

Exodus xxiii., therefore, does not mention "a fixed date"; nor does Deuteronomy do so. For this reason Deuteronomy could not give a date for Passover, this feast being regarded as the beginning of the days of unleavened bread. Afterwards, however, the conflation of Passover and these days bound the official harvest feast to a fixed date, the 15th of Nisan. Passover was connected with the full moon and could not be removed.

The days of the unleavened bread were a feast in honour of Jahve, not by the unleavened bread, but by the sheaf that was offered to Jahve (Lev. xxiii. 10 sqq.). The custom of eating unleavened bread may have been much older than the Jahvistic religion. In the pre-exilic period the old customs of Passover and of the unleavened bread were sanctified by the priests of Jahve by transplanting the old rites into the sphere of the Jahvistic religion.

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THE DEPENDENCE OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY UPON NON-JEWISH RELIGIONS.

THE idea that early Christianity was in some respects influenced by extra-Jewish religions is repugnant to some even now. It is held that Christianity would be depreciated by such a contact. But evidently, this would only be the case provided that all other religions are false religions and that Christianity, therefore, if dependent on them, would to this extent be proved false too. Now, it is true that former generations sometimes regarded these other religions in this way; but the more enlightened have always observed that there were at least some glimpses of the truth beyond Christianity. The last prophet of the Old Testament proclaimed: "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same *my* name is great among

the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered unto *my* name, and a pure offering; for *my* name is great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of hosts." And Paul says of the heathen: "that which is knowable of God is known to them, for God manifested it to them; for the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity." If this is our attitude to these non-Jewish religions, then we need, of course, not hesitate to assume that they to some degree influenced Christianity; for what must be derived from them is not for this very reason necessarily false, but may be as true as if first seen or proclaimed by Christ or any of His followers.

Indeed, Israel and the Christian Church did not live on an island isolated from all other countries, but rather in the midst of other nations that controlled it. Hence the Jewish and the Christian Church could hardly help being influenced by their environment. Nevertheless, these influences were for the first time studied only by the deistic writers of the eighteenth century, from whom the rationalistic theologians as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century learned. The later theological schools took no interest in these problems. It is only in recent times that they have been examined anew. Germans, Dutchmen, Swedes, Englishmen and Americans have co-operated for this purpose, and especially in my fatherland no other problem has been so eagerly studied during these last five or six years as the dependence of early Christianity upon non-Jewish religions.

Unfortunately, however, very often a few general rules have been eliminated from the consideration. Without the observation of these no ultimate results can be attained. In the first place, we ought never to assume that Christian ideas have been borrowed from another religion until

we have done our best to explain them from Christian, or at least Jewish principles. For it is, of course, the most natural assumption that they depend upon these, and if this can be proved, then all other explanations are air-castles. But even if we do not succeed in explaining a Christian idea or institution on the basis of Christian or Jewish principles, and if, therefore, we are compelled to look for another religion whence it could have been borrowed, even then we must bear in mind three more rules before we can hope to establish our case: The non-Jewish idea or institution by which we wish to explain the Christian one must in general at least correspond to it. I say deliberately, in general at least; for it is quite possible, nay, even probable, that an idea, when transplanted from one religion into another, may undergo slight modification; but to be derived from another religion it must exist there in germ at least. Or, to be more exact—and this is the second point I should like to emphasize—it must have existed there prior to the birth of Christianity; for otherwise it could not have called forth or influenced a Christian idea. It is true, views may be much older than the sources in which we for the first time meet them; but before making such an assumption we must offer some evidence in substantiation of it. And even then we have not yet succeeded in showing a borrowing from that religion probable. We must in the last place show that that religion could indeed influence Christianity or Judaism, that these or one of them came into contact with that other religion and could borrow something from it. To be sure, sometimes we must assume such a dependence without being able to explain it. Those well-known fables on animals which we find with the Greeks even before Alexander the Great must have been absorbed from the people of India; but nobody can tell how they came to the Greeks. So sometimes we

may assume a pagan origin of a Christian idea or institution, even if we are not able to explain how it could have been produced by that non-Jewish religion ; but such an assumption may only be made if that religion contains an idea which corresponds closely to the Christian one, and if it contained this idea prior to the birth of Christianity.

Now, all this does *not* hold good with regard to two religions which are sometimes believed to have influenced early Christianity : Buddhism and Mithraism. It was the Leipzig professor of philosophy, Dr. Rud. Seydel, who for the first time tried to trace back a great portion of the narratives contained in the Gospels and in the first two chapters of Acts to Buddhist sources. He was followed by a Dutch scholar, Dr. van den Bergh van Eysinga, and now an American, Mr. A. Edmunds, of Philadelphia, who for the last ten years has published a good many articles and pamphlets on Buddhistic parallels to the Gospels, believes to have shown that John and Luke were indeed influenced by Buddhism. Also the late Professor Pfeleiderer agreed with him, and even one of our foremost Sanscrit scholars, Pischel, of Berlin, thought that in some places the gospels were indeed dependent upon Buddhism.

But such a hypothesis is *a priori* very improbable. It is true there was a lively commercial intercourse between India and the West, but that does not yet prove that religious ideas migrated from India to Syria or Asia Minor. Professor Pischel has recently shown that Turkestan was influenced by India and did influence again the West ; but that by this sideway Buddhism became known there is very improbable. Only two among all the Greek and Roman authors of the two centuries after Alexander the Great mention Buddhism, Megasthenes and Alexander Polyhistor ; and they had either themselves been in India or borrowed from authors who seem to have been there. To be sure, King Asoka, the

Constantine of Buddhism, tells us, that he sent missionaries to some Greek kings and converted them to Buddhism, but that is entirely incredible. "There is no outside evidence," says Professor Hopkins of Yale, "that such missionaries ever arrived, or, if they did, that they ever had any influence, and scholars like M. Senart . . . incline to the opinion that Açoka had simply heard of these kings through his friend Antiochus and had dispatched missionaries to them when he boasted of the conversion of the Western world, within a year after the missionaries were sent Up to the present, no trace of any early Buddhistic worship has been found in the West. The only known monument, a reputed Gnostic tomb in Syracuse, is only supposed to have been Buddhistic—two suppositions in regard to a monument of comparatively late date." But for other reasons it is as good as certain indeed that in the second century Buddhism did influence Christianity, and even prior to Alexander the Great, as we previously noticed, the fables on animals must have migrated from India to Greece ; so it is not quite impossible that even the Gospels were in some respects influenced by Buddhistic traditions—provided, of course, that these traditions were older than our Gospels. Is this really the case ?

A few of the Buddhistic writings, to which the before-mentioned scholars try to refer some narratives in the Gospels, the Mahâparinibbâna Sutta, the Mahâvagga and the Tschullavagga, are indeed older than the Gospels. The Lalita Vistara, on the other hand, is in its present form post-Christian, and "as evidence of what early Buddhism actually was and is, of about the same value as some mediaeval poem would be of the real facts of the Gospel history." Still younger is the Lotus, and the Jâtakas date from the fifth century ; only a few of them may be demonstrated to be older. But it is utterly preposterous to treat all these writings as if they were pre-Christian.

It must be added that most of the supposed Buddhistic parallels to narratives in the Gospels are no parallels at all. Of course, I can discuss here only a few of them, but I have selected those which are considered as most remarkable by the before-mentioned scholars, and could at first sight in fact appear so.

It is well known as a matter of fact that the presentation of firstborn children in the temple was not prescribed by the Jewish law. It was for this reason that Seydel and his followers tried to trace back the narrative in Luke ii. 22 ff. to the Lalita Vistara, where a visit of the Buddha-child in the temple is described. But even if the Lalita Vistara were pre-Christian, still it could not have produced the Lukan narrative. For Buddha visits the temple only to conform to the fashion of the world, and in the temple he is acknowledged as god by gods and men; all this has no parallel at all in Luke. Nor can Simeon be compared with Asita who, according to Buddhistic tradition, came to Buddha through the air, prostrated himself before him and suddenly began to lament because he would not live to see his glory. Still less remarkable are the parallels to the prophetess Anna and the concluding remark: and the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was with him, which these scholars quote. The story of the presentation in the temple is certainly independent of Buddhistic ideas.

In some other cases there is greater similarity. In the Jâtakas a pious layman, absorbed in contemplation of Buddha, is said to have walked on the river Aciravatî until he observed its waves: then his ecstasy vanished and his feet began to sink. That reminds one of the story of Peter's walking on the water (Matt. xiv. 28 ff.), but still it need not be its source. Nor must the story of the widow's mite (Mark xii. 41 ff., Luke xxi. 1 ff.) be traced back to a similar

Buddhistic story, in which a widow offers two coppers which she had found on a dung-heap and is therefore praised by the high priest. A widow is so obviously an illustration of poverty that she could be introduced in two literatures independent of each other, and even the fact that she had two coins was to express that she could have retained one.

There is no narrative in the Gospels or in Acts which must be explained by Buddhistic influences on the Christian Church or the circles in which it originated. Not even a detailed comparison of the alleged Christian and Buddhistic parallels can demonstrate what appeared *a priori* improbable to us.

The same holds good with reference to Mithraism, the other religion mentioned above. It was first declared the source of Christianity in a book which appeared at the time of the great French revolution and which was a revolutionary book indeed: Dupuis, *Origine de tous les cultes*. In our own day the late Professor Dieterich, of Heidelberg, Professors Pfeiderer and Heitmüller have tried to explain by it at least some ideas in primitive Christianity, especially the later doctrine of the Lord's Supper; but such a theory is again rather improbable even for general reasons.

It is true, Mithraism, a further development of Parseeism, of which I shall later speak—Mithraism spread into the eastern part of Asia Minor already at the time of the Achaemenian kings, but in the pre-Christian era it did not push on to the West, and even later on it never entered the Graeco-Roman world. In all the countries bordering upon the Aegean Sea, says Professor Cumont, the author of the best book on the mysteries of Mithra we possess—in all countries bordering upon the Aegean Sea but one inscription, found in the Piraeus, speaks of Mithra. It is true, there are some sanctuaries of Mithra in the harbours of Phœnicia and

Egypt, but none in the interior. Nor are there any Greek names derived from Mithra, as they were derived from Egyptian or Phrygian deities (Isidorus, Serapion, Menophilus, Metrodotus); all names based upon Mithra, as, first and foremost Mithradates, are foreign formations. The Greek and Roman authors who mention Mithra (Strabo, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, Lucian) call him a god of the Persians, and Dio Chrysostomus, who addressed some of his orations to the Tarsians, does not mention him at all. It is, therefore, very improbable that Paul, either in his native town or elsewhere, became familiar with his cult.

Nor is it necessary to explain his theology, and especially his doctrine of the Lord's Supper, by assuming such a model. To be sure, the opinion is widespread nowadays that Paul no longer regarded the Lord's Supper as a symbol of Christ's death, but as a sacrament in the later sense of the word, but I cannot convince myself that this opinion is right. At best some terms used by him (as, above all, the term: communion of the blood and the body of Christ) could have been borrowed from a theory, according to which a communion between God and man was brought about by a sacrificial meal, and in a similar way the fourth evangelist could have known of a conception of the Lord's Supper, according to which Christ's flesh and blood were tasted in the Lord's Supper; for otherwise he would perhaps not have made Jesus say: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves." But were similar opinions held by the followers of Mithra?

We possess two representations of the holy meal of the cult of Mithra, which were found in Bosnia and at Rome. In both of them two mystics are represented as reclining at table and some others as standing around them and dressed up or masked as raven, Persian, soldier and lion. Now it is true these masks of animals, and the corresponding

names of animals which were conferred on these men, originally were intended to express the opinion that the follower of a god, who in olden times was represented in the form of an animal, became identical with him. But it is quite improbable, nay, it is impossible, that this origin of the masks and names of animals was known later on. For later on, as we just noticed, to these two classes of mysts, the ravens and the lions, two others, the Persians and the soldiers, were added, who, of course, did not have the same origin, but were assumed, because Mithra was a Persian god and because he was venerated above all by the soldiers. Nay, even if the origin of the masks and names of animals were known later on, it could not have been believed that the mysts put on the god by the holy meal. Cumont even thinks it probable that only the "lions," and not the lower grades, were allowed to take part in the meal; so the "ravens" could not at all have been believed to put on the god through it. Thus the conception of the Lord's Supper presupposed by John and the more general idea of a communion with God occasioned by a holy meal, which perhaps influenced Paul's mode of expression and was shared by the Corinthians, when they were afraid to eat things sacrificed to idols—these ideas cannot be traced back to Mithraism. The view of the Corinthians was connected with their belief in demons; Paul's mode of expression came perhaps from a belief in communion with the Deity held by former generations, but the conception of the Lord's Supper presupposed in the Fourth Gospel was of Christian origin.

Let us, therefore, turn to those religions which could have influenced primitive Christianity indeed, either directly or indirectly, i.e., through the instrumentality of Israelitish and Jewish religion. The Egyptian religion could, of course, have acted upon those not only during the sojourn of the Israelitish tribes in Egypt, but also later on; but as

a matter of fact this does not seem to have been the case, at least not in any respect important for Christianity. The religion of the original inhabitants of Palestine influenced the Israelitish one after the tribes had settled in the country, but the southern kingdom, which alone was of importance for the later development of the Jewish religion, shook itself free from these elements. Assyrian and Babylonian cults penetrated into Israel from the eighth century on, and though they were opposed by the prophets and king Josiah, still they could have influenced the Israelitish religion. In the same way during the exile some worshipped Babylonian deities and others could at least have been influenced by these cults. Nor did the Babylonian religion disappear after the Babylonian empire had fallen before the Persians; even in the first century after Christ there were three schools of priests in Babylonia. Consequently, the Jews who remained in Babylonia, and through their agency the Jews in general, may have been influenced by Babylonian ideas even later on, and their views could again have penetrated into the Christian religion.

So far then the German scholars who sought for Babylonian elements in the New Testament were quite right. Professor Gunkel, then at Berlin, now at Giessen, blazed the trail in this respect by his epoch-making book, published in 1895, *Creation and Chaos*, a religio-historical investigation of Genesis i. and Revelation xii. Later on appeared another booklet of his, entitled, *Contributions to the Religio-historical Interpretation of the New Testament*, in which he tried to trace back to Babylonian influence still other passages of the New Testament, and his former colleague, Professor Zimmern, of Leipsic, edited for the third time Professor Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, taking into consideration also the New Testament. Dr. Jeremias, of Leipsic, published a treatise on Babylonian

influences in the New Testament, and finally, Professor Jensen, of Marburg, issued the first volume of a very bulky work on the influence of the Gilgamesh epic on the world's literature, in which, on the basis of this epic, he tried to explain not only a great many Old Testament narratives, but also nearly the whole tradition concerning Christ.

Now this theory is untenable because the evangelical tradition cannot be considered as a mere myth. For the same reason not even the tradition of Christ's death and resurrection at Easter can be explained in such a way. It is only at a very few points that a Babylonian influence on the New Testament may be established.

As in Judaism, so in primitive Christianity sometimes seven angels standing before God or His throne are mentioned. Also the seven spirits, which, according to the Revelation of John, Jesus has, must originally be identical with them ; and, moreover, as the seven spirits the seven lamps before God's throne and the seven eyes of the Lamb are interpreted. Now eyes of the Deity is a very obvious and therefore frequent metaphor for stars, and more easily still stars could be compared with lamps. Indeed, in other passages the Son of Man is described as having in His right hand seven stars. All this is only comprehensible if these seven stars were especially important or, to be more exact, if they were venerated in another religion and subordinated to the true God or the Messiah by putting them into His hand or regarding them as His eyes, or by placing them as lamps before God.

Now we know that later on in the Babylonian religion the so-called seven planets, i.e. the sun, the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, were worshipped in the first place. In other religions, of which we shall hear by-and-by, they were regarded as subject to the highest god, and the same idea is expressed in a more plastic way by the conceptions found in Revelation.

In what has been said is implied that the seven planets, as other stars, were considered as living, or at least animated beings. Thus it is to be explained that in Judaism they were represented as seven angels or spirits which stand before God and His throne or which the Messiah has. In other words, all these groups of seven beings mentioned in the first chapters of Revelation and discriminated between by its author (the seven angels, spirits, lamps, eyes, stars) were originally identical. The author was therefore perfectly right in interpreting the lamps and eyes as spirits; but the original sense of all these quantities was no longer known to him. He only believed that there were seven archangels, and had heard that there were seven lamps before God, seven eyes of the Lamb and seven stars in the hand of the Messiah, and interpreted these latter by the former conception.

There are two other notions in the Apocalypse of John which must be explained in a similar way. In chapter iv. we read that round about the throne of God there are four and twenty thrones, and upon the thrones four and twenty elders, arrayed in white garments, sit, and on their heads are crowns of gold. To judge from their description these elders must be angels, and being placed before God's throne just as the seven spirits previously mentioned, they may be interpreted as stars too. Indeed, we learn from Diodorus that in addition to the zodiac the Babylonians venerated twenty-four other stars, which they called rulers of the world. Perhaps even the Persians discriminated between twenty-four minor gods, but they may have been dependent upon the Babylonians. Thus it is safer to derive the twenty-four elders of Revelation from *their* religion; the rulers of the world had been subordinated to the true God similarly to the seven planets.

I mentioned a moment ago that according to Diodorus

and other older authorities the Babylonians worshipped the signs of the zodiac, though they to some extent termed them otherwise than later generations. So it is easy to be understood that already at the end of the eighteenth century Dupuis attempted to refer the four living creatures, which the seer of the Apocalypse sees in the midst of and round about the throne of God to the main signs of the Babylonian zodiac. Indeed, the lion and the calf or ox, as this creature is called by Ezekiel, who, as is well known, gives a similar description of God's throne, can very well be identified with Lion and Taurus in the zodiac, which were called by these very names by the Babylonians and are ninety degrees distant from each other. But the third creature, which is described as having a face as of a man, cannot be Aquarius, who is again ninety degrees distant from Taurus; for this sign of the zodiac was not called Aquarius by the Babylonians, but water-cask. Nevertheless they represented Scorpion, which is opposite to Taurus, as a man with a scorpion's tail. Consequently we may recognize the creature having a face as of a man in this sign of the zodiac. Finally, the fourth creature like a flying eagle is probably not to be identified with the sign of the zodiac now bearing the same name; for we do not know if it was thus called by the Babylonians, and at any rate it is not opposite to the Lion. Here we find Pegasus, the winged horse, which seems to have been known to the Babylonians too; therefore we may best refer the eagle to it. To be sure, Pegasus is not in the zodiac, but that does not matter; it is quite probable that the less conspicuous signs of the zodiac were named only later and that the corresponding parts of the ecliptic were previously designated by constellations lying north or south of it. It is true, thus far we cannot prove that these four constellations, Lion, Taurus, Scorpion and Pegasus, were especi-

ally venerated by the Babylonians ; but bearing in mind that they venerated the signs of the zodiac, and recalling that all these four constellations contain one star of the first magnitude, it seems very natural that they should have marked them out in such a way. As the seven planets and the twenty-four other stars they had been subordinated to the true God by placing them in the midst of and round about His throne. Of course the author of the Revelation of John no longer knew the origin of all these numbers ; he had only heard that there were twenty-four elders sitting round God's throne and four creatures in the midst of it.

From chapter xi. on we hear of one or two beasts or a dragon which are to appear before the end. The same expectation is found in Judaism, especially in the book of Daniel, whereas in the Old Testament a similar monster is sometimes declared to have lived in hoary antiquity. I quote only the clearest passage, Isaiah xi. 9 : "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah ; awake as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Is it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the monster ?" And this monster is to reappear before the end ; it was and is not, says the apocalypticist, and is about to come up out of the abyss.

Now it is clear that such a conception could not originate in Israel ; it is therefore quite comprehensible that a great many scholars have tried to trace it back to Babylonia. But Tiâmat, whom Marduk in the Babylonian epic of the creation is said to have conquered, is described as a woman not as a beast. Still we have a great many plastic representations of the fight of a Babylonian god with a monster, by which the monster of hoary antiquity may be understood. The Babylonians may even have expected its reappearance in future ; at any rate such a dread is

found in Parseeism and Mandaism. But it seems necessary to seek the origin of the whole conception in Babylonia.

Chapter xii. is probably reared upon a still more detailed myth. In the first place it is evident that a Christian writer like the author of Revelation could announce the birth of a man child, who was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, i.e. the Messiah, only if he made use of a Jewish tradition which referred to the birth of the Messiah, but at the same time announced some other things which a Christian writer expected too, so that he could incorporate the whole tradition into his book, though in his opinion it had already been partially fulfilled. But how could a Jewish tradition describe the birth of the Messiah in the way in which it is described here: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon, under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars shall bear him, but a great red dragon, shall try to devour him and shall afterwards persecute the woman that had given birth to the Messiah, and cast out of his mouth after her water as a river that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream? All this was only possible if this Jewish tradition made use of a pagan myth which described the birth of a god in such a way. For a pagan goddess could be represented indeed as arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. Nay, we know that Damkina, the mother of Marduk, was pictured in such a way, and remembering that, as we saw a little while ago, the dragon came from Babylonia too, it was quite natural that Gunkel should maintain that the whole myth must have had the same origin.

There were, however, still other religions upon which primitive Christianity may have been dependent. After the conquest of Babylon by the Persians their religion could have influenced the Jews in the exile, and this religion of the

Persians was no other than that which we find in the Avesta. It is true, the religion of the Avesta has been declared as post-Christian by a few scholars ; but they have not made good their case. What we read in the Gathas, the Heptanghaiti-Yasna, in some other parts of the same book, and finally in the metrical portions of the Yašts, may indeed be used for the explanation of Jewish and Christian ideas. Even the Bundehišt which in its present form was written only in the ninth century of our era is probably a translation of one of the books of the old Avesta, and may, therefore, cautiously be employed for our purpose.

The first writer to do this was the German poet Herder ; his explanation of the New Testament from a newly discovered oriental source, which appeared in 1775, referred to the Avesta. In the beginning of the last century the English poet Keats wrote to his brother and his sister : “ It is pretty generally suspected that the Christian scheme has been copied from the ancient Persian and Greek philosophers.” Ten years ago a Swedish scholar, Professor Stave of Upsala, published a book on the influence of Parseeism on Judaism, in which, in fact, he explained some New Testament ideas too. Finally, Dr. Moffatt examined the relations of Zoroastrianism and primitive Christianity in some articles published in the two first volumes of the *Hibbert Journal*, and Professor Bousset, of Göttingen, discussed the same question with regard to Judaism in the concluding chapter of his *Jewish Religion in the Time of the New Testament*.

It is above all the eschatology of Judaism and primitive Christianity which must in part be traced back to Parseeism. Even Satan, who was identified with Ahriman first by the French deists, could not be explained in such a way if his defeat at the end of all things were not expected in Judaism and primitive Christianity as well as in Parseeism. More-

over, the beast which is to reappear before the end came perhaps, as we saw a little while ago, more directly from Persia than from Babylonia ; for here we find the very same expectation. Also the son of man is probably, in the final analysis, identical with the primitive man of the Parsees, though the conception could have attained its later form, in which it influenced Judaism and Christianity, only in some other religion or philosophy.

Thus it is especially the Jewish and Christian eschatology which probably was in part absorbed from Parseeism. The expectation of the destruction of the world by fire could not have originated in Palestine, but only in a country in which there are volcanos. Persia was such a country, and here we find this expectation, together with the other one that in the end there will be no more mountains. To this expectation probably such words are to be traced back as Zechariah xiv. 20 : "all the land shall be made like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem" ; or the description of the new Jerusalem in the Revelation of John xxi. 16 : "the city lies foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth : and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs : the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal."

In the same way the destiny of the individual after death is, in some respects, conceived of by Judaism and early Christianity after the pattern of Parseeism. Here the soul was believed to leave the body only three days after death ; it was probably for this reason that not only the rabbis held the same view, but also the Gospel of John narrated that Lazarus, when he was raised by Christ, had been dead four days, i.e., not seemingly, but really dead. Moreover, the Parsees believed that after that time the soul wandered through the different heavens and could do so in ecstasy even before death. It can hardly be doubted that

Paul, when he spoke of his having been caught up to the third heaven and into Paradise, was ultimately dependent upon this Parsee conception. Perhaps also the description of Christ's exaltation, "He passed through the heavens," Hebrews iv. 14, had the same origin. Furthermore, the Parsees believed that Ahura Mazda and Anra Mainyu fought for the souls; so according to the midrash to Deuteronomy did God and Satan for the soul of Moses; and, according to the epistle of Judas, for his body. Finally, the new body which the blessed shall receive is compared to a new garment in the Avesta; the same comparison occurs in Judaic writings and in the New Testament.

It is true, some of these conceptions have also been traced back to Greek influences; but this explanation, which has recently been brought forward especially by Dieterich, is much less probable. Nor can the derivation of some other ideas from this source be established, though accepted by a great many scholars now. The conception of the virgin birth of Christ is hardly to be explained from Greek myths, but from Jewish ideas as we find them in Philo. Still more easily can the belief in Christ's descent into Hades be traced back to these: if all men go to the underworld after death, then, of course, Christ must have been there too. Perhaps His exaltation to the right hand of God or His appearance on earth after having pre-existed in heaven seemed more credible to some members of the Christian Church because they had formerly believed in apotheoses and theophanies; but the Christian doctrines themselves did not flow from these sources.

There are only a very few conceptions in primitive Christianity which must necessarily be traced back to Greek influences. Paul expected the incestuous man at Corinth to die because he had execrated him, just as by the author of Acts Peter and Paul were believed to have killed Sapphira

and blinded Barjesuan by their word. This is a view which was found in other nations too, but pre-eminently among the Greeks and Romans during the centuries preceding and following Christ's birth. Moreover, the idea of the inspiration of holy Scripture, as we meet with it in 2 Timothy iii. 16, can only be traced back to Greek philosophy, which, however, so far was perhaps dependent upon oriental religions. Finally, the belief that baptism is not a symbol, but a sacrament providing forgiveness of sin, as we find it in Acts, can also be explained only by the part played by ablutions in Greek mysteries, which, it is true, in their turn were influenced by other religions, but influenced Christianity only in their Greek form.

Now it can, of course, not be denied that these last-mentioned conceptions were very important for the later development of Christianity. But in general only more or less subordinate points may be traced back to non-Jewish influences. It was, therefore, a colossal exaggeration when Professor Gunkel asserted that Christianity was a syncretistic religion from the beginning. Its central ideas as a matter of fact were new; others were borrowed from Judaism, but only a few and mostly subordinate views were absorbed from other religions. To be sure, Christianity would not be depreciated by the proof of intimate connexions with such religions; but, in fact, such evidence cannot be offered. The Christians were indeed, what a second-century apologist called them, a new race.

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