

“The scene,” says Mr. Grote, “is one of the most dramatic and inspiring in the history of Thucydides.” The world has never ceased to admire the resolution of that silent chief, “*Saevis tranquillus in undis*,” that if the last resort failed to check the already overshadowing power of France, he would gather his comrades on their ships, and plant Holland upon some far island of the Pacific. Not unlike was the resolution of this gallant band: “If worst comes to worst, and all other hopes fail us, our fleet shall find places of refuge and a city for us.” Such courage, such devotion were not, can never be, in vain. The usurpation of the Four Hundred passed away; for the spirit of Athenian freedom was mightier than fraud or violence.

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#### ARTICLE IV.

#### THE DEATH OF CHRIST IN ITS OUTWARD APPEARANCE AND ITS HISTORICAL INFLUENCE.

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WE propose, in the following pages, first, to call attention to the contrast between the estimate formed of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth by his contemporaries and the position it has actually held in the history of mankind for the last eighteen hundred years; and secondly, to inquire into the reason of this phenomenon. Outwardly considered, few events have had less significance than the death of Jesus on Calvary; and yet his death has formed one of the principal factors in the life of humanity ever since it occurred. What is the explanation? There is not another phenomenon of human history remotely comparable to it — not even that very remarkable phenomenon, the rise and progress of Buddhism. The existence of the contrast cannot be denied save by an ignorance so dense that its opinions are worthless. It is therefore the duty of the philosophical historian to

seek to account for it. Nor, considering the important practical bearings of the question, ought any man to rest until he has found a solution. Especially ought those philosophical historians to recognize their obligation, one of whose fundamental principles is, that the course run by the human race has been the development of the highest reason, and one of whose prime axioms is: Where reason is, there must reason be found.

Attempts without number have been made to solve the problem to which we refer; and one solution has seemed to satisfy thousands and tens of thousands of the wisest and best men who have lived. Is that solution the true one? Or does the problem still await a solution?

We shall discuss the subject before us under three heads:

- I. *In what Light was the Crucifixion of Jesus regarded by most of his Contemporaries?*
- II. *What Position has his Death actually held in the Spiritual History of Humanity?*
- III. *What is the Explanation of the Contrast between the two?*

Let us then consider,

I. The Light in which the Crucifixion of Jesus was regarded by most of his Contemporaries.

1. *How it appeared to the Romans and Greeks.*

Those who were immediately concerned with the crucifixion of Jesus evidently regarded it as in itself an event of slight consequence.

Pilate, for example, by the very readiness which he evinced to let Jesus go, showed that he attached little importance to his life; and if his life were of small consequence, of how much less his death! He, for his part, found no fault in him; he felt that to execute him would be needless cruelty. He saw clearly that the objections brought against him, so far as they came under his cognizance, were false, and that his accusers were stirred by envy; and yet he delivered Jesus to be crucified! The fact was, he had an opportunity

of meeting the wishes of the Jewish people and thus securing a little popularity without risk and at little cost, and therefore let them have their way. For a man in his position to "take water, and wash his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it,'"<sup>1</sup> was to show for his victim and everything relating to him a profound indifference, or even contempt.

The general sentiment is reflected clearly enough, also, in the conduct of the officials who had to see to the carrying out of the sentence. The simple details given by the evangelists<sup>2</sup> betray a cold-blooded cruelty and unconcern such as the slightest sense of the significance of the transaction would have rendered impossible: "They stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe; they platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. And after they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own garment on him." While he hung on the cross, they parted his garments among them, casting lots; and sitting down, watched him. It is true the bitterness and scorn felt for Christ's person by the Jews seems to have passed over to the Roman soldiers; but that the death they were bringing about with such a brutal spirit was in itself more than the death of the malefactors who shared Jesus's fate, they had not the remotest conception. To one man alone, to the centurion, does a passing glimpse seem to have been vouchsafed into the character of him who hung before his eyes on the cross; but he too did not dream that "the "Son of God," as he termed him, was, at the moment of giving up the ghost, accomplishing that reconciliation of heaven and earth which had been the object of the deepest yearnings of all the ages.

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. xxvii. 24 sq.; Mark xv. 15 sq.; Luke xxiii. 22 sq.; John xix. 6 sq.

<sup>2</sup> The momentary qualm of conscience, or perhaps superstitious fear, to which John alludes, must have disappeared again directly.

Nor did the higher Roman authorities — the authorities to whom Pilate was answerable attach any importance to the crime he committed in putting Jesus to death. For this event he was certainly never called to account. On the contrary, to judge by analogy, one may imagine that he would rather earn praise than blame for preventing a disturbance by sacrificing Jesus. So long as peace and the semblance of contentment were preserved, the life of this or that man was of little consequence.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary Roman and Greek writers, both by the way in which they mention the event and by their silence, treat the death of Jesus as a trivial occurrence.

Tacitus (A.D. 61–117) in his account of the great fire of Rome during the reign of Nero, tells us that the emperor, “in order to suppress the reports which charged him with the deed, accused other people of it, and inflicted on those who went by the name of Christians the most exquisite punishments. The originator of this name was one Christ, who was punished with death during the reign of Tiberius by Pontius Pilate the procurator.” He afterwards speaks also of Christianity as a *superstitio execrabilis*, and refers to both Christians and Jews as being in many cases taken into custody, not so much for the crime of setting fire to Rome as because they were haters of the entire human race. The death of Christ had obviously no meaning to this most philosophic historian save that of the merited end of a wretched impostor.

Suetonius (A.D. 54–110) refers in his Life of Claudius to the banishment of the Jews from Rome, assigning as the reason that they were constantly exciting uproars at the instigation of Chrestus (Christ); and in the Life of Nero informs us that the Christians — a sect given up to a new and pernicious superstition — were punished with death.

<sup>1</sup> Pilate was removed from office by Vitellius the President of Syria in consequence of the disturbances to which his violence and tyranny gave rise, and which could only be suppressed by force of arms. See Josephus, Antiquities 18, 3, 1 sq.; Jewish War 2, 9, 2 sq.

So far was the death of Jesus from being to him of any weight that he does not even seem to be aware of its having occurred prior to the great fire of Rome. He speaks as though Christ were personally the exciter of the tumults in question.

Pliny the Younger (A.D. 62-117) describes the Christians as holding a *pravam et immodicam superstitionem*, but makes no allusion to the crucifixion on Calvary.<sup>1</sup>

Lucian (A.D. 120-200) introduces into his Life of Peregrine<sup>2</sup> a reference to the worship paid by the Christians to the crucified impostor, and terms Jesus ironically, "the great man who was impaled in Palestine." But that such a death should or could have any great significance never occurs to him.

How difficult it was, and must always have been, for Greeks and Romans to attach any importance to this event, we may learn also from the mode in which their writers allude to the Christian belief on the subject. Celsus, for example, who probably lived early in the second century, bases on the death of Christ arguments against his having the elevated characteristics ascribed to him by Christian believers. The notion of their worshipping as the Son of God a man who had been so ignominiously put to death was in his eyes intensely absurd. And that his death should be for the destruction of the devil and sin he is quite unable to admit. The worshippers of the captured and dead Christ he compares to the Getae who worshipped Tmolus.<sup>3</sup> Tertullian (A.D. 160-220) says that the Pagans called Christians *crucis religiosi, crucis antistites, crucicolae*, by way of nickname.<sup>4</sup> In the dialogue of Minucius Felix, between Caecilius and Octavius, the former, the representative of heathen objections to Christianity, is introduced as speaking with abhorrence of those who worship one punished with the extreme penalty of the law for the crimes he had committed,

<sup>1</sup> See Pliny, Epist. ix., x.

<sup>2</sup> Peregrinus Proteus.

<sup>3</sup> Orig. Contra Celsum, lib. ii., iii., vi.

<sup>4</sup> Tertull. Apolog. cap. xvi.; Ad Nationes, lib. i. cap. xii.

and ridiculing the reverence of Christians for the cross.<sup>1</sup> Lactantius (A.D. 330) writes: "It is made a matter of opprobrium against us, both that we worship a man at all, and that we worship one who was tortured and put to death."<sup>2</sup> And Arnobius (A.D. 300) expresses the views and feelings of the heathen in the words, "We [the heathens] are not angry with you because you worship the omnipotent God, but because you pay daily homage to a man, whom you maintain to have been God, and who was put to death in a way that is a disgrace even to the vile."<sup>3</sup> These testimonies, selected from among many others, are surely clear proof, if proof were required, that the heathen, at all events, were as far as possible from attaching importance to the death of Christ. Nor was it possible, considering the estimate in which death by crucifixion was held, that anything but contempt should be felt for the man who underwent such a punishment. Seneca styles the cross, *infelix lignum*; Livy, *infelix arbor*; Apuleius, *crux damnata*; others, *infamis stipes*. The punishment is spoken of by Cicero as *crudelissimum deterrimumque supplicium*; by Apuleius as *extrema paena*; by Tacitus as *servile supplicium*.

## 2. How it appeared to the Jews.

The priests, scribes, and elders of the Jews, who had been the means of securing Christ's condemnation, undoubtedly regarded his death as a triumph, as the removal of a danger. No thought of its being the divinely foreknown and fore-ordained completion of their enemy's mission ever entered their minds. The advice given by Caiaphas—"It is expedient that one man should die for the people"—meant, so far as the words expressed the views of himself and companions, 'to avert the peril this man threatens to bring on us and the nation, it is better that he be put out of the way; it is better that one suffer, rather than that the many suffer.' How far any of them were from discerning the significance

<sup>1</sup> Minucius Felix. *Octavius*.

<sup>2</sup> Lactantius, lib. iv. cap. xvi.

<sup>3</sup> Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, lib. I.

of the death of Jesus is sufficiently clear from their conduct on Calvary. The chief priests, we read in Matt. xxvii., with the Scribes and elders, mocked him, saying: "He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God." The passers-by, too, "reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Even one of his fellow-sufferers "railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us" (Luke xxiii. 39). Not the vaguest idea that the Son of God could not descend from the cross—could not in their sense save himself—without failing to accomplish the work committed to him, crossed their minds. It was his *life* they feared; it was to his life they attached importance: dead, he was dead. The request of the chief priests and Pharisees, that the sepulchre might be made sure (Matt. xxvii. 64) until the third day, lest the disciples should come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead, and the last error be worse than the first, shows also that the death in itself was to them a trivial affair. These were the enemies of Jesus Christ among the Jews.

### 3. *How it appeared to his Friends and Disciples.*

But he had friends, well-wishers, and disciples; in what light did his death appear to them? As a most sad and cruel event, but certainly not as an event of the profound significance which they afterwards saw it to possess. Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, and besought him that he might take away the body of Jesus; and he took it, and laid it in a new tomb hewn out of the rock; thus paying, as he supposed, the last honors to his friend and master (Matt. xxvii. 60; John xix. 38). Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight, and wound the body

of Jesus in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews was to embalm; wishing at all events to preserve the mortal remains of his rabbi as long as possible (John xix. 39). Mary Magdalene and other women prepared spices and ointments for the same purpose, and, not finding the body of Jesus, supposed the gardener or some other person had removed it. But no one of them breathes a syllable indicating insight into the true nature of the death Jesus had endured. Nor is a different impression made upon us by the simple and touching story of the walk to Emmaus. As the disciples tell their unknown companion, in the most artless possible way, how Jesus of Nazareth had been a prophet mighty in deed and word before all the people; how they had trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; how the chief priests and rulers had delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him; and how certain of their number had astonished them all by saying that they had been early to the sepulchre where Jesus was laid, had not found his body, but had seen a vision of angels which said that he was alive; nothing can be clearer than that they had never dreamed of the crucifixion,—which robbed them of their beloved master, blasted their brightest hopes, and quenched the purest joys their lives had known,—having a profound, an universal significance.

Confirmatory evidence that these were the lights in which the death of Jesus appeared to contemporary Jews, foes and friends, and that it could not well be otherwise regarded, is supplied also by Jewish works written and opinions reported during the succeeding two or three centuries. Philo Judæus (who was born twenty years before Christ, and died about A.D. 50), the Alexandrian, never so much as mentioned the name of Jesus or any circumstance connected with his life or history; and yet he can scarcely be supposed to have remained in ignorance of what passed in Jerusalem. Josephus (A.D. 37–93) does not allude to Christ with a single syllable in his “History of the Jewish War,” although he gives a detailed account of the Procuratorship of Pontius

Pilate. In his later work, that on the Jewish Antiquities, occur two passages in which Christ is mentioned. The second one,<sup>1</sup> in giving an account of the martyrdom of James, simply says that he was the brother of Christ. The first passage<sup>2</sup> is one of great importance, if it be not a Christian interpolation. It runs as follows: "At that time lived also Jesus, a wise man, — if it be allowable to call him a man — for he was an accomplisher of wonderful works and a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure; and drew to himself many, both Jews and Greeks. This was Christ; and although Pilate punished him with the death of the cross at the complaint of our chief men, those who loved him at first did not cease: for he appeared to them on the third day again alive, the divine prophets having declared these and myriads of other wonderful things about him. To the present day the tribe of Christians, called after this same man, has not failed." Supposing Josephus himself to have written these words, which we greatly doubt, still they evince no sense of the importance of the death of Christ. The Mishna, although it introduces many Rabbis who lived at or about the time of Christ, never mentions the name of the latter or refers to any one of his sayings.<sup>3</sup> Both in the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Gemara are passages relating to Jesus.<sup>4</sup> The former adduces a tradition that "Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation for the Sabbath. Forty days long an Herald walked before him who proclaimed aloud, 'He is to be stoned because he has practised magical arts and excited

<sup>1</sup> Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 9, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 3, 3. A small library might be formed of the treatises discussing this passage. Some consider it altogether spurious; others maintain merely portions of it to be interpolations; and others believe the whole to be genuine. We, for our part, agree with the first mentioned; but this is not the place for examining the point. It has no special bearing upon our present argument.

<sup>3</sup> The Mishna was probably collected about A. D. 219; but portions of it are certainly as old as, if not older, than the Christian era.

<sup>4</sup> The Jerusalem Gemara was collected about A. D. 390; the Babylonian about 500; but both include much that is centuries older. See, for example, Tract. Sanhedrim 43, 67, Fol. 107; Sota, Fol. 47; Sabbath, Fol. 104.

and seduced the Israelites.' Whoso is able to advance anything to prove him innocent, let him come and declare it! As no evidence of his innocence could be adduced, they crucified him on the day before the Feast of Passover."<sup>1</sup> The other passages either do not allude at all to his death, or else in a manner even more superficial than in the one just quoted.<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho,<sup>3</sup> represents the Jew as objecting: "Be assured that all our nation waits for Christ; and we admit that all the scriptures which you have quoted refer to him. Moreover, I do also admit that the name of Jesus, by which the Son of Nave (Nun) was called, has inclined me very strongly to adopt this view. But whether Christ should be so shamefully crucified, this we are in doubt about. For whosoever is crucified is said in the law to be accursed; so that I am exceedingly incredulous on this point. It is quite clear, indeed, that the scriptures announce that Christ had to suffer; but we wish to learn if you can prove it to us whether it was by the suffering cursed in the law. Prove to us whether he must be crucified and die so disgracefully and so dishonorably by the death cursed in the law. For we cannot bring ourselves even to think of this." There is every reason for assuming that Trypho's words express the feelings most natural to, and most widely cherished by, the Jews.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tract. Sanhedrim, Fol. 43.

<sup>2</sup> We quote these authorities because there is little doubt but that they contain much precipitated Jewish sentiment of far earlier date, which, considering the conservative tendency of the nation, need not occasion surprise.

<sup>3</sup> Dial. cum Tryph. c. 89, 90. We quote the translation published by Clark of Edinburgh.

<sup>4</sup> We might have quoted also the Toldoth Jeshu, or Jewish "History of Jesus"; for, although first brought to light in the thirteenth century, it contains fragments of a tradition which was probably current among the Jews at the time of Justin Martyr, and parts of which we find in Origen's work against Celsus. As some of our readers may not be acquainted with the Toldoth, we will add a word or two about its character and contents. There exist two versions of the book; but who were their writers is totally unknown. Both of them contain the most extravagant stories and frightful blasphemies. According to the version first published by Huldreich in Leyden in 1705, under the title, "Historia Jeschuae Nazareni a Judaeis blasphemae corrupta," Jesus was

If there is one thing clearer than another in connection with the history of Christianity, whether viewed with the eye of hostile criticism or of loving belief, it is that neither its friends nor its foes originally saw any special significance in the death of Jesus, the founder. His death, as such, was no more than the death of his companions in tribulation. We might even question whether his friends deemed him a martyr to the truth.

II. We come now to the second part of our task, which is briefly to review the position held by the death of Christ in the spiritual history of humanity.

### 1. *The View taken by the Personal Disciples of Jesus.*

Scarcely had three months elapsed when we find the men whom Jesus had appointed apostles and who had followed him as disciples — men almost exclusively drawn from the uncultivated classes; who, though their souls had been touched by the spiritual power, life, and light of the master, had probably been mainly spurred on by dreams of realizing

a son of adultery — the son of Miriam a Frisense, wife of Papus, by Joseph Pandira of Nazareth. Jesus, when he was grown up and heard that he was an illegitimate child, is said to have crushed his mother's breasts between the door and the door-post, and to have killed his father. As a sample of the stories it contains, we may quote the following: "One day Jesus asked a shepherd the way. Too lazy to get up, the man simply pointed with his foot in the direction which Jesus and his disciples ought to take. Shortly after, they meet a shepherdess; and she, being asked the way, accompanied them till they came to a stone that served as a sign-post. Jesus blessed the girl, and wished that she might become the wife of the shepherd. Peter asked: 'Why didst thou bless the shepherd, by wishing that this woman might become his wife?' Jesus answered: 'Because he is idle, and she, being active, will be able to keep her husband, who would otherwise fare ill; for I am a compassionate God, and appoint marriages according to the works of men. David prophesied of me in Psalm cii. 24, 'He weakened my strength in the way.'" One of his miracles was rowing about on the sea seated on a millstone; a power which he had in consequence of uttering the name of God, to which the Jews ascribe a magical force.

Further details may be found in Eisenmenger's "Entdeckte Judenthum," in Origen's work against Celsus, and in a little book entitled "Die Urtheile herdrischer und jüdischer Schriftsteller über Jesus und die ersten Christen," to which we are indebted for several references, though we have used them for a purpose directly opposed to that of the anonymous author.

their country's hopes and thus promoting their own temporal interests; who had hoped against hope, notwithstanding the strange and to them foolish ideas and words of Jesus, as long as he lived; but who were scattered like sheep without a shepherd by his death; — these men we find giving utterance to conceptions totally opposed to all that we know of them before. We find them proclaiming publicly that the Jesus who had been ignominiously nailed to the cross was a man approved of God, though according to the law every crucified man was accursed; that God had showed before\* by the mouth of all his prophets that he, the Christ, should suffer (Acts iii. 18); that he was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (Acts ii. 23), being the Prince of Life (Acts iii. 15); that there is no salvation in any other, none other name being given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved (Acts iv. 13). Nor can there be any reasonable doubt that the teachings of the apostles regarding the crucifixion very soon acquired the clearness and definiteness which we find in the Epistles of Peter and of John; where the former speaks of the blood of Jesus Christ as the blood of sprinkling (1 Pet. i. 2); of our being redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, from our vain conversation (1 Pet. i. 18, 19); of his suffering for us and bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, healing us by his stripes (1 Pet. ii. 21–24); of his having once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God (1 Pet. iii. 18): while the latter, the beloved disciple, tells us that he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John ii. 2); that he laid down his life for us (1 John iii. 16).<sup>1</sup> Now even supposing that the Tübingen view of

<sup>1</sup> It seems to us that neither scripture nor the psychological constitution of man warrant us in supposing that the first teachings of the disciples were as clear as their later ones. The later were not opposed to, but they certainly were a development of, the earlier. And it strikes us that a most powerful argument for the genuineness of the Acts of the Apostles might be drawn from a comparison of its doctrinal teachings with those especially of the first Epistle

the Epistles of John and Peter as the products of a later age, and the reflections of a later phase of thought had been established, there would still be satisfactory reasons for assuming that the conception of the death of Jesus just quoted was the one germinantly, if not substantially, held at the early date to which we are alluding. Such passages as Acts ii. 28, "delivered by the determinate counsel of God"; or Acts iii. 18, "those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled"; or Acts iii. 26, "God sent him to bless you in turning every one of you from his iniquities"; or lastly, Acts ii. 38, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins," are the vague expression of a state of feeling which must recognize in the statements of the Epistles the distinct expression of its real essence.

This is the first problem presented by the history of Christianity: How came these disciples to entertain such views of the death which had been the death-knell of their hopes and joys?

2. Not only did these uneducated, dispirited men proclaim a conception of the ignominious event to which no one had at first dreamed of attaching any special significance, that ran counter to all their own and their countrymen's prejudices; but, what is even more surprising, actually persuaded a considerable number of their antagonists to accept the same view. The very men who had made a mock of the apostles, became pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest, "men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts iii. 37); and formed themselves into a community which recognized Jesus as the corner-stone, in whose name alone there is salvation (Acts iv. 11, 12) and as the "Saviour who giveth repentance to Israel and the remission of sins" (Acts v. 31); — in a word, whose constitutive principle and bond of union

of Peter — a comparison showing how Peter's mind grew to fuller clearness, and how what he is reported to have preached at first was just such a basis of what he wrote later as the nature of the human mind and the circumstances of the case would have led us to expect.

was belief in the death of the Nazarene as a death for human sin. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that three thousand souls were added in one day; but even if this were an exaggeration — which there is no reason whatever for believing it to be — one thing is clear: the newly-formed community was sufficiently large and important to excite a severe persecution. No critic has called in question the reality of the persecution spoken of in Acts viii. 1; and one can scarcely imagine that the Jewish leaders were foolish enough to stir up a persecution merely because a handful of poor men was preaching a view of Christ's death which to the natural mind must always appear absurd.

This is a second problem: how came Jews, either inhabitants of, or sojourners in Jerusalem, or both, who probably knew all about the condemnation of Jesus, and had possibly witnessed and mocked at his crucifixion, to consent to do after his burial what they refused to do before; namely, take upon them the reproach of his name and expose themselves to rejection, expatriation, imprisonment, and death on his account?

3. Within three years of the death of Jesus, we see the principal and most zealous agent in the persecution to which we have referred, suddenly allying himself, body, soul, and spirit, with the community against which he had "breathed out threatenings and slaughter" (Acts ix. 1). Saul of Tarsus, who said of himself at Jerusalem before his countrymen (Acts xxii. 3), "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and zealous toward God, as ye are this day"; who afterwards, in perfect harmony herewith, wrote to the Galatians (Gal. i. 14): "I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers"; who after his conversion loved his countrymen so passionately that he could use the strong words: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy

Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom ix. 1-3); who had probably known Jesus, and if he were not present at, was fully aware of the fact and circumstances of, his crucifixion, and who had "verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 9);—this same Saul burst all the ties of blood, custom, country, belief, religion, and adopted, and began to preach with most fiery energy, such ideas as that "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20); "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 13); "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us . . . . being justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 8, 9). And so possessed was he by the unfathomable significance of that apparently most unimportant event, that in his Epistle to the Galatians he gave vent to his feelings in the almost extatic words: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).<sup>1</sup>

This is the third problem which calls for solution: How a man of Paul's training, ability, intelligence, sincere attachment to the faith of the fathers, and burning contempt for the new sect, should come to make that very thing his glory which was once in his eyes the uttermost ignominy?

4. During the next two hundred and fifty years we find

<sup>1</sup> We have purposely quoted solely from the four principal Epistles of Paul, — namely, those to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, — because even the wildest criticism is compelled to acknowledge their genuineness and authenticity. We shall refer further on to the explanation of Paul's conversion given by Dr. Baur of Tübingen and his school.

the view of the death of Jesus which the apostles, including Paul, had preached, further adopted and advocated by thousands and tens of thousands of men of all classes and conditions, and in all countries; and that in the face of every species of opposition and persecution that subtle cruelty could devise or strong political authorities carry out. Hundreds of communities were formed whose constitutive principle was the recognition of the death of Jesus as a propitiation for the sins of the world. If we only cast our eye superficially over the pages of the church writers of the first three centuries, we shall be surprised at the singular unanimity with which they reiterate, not slavishly, but under forms suggested by their own peculiar training and circumstances, the teachings of the first apostles on this central and vital theme. It will be of interest, however, to adduce the principal names and let them speak for themselves. Clement of Rome (about A.D. 97), a man of appreciative, if not productive mind, sound, practical judgment, and general culture, says, in his Epistle to Corinthians:<sup>1</sup> "Let us reverence Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us" (chap. xxi.); "On account of the love he bore us, Jesus Christ our Lord gave his blood for us by the will of God; his flesh for our flesh, and his soul for our souls" (chap. xlix.); "Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ and see how precious that blood is to God, which having been shed for our salvation has set the grace of repentance before the whole world" (chap. vii.). In the so-called Epistle of Barnabas<sup>2</sup> (about A.D. 107-120) we read: "the Son of God who is Lord, and who will judge the living and the dead, suffered that his stroke might give us life:— the Son of God could not have suffered except for our sakes" (chap. vii.).

<sup>1</sup> With the majority of authorities at the present day we regard the Second Epistle of Clement as spurious. But, whoever may have been its author, its teachings on this matter are identical with those of the other writings of this period.

<sup>2</sup> It is scarcely likely that this Barnabas is the Barnabas mentioned in Acts iv. 36 and elsewhere; nor would it be a gain to the church and Christianity to establish their identity.

Ignatius writing about A.D. 107 or 116,<sup>1</sup> speaks of Jesus as "giving himself an offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. i.); as being nailed to the cross for us in the flesh, and suffering all things for our sakes, that we might be saved (Smyrna, i. 2); as having died for us (Rom. vii.). Polycarp, the martyr (before A.D. 107), who, according to Irenaeus his disciple, was instructed by the apostles and brought into contact with many who had seen Christ,<sup>2</sup> uses in his Epistle to the Philippians such words as, "who for our sins suffered even unto death" (chap. i.); "who bore our sins in his own body on the tree; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, but endured all things for us that we might live in him" (chap. viii.). In the calmly philosophic but also deeply earnest Epistle to Diognetus (during the second century), whose writer is unknown, we find the following noble passage—than which a nobler is scarcely to be found in any Christian production: "He himself took on him the burden of our iniquities; he gave his own Son as a ransom for us—the Holy One for transgressors, the Blameless One for the wicked, the Righteous One for the unrighteous, the Incorruptible One for the corruptible, the Immortal One for them that are mortal. For what other thing was capable of covering our sins than his righteousness? By what other one was it possible that we, the wicked and ungodly, could be justified, than by the one only Son of God? Oh sweet exchange! Oh unsearchable operation! Oh benefit surpassing all expectation! That the wickedness of many should be hid in a single righteous One, and that the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors!" (chap. ix.). Justin Martyr, a Samaritan by birth, trained in the schools of philosophy, but afterwards converted to Christianity, and put to death in Rome about A.D. 161–168,<sup>3</sup> expresses himself as follows:

<sup>1</sup> We have quoted passages only which are found both in the short and the long version of the Epistles of Ignatius.

<sup>2</sup> The Epistle of Polycarp, with the exception perhaps of Chapter xiii., is now generally allowed to be genuine.

<sup>3</sup> Three works alone attributed to Justin Martyr are probably genuine,—the two Apologies—one addressed to Antoninus Pius about 138, the second to Marcus Aurelius soon after A.D. 161—and the *Dialogus cum Tryphone*.

“It is he who bears our sins and is afflicted for us; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of peace was upon him, by his stripes we are healed” — quoting the words of Isaiah the prophet;<sup>1</sup> “He became man for our sakes, that becoming a partaker of our sufferings he might also bring us healing”;<sup>2</sup> “The Father of all wished his Christ for the whole human family to take upon him the curses of all”;<sup>3</sup> “the lamb which was commanded to be wholly roasted was a symbol of the suffering of the cross which Christ would undergo”;<sup>4</sup> “Christ served (as Jacob did Laban) even to the slavery of the cross for the various and many-formed races of mankind, acquiring them by the blood and mystery of the cross.”<sup>5</sup> Irenaeus,<sup>6</sup> the greatest teacher of the church before Clemens Alexandrinus, the first who combined philosophical insight, breadth of mind, and liberality of spirit with due regard to the history and earnest belief in the truths of Christianity, speaks of Christ being made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that he might do away with the disobedience of man”; of his destroying death, doing away with error, exterminating corruption, dissipating ignorance, leading captivity captive, and vanquishing the devil by his death; of his redeeming us rationally by his own blood, giving himself a ransom for those who had been led into captivity, giving up his soul for our souls, and his flesh for our flesh.<sup>7</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus (died A.D. 220), one of the most genial, learned, and cultivated of the early Fathers of the church, a man who had drunk at the purest, nay, perhaps at all, the fountains of heathen wisdom, but had been unable to quench his soul’s thirst save in the scriptures; who refers also to the “foolishness of the cross,”<sup>8</sup> says that Christ was immolated a sacrifice

<sup>1</sup> Apol. i. 50.<sup>2</sup> Apol. ii. 13.<sup>3</sup> Dial. c. Tryph. c. 95.<sup>4</sup> Dial. c. 40.<sup>5</sup> Dial. c. 134.<sup>6</sup> Irenaeus was Bishop of Vienne and Lyons from A.D. 177 to 202. The only work of his extant is the “Adversus Hereses” in five books.<sup>7</sup> See lib. v. 16, 1, 2; ii. 20, 3; v. 1. Irenaeus was the first to attempt to theorize about the death of Christ.<sup>8</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromata, c. 18.

for us, being typified by Isaac;<sup>1</sup> that we are redeemed by his blood;<sup>2</sup> that he gave his life a ransom for many;<sup>3</sup> that as a good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep, so he gave himself a sacrifice for us;<sup>4</sup> that we are healed by his stripes.<sup>5</sup> Tertullian (A.D. 160–220) the fiery African rhetorician, the Tacitus of the young Christian church, represents Christ as expiating the sins of men by every kind of satisfaction.<sup>6</sup> He says, it behoved him to become a sacrifice for all nations;<sup>7</sup> Christ our passover is sacrificed;<sup>8</sup> who can free another from death by dying himself, save the Son of God, — he, being himself free from fault, underwent all suffering for the sake of sinners;<sup>9</sup> Christ redeemed man by his blood; he was delivered unto death, even the death of the cross, that he might free us from our sins.<sup>10</sup> Origen (A.D. 185–254), the founder of philosophical theology, and the learned commentator and critic, the chief originator of the celebrated Alexandrian school, discusses the death of Christ in numerous passages, and represents it under the most varied forms, all, however, in harmony with the view we have hitherto described. Our Lord and Saviour, being led as a lamb to the slaughter and offered as a sacrifice on the altar, obtained remission of sins for the whole world;<sup>11</sup> he made propitiation by the shedding of his own blood;<sup>12</sup> we are cleansed by the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless victim;<sup>13</sup> God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son for the life of the world.<sup>14</sup> Cyprian, bishop of Carthage from A.D. 248–258, a celebrated rhetorician and pleader till his conversion, and to the end a man of insight, experience, and earnestness, speaks of Christ undergoing death on the cross, redeeming believers with the price of his own blood, and reconciling man to the Father;<sup>15</sup> of his being wounded that he might heal our wounds; of his

<sup>1</sup> Paedagogus, lib. i. c. 5.<sup>2</sup> Paed. lib. i. c. 6.<sup>3</sup> Paed. lib. i. c. 9.<sup>4</sup> Paed. lib. i. c. 11.<sup>5</sup> Stromata, 2. p. 388.<sup>6</sup> De Cultu Foem. i. 1.<sup>7</sup> Adv. Jud. 13.<sup>8</sup> Cont. Marcionem, 4, 7. <sup>9</sup> De Pudicit. 22.<sup>10</sup> De Fuga 12.<sup>11</sup> Origen. In num. hom. 24, 1.<sup>12</sup> Comm. in Ep. ad Rom. 3, 8.<sup>13</sup> In Levit. hom. 3, 8.<sup>14</sup> In num. hom. 24, 2.<sup>15</sup> Cyprian, Ad Demetrium, p. 196.

being made subject to bondage that he might bring those who were bound to liberty; of his enduring death that mortals might have immortality;<sup>1</sup> of his offering himself up a sacrifice to the Father;<sup>2</sup> of our being redeemed and quickened by his blood.<sup>3</sup>

These, and many others who speak in the same tone, and express the same view of the death of Jesus on Calvary, spoke not merely for themselves but for myriads of Christians scattered through Arabia, Parthia, Persia, India, Italy and Rome, Africa and Carthage, Asia Minor, Gaul, Armenia, Germany, Britain, Spain, and many other countries. On this point there was perhaps more agreement than any other. From all parts of the then known world the eyes of sin-sick men were directed to the dying Nazarene uplifted on Calvary, and the sight brought comfort to their guilty hearts, light to their understanding, strength to their will, and purity to their entire being. This is the fourth problem.

5. About the year 305, the Emperor Diocletian, instigated by his vicious colleague Galerius, inaugurated a last, cruel persecution of the Christians, designed to exterminate the *religio crucis* and to rehabilitate Paganism. But neither the one nor the other end was gained. The immediate successors of the retired Diocletian, namely Galerius, Maximian, and Constantius Chlorus, were soon superseded by Licinius in the East and Constantine in the West. In 313 both emperors issued edicts of toleration, in virtue of which the *crucicolae*, the cross-worshippers, were recognized as a religious party, having equal rights with all others. As emperor of the West until A.D. 323 Constantine treated the Christian church ever with more and more favor, conferring upon it privileges, wealth, security; and when he became sole possessor of the

<sup>1</sup> De opere et elemos.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Epist. 63. We need scarcely remark that we have no intention of giving anything like an exhaustive view of the teachings of the church during the period in question. See Baur's "Geschichte der Lehre von der Versöhnung Christi."

empire, he openly avowed his wish and design to constitute Christianity the one undivided religion of the state. And this purpose he executed. Henceforth we find the cross, which three hundred years before had been spoken of, especially in connection with the low-born Nazarene, by the high in station, the refined in taste, the lofty in genius, the profound in thought, the philosophic in insight, the learned in knowledge, the devout in religion, as *crux damnata*, *infelix lignum*, *infamis stipes*, occupying the highest place of honor that the universal Roman empire could assign it: it was stamped on the coinage, it formed an integral part of the *labarum* or imperial standard borne before the emperors, and it raised its head on the temples and other buildings recognized by the authorities. Surely a marvellous revolution! And what a powerful commentary on the paradoxical but profound words used by the apostle Paul relatively to Jesus the Crucified One in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and *base things of the world and things which are despised*, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are."

Whatever view we may take of the motives that animated Constantine, and whether we may regard the event as beneficial or harmful to the church and Christianity, it cannot be denied to be one of the most striking phenomena presented by the history of the world! It is a fifth problem arising out of the course run by the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth.

6. The death of Christ constitutes from this time onwards one of the most important factors in the life of civilized humanity. Its history is, to no small extent, the history of what is profoundest in human thought, what is purest in human feeling, what is noblest in human endeavor, what is loftiest in human self-sacrifice, nay more, we might add, of what is best in human life—whether in the family, the society, or the state.

Paganism made a last attempt in the person of Julian the apostate to recover the position from which it was rapidly being driven by the *religio crucis*. If ever there were a man fitted for extirpating a hollow belief, it was Julian—a valiant soldier, a man of philosophic culture, a comparatively pure and generous character, an intense lover of his country, and a thorough devotee of the ancient superstition. All that man could do, and that man an emperor, with every conceivable human means at command for realizing his aim, was done. He ridiculed, reviled, controverted, and discouraged the Christians in every possible way, without positively persecuting them; he extolled, praised, defended, encouraged the old idolatry and its priests in every possible way, by example, precept, and favor; but all was in vain; and when he died (A.D. 363) he is said to have exclaimed: "Nazarene, thou hast conquered." Whether these were his words or not, they undoubtedly express the fact. What his predecessors had failed to accomplish by brute force, seconded by the blind hatred of the mob, the fanatic hostility of the superstitious, the scorn of the refined, the satire of the poets, the misrepresentations of the historian, and the subtle refutations of the philosophers when the Christians were as yet a very feeble fold, Julian also failed to accomplish. The cross has pursued an almost unhindered course of conquest down to the present day; and we should but express the thorough conviction of myriads of souls were we to describe it as "the salt of the earth and the light of the world." But we must as heretofore limit ourselves strictly to bare facts,—facts which all acknowledge to be such, whatever opinion may be entertained as to their rationality or worth.

a. No inconsiderable portion of human thought has been devoted to this event, from the days of Anselm, who first opened up the ethical problems it involves, down to Hegel and Baur, who after their manner also constituted it one of the main pillars of their speculative historical edifice. To enumerate the writers who have made it the subject of some of their profoundest inquiries would be to tell the roll of the

greatest thinkers of their respective ages ; and these all, with rare exceptions, have recognized the fact that the cross is the salvation of humanity, even when they were either unable to explain how, or fell on explanations logically incompatible with the fact. Prior to Anselm we find it discussed most zealously by Augustine, whose influence on Christian literature is traceable even to the present hour ; by Leo, justly designated the Great, a churchman of most vigorous grasp of mind and will ; by Gregory of Nyssa, noted for philosophical subtilty ; by John of Damascus, the comprehensive summarizer of the results of theological thought up to his time ; by Basil, great in his zeal alike for science, monkery, and the church ; by Gregory Nazianzen, theologian and orator ; by Athanasius, mighty in faith, in word, in deed, and in suffering ; by Theodoret the learned ; by Hilary, the Athanasius of the West ; and by Scotus Erigena, one of the profoundest thinkers of the Christian era.

After Anselm had given a new direction to inquiry by his immortal treatise "Cur Deus Homo," we find the subject taken up in all earnestness by Abaelard, once the most popular teacher of philosophy and theology in Paris ; by Bernhard, saint and hero ; by Hugo St. Victor, scholastic and mystic ; by Peter Lombard, the learned master of sentences ; by Bonaventura, the seraphic doctor ; by Thomas Aquinas, the Doctor Angelicus, who aimed at combining Aristotle, Plato, and Augustine in one comprehensive system ; by Duns Scotus, Doctor Subtilis ; by Wyclif, the morning star of the Reformation ; by Wessel, the reformer before the Reformation ; by Luther the Reformer ; and by a host of thinkers of all classes, and in all the countries of the civilized world, since his day down to the present moment. And never did the crucifixion on Calvary under Pontius Pilate attract more thought and speculation than it does at this present moment. So much for its position in the history of human thought. A thousand times tabooed as a problem beneath the notice of philosophic minds, and a thousand times imperiously claiming the most concentrated attention of the simplest and the profoundest !

b. But, besides engaging the intelligence of man, it has also awakened in him feelings, stirred him to efforts, and manned him to self-sacrifice as pure, as high, as lofty — we should be justified in saying immeasurably purer, higher, and loftier — as any recorded on the whole page of human history. What was it that led to the establishment of the hundreds of monasteries, convents, and similar institutions, which, whatever they may have been in the days of their degeneracy, were founded by men of the purest zeal for their own and others' welfare, and were for generations a source of refining, elevating, and civilizing influences to the districts around them? It was the cross. What was it that drove hundreds of the best men of their respective generations from their native lands to traverse pathless wilds, and seek out unknown and barbarous tribes for the purpose of saving them from temporal and eternal ruin? It was the cross in their hearts, whose image they often bore in their hands. What gave the signal for the movement of those immense masses of men of all classes and ages from all parts of Europe on Jerusalem during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries — to the crusades, which, however else we may judge of them, must be confessed to have been rooted in an enthusiasm such as the world had never before witnessed? It was the cross. What was it that inspired Italian art, at the noblest period of its existence, with its grandest thoughts and colors and forms? Was it not the cross? In whose honor were raised the finest monuments of the most spiritual style of architecture that human genius has conceived? Surely the cross, which they exhibit in their form — the cross, that towers aloft on their summits! Under what sign arose and labored the numerous orders and associations of the Middle Ages — cleric and laic, civil and military — for the defence of the church and for the care of the sick and needy? Under the sign of the cross. Why was it that the Romish church gradually lost so much of its quickening and purifying influence on the world, and became at its very centre a mass of festering corruption?

Because it had dimmed the brightness of the cross, substituting other sacrifices for the one sacrifice offered by the Nazarene. What was it that gave light and life to Luther's soul, and lent his voice an almost magical influence on the hungry and thirsting peoples of Europe? It was the message of the cross. To what do the tens of thousands of churches whose spires adorn the landscapes of Europe and America and other parts of the world owe their existence? To the cross. To what purpose are devoted the vast majority of the benevolent associations which exist all over the civilized world? To the preaching of the cross. Whatever may be said to the contrary, and however many defects and weaknesses may be pointed out in its bearers, can it be denied that the message of the cross is at the present moment as powerful and stirring as ever?

Throughout Christendom, notwithstanding that many maintain it to be surfeited of the cross, wherever that cross is held up distinctly, simply, faithfully, it never fails to speak to the human conscience, heart, and will with a power which, unexplained as it may be, is none the less indubitably great. And the victories it gained over the heathenism of Greece and Rome and Egypt and Carthage during the early years of its proclamation it is still gaining, and likely to gain, in India, China, Africa, and Polynesia.

Here we have a sixth problem, or rather a series of problems, which awaits the solution of the philosophical historian.

Such, then, is a brief and very imperfect view of the position occupied by the death of Jesus in the history of humanity during the last eighteen hundred years. It has been believed in by millions as the propitiation for the sins of the world, and as such has stimulated thought, awakened hope and love, strengthened volition, and restored life to an extent unparalleled within the known existence of humanity.

III. We have now to inquire: What is the reason that the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, which, as we have shown, no one regarded as an event of special significance when it

took place, came to be believed in—first by the disciples, then by natives of Jerusalem, then by Paul, and afterwards by millions throughout the length and breadth of the world—as a sacrifice for sin; and as such to take so strong a hold as it undeniably has done on the human intelligence, the human heart, the human will, the human conscience, in a word, on human life? Or, to put the matter in another form, what conclusion are we justified in drawing from the contrast between the supposed and apparent insignificance of the event and the marvelous influence it has had on the course of human history?

Throughout all the centuries of the church's existence attempts have been made to explain the phenomenon under consideration in a way different from that adopted by Christian believers and apologists; but the only success achieved has been to saddle mankind with a degree of folly and hallucination such as to render all inquiry alike futile and absurd. To review these attempts would be a labor as tedious as unprofitable. Whatever form the explanations may have taken, they have all issued in the one or the other of the following alternatives: those who first taught that Christ's death was a sacrifice for sin—whether they were the original disciples, or Paul, or later writers—must either have been laboring under an hallucination, or have wilfully propagated what they knew to be erroneous; and their successors, whether in the belief or in the propagation of the belief, must either have deceived themselves or been deceived, or been deceivers and deceived together. By way of at once confirming what we have just remarked and furnishing a sample of the kind of shifts to which eminent men have resorted, we will here notice the account given by Dr. Baur of Tübingen, of the way in which first, the immediate disciples, and then Paul, arrived at their belief. With regard to the former he says:<sup>1</sup> "As long as Jesus lived there was still a possibility of the Jewish people recognizing him as the Messiah, notwithstand-

<sup>1</sup> We quote from Dr. Baur's "Kerchengeschichte der drei ersten Jahrhunderte," pp. 39 sq. and 45 sq.

ing the antagonism between his idea of the promised deliverer and theirs. But after enduring the death of the cross it was totally impossible for a Jew, so long as he remained a Jew, to recognize him as the Messiah. Whoso believed in him as the Messiah after such a death must have cast aside all the carnal elements of the ordinary Jewish expectations. In fact, what could a dead Messiah possibly be to a Jew? Either, therefore, the faith on him must be extinguished by his death, or, if it were firm and strong enough, it must break the bounds of death, and pierce through from death to life.<sup>1</sup> Nothing but the miracle of the resurrection could have scattered the doubts which seemed necessarily to involve the extinction of faith. What the resurrection was in itself is not a subject for historical inquiry. It is sufficient for the historian to know that the disciples believed it to be a fact. The fact of the resurrection is not necessary to the explanation of what follows, but only the belief of the disciples in the fact." Dr. Baur elsewhere denies that the resurrection was or could have been a fact. Expressed in plain English Baur's view is just this; the hallucination into which the disciples fell as to the significance of Christ's death, was a consequence of the hallucination under which they labored that he had risen again.<sup>2</sup>

Let us now hear what he has to say about Paul. After affirming that the *miracle* (Wunder) of Paul's conversion was nothing but an inner spiritual process, though Paul himself labored under the hallucination of having actually seen Jesus, he goes on to say: "The very thing which rendered it impossible for a Jew to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, to wit, his death on the cross, was converted by Paul's deeper thinking mind into its very opposite; the thought dawned upon him that that which is most opposed to the carnal

<sup>1</sup> We think it proper to assure our readers that we are not caricaturing, but quoting.

<sup>2</sup> It would lead us aside from our present purpose to attempt to point out the absurdities contained in this pre-eminently philosophical and rational account of the rise of Christianity, as it claims to be.

mind of man may be the profoundest truth; that the very death which is apparently the strongest argument against the Messiahship of Christ, may have been a part of his mission, and, as ordained by God, have a special religious significance."<sup>1</sup> How Paul's mind came to perform so extraordinary a summersault Dr. Baur does not at all explain. The sentences immediately preceding what we have just quoted indicate so extraordinary a power of performing logical and psychological summersaults on the part of Dr. Baur himself, that we cannot help further referring to them. "No analysis, whether psychological or dialectical, is capable of clearing up the mysterious act by which God revealed his Son in him. Still we are justified in asking whether his conversion was not brought about by the mighty impression which the great fact of the death of Jesus all at once made on his soul. From the moment when the Son of God was revealed in him he lived in the contemplation of the Crucified One; he knew of no other; he was crucified with him; and his entire system of thought hung on this one fact. The death which was to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, was to him the sum and substance of salvation." Unpleasant as it is to us to refer to a man of Dr. Baur's eminence in such terms, we must say the above passage is as conspicuous an instance of perversity as can be found in any work that has ever come into our hands.

1. He speaks of God revealing his Son: a "God" who, according to Baur, is not a God in any sense warranting his being represented as revealing; and a "Son" who in no sense whatever suitable to the connection, deserves the name.
2. What he immediately before describes as purely a process of Paul's own mind, he here describes as a revealing act of God.
3. The death of Jesus, that is, the very event, which we have every psychological reason for believing to have been one of the chief grounds of his righteous scorn and wrath at those who trusted in him as the Messiah, became the principal link in his conversion.

<sup>1</sup> See also Baur's "Neutestamentliche Theologie," p. 150.

This is one of the latest and confessedly ablest attempts to account for the rise of the idea that Christ's death was a sacrifice in a way different from that recognized by the church; and with what result? Surely, to add hallucination to hallucination, improbability to improbability. In point of fact, as we have already remarked, every explanation save one issues in the imputation of either hallucination or imposture, of self-deception or the wilful deception of others. Either it was the fact, or not the fact, that Christ died a propitiation for sins. If it were not the fact, the propagators of the idea must either have persuaded themselves of its truth, or have propagated it knowing it to be an untruth, or have been misunderstood by those to whom they spake. Let us look for a moment at each of these alternatives. Were the first propagators self-deceived? No one of the first preachers of Christ did so much to persuade men that he died for sin as Paul. He himself lays special stress on his not having received his gospel of man, and pronounces accursed all who should preach any other gospel than that which he had preached (Gal. i. 8, 12). Is it possible to suppose, then, that he was self-deceived? One of the subtlest attempts to show how he might have arrived at the conviction he entertained although it was groundless, is the one made by Dr. Baur; and what perversities it is chargeable with we have seen above. Eccentric as the human mind sometimes is, and capable as it is of cherishing strange delusions, an eccentricity and a delusion like this of the disciples of Christ has never been witnessed — apart altogether from the improbability that their very enemies, who were as well acquainted with what had occurred as themselves, should be also persuaded to accept the delusion. Nor have we another example in the entire religious history of the world of such a significance being attached to the death of a mere man, either by his own friends or by later generations — not even among heathens, how much less among Jews! As to the second alternative, that the first followers of Jesus wilfully propagated what they knew to be untrue, such a thing lay, of

course, within the range of possibility. Abstractly considered, we allow they might have combined for this purpose. But it would have been a folly of unparalleled senselessness and purposelessness. They had all to lose, and plainly nothing whatever to gain, by adopting such a course. And surely we can scarcely suppose that the enemies of their Master and of themselves would be persuaded to accept the lie that was offered to them, and risk for its sake the loss of all things. The third alternative, that the first preachers of Christ were misunderstood, seems more plausible; but, often as it has been advanced, it is hollow to the core. We are told that, as Orientals, and particularly as Jews, they may have used much stronger language than Occidentals are in the habit of using; and that, accordingly, they may merely have intended to represent Jesus as dying a sacrifice for us in essentially the same sense as that in which all sufferers for the truth, for right, and for love are sacrifices both for men and for sin. Or they may have regarded him as the head, and the Jewish people—nay, the whole world—as his veritable members; both form a solidaric unity;<sup>1</sup> and in this sense

<sup>1</sup> One of the youngest and ablest members of the Tübingen school, Dr. Th. Keim, Professor of Theology at the University of Zürich, expresses himself in his "Der Geschichtliche Christus," as follows: "Strongly as many object at the present day to recognize in Christ our substitute both in obedience to the law and in the payment of our debts, and much as they try to loosen the connection between what he did and what humanity has gained, faith demands and facts recommend its recognition; although not in the coarse sense in which the Middle Ages understood his substitution. Faith is not quieted before God by an ideal in the soul which never becomes a reality, nor by the penitence which is always imperfect, and which would not atone for the irrecoverable burdens of our life, even if it were perfect, nor by the certainty that Jesus has revealed the heart—the love, grace, and compassion—of God. In view of the holy God, faith cannot be content with what is imperfect; and the soul cannot think of God's love without also thinking of his righteousness—that righteousness which Jesus also proclaimed. It calls for facts instead of wishes, and finds them in Christ. The perfect Christ, being ours, consoles us for our imperfection. The Christ suffering innocently, being ours, calms us relatively to the divine and human remembrance of our sins and guilt. Is it a mere matter of religious fancy thus to base on persons and facts what is essentially an inner experience? Not so; for all people in all times have believed in substitution. God was gracious to Israel for the sake of the faithfulness of Abraham, Moses, and

have believed in Christ as a propitiation for the sins of the world. Apart altogether from the difficulty of explaining how they could have risen even to such a view of their master's crucifixion without some hallucination like that of the resurrection, and while we may allow that Western hearers might possibly have attached to some of their words a fuller meaning than they naturally bore, we must still ask: Did then the inhabitants of Jerusalem who believed in Jesus not understand them? Was Paul, who sets forth the view in question with greater definiteness, fulness, and variety than any other of the sacred writers, incapable of rightly apprehending what was intended? And was he never brought to correct his own language by his intercourse with Greeks and Romans to whom his preaching was foolishness? Did the converts from heathenism never make the discovery that the doctrine they had accepted was based on a misapprehension; not even those who, like Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, and others, had gone through the schools of philosophy prior to their conversion? The entire supposition is absurd.

There is but one hypothesis fitted to account satisfactorily for the phenomena we have passed in review. This hypothesis does fully and satisfactorily account for every one, whatever difficulties it may itself involve. The hypothesis in question is, that what was preached was true — that what

David. For the sake of unrighteous sufferers, but still more for the sake of righteous sufferers, are people delivered. The greatness of great men is diffused, as it were, over the entire nation. The scene of a martyrdom lightens the hearts of those who surround it, as though it were a means of purification and propitiation before God. And here is more than a great man, more than a human martyr. What history teaches is confirmed by reason. There is a veritable, vital unity, a solidaric obligation between the members of the same people, between all the members of the human race. As the vital process rises and falls, the one lives and suffers with the other; the weak lean on the strong, the strong bow down to the weak; and when the strong man dies for the weak the latter can courageously rise again. The life of Jesus is an illustration of this league between the strong and the weak." An interesting approximation to the doctrine of the atonement on the part of a man who logically ought to reject it in every form.

was proclaimed as a fact was a fact. If the death of Jesus really was the propitiation for the sins of the world, and, as implied therein, the world needed a propitiation, then nothing could be more natural than that it should produce the effects ascribed to it; nothing would have been more unnatural than for it not to stir the deepest depths of the intellect, heart, conscience, will, and whole life of mankind. And as the hypothesis fully explains the facts, so the facts require the hypothesis. Every single step in the history of the position actually occupied by the crucifixion of Jesus in the life of humanity becomes as simple and natural as possible the moment we accept the double supposition above mentioned. If either the one or the other be denied, the history of humanity, not only during, but even before, the Christian era, becomes a huge labyrinth of confusion. Under these circumstances there is only one other question that the philosophical historian, the man of science, has a right to put, — the question, namely, whether the acceptance of the hypothesis lands us in greater difficulties than its rejection? If it does, we must of course reject it. We cannot here enter on a discussion of this very important question, but must content ourselves with one remark: The difficulties which present themselves when we deny that Christ actually made propitiation for our sins are appreciable, tangible, demonstrable; the difficulties in the way of the acceptance of the fact of the propitiation are almost all *a priori*, theoretical suppositions, and of such a nature as to give the lie to other important phenomena of human history which are altogether independent of Christianity and of the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is clear enough that if the phenomena described warrant us in concluding the death of Christ to have been actually what it was believed to be, they warrant also other conclusions, or require other hypotheses, as, for example, the divine-human nature of Christ, that he rose again from the dead; that the disciples were supernaturally enlightened to see the significance of the outwardly insignificant event, and so forth.

