kind. His treatise of *Natural Religion* we take to be a rigid application of Bacon's method in theological inquiries, and his inductions to be legitimate, admitting his premises and accepting his method. A third instance of the same kind is afforded by the excellent Dr. Paley. Here this method is applied in morals; the result is too well known to need mention.

Never did a new broom sweep so clean as this new instrument, in the various departments of metaphysics, theology, and ethics. Love, God, and the Soul are swept clean out of doors.\* We are not surprised that no one, following Bacon's scheme, has ever succeeded in argument with these illustrious men, or driven Materialism, Selfishness, and Skepticism from the field of Philosophy, Morals, and Religion. The answer to these systems must come from men who adopt a different method. Weapons tempered in another spring were needed to cleave asunder the seven-orbed Baconian shield, and rout the Skepticism sheltered thereby. No Baconian philosopher, so it seems to us, has ever ruffled its terrible crest, though the merest stripling of the Gospel could bring it to the ground. The replies to Locke, Hume, and Paley come into England from countries where a more spiritual philosophy has fortunately got footing.

The consequences of this exclusive Baconianism of the English have been disastrous to theological pursuits. The "Divines" in England, at the present day, her Bishops, Professors, and Prebendaries, are not theologians. They are logicians, chemists, skilled in the mathematics; historians, poor commentators upon Greek poets. Theology is out of their line. They have taken the ironical advice of Bishop Hare. Hence it comes to pass, either that theology is not *studied* at all; only an outside and preparatory department is entered; or it is studied with little success, even when a man like Lord Brougham girds himself for the task. The most significant theological productions of the last five and twenty years in England are the *Bridgewater*

\* We would not have it supposed we charge these results upon the *men*, but on their systems, if legitimately carried out.

Treatises, some of which are valuable contributions to natural science. Of Lord Brougham's theological writings little need be said, and of the Oxford Tracts we shall only say, that while we admire the piety displayed in them, we do not wonder that their authors despair of theology, and so fall back on dark ages; take authority for truth, and not truth for authority. The impotence of the English in this department is surely no marvel. It would take even a giant a long time to hew down an oak with a paver's maul, useful as that instrument may be in another place. Few attempt theology, and fewer still succeed. Men despair of the whole matter. While truth is before them in all other departments, and research gives not merely historical results to the antiquary, but positive conclusions to the diligent seeker, here in the most important of all the fields of human speculation, she is supposed to be only behind us, and to have no future blessing to bestow. Thus theology, though both Queen and Mother of all science, is left alone, unapproached, unseen, unhonored, though worshipped by a few weak idolaters, with vain oblation, and incense kindled afar off, while strong men and the whole people have gone up on every hill-top, and under every green tree, to sacrifice and do homage to the Useful and the Agreeable. Any one, who reads the English theological journals, or other recent works on those subjects, will see the truth of what we have said, and how their scholars retreat to the time of the Reformation and Revolution, and bring up the mighty dead, the Hookers, the Taylors, the Cudworths, with their illustrious predecessors and contemporaries, who with all their faults had a spark of manly fire in their bosoms, which shone out in all their works. It must be confessed, that theology in England and America is in about the same state with astronomy in the time of Scotus Erigena.

Now theological problems change from age to age; the reflective character of our age, the philosophical spirit that marks our time, is raising questions in theology never put before. If the "Divines" will not think of theological subjects, nor meet the question, why others will. The matter cannot be winked out of sight. Accordingly, unless we are much deceived, the educated laymen have applied good sense to theology, as the "Divines" have not dared

to do, at least in public, and reached conclusions far in advance of the theology of the pulpit. It is a natural consequence of the theological method, that the men wedded to it should be farther from truth in divine things, than men free from its shackles. It is not strange, then, for the pulpit to be behind the pews. Yet it would be very surprising if the professors of medicine, chemistry, and mathematics understood those mysteries more imperfectly than laymen, who but thought of the matter incidentally, as it were.

The history of theology shows an advance, at least, a change in its great questions. They rise in one age and are settled in the next, after some fierce disputing; for it is a noticeable fact, that as religious wars,—so they are called,—are of all others the most bloody, so theological controversies are most distinguished for misunderstanding, perversity, and abuse. We know not why, but such is the fact. Now there are some great questions in theology that come up in our time to be settled, which have not been asked in the same spirit before. Among them are the following.

What relation does Christianity bear to the Absolute? What relation does Jesus of Nazareth bear to the human race? What relation do the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament bear to Christianity?

The first is the vital question, and will perhaps be scarce settled favorably to the Christianity of the Church. The second also is a serious question, but one which the recent discussions of the Trinity will help to answer. The third is a practical and historical question of great interest. In the time of Paul the problem was to separate Religion from the forms of the Mosaic ritual; in Luther's day to separate it from the forms of the Church; in our age to separate it from the letter of Scripture, and all personal authority, pretended or real, and leave it to stand or fall by itself. There is nothing to fear from Truth, or for Truth. But if these questions be answered, as we think they must be, then a change will come over the spirit of our theology, to which all former changes therein were as nothing. But what is true will stand; yes, will stand, though all present theologies perish.

We have complained of the position of theology in England and America. Let us look a little into a single de-

partment of it, and one most congenial to the English mind, that of Ecclesiastical History; here our literature is most miserably deficient. Most English writers quote the Fathers, as if any writer of the first six centuries was as good authority for whatever relates to the primitive practice or opinion, as Clement of Alexandria, or Justin Martyr. Apart from the honorable and ancient name of Cave we have scarce an original historian of the church in the English tongue, unless we except Mr. Campbell, whose little work is candid and clear, and shows an acquaintance with the sources, though sometimes it betrays too much of a polemical spirit. England has produced three great historians within less than a century. Their works, though unequal, are classics; and their name and influence will not soon pass away. To rank with them in Ecclesiastical history, we have Echhard, Milner, Waddington, Milman! The French have at least Du-Pin, Jillemont, and Fleury; the Germans, Mosheim, Walch, Arnold, Semler, Schroeckh, Gieseler, and Neander, not to mention others scarcely inferior to any of these. In America little is to be expected of our labors in this department. We have no libraries that would enable us to verify the quotations in Gieseler; none perhaps that contains all the important sources of ecclesiastical history. Still all other departments of this field are open to us, where a large library is fortunately not needed.

Now in Germany theology is still studied by minds of a superior order, and that with all the aid which Science can offer in the nineteenth century. The mantle of the prophet, ascending from France and England, and with it a double portion of his spirit has fallen there. Theology has but shifted her ground, not forsaken the Earth; so, it is said, there is always one phenix, and one alone, in the world, although it is sometimes in the Arabian, sometimes in the Persian Sky. In this country, we say it with thanksgiving, theology is still pursued. Leibnitz used to boast that his countrymen came late to philosophy. It seems they found their account in entering the field after the mists of morning had left the sky, and the barriers could be seen, when the dew had vanished from the grass. They have come through Philosophy to Theology still later; for the theology of the Germans before Semler's time, valuable

as it is in every respect, is only related to the modern, as our Scandinavian fathers, who worshipped Odin and Thor, two thousand years ago, are related to us. Germany is said to be the land of books. It is *par eminence* the land of theological books. To look over the *Literatur Anzeiger*, one is filled with amazement and horror at the thought, that somebody is to read each of the books, and many will attempt inward digestion thereof. Some thousands of years ago it was said "of writing books there is no end." What would the same man say could he look over the catalogue of the last Leipsic fair?

We do not wonder that the eyes of theologians are turned attentively to Germany at this time, regarding it as the new East out of which the star of Hope is to rise. Still it is but a mixed result which we can expect; something will no doubt be effected both of good and ill. It is the part of men to welcome the former and ward off the latter. But we will here close our somewhat desultory remarks, and address ourselves to the work named at the head of this article.

In any country but Germany, we think, this would be reckoned a wonderful book; capable not only of making the author's literary reputation, but of making an epoch in the study of Ecclesiastical history, and of theology itself. The work is remarkable in respect to both of these departments of thought. Since copies of it are rare in this country, we have been induced to transfer to our pages some of the author's most instructive thoughts and conclusions, and give the general scope of the book itself, widely as it differs in many respects from our own view. Its author is a Professor of Theology at one of the more Orthodox Seminaries in Germany; and so far as we know this is the only work he has given to the public in an independent form.

In one of the prefaces, — for the work has two, and an introduction to boot, — the author says, that as Christianity goes on developing itself, and as men get clearer notions of what they contend about, all theological controversies come to turn more and more upon the person of Christ, as the point where all must be decided. With this discovery much is gained, for the right decision depends, in some

measure, on putting the question in a right way. It is easy to see that all turns on this question, whether it is necessary that there should be, and whether there actually has been, such a Christ as is represented in the meaning, though not always in the words of the Church. That is, whether there must be and has been a being, in whom the perfect union of the Divine and the Human has been made manifest in history. Now if Philosophy can demonstrate incontestably, that a Christ, in the above sense, is a notion self-contradictory and therefore impossible, there can no longer be any controversy between Philosophy and Theology. Then the Christ and the Christian Church, — as such, — have ceased to exist; or rather Philosophy has conquered the whole department of Christian Theology, as it were, from the enemy; for when the citadel is taken, the outworks must surrender at discretion. On the other hand, if it is shown that the notion of an *historical*, as well as an *ideal* Christ, is a necessary notion, "and the speculative construction of the person of Christ" is admitted, then Philosophy and Theology, essentially and most intimately set at one with each other, may continue their common work in peace. Philosophy has not lost her independence, but gained new strength. Now one party says, this is done already, "the person of Christ is constructed speculatively;" while the other says, the lists are now to be closed, inasmuch as it has been demonstrated that there can be no Christ, who is alike historical and ideal.

Professor Dorner thinks both parties are wrong; that "the speculative construction of the Christ" is not yet completed. Or in other words, that it has not yet been shown by speculative logic, that an entire and perfect incarnation of the Infinite, in the form of a perfect man, is an eternal and absolute idea, and therefore necessary to the salvation and completion of the human race; nor on the other hand has the opposite been demonstrated. Faith has been developed on one side, and Reason on the other, but not united. Philosophy and Religion are only enamored of one another, not wed, and the course of their true love is anything but smooth. His object is to show what has already passed between the two parties. Or, to speak without a figure, to give the net result of all attempts to explain by Reason or Faith, the idea of the Christ; to

show what has been done, and what still remains to be done in this matter. He thinks there is no great gulf fixed between Faith and Reason; that if Christianity be rational, that Reason itself has been unfolded and strengthened by Christianity, and may go on with no limit to her course.

He adds, moreover, that if Christ be, as theologians affirm, the key to open the history of the world, as well as to unloose all riddles, then it is not modesty, but arrogant inactivity which will not learn to use this key, and disclose all mysteries. He assumes two things in this inquiry, with no attempt at proof, namely, first, that the idea of a God-man, — a being who is at the same time perfect God and perfect Man, — is the great feature of Christianity; that this idea was made actual in Jesus of Nazareth: and again that this idea of a God-man exists, though unconsciously, in all religions; that it has been and must be the ideal of life to be both human and divine; a man filled and influenced by the power of God. Soon as man turns to this subject, it is seen that a holy and blessed life in God can only be conceived of as the unity of the divine and human life. Still farther, the ideal of a revelation of God consists in this, that God reveals himself not merely in signs and the phenomena of outward nature, which is blind and dumb, and knows not him who knows it, but that He should reveal Himself in the form of a being who is self-conscious, and knows him as he is known by him. In the infancy of thought, it was concluded no adequate representation of God could be made in the form of a God-man; for the Divine and Human were reckoned incompatible elements, or incommensurable quantities. God was considered an abstract essence of whom even BEING was to be predicated only with modesty. In its theoretic result, this differed little from Atheism; for it was not the Infinite, but an indefinite being, who revealed himself in the finite.

Now Christianity makes a different claim to the God-man. It has been the constant faith of the Christian Church, that in Jesus, the union of the Divine and Human was effected in a personal and peculiar manner. But the objection was made early and is still repeated, that this idea is not original in Christianity, since there were parallel historical manifestations of God in the flesh, before Je-

sus. But if this objection were real, it is of no value. Its time has gone by, since Christianity is regarded as a *doctrine*, and not merely an *historical fact*; as the organization of truth, which unites the scattered portions into one whole, that they may lie more level to the comprehension of men. But to settle this question, whether the idea is original with Christianity, it becomes necessary to examine the previous religions, and notice their essential agreement or disagreement with this.

"In this posture of affairs, all contributions will be welcome which serve to give a clearer notion of the ante-christian religions. So far as these contributions contain only the truth, it is a matter of indifference, whether they are made with a design hostile or favorable to Christianity. For the more perfectly we survey the field of ante-christian religions in its whole compass, the more clearly on the one hand, do we perceive the preparation made for Christianity by previous religions, and its historical necessity; and, on the other hand, as we look back over all the phenomena in this field, we see not less clearly the same newness and originality of the Christian religion, which has long been admitted by every sound, historical mind, as it looks forward and sees its world-traversing and inexhaustible power. Yes, we must say, that it is for the sake of proving the truth of Christianity, and in particular of its all-supporting fundamental idea,—the absolute incarnation of God in Christ,—that we have abandoned the more limited stand-point which was supported by single peculiarities, such as inspiration, prophecy, and the like; that taking our position in the more comprehensive stand-point supported by the whole course of religious history before Christ, we may thoroughly understand how the whole ante-christian world strives towards Christ; how in him the common riddle of all previous religions is solved, and how in him, or still more particularly, in his fundamental idea, lies the solution by which we can understand all these religions better than they understood themselves. So long as all religions are not understood in their essential relation to Christianity, as negative or positive preparations for it, so long the historical side thereof will swing in the air."—pp. 3, 4.

He then goes on to inquire if it were possible this idea of the God-man could proceed from any religion before Christ, or was extant in his time. The Jews were hostile to it, as appears from the various forms of Ebionitism embraced by the Jewish Christians. Besides, the doctrine, or the fact, finds no adequate expression in Peter, or James,

in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Hence some have conjectured it came from heathenism, and the conjecture seems at first corroborated by the fact, that it was not developed in the Church until the Gentiles had come in, and the apostles who lived in the midst of the heathens were the men who taught this doctrine.\* But this natural suspicion is without foundation. Heathenism may be divided into Eastern and Western. The Indian religion may be taken as the type of one, the Greek of the other. But neither separates God distinctly enough from the world. Both deserve to be called a worship of nature.† One proceeds from the Divine in the objective world, the other from the finite, and both seek the common end, the unity of the Divine and Human. Hence in the East, the various incarnations of Krishna, in one of which he assumes the human form as the highest of all. Here the God descends to earth and becomes a man. Again Vishnu actually becomes man. The idea of the God-man appears, as in Christianity, in the condescension of God to the human form. There is no doubt these notions were well known in Alexandria in the time of Jesus. But the Christian idea cannot be explained from this source, for the *true unity* of the divine and human natures nowhere appears, therefore the redemption of men by the Eastern religion is but momentary. The incarnate Deity does not draw men to him. Besides, the Dualism of this system destroys its value and influence. It ends at last in a sort of Quietism and Pantheism, which denies the existence of the world.

The Greek religion is the opposite of this. It deifies man, instead of humanizing God. It admitted Polytheism, though a belief in Fate still lingered there, as the last relic of primitive Pantheism. It does not develop the ethical idea, but confounds it with physical causes. It begins in part the

\* The influence of heathenism on the opinions of the primitive Christians has never yet, it would seem, had justice done it by writers of ecclesiastical history. We see traces of it in the apocryphal Gospels and Epistles, some of which are perhaps as ancient as the canonical writings. In our view, the Divinity of Christ, and its numerous correlative doctrines come from this source.

† This we think true of neither, except while the religion was in its weak and incipient stages. In the Greek Religion there are three stages, the Saturnian, Olympian, and Dionysian. Only the first is a worship of nature.

opposite way from the Indian, but comes to the same conclusion at last, a denial of all but God, "the one divine substance before which all the finite is an illusion."\* Besides, our author finds the moral element is wanting in the Greek religion. In this conclusion, however, we think him too hasty; certainly the moral element has its proper place in such writers as Æschylus, Pindar, and Plato. It would be difficult to find an author in ancient or modern times, in whom justice is more amply done to the moral sense, than in the latter.

However, Dr. Dorner thinks Parsism is an exception to the general rule of ancient religions. Here the moral element occurs in so perfect a form, that some will not reckon it with the heathen religions. But this has not got above the adoration of Nature, which defiles all the other heathen forms of religion. Besides, the Dualism, which runs through all the oriental systems, allows no true union of the Divine and Human. Accordingly the Parsee Christians always had a strong tendency to Manichæism, and ran it out into the notions of the Docetæ, and then found that in Jesus there was no union of the two natures. According to Parsism the Divine can never coalesce with the Human; for the Infinite Being, who is the cause of both Ormusd and Ahriman, remains always immovable and at perfect rest. It, however, admits a sort of Arian notion of a mediator between him and us, and has a poor sort of a God-man in the person of Sosioch, though some conjecture this is a more modern notion they have taken from the Jews. Thus it appears the central idea of Christianity could have proceeded from no heathen religion.

Could it come from the Hebrew system? Quite as little.† Of all the ancient religions, the Hebrew alone separates God from the world, says our mistaken author, and recognises the distinct personality of both God and man. This solves the difficulty of heathenism. It dwells on the moral

\* This wholesale way of disposing of centuries of philosophical inquiry is quite as unsafe, as it were to take the middle-age philosophers, the Mystics, the Sensualists of England and France, with the Transcendentalists of Germany, as the natural results and legitimate issue of the Christian Religion.

† See the attempt of Mr. Hennell, (*Inquiry into the Divine Origin of Christianity*. London. 1839. 1 vol. 8vo. pp. 8-23,) to derive some of the Christian ideas from the Essenes.

union of man and God, and would have it go on and become perfect, and, in the end, God write the law in the heart, as in the beginning He wrote it on tables of stone.\* But in avoiding the adoration of Nature, the Jews took such a view of the Deity, that it seemed impossible to them that he should incarnate himself in man. All the revelations of God in the Old Testament are not the remotest approach to an incarnation like that in Jesus. They made a great chasm between God and man, which they attempted to fill up with angels and the like.† The descriptions of Wisdom in Proverbs, the Apocrypha, and Philo, are not at all like the Christian incarnation. The Alexandrian Jews assimilated to the Greek system, and adopted the Platonic view of the Logos, while the Palestine Jews, instead of making their idea of the Messiah more lofty and pure, and rendering it more intense, only gave it a more extensive range, and thought of a political deliverer. Thus it appears the idea of a God-man could not come from any of these sources, nor yet from any contemporary philosophy or religion. It must therefore be original with Christianity itself. It was impossible for a heathen or Hebrew to say in the Christian sense, that a man was God, or the son of God. But all former religions were only a *preparatio evangelica* in the highest sense. This fact shows that Christianity expresses what all religions sought to utter, and combines in itself the truths of heathenism and Judaism.

"Judaism was great through the idea of the absolute, personal God; the greatest excellence of heathenism is the idea of the most intimate nearness and residence of a divine life in a free human form. But the idea of the personal existence of God in Christ was both of them united together into a higher unity. According to the heathen way of considering the matter, the divine, alone absolute and impersonal Being, who soars above the gods,—if it is possible for him to reveal himself,—

\* If we understand the Hebrew Scriptures and St. Paul, they both teach that He *did* write the law in the heart in the beginning, else the law of stone were worthless.

† Here also the author fails to notice the striking fact of the regular progress of the theophanies of the Old Testament. 1. *God appears himself*, in human form, and speaks and eats with man. 2. It is an *angel of God* who appears. 3. He *speaks only in visions, thoughts*, and the like, and his appearance is entirely subjective. We see the same progress in all primitive religious nations.

must have first in Christ come to a personal consciousness, for himself, which he had not before; but this would be the generation of a personal God, through the form of human life, and therefore a human act. Judaism had for its foundation not an obscure, impersonal being, a merely empty substance, but a subject, a personality. But to such as admitted its forms of Monotheism, the incarnation of God seemed blasphemy. But Christianity is the truth of both systems. In the personality of Christ, it sees as well a man who is God, as a God who is man. With the one it sees in Jesus, as well the truth of the Hellenic Apotheosis of human nature, as with the other it sees the complete condescension of God, which is the fundamental idea in the East. But it required long and various warfare, before the Christian principle went through the Greek and Jewish principle, and presented to the understanding its true form. We shall see that even now its work is not completed."\* — pp. 33, 34.

He next turns to consider the historical development of this central idea, which Jesus brought to light in word and life. This remained always *enveloped* in the Church, but it was not *developed*, except gradually, and part by part. Then he proceeds on the clever hypothesis, that all moral and religious truth was *potentially involved* in the early teachers, though not professed consciously, and *actually evolved* by them; a maxim which may be applied equally to all philosophers, of all schools, for every man *involves* all truth, though only here and there a wise man *evolves* a little thereof. Now the Church did not state all this doctrine in good set speech, yet it knew intuitively how to separate false from true doctrine, not as an individual good man separates wrong from right, by means of conscience. This is rather more true of the Church, than it is of particular teachers, who have not been inventors of truth, but only mouths which uttered the truth possessed by the Church.† However, amid conflicting opinions, where he gets but intimations of the idea of a God-man, and amid many doctrines taught consciously, he finds this tendency to glorify Christ, even to deify him, which he regards as a proof that the great central idea lay there. This also we

\* We have given a pretty free version of portions of this extract, and are not quite certain that in all cases we have taken the author's meaning.

† But these mouths of the Church seem smitten with the old spirit of Babel, for their "language was confounded, and they did not understand one another's speech," nor always *their own*, we fancy.

take to be a very great mistake, and think the tendency to deify persons arose from several causes; such as the popular despair of man. The outward aspect of the world allows us to form but a low opinion of man; the retrospect is still worse. Besides some distrusted the inspiration which God gives man on condition of holiness and purity. Therefore, when any one rose up and far transcended the achievements and expectations of mere vulgar souls, they said he is not a man, but a god, at least the son of a god; human nature is not capable of so much. Hence all the heroes of times pretty ancient are either gods or the descendants of gods, or at least *miraculously* inspired to do their particular works. Then the polytheistic notions of the new converts to Christianity favored this popular despair by referring the most shining examples of goodness and wisdom to the gods. Hence, for those who had believed that Hercules, Bacchus, and Devanisi were men, and became gods by the special grace of the Supreme, it was easy to elevate Jesus, and give him power over their former divinities, or even expel them, if this course were necessary. Now there are but two scales to this balance, and what was added to the divinity of Jesus was taken from his humanity, and so the power of man underrated. Hence we always find, that as a party assigns Jesus a divine, extra-human, or miraculous character, on the one hand, just so far it degrades man on the other, and takes low views of human nature. The total depravity of man and the total divinity of Jesus come out of the same logical root. To examine the history of the world, by striking the words and life of Jesus out of the series of natural and perfectly human actions, and then deciding as if such actions had never been, seems to us quite as absurd as it would be, in giving a description of Switzerland, to strike out the Alps, and the lakes, and then say the country was level and dull, monotonous and dry. To us, the popular notions of the character of Jesus "have taken away our Lord, and we know not *where* they have laid him." To our apprehension, Jesus was much greater than the evangelists represent him. We would not measure him by the conceptions formed by Jewish or heathen converts, but by the long stream of light he shed on the first three centuries after his death, and through them on all time since.

But to return to our task. Dr. Dorner admits this idea does not appear in the earliest Christian writings, which we think is quite as inexplicable, taking his stand-point, as it would be if Columbus, after the discovery of the new continent, had founded a school of geographers, and no one of his pupils had ever set down America in his map of the world, or alluded to it, except by implication. But as Christianity went on developing, it took some extra-christian ideas from the other religions. Thus from Judaism it took the notion of a *primitive man*, and a *primitive prophet*; from heathenism, the *doctrine of the Logos*. These two rival elements balanced each other, and gave a universal development to the new principle. Thus while Christianity attacked its foes, it built up its own dogmatics, not unlike the contemporaries of Ezra, who held the sword in one hand, and the trowel in the other. He finds three periods in the history of Christology. I. That of the establishment of the doctrine, that there were two essential elements in Jesus, the Divine and Human. II. Period of the one-sided elevation of either the one or the other; this has two epochs. 1. From the Council of Nice to the Reformation; period of the divine side. 2. From the Reformation to Kant; period of the human side. III. Period of the attempt to show both in him, and how they unite. We must pass very hastily over the rest of the work; for after we have thus minutely described his stand-point and some of his general views, and have shown his method, the student of history will see what his opinions must be of the great teachers in the Church, whose doctrines are well known.

To make the new doctrines of Christianity intelligible, the first thing was to get an adequate expression, in theological dogmas, of the nature of Christ. On this question the Christian world divides into two great parties; one follows a Hebrew, the other a Greek tendency; one taking the human, the other the divine side of Christ. Hence come two independent Christologies, the one without the divine, the other without the human nature in Jesus. These are the Ebionites and the Docetæ. "Docetism, considered in antithesis with Ebionitism, is a very powerful witness of the deep and wonderful impression of its divinity, which the new principle had made on mankind at its appearance;

an impression which is by no means fully described by all that Ebionitism could say of a new, and holy prophet that had risen up. On the other hand, Ebionitism itself, in its lack of ideal tendency, is a powerful evidence on the historical side of Christianity, by its rigid adherence to the human appearance of Christ, which the other denied." — p. 36. Strange as it may seem, these two antithetic systems ran into one another, and had both of them this common ground, that God and man could not be joined; for while the Ebionites said Jesus was a *mere man*, the Christ remained a pure ideal not connected with the body, a redemption was effected by God, and Jesus was the symbol; while the Docetæ, denying the *body* of Jesus had any objective reality, likewise left the Christ a pure ideal, never incarnated. "Both were alike unsatisfactory to the Christian mind. Both left alike unsatisfied the necessity of finding in Christ the union of the human and divine; therefore this objection may be made to both of them, which, from the nature of things, is the most significant, namely, that man is not redeemed by them, for God has not taken the human nature upon himself, and sanctified it by thus assuming it. The Church, guided rather by an internal tact and necessity, than by any perfect insight, could sketch no comprehensible figure of Christ in definite lines. But by these two extreme doctrines it was advanced so far, that it became clearly conscious of the necessity, in general, of conceiving of the Redeemer as divine and human at the same time." — p. 39.

Various elements of this doctrine were expressed by the various teachers, in the early ages. Thus, on the divine side it was taught, first, by the Pseudo Clement, Paul of Samosata, and Sabellius, that a *higher power* dwelt in Christ; next by Hippolytus, that it was not merely a higher power, but a *hypostasis* that dwelt in Christ. Tertullian, Clement, and Dionysius of Alexandria, with Origen, considered this *subordinate* to the Father, though the latter regarded it as *eternally begotten*. The next step was to consider this hypostasis not merely subordinate, but eternal; nor this only, but of the *same essence* with the Father. This was developed in the controversy between Dionysius of Rome and of Alexandria, between Athanasius and Arius. At the same time the human side also was devel-

oped. Clement and Origen maintained, in opposition to the Gnostics, that Christ had an 'actual human body. Then Apollinaris taught that Christ had a human *soul* (*ψυχή*), but the Logos supplied the place of a human *mind* (*νοῦς*). But in opposition to him, Gregory of Nazianzen taught that he had a human mind also. Thus the elements of the Christ are "speculatively constructed" on the human and divine side; but still all their elements were not united into a human personal character,—for the human nature of Christ was still regarded as impersonal. But attempts were made also to unite these parts together, and construct a whole person. This, however, led rather to a mixture than an organic and consistent union; therefore the separateness and distinctness of the two natures also required to be set forth. This was done very clearly. The Council of Nice declared he was *perfect God*; that of Chalcedon, that he was *perfect man* also, but did not determine how the two natures were reconciled in the same character. "The distinctive character of these two natures"—we quote the words of Leo the Great—"was not taken away by the union, but rather the peculiarity of each nature is kept distinct, and runs together with the other, into one *Prosopon* and one *Hypostasis*."\* Next

\* We give the Greek words *Prosopon* and *Hypostasis*, and not the common terms derived from the Latin. The subtleties of this doctrine can only be expressed in the Greek tongue. A Latin Christian could believe in three *personæ* and one *substantia*, for he had no better terms, while the Greek Christian reckoned this heretical if not atheistical, as he believed in *one essence and three substances*. But to say *three persons*, — *τρία ἡποσωπα*—in the *Godhead*, was heresy in Greece, as to say *three substances*, (*tres substantia*,) was heresy at Rome. Well says Augustine, apologizing for the Latin language, "dictum est tres personæ, non ut illud diceretur, sed ut non taceretur."—*De Trinitate*, lib. v. c. 9

St. Augustine has some thoughts on this head, which may surprise some of his followers at this day. "And we recognize in ourselves an image of God, that is of the Supreme Trinity, not indeed equal, nay, far and widely different; not coeternal, and (to express the whole more briefly,) not of the same substance with God; yet that, than which of all things made by Him none in nature is nearer to God; which image is yet to be perfected by re-formation, that it may be nearest in likeness also. For we both are to know that we are to love to be this and to know it. In these then, moreover, no falsehood resembling truth perplexes us."—*Civ. Dei*. Lib. xi. c. 26, as translated in *Pusey's* ed. of *Augustine's Confessions*. London: 1840. 1 vol. 8vo. p. 283, note.

The late Dr. Emmons seems aware of the imperfection of language, and its inability to express the idea of a Trinity. "Indeed there is no word, in any language, which can convey a precise idea of this incom-

follow the attempts to construct one person out of these two natures. Some said there was one Will, others two Wills, in the person of Christ. This was the quarrel of the Monothelites and the Dyothelites. Others said the union was effected by the loss of the attributes of the Human, or Divine being; some supposing the one passed into and so became the other, or that both coalesced in a *tertium quid*, a *Συμβασις ψυχοῦς*. But it became orthodox to affirm that each retained all its peculiar attributes, and so the two were united. Now this doctrine may seem very wise, because it is very puzzling; but the same words may be applied to other things. We have very little skill in showing up absurdities, but can apply all this language to very different matters, and it shall sound quite as well as before. Thus we may take a Circle instead of the Father, and a Triangle for the Son, and say the two natures were found in one, the circle became a triangle, and yet lost none of its circularity, while the triangle became a circle yet lost none of its triangularity. The union of the two was perfect, the distinctive character of each being preserved. They corresponded point for point, area for area, centre for centre, circumference for circumference, yet was one still a circle, the other a triangle. But both made up the circle-triangle. The one was not inscribed, nor the other circumscribed. We would by no means deny the great fact, which we think lies at the bottom of this notion of the trinity, a fact, however, which it seems to conceal as often as to express in our times, that the Deity diffuses and therefore incarnates himself more or less perfectly in human beings, and especially in Jesus, the climax of human beings, through whom "proceed" the divine influences, which also "proceed" from the Father. Hence the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. This truth, we think, is expressed in all religions; in the incarnations of Vishnu; the Polytheistic notions of the Greeks; the angels, archangels, and seraphs that make up the Amshaspand of the Persians, which Daniel seems to imitate, and the author of the Apocalypse to have in his eye.

prehensible distinction; for it is not similar to any other distinction in the minds of men, so that it is very immaterial whether we use the name person, or any other name, or a circumlocution instead of a name, in discoursing upon this subject."—*Sermon iv.* p. 87. Wrentham: 1800.

But to return. These points fixed, the Catholic church dwelt chiefly on the Divine in Christ, and continued to do so till the Reformation, while the human side was represented by heretics and mystics, whom here we have not space to name.

We now pass over some centuries, in which there was little life and much death in the Church;—times when the rays of religious light, as they came through the darkness, fell chiefly, it seems, on men whom the light rendered suspicious to the Church,—and come down to times after the Reformation. After the great battles had been fought through, and the Council of Trent held its sessions, and the disturbances, incident to all great stirs of thought, had passed over, and the oriental and one-sided view of Christ's nature had been combatted, the human side of it comes out once more, into its due prominence. "By the long, one-sided contemplation of the Divine in Christ, his person came to stand as somewhat absolutely supernatural, as the other side of and beyond human nature; something perfectly inaccessible to the subjective thought, while it is the greatest thing in Christianity to recognise our brother in him." With the Reformation there had come a subjective tendency, which laid small stress on the old notions of Christ, in which the objective divine nature had overlaid and crushed the subjective and human nature in him. This new subjective tendency is a distinctive feature of the Reformation. It shows itself in the doctrine of Justification by Faith, and quite as powerfully in the altered form of Christology. But here, too, we must tread with rapid feet, and rest on only two of the numerous systems of this period, one from the Reformers themselves, the other from a Theosophist. The human nature is capable of divinity, (*humana natura divinitatis capax*) said the early Protestants; what Christ has first done, all may do afterwards. Well said Martin Luther, strange as it may seem to modern Protestants who learn ecclesiastical history from the "Library of Useful Knowledge," "Lo, Christ takes our birth (that is, the sinfulness of human nature,) from us unto himself, and sinks it in his birth, and gives us his, that we thereby may become pure and new, as if it were our own, so that every Christian may enjoy this birth of Christ not less than if he also, like Jesus, were born bodily of the

Virgin Mary. Whoso disbelieves or doubts this, the same is no Christian." Again. "This is the meaning of Esaias, To us a child is born, to us a son is given. To us, to us, to us is he born, and to us given. Therefore look to it, that thou not only gettest out of the Evangel a fondness for the history itself, but that thou makest this birth thine own, and exchangest with him, becomest free from thy birth, and passest over to his,—then thou indeed shalt sit in the lap of the Virgin Mary, and art her dear child." This thought lay at the back-ground of the Reformation, which itself was but an imperfect exhibition of that great principle. He, that will look, traces the action of this same principle in that great revival of Religion, five centuries before Christ, in the numerous mystical sects from the first century to the reformation, in such writers as Ruysbröck, Harphius, Meister, Eckhart, Suso, Tauler, the St. Victors, and many others. Perhaps it appears best in that little book, *once* well known in England under the title *Theologia Germana*, and now studied in Germany and called *Deutsche Theologie*; a book of which Luther says, in the preface to his edition of it, in 1520, "Next to the Bible and St. Augustine, I have never met with a book, from which I have learnt more what God, Christ, man, and all things are. Read this little book who will, and then say, whether our theology is old or new; for this little book is not new."

We give a few words from it, relating to the incarnation of God, for the private ear of such as think all is *new* which they never heard of before, and all naughty things exist only in German. It says, man comes to a state of union with God, "when he feels and loves no longer this or that, or his own self, but only the eternal good, so likewise God loves not himself as himself, but as the eternal good, and if there were somewhat better than God, the God would love that. The same takes place in a divine man, or one united with God, else he is not united with him. This state existed in Christ in all its perfection, else he would not be the Christ. If it were possible that a man should be perfect and entire, in true obedience be as the human nature of Christ was, that man would be one with Christ, and would be by grace, what he was by nature. Man in this state of obedience would be one with God,

for he would be not himself, but God's Own (*Eigen*) and God himself would then alone become man. Christ is to you not merely the Objective, isolated in his sublimity, but we are all called to this, that God should become man in us. He that believes in Christ believes that his (Christ's) life is the noblest and best of all lives, and so far as the life of Christ is man, so far also is Christ in him." In this book, — and its ideas are as old in this shape, as the time of Dionysius the Areopagite, — the historical Christ is only the primitive type, the divine idea of man, who appears only as a model for us, and we may be all that he was, and we are Christians only in so far as we attain this. It is only on this hypothesis, we take it, there can be a Christology which does not abridge the nature of man.\* This same idea, — that all men are capable of just the same kind and degree of union with God, which Jesus attained to, — runs through all the following Christologies. It appears in a modified form in Osiander and Schwenkfeld, whom we shall only name.† But they all place the historical below the internal Christ which is formed in the heart, and here commences what Dr. Dorner calls the degeneracy of the principle of the Reformers, though the antithesis between nature and grace was still acknowledged by the Protestants. But as our author thinks, the subjective view received a one-sided development, especially in Servetus and the Socinians, who differ, however, in this at least, that while the former, in his pantheistic way, allows Christ to be, in part, uncreated (*res increata*) the lat-

\* Dr. Baur, a very able Trinitarian writer and Professor at Tübingen, sums up the various Christological theories in this way. Reconciliation must be regarded, either, (1) as a necessary process in the development of the Deity himself, as he realizes the idea of his being, or (2) as an analogous and necessary process in the development of man, as he becomes reconciled with himself, the one is wholly objective, the other wholly subjective, or (3) as the mediation of a *tertium quid*, which holds the human and divine natures both, so involves both the above. In this case reconciliation rests entirely on the historical fact, which must be regarded as the necessary condition of reconciliation between God and man, of course he, who takes this latter view, considers Jesus as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. See his *Die Christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung in ihrer geschichtliche Entwicklung, &c.* Tüb. 1838.

† See Osiander's *Confessio de unico Mediatore J. C. et Justificatione fidei*, 1551. His *Epistola in qua confutatur, etc.*, 1549. See also Schwenkfeld *quæstiones von Erkenntnis J. C. und seiner Glorien*, 1561, von der Speyse des elvigon Lebens, 1547. Schwenkfeld's Christology agrees closely in many respects, with that of Swedenborg.

ter considers him certainly a created being, to whom God had imparted the divine attributes.

We pass over Theophrastus and Paracelsus, and give a few extracts from Valentine Weigel's "*Guldene Griff*." With him, man is an epitome of the whole world, — a favorite notion with many mystics, — all his knowledge is self-knowledge. "The eye, by which all things are seen, is man himself, but only in reference to natural knowledge, for in supernatural knowledge man himself is not the eye, but God himself is both the light and the eye in us. Our eye therefore must be passive, and not active. Yet God is not foreign to men in whom he is the eye, but that passive relation of man to him has this significance, that man is the yielding instrument by which God becomes the seeing eye." This Light in us, or the Word, is for him the true Christ, and the historical God-man disappears entirely in the back-ground. The book whence all wisdom comes is God's Word, a book written by the finger of God in the heart of all men, though all cannot read it. Out of this are all books written. This book of life, to which the Sacred Scriptures are an external testimony, is the likeness of God in man, the Seed of God; the Light; the Word; the Son; Christ. This book lies concealed in the heart; concealed in the flesh; concealed in the letter of Scriptures. But if it were not in the heart, it could not be found in the flesh and the Scripture. If this were not preached within us, if it were not always within us, — though in unbelief, — we could have nothing of it. A doctrine common enough with the fathers of the first three or four centuries. If we had remained in Paradise, we should never have needed the outward Word of Scripture, or the historical incarnation of Jesus.\* But expelled from Paradise, and fallen through sin, it is needful that we be born again of Christ, for we have lost the holy Flesh and the Holy Ghost, and must recover both from Christ. Be-

\* Quaint George Herbert has a similar thought. We quote from memory.

"For sure when Adam did not know  
To sin, or sin to smother,  
He might to Heaven from Paradise go,  
As from one room to another."

cause we cannot read this inner book, God will alter our spirit by Scriptures and Sermons. All books are only for *fallen* men. Christ was necessary to the race, as the steel to the stone, but his office is merely that of a Prophet and Preacher of Righteousness, for God was incarnate in Abel, Noah, Adam, and Abraham, as well as in Jesus, "and the Lord from Heaven" exists potentially in all men; the external Christ, who was born of Mary, is an expressive and visible model of the internal Christ. In a word, he makes Christ the universal divine spirit, shed down into man, though it lies buried and immovable in most men. But whenever it comes to consciousness, and is lived out, there is an incarnation of God.

These views were shared by many teachers, who modify them more or less, of whom we need mention but a few of the more prominent. Poiret, Henry More, Bishops Fowler and Gastrell, Robert Fleming, Hussey, Bennet, and Thomas Burnet, Goodwin, and Isaac Watts.\*

This mystical view appears in Jacob Böhme, and through him it passed on to Philosophy, for it is absurd to deny that this surprising man has exerted an influence in science as deep almost as in religion. German Philosophy seems to be the daughter of Mysticism.

But we must make a long leap from Valentine Weigel to Immanuel Kant, who has had an influence on Christology that will never pass away. It came as a thunder-bolt out of the sky, to strike down the phantoms of doubt, and scatter the clouds of skepticism. Kant admits that in practice, and the actual life of man, the moral law is subordinate to sensuality; this subordination he calls *radical evil*. Then to perfect mankind, we need a *radical restoration*, to restore the principles to their true order from which they have been inverted; this restoration is possible on three conditions. 1. By the idea of a race of men that is well pleasing to God, in which each man would feel his natural destination and perfectibility. It is the duty of each to rise to this, believe it attainable, and trust its pow-

\* See, who will, his three discourses "on the Glory of Christ as God-man," (Lond. 1746,) and Goodwin's book to which he refers, "Knowledge of God the Father and his Son J. C." See also the writings of Edward Irving, Cudworth's Sermon before the House of Parliament, in the American ed. of his works. Vol. ii. p. 549, seq.

er. This state may not be attained empirically, but by embracing the principle well pleasing to God, and all the faults in manifesting this principle vanish, when the whole course is looked at. We should not be disturbed by fear lest the new moral disposition be transient, for the form of goodness increases with the exercise of it. The past sins are expiated only by suffering, or diminution of well-being in the next stage of progress. 2. The foundation of a *moral commonwealth*,\* without this there will be confusion. This is possible only on condition that it is religious also. Thus this commonwealth is, at the same time, a church, though only an ideal one; for it can rest on nothing external, but only on the "unconditional authority of Reason, which contains in itself the moral idea." 3. This ideal Church, to become real, must take a *statutory form*, for it is an universal tendency of man to demand a sensual confirmation of the truth of Reason, and this renders it necessary to take some outward means of introducing the true rational religion, since without the hypothesis of a revelation, man would have no confidence in Reason, though it disclosed the same truths with Revelation, because it is so difficult to convince men that pure morality is the only service of God, while they seek to make it easier by some superstitious service (Afterdienst.)

On these notions the following Christology is naturally constructed. Man needs no outward aid for the purpose of reconciliation, sanctification, or happiness; but the belief in an outward revelation is needed for the basis of the moral commonwealth. Christianity can allow this, as it has a pure moral spirit. Here everything turns on the person of its founder. He demands perfect virtue, and would found a kingdom of God on the earth. It is indifferent to practical religion, whether or not we are certain of his historical existence, for historical existence adds no authority. The historical is necessary only to give us an idea of a man well pleasing to God, which we can only understand by seeing it realized in a man, who preserves his morality under the most difficult circumstances. To get a concrete

\* It is a saying of Pagan Plato in the *Timæus*, "We shall never have perfect men, until we can surround them with perfect circumstances," an idea the English Socialists are attempting to carry out in a very one-sided manner.

knowledge of supersensual qualities, such as the idea of the good, moral actions must be presented to us performed in a human manner. This is only needed to awaken and purify moral emotions that live in us. The historical appearance of a man without sin is possible; but it is not necessary to consider he is born supernaturally, even if the impossibility of the latter is not absolutely demonstrable. But since the archetype of a man well pleasing to God lies in us in an incomprehensible manner, what need have we of farther incomprehensibilities, since the exaltation of such a saint above all the imperfections of human nature would only offer an objection to his being a model for us, — since it gives him not an achieved but an innate virtue, — for it would make the distance between him and us so great, that we should find in him no proof that we could ever attain that ideal. Even if the great teacher does not completely correspond to the idea, he may yet speak of himself, as if the ideal of the good was bodily and truly represented in him, for he could speak of what his maxims would make him. He must derive his whole strength from reason. The value of his revelation consists only in leading to a conscious, voluntary morality, in the way of authority. When this is done the statutory scaffolding may fall. The time must come, when religion shall be freed from all statutes, which rest only on history, and pure Reason at last reign, and God be all in all. Wise men must see that belief in the Son of God is only belief in man himself; that the human race, so far as it is moral, is the well pleasing Son of God. This idea of a perfect man does not proceed from us, but from God, so we say that HE has condescended and taken human nature upon himself. The Christ without and the Christ within us are not two principles, but the same. But if we make a belief in the historical manifestation of this idea of humanity in Christ the necessary condition of salvation, then we have two principles, an empiric and a rational one. The true God-man is the archetype that lies in our reason, to which the historical manifestation conforms.

This system has excellences and defects. By exalting the idea of moral goodness, Kant led men to acknowledge an absolute spiritual power, showing that this is the common ground between Philosophy and Christianity, and

with this begins the reconciliation of the two.\* He recognised the Divine as something dwelling in man, and therefore filled up the chasm, as it were, between the two natures. Again, he acknowledged no authority, so long as it was merely outward and not legitimated in the soul, for he had felt the slavery incident upon making the historical a dogma. He saw the mind cannot be bound by anything merely external, that has value only so far as it contains the idea and makes it historical. But, on the other hand, he exalts the subjective too high, and does not legitimate the internal moral law, which Dr. Dorner thinks requires legitimating, as much as the historical manifestation. His foundation therefore is unstable until this is done. Besides he is not consistent with himself; for while he ascribes absolute power to this innate ideal of a perfect man, he leaves nothing for the historical appearance of the God-man. He makes his statutory form useless, if not injurious, and makes a dualistic antithesis between Reason and God. Still more is it inconsistent with Christianity, for it makes morality the whole of religion, it cuts off all connexion between the divine and human life, denying that influence comes down from God upon man. He makes each man his own redeemer, and allows no maturity of excellence, but only a growth towards it. In respect to the past, present, and future, it leaves men no comfort in their extremest need.

We pass next to the Christology of Schelling, leaping over such thinkers as Röhr, Wegscheider, De Wette, Hase, Hamann, Oetinger, Franz Baader, Novalis, Jacobi, and Fichte.

The Divine unity is always actualizing itself; the One is constantly passing into the many; or in plain English, God is eternally creative. God necessarily reveals himself in the finite; to be comprehensible to us, He must take the limitations of finite existence. But since He cannot be represented in any finite form, the divine life is portrayed in a variety of individuals; in a copious history, each portion whereof is a revelation of a particular side of the divine life. God therefore appears in historical life as the finite, which is the

\* Leibnitz made the attempt to effect the same thing, but in a manner more mechanical and unsatisfactory.

necessary form of the revelation of Him. The finite is God in his development, or the Son of God. All history, therefore, has a higher sense. The human does not exclude the divine. Thus the idea of the incarnation of God is a principle of philosophy; and since this is the essence of Christianity, philosophy is reconciled with it. Nature herself points forward to the Son of God, and has in him its final cause. Now the theologians consider Christ as a single person; but, as an eternal idea alone can be made a dogma, so their Christology is untenable as a dogma. Now the incarnation of God is from eternity. Christ is an eternal idea. The divinity of Christianity cannot be proved in an empirical way, but only by contemplating the whole of history as a divine act. The sacred history must be to us only a subjective symbol, not an objective one, as such things were to the Greeks, who thereby became subordinate to the finite, and refused to see the infinite, except in that form. But as Christianity goes immediately to the infinite, so the finite becomes only an allegory of the infinite. The fundamental idea of Christianity is eternal and universal, therefore it cannot be constructed historically without the religious construction of history. This idea existed before Christianity, and is a proof of its necessity. Its existence is a prediction of Christianity in a distant foreign country. The man Christ is the climax of this incarnation, and also the beginning of it; for all his followers are to be incarnations of God, members of the same body to which he is the head. God first becomes truly objective in him, for before him none has revealed the infinite in such a manner. The old world is the *natural* side of history. A new era, in which the infinite world preponderates, could only be brought by the truly infinite coming into the finite, not to deify it, but to sacrifice it to God, and thereby effect a reconciliation; that is, by his death he showed that the Finite is nothing; but the true existence, and life is only in the Infinite. The eternal Son of God is the human race; created out of the substance of the Father of all; appearing as a suffering divinity, exposed to the horrors of time, reaching its highest point in Christ; it closes the world of the finite and discloses that of the infinite, as the sign of the spirit. With this conclusion, the mythological veils in which Christ, as the only God-man, has been arrayed, must fall off. The

ever living spirit will clothe Christianity in new and permanent forms. Speculation, not limited by the past, but comprehending distinction, as it stretches far on into time, has prepared for the regeneration of esoteric Christianity, and the proclamation of the absolute gospel. Viewed in this light, Christianity is not regarded merely as *doctrine* or *history*, but as a *progressive divine act*; the history of Christ is not merely an empirical and single, but an eternal history. At the same time it finds its anti-type in the human race. Christianity, therefore, is not merely one religious constitution among others, but **THE RELIGION**; the true mode of spiritual existence; the soul of history, which is incorporated in the human race, to organize it into one vast body, whose head is Christ. Thus he would make us all brothers of Christ, and show that the incarnation of God still goes on to infinity, in the birth of the Son of God, until the divine life takes to itself the whole human race; sanctifies and penetrates all through it, and recognises it as his body, of which Christ is the head; as his temple, of which Christ is the corner-stone. We shall not dwell upon the excellence of this view, nor point out its defects. The few, who understand the mystical words of St. John, and the many, who do not understand them, can do this for themselves.

Our remarks are already so far extended, that we must omit the Christology of Hegel, though this, however, we do with the less reluctance, as the last word of that system has but just reached us; it comes with the conclusion of Strauss's work on Dogmatics.\* We regret to pass over the views of Schleiermacher, which have had so deep an influence in Germany, and among many of the more studious of our Trinitarian brethren in this country. To most of our own denomination only the Lemnian horrors of its faint echo have come. We give Dr. Dorner's conclusion in his own words. "Christology has now reached a field as full of anticipations, as it is of decisions. But the anxiety, which here takes possession of us, is a joyful one, and bears in itself the tranquil and certain conviction, that, after a long night, a beautiful dawn is nigh. A great course has been run

\* Die Christliche Glaubenslehre, &c. Von Dr. D. F. Strauss. 2 vols. 8vo. 1840, 1841.

through, and the deep presentiments of the greatest minds of the primitive times of Christianity begin to find their scientific realization. After long toil of the human mind, the time has at last come, when a rich harvest is to be reaped from this dogma, while the union, already hastening, is effected between the essential elements of Christology, which seem the most hostile to each other. Previous Christologies have chiefly presented these elements in their separation and opposition to one another. Now, while we contemplate them together in their living unity, which verifies their distinction from one another, we see their historical confirmation and necessity, and now, as Æthiopia and Arabia, according to the prophet, were to present their homage to the Lord, so must the middle ages, with their scholasticism and modern philosophy, the whole of history, — as well of the antechristian religions, as that of the Christian dogma, — assemble about the One, (the Son of Man,) that they may lay down their best gifts before him, who first enables them to understand themselves; while, on the other hand, he confers on them the dignity of his own glorification, and allows them to contribute to it, so that by their service, likewise, his character shall pass into the consciousness of the human race with an increasing brilliancy."

Now, if we ask what are the merits and defects of the work we have passed over, the answer is easy. It is a valuable history of Christology; as such, it is rich with instruction and suggestion. A special history of this matter was much needed. That this, in all historical respects, answers the demands of the time, we are not competent to decide. However, if it be imperfect as a history, it has yet great historical merits. Its chief defects are of another kind. Its main idea is this, that the *true Christ is perfect God and perfect man*, and that *Jesus of Nazareth is the true Christ*. Now he makes no attempt to prove either point; yet he was bound, in the first instance, as a *philosopher*, to *prove his proposition*; in the second, as an *historian*, to *verify his fact*. He attempts neither. He has shown neither the eternal necessity, nor the actual existence of a God-man. Nay, he admits that only two writers in the New Testament ever represent Jesus as the God-man. His admission is fatal to his fact. He gives us the history of a dogma of the church; but does not show it has any foundation to rest on.

We must apply to this book the words of Leibnitz, in his letter to Burnet on the manner of establishing the Christian religion.\* "I have often remarked, as well in philosophy as theology, and even in medicine, jurisprudence, and history, that we have many good books and good thoughts scattered about here and there, but that we scarce ever come to *establishments*. I call it an *establishment*, when at least certain points are determined and fixed forever; when certain theses are put beyond dispute, and thus ground is gained where something may be built. It is properly the method of mathematicians, who separate the *certain from the uncertain, the known from the unknown*. In other departments it is rarely followed, because we love to flatter the ears by fine words, which make an agreeable mingling of the certain and the uncertain. But it is a very transient benefit that is thus conferred; like music and the opera, which leave scarce any trace in the mind, and give us nothing to repose on; so we are always turning round and round, treating the same questions, in the same way, which is problematic, and subject to a thousand exceptions. Somebody once led M. Casaubon the elder into a hall of the Sorbonne, and told him, The divines have disputed here for more than three hundred years! He answered, And what have they decided? It is exactly what happens to us in most of our studies." . . . "I am confident that if we will but use the abilities wherewith God and nature have furnished us, we can remove many of the evils which now oppress mankind, can establish the truth of religion, and put an end to many controversies which divide men, and cause so much evil to the human race, if we are willing to think consecutively, and proceed as we ought. . . . I would proceed in this way, and distinguish propositions into two classes: 1. what could be *absolutely demonstrated* by a metaphysical necessity, and in an incontestable way: 2. what could be *demonstrated morally*; that is, in a way which gives what is called moral certainty, as we know there is a China and a Peru, though we have never seen them. . . . Theological truths and deductions therefrom are also of two kinds. The first rest on definitions, axioms, and

\* Opp. ed. Dutens., vol. vi., p. 243, sqq.

theorems, derived from true philosophy and natural theology; the second rest in part on history and events, and in part on the interpretation of texts, on the genuineness and divinity of our sacred books, and even on ecclesiastical antiquity; in a word, on the sense of the texts." And again: \*  
"We must demonstrate rigorously the truth of natural religion, that is, the existence of a Being supremely powerful and wise, and the immortality of the soul. These two points solidly fixed, there is but one step more to take, — to show, on the one hand, that God could never have left man without a true religion, and on the other, that no known religion can compare with the Christian. The necessity of embracing it is a consequence of these two plain truths. However, that the victory may be still more complete, and the mouth of impiety be shut forever, I cannot forbear hoping, that some man, skilled in history, the tongues, and philosophy, in a word, filled with all sorts of erudition, will exhibit all the harmony and beauty of the Christian religion, and scatter forever the countless objections which may be brought against its dogmas, its books, and its history."

P.