

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

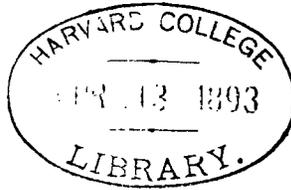
<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php



THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TESTAMENT
JUDAISM.

BY PROFESSOR GEORGE H. SCHODDE, PH. D., CAPITAL UNIVERSITY,
COLUMBUS, OHIO.

IN its way the development of the faith and religious life of Israel in the eventful centuries between the close of the Old and the beginning of the New Testament is as much an historical problem *sui generis* as are the origin, character, and growth of the Old Testament religion itself. Of all the peoples of Western Asia, only the Jews were able to resist the disintegrating process which set in with the conquest of the Orient by Alexander the Great, and to which the individuality and nationality of the others fell an easy prey. The forces that destroyed these had, among the Jews, only the effect of strengthening their consciousness of being a peculiar people, with a most important historical mission to perform. And yet the conditions seemed on the surface to be favorable for such a disintegration and dissolution in Israel also. In pre-exilic times, Israel, in itself of little or no political importance, had frequently come into contact with the Eastern nations and with Egypt in their endeavors to realize the highest ideal of ancient statescraft, namely, the establishment of a world-supremacy; and the prophets,

in their work of teaching the people to be faithful to their peculiar calling, not infrequently met with a popular opposition that was willing to admit influences from abroad endangering the individuality, and that eventually did destroy the political existence, of the people. And this was the case, although these nations that threatened Israel really employed no stronger agencies than mere physical force. When for the first time Israel in post-biblical times came in contact with the aggressive movement of the West, the danger was all the greater. In the wake of Alexander came Grecian philosophy, literature, and culture,—all subtler but more efficient agencies than mere brute force. A new civilization in the shape of Hellenism readily subdued the effete civilization of the East, and found easy victims in all except in the Jews; and yet, outwardly at least, this people seemed not prepared to resist such powerful historical forces. Politically Israel was under the rule of nations who neither appreciated nor favored its peculiarities, and at best regarded these as “superstitions,” as the well-known slurs of Horace, Juvenal, and other satirists show us. The Persian, the Greek, the Syrian, the Roman, each in his own way and manner, sought to rob this people of its existence and life. In Israel itself there was a party that favored Hellenistic innovations, and these found able leaders in the aristocratic and influential Sadducees. Even when political independence was gained for a few decades in the Maccabean revolt, the Asmonean house, with the exception of Alexandra, proved unfaithful to the principle of religious autonomy that had brought it into power. The Diaspora, or great dispersion, scattered tens of thousands of Jews among nations antagonistic to their religion, and possessing a culture which, in its outward forms and as mere “world-wisdom,” was superior to their own, and which could, and did, exert a wonderful influence on Jewish thought, as the works of Philo, Josephus, and others show. Yet, notwithstanding this combination of

hostile forces, which would have crushed out the very existence of other nations, Israel's convictions of its mission and of the importance of maintaining its national and religious individuality grew from year to year and rapidly became the mainspring of its vitality and faith.

This state of affairs proves conclusively the existence and operation of factors in the historical development of Israel which were absent in the life of other peoples. The literary remains we still possess from those inter-Testament days, the Apocrypha, Apocalypses, etc., as also the pages of the New Testament, leave no room to question that these factors were the religious convictions and ideals of the people. This religion was in kind entirely different from other religions. The new development theory of the Old Testament, which starts out, on the basis of an hypothesis taken from the science of comparative religions, by denying this generic distinction,¹ is not only a *petitio principii*, but it ignores the very feature that enables us intelligently to understand the origin and development of this religion. The consciousness of this possession on the part of the people was dimmed and even darkened at times during the Old Testament days, and it was the constant endeavor of the true prophets to recall Israel from the practice of religious syncretism, which natural depravity or political policy so often suggested. The prevailing view of the Gentile nations, as many passages of the Old Testament and other evidences tell us, was, that the gods of all the nations had an equal right of existence, and that in their own realm and nation they had divine power, but not elsewhere. The idea of one divinity as the controlling power of the whole universe and of all peoples is distinctively a revealed idea; and from the beginning of Israel's existence, and not merely since the prophets

¹ Kuenen, *De Godsdienst*, i. § *seq.*, where he defines "*Ons Standpunt*," says: "Judaism and Christianity indeed belong to the principal religions, but between them and all other religions there exists no specific difference."

of the eighth century, was it the peculiar possession of the genuine Israelites. Hence they could not acknowledge the gods of the Gentiles as legitimate coregents with Jehovah, but of a necessity must pronounce him the only true God, and all other claimants usurpers. From their own standpoint, Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, and Cyrus could consistently acknowledge the power of Jehovah; but an Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel could not have returned the compliment. Such syncretism would have been an inconsistency.

But, however strong or weak this conviction may have been in the life of the people before the exile, certain it is that, after the Return, it was the centre and pivot around which their existence and history circled. The Exile had taught them that Israel as a nation had failed to reach the goal for which it was intended, because they had failed to be true to their religion and revelation. To attain this goal, the ideal of all prophecy, became the steady purpose of the people after the return. This "pilgrim band" lived intently in the future, and not in the present.¹ In quite a contrast

¹ Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, 1874, p. 12 *seq.* It had been the general tendency of investigators to overestimate the changes made in the national life of Israel through and after the captivity, or, rather, to underestimate the conservative forces which preserved in them their historic peculiarities. The early use for the Targums, e. g., and a misunderstood passage in Nehemiah, had induced scholars to believe that at the time of Christ the old Hebrew had virtually died out in Israel. Closer investigations have of late proved the contrary. We refer here not only to the little pamphlet of Delitzsch, written in English, in which he gives an account of his Hebrew translation of the New Testament, but more particularly to Nöldeke's searching criticism of the fifth volume of Mommsen's "History of Rome," in which the latter treats of the Syrian and other provinces, and maintains the traditional view concerning the rapid decay of the national characteristics of Palestine in this period. Nöldeke, whose article appeared in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society*, 1886, p. 331 *seq.*, proves the contrary to be the fact, and that Hellenism did not gain control of the hearts and minds of the people. Neubauer, in the *Studia Biblica*, of Oxford, 1885, pp. 39-74, has also reached the same general conclusion, and claims that the Hebrew of the day was relatively pure and classical, being mixed only slightly with Syriac and Greek. In other researches as to the status and thought of that day similar conclusions are being reached.

with the Old Testament phase of this religion, in which the worship and rewards were chiefly in and of this world, the post-exilic Jews, finding the present so deplorable, emphasize the ideals and hopes of their faith as never before. For them the golden age was not in the past, but in the future. The realization of their highest hopes was the *הבנה דלעת, ה אילון* *ἐρχόμενος*,¹ or *μέλλον* as this is technically called and contrasted with the *הנה דלעת, ה אילון* *οὗτος* or *ἐκείνος*. These convictions of the great historic mission of Israel as the chosen people of the only true God, and of the certainty of the glorious consummation of the prophetic ideals through the fidelity of the people to their God, are the source of Israel's vitality and stubborn existence in the face of such fearful odds. Only the due appreciation of these singular factors in the life of the people can make intelligible this anomaly of history.²

But on this correct basis of Moses and the prophets they built not only gold and silver, but still more hay and stubble. The New Testament does indeed not present a systematic or complete account of the popular faith of the day, which was the outcome of the history of Israel since the close of the Old Testament. But the leading features are given, and from these it is evident that this development had been of an erratic kind. Both Christ and the Jewish orthodoxy of his day claim to build upon the Old Testament, and yet the systems of religion which they teach are radically contradictory. Only one conclusion can be reached from this, namely, that in the genesis and formation of the

¹ Cf. Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, §§ 28 and 29. For the New Testament use of this expression, see Grimm-Thayer, under *αἰών*, and Trench's *Synonyms of the New Testament*, 9th ed., p. 217.

² Cf. on this whole matter the excellent summary given by Ewald at the close of the third volume of his "History of the People of Israel;" and see also the terse but telling *characteristique* of Israel's religion in the *Einleitung* to Stade's "Geschichte Israels," particularly p. 6 *seq.* Cf. also Smend's article on the Apocalypses in the *Zeitschrift für A. T. Wissenschaft*, 1885, pp. 222-251.

teachings of Jesus' contemporaries elements must have been introduced that were foreign to its essence and genius and in no way accorded with the earlier revelations of God. If Christ was, as Christian scholarship with all reason and right maintains,¹ the fulfilment of law and prophecy, then his antagonists taught a system based not upon revelation, but upon flesh and blood. This perversion of the Jewish faith is one of the saddest yet most instructive lessons of history. If their religious development had continued in the lines marked out by Old Testament revelation, then when He came who was the end of the law (Rom. x. 4), the object of prophetic prediction (Acts iii. 21; Rom. i. 2; xvi. 26; 1 Pet. i. 10), and the hope and consolation of the psalmists (Matt. xxii. 45), he would have been received and accepted by the Israel of the flesh as well as by the Israel of the Spirit. "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (John i. 11), is the sigh of sorrow amid the joyous revelations in the majestic prologue of the fourth Gospel, and at the same time the words proclaim one of the saddest facts of history. Christ's tears over Jerusalem's impending fate were wept over the spiritual destruction of God's chosen people, over the failure, as far as they themselves were concerned, of their mission as a great and important factor in the development of the kingdom of God on earth, and not over the city and temple of stone and wood. For them the law had not proved a *παιδαγωγὸς εἰς χριστόν* (Gal. iii. 24); nor had the prophecies, even in highest evangelistic flights, as in Isaiah liii., preserved them from far-reaching departures from the true spirit and essence of the kingdom of God. Looking at the contemporaries of Christ, as these are portrayed so vividly in the Gospel records, it would almost seem that all prophecy had been written in a strange and unknown tongue, and that the dealings of God with his

¹ Cf. Schmid, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, § 21 *seq.*, especially § 30.

people had had no pedagogical meaning. The whole development of religious life and thought of the people from Malachi to John the Baptist, in those centuries when the oracles of God were silent, had resulted in the production of a system that in principle and essence was the opposite of that which Christ and the New Testament legitimately draw from the Old Testament revelation.

The problem suggested by this state of affairs is one of deeper importance than the mere historical question concerning the character of the erratic system of the Lord's times. It is one fundamentally connected with the biblical theology of the New Testament. Christ gives no dogmatic system of the truth he teaches, but presents this truth and the principles of this truth in connection with the living questions of his day. He spoke, first of all, for his day and for his times; and, although the substance of his teachings as eternal truths can in no way be made dependent upon the character of his times, yet the manner of the presentation as well as the peculiar phases of this truth which are emphasized here or there, stand in the most intimate connection with the religious thought and needs of his days. Hence a thorough understanding and appreciation of the world of contemporary thought, by the law of contrasts, cannot but be full of instruction for the elucidation of New Testament truth. If such ends can already be secured by the mere study of the geography, manners, and customs of the Holy Land,¹ in a much higher and deeper sense will the thorough appreciation of the historical background of the New Testament help us to understand the New Testament and its teachings as a phenomenon and factor in history. The History of the New Testament Times is a new theological discipline, but it is one that has done splendid services for New Testament Theology,

¹ Renan has not inaptly called the Holy Land "the fifth Gospel." Thomson's "The Land and the Book" is a thesaurus of good things for the Bible student.

notwithstanding the fact that illegitimate use has been made of it by the older school of Baur and the more modern school of Ritschl, and by the efforts of Harnack to establish a new historical school of his own.¹

Nowhere do we have an *ex professo* exposition or synopsis in the New Testament of the teachings of Christ's opponents. The official dogmatics of the day must be gleaned from the discussions of Christ with them and from other New Testament statements. Aside from the fundamentally different schools of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, there were in the ranks of these again shades and diversities of thought. Yet there can be no doubt that as a class the Pharisees represented the controlling religious thought of the times. The Sadducees play but a comparatively unimportant role in the Gospel records, as they were representatives of unpopular and unpatriotic Hellenism. The Essenes are not even mentioned in the New Testament, and no clear evidence can be brought forth that their tenets influenced in any way, direct or indirect, the matter or manner of Christ's teachings. It is only within the last decade that the Jewish sects, particularly the Pharisees, are being understood in their real nature and in

¹ Baur interpreted New Testament theology, or rather the Catholic faith of the second century as based upon our present New Testament Canon, as the result of a compromise between the antagonistic Judaistic theology of Peter and the Gentile theology of Paul. Ritschl regards it as a deterioration of original Paulinism, in which Judaism had little or no influence. Harnack, in his recent somewhat sensational "Dogmengeschichte," claims that Greek philosophy contributed not only in the formal manner but also materially to the development of this faith, and that this faith is accordingly based only in part upon scriptural foundation. The two best works upon New Testament times are those of Schürer and Hausrath. Especially is the former full of extracts from original sources of information. The best English works of a scholarly kind in this line are Edersheim's "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah" (2 vols.), and Drummond's "The Jewish Messiah," while in a more popular way contemporary history and thought have been well used by Geikie's "Life of Christ," and also by Farrar's works.

their mutual relations. It is the merit of Wellhausen¹ to have developed the real differences between them. He has shown that the two parties of Sadducees and Pharisees did not originally represent two antithetical religious stand-points. The Sadducees are originally the aristocratic party, whose high official position brought them in contact with the non-Jewish world and naturally developed in them free and even radical opinions. They are therefore originally a social, not a religious sect. The Pharisees, however, were the legal party from the beginning; and the course of events made the two parties enemies. However, during the New Testament times the Pharisees represent the popular views of the day, and by historic development justly occupy this position. As Schürer says,² they are "the classical representatives of that school of thought which characterizes the whole inner development of Israel in the post-exilic period." And yet they too were at least not in spirit a unit. Not only do we learn from the extra-canonical literature of the day of the existence and the controversies of a strict school of Pharisees under the leadership of a Shammai, and of a milder school championed by Hillel,³ but in the Gospels

¹ Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer, Eine Untersuchung zur inneren jüdischen Geschichte, 1874.

² Cf. *l. c.*, § 26. Schürer's supposition that the name סֵפָרִיטִים, or "Separatists," was first given them in derision by their enemies, and afterwards adopted by themselves, is doubtless correct. The adoption of the name and the conversion of its meaning *in bonam partem* would have a parallel in the history of the word "Methodist" in modern times.

³ The modest temper of Hillel's teachings and the fact that in outward form some of his sayings have a marked resemblance with those of Christ, have been used, or rather abused, by radical criticism to deprive Christ of his originality and make him in fact a pupil of Hillel. The chief sinners in this regard are Renan and Strauss. An excellent analysis of the difference of Spirit between Christ and Hillel, notwithstanding their seeming agreement in words, is found in the popular yet scholarly little work of the elder Delitzsch, "Jesus und Hillel," which has been several times translated into English, e. g. in the *Lutheran Quarterly*, of Gettysburg, Oct. 1881. This attempt to connect Christ with Hillel is but one of its kind. Deutsch, in his famous

themselves we find beside the stereotype, legalistic Pharisees (Luke xviii. 11) types of an earnest and truth-seeking class, such as Nicodemus (John iii. 1 *seq.*), and Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. xxvii. 57); the latter, however, seem to differ rather in degree than in kind from the leaders of their clans, and were themselves unable to understand the spirituality of the new revelation.¹ And then there were still among the chosen people a small remnant of the genuine Israel after God's own heart, a Hannah, a Simeon, the pious household at Bethany, and a number of others who were not children of their own times, but understood the oracles of God in their real and original import. Then again in Judæa, and especially in the religious centre of the country, Jerusalem,

Talmud article (reproduced in his *Literary Remains*, 1874, pp. 1-58), thought to deprive the gospel of its originality by showing that such words as "righteousness," "baptism," "regeneration," etc., were taken from the Jewish terminology of the day. It is a well-known fact that every petition of the Lord's Prayer can be duplicated, so far as the words go, in the literature of the times. But this does by no means argue that the gospel or the prayer are not original with the New Testament. *Duo si dicunt idem non est idem*. Indeed the *newness* of the New Testament gospel, which cannot be made out to be the result of causes and factors in the history of its day, has been a constant stumbling-block in the way of those who try to deprive the Sacred Records and their contents of their *sui generis* element. On the Lord's Prayer, cf. Taylor's *The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, Excursus V. pp. 138-145. In this connection special mention should be made of the new school of investigators who seek in the literature of the day the source of New Testament thoughts. While it of course will not be denied that a formal and suggestive influence of the former on the latter is absolutely demanded by the principles of historical interpretation, the claim of a material influence remains without any evidence. Cf. for details on this interesting problem an article on "Inter-Testament Literature" by the writer, in the *Old and New Testament Student*, Oct. 1890.

¹ Cf. especially, G. Schnedermann, *Das Judentum und die christl. Verkündigung in den Evangelien*, 1884. This work, which is a running commentary on the four Gospels, with the special object of learning the religious thought of the day, draws special attention to the differences and diversities in that thought. Reuss (*Herzog, Real-Encyclop.*, 1st ed., 12, 508) correctly says: "Pharisaism is only the fuller development of the ideas and the aims that from the beginning constituted the vital kernel of the new Jewish [i. e. post-exilian] communion."

the Pharisaic system found much more decided advocates than in the distant Galilee, so much abused for its lack of culture and want of a knowledge of the law. Christ's selection of Galilee as the chief seat of his work was based upon his knowledge of the fact that the Galileans were less under the bondage of the errors of the day. But the *status controversiæ* can be best understood by paying regard to the teachings of the Pharisees.

Surface indications would suggest that the erroneous views of the Pharisees centred in their legalistic standpoint and in their unwillingness to accept Christ as the promised Messiah. It is true that the self-righteousness by an outward and superficial obedience to the letter of the law and a disregard of its spirit and essence, as also the rejection of Jesus of Nazareth, form the outward and most palpable features in which the Judaism of the day had departed from the standpoint of revelation as maintained by Christ. But back of these, and as the real cause of them, lay their carnal conception of the kingdom of God on earth. In the *βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* or the *βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*, which is practically equivalent to *המלכות השמים* in the technical terminology of contemporary literature, it is that the Jewish thought of the day centres.¹ Under this term they understood, in their way and

¹ On these terms some interesting discussions have been carried on of late. All agree that they are taken from the Hebrew expression *מַלְכוּת יְהוָה* or *מַלְכוּת שְׁמַיִם*, the question being whether these expressions were employed by the Jews of the Messianic future. Certain it is that they are generally used merely to designate a rule from heaven, or a rule in the Spirit of God, over against the rule of evil or evil persons, and Schürer (§ 28) has stoutly maintained that it is never used in the specific religious sense of the New Testament. Cremer, in the last edition (*not* in the earlier) of his "Theologico-Biblical Lexicon of the New Testament," under *βασιλεία*, has made it quite plain that the religious sense was the original sense of the term, but that it afterwards deteriorated. Wellhausen well says (*l. c.*, p. 23): "The basis of the Messianic hope is the '*Malkuth*.' The name and idea are antithetical and were developed only in contrast to the '*Malkuth*' of the earth. The latter for the time being ruled the world; the opposite thereof has not yet appeared, but, like all good things hoped for, is yet in heaven." Whatever may have

manner, the development and realization of the prophetic ideals and promises. While Christ and the gospel see in this kingdom the consummation of the spiritual blessings promised with the advent of the Redeemer "in the fulness of time," the Pharisees have confounded with this the people or the nation of God, as the means or agents through whose instrumentality or in whose midst this kingdom should be realized, and have substituted the means for the object itself, and made Israel and fidelity to what we conceived as the mission of Israel this kingdom itself.¹ Their direct teaching has been the origin of the expressions and their original meaning, certain it is, that in New Testament Judaism it *does* express the sum and substance of the Messianic hope. Its actual meaning must be determined by the *usus loquendi* of New Testament writers; its origin and etymology can give us only a hint as to the line of development taken to reach the actual meanings. These expressions, however, are only another testimony that we must go to contemporary Jewish thought in many cases for the foundation of New Testament definitions, and also that frequently Hebrew expressions of this sort have received a fuller depth and world of meaning in being adopted by the New Testament, just as this is the case with the Greek. In this way doubtless the *Memra Yahve* of the period furnished the basis out of which grew the Logos of St. John, and not the *lóyos* of Philo, except in so far as it again rests upon the Jewish *Memra Yahve*.

¹ This must not be misunderstood. The ideal of the Pharisees was not a political state in which the law could have absolute sway, but the rule of Israel as a nation was expected to begin with the Messianic millennium. Indeed, it seems that the Pharisees steadily opposed national independence, at least did not directly favor it; fearing apparently that in case it were secured, politics and not the law would become the leading thought of the people. We have evidence in abundance that the Pharisees were *not* the class that continually sought political independence. The Pharisees did not desire a political state, but only a congregation of law observers. They frequently opposed the aims of the Asmoneans, and asked Pompey to do away with their rule (Joseph. Antiq. xiv. 3, 2). They did not participate in the national contest against Herod, but rather advised to receive him in Jerusalem (Antiq. xv. 1, 1). During Herod's reign the Pharisees stood high in honor at the court (Antiq. xvii. 2, 4), and at no other time did their tenets have wider dominion. In his days lived such famous law teachers as Shemaja and Abtalion, Hillel and Shammai. Under the Roman dominion a new party, the Zealots, arose, and they it was who sought above everything independence of foreign control, and their zeal it was that finally brought about the national catastrophe of 72 A. D. But the Pharisees remained true to their anti-revolutionary

ings in opposition to the Saviour, as well as their silence and their actions, show how they have despiritualized the biblical idea of this kingdom. The Old Testament as a revelation and the history of a revelation goes out from the premise that sin has corrupted the human race and interfered with the original designs of God in the creation of man. He who fails to recognize the idea of sin as a most fundamental power and underlying premise in the whole Old Testament development can never appreciate its true essence and genius. The recognition of this anthropological principle is indispensable to a recognition of the soteriological principle of deliverance through divine mercy, which, over against the former or the negative principle of the kingdom of God on earth, is its positive principle. It is the conflict of these two principles, or rather the eventual conquest of the former by the latter, that constitutes the idea of the kingdom of God on earth. To restore and re-establish fallen mankind to his lost estate is the object of all of God's dealings with men. To effect this all the better one people are chosen to become the bearers of this salvation, to be educated by the immediate providence of God through the law and the prophetic revelations for the purpose of preparing salvation for men as well as preparing men for salvation, of which the Israelites themselves stood in need and should partake. But the spiritual character of this kingdom stands out boldly in Old Testament prophecy, in its inception and history; and the fact that its development was confined within the limits of a religious-national state was intended only to principles. They aimed at only one thing, namely, the supremacy of the law in the life of the people, in the hope that when the proper time would have come, Israel as a nation, or still better, as a religious sect, as an international religious communion of law-observers, would become partakers of the promised glories of the Messianic rule. The views often met with, that the Pharisees were constantly plotting against the foreign yoke, is not based upon historic testimony. Cf. especially Wellhausen's "Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer," and Weber's "Die Lehren des Talmuds," pp. 9-14.

effect all the better the spiritual ends of this kingdom as the regenerating power of the world, which limits could be and were thrown aside when the proper time had come. Through a number of historical causes, of which mention will be made later, the contemporaries of Christ had substituted the national idea as the subordinate for the spiritual idea as the principal feature of the kingdom of God, especially in the final consummation of that kingdom. It was the substitution of the means, which were temporal and accidental, for the ends, which were eternal and essential. It is this perversion that constitutes the *fons et origo* of the followers of New Testament Judaism. How deeply this carnal and superficial view of this central point of revelation had found its way into the Jewish heart, even of the better classes, is only too plainly illustrated by the remarkable conversation of Nicodemus with Jesus. Historically and psychologically this sad departure from the landmarks of the fathers is not so great an historical enigma, especially when viewed in the light of contemporary literature. It is not the only case of the kind in history. The development of the doctrine of the church in the Roman Catholic Church is a phenomenon of quite a similar character. It is the preservation of the shell and the rejection of the kernel. It is essentially the process of transferring the mainspring of religious thought and life from the heart to the head, and it ends in pure formalism or doctrinal petrification. It is a noteworthy and significant fact that the erroneous central thought of this Judaism in Christ's day was not an absolute error in itself, but the one-sided development of a temporarily important but essentially unimportant feature in the idea of the kingdom of God to the extreme idea of excluding the soul of the idea and thought itself. It will soon be seen that in the other antagonistic positions of Christ's adversaries the same feature is noticeable. No error is more dangerous than one that contains a germ of truth. This

element of truth gives the error with which it is associated the plausibility or appearance of truth, at least in the eyes of the unthinking.

The substitution of the national or sectarian idea for the spiritual idea in the popular conception of the kingdom of God having once been made, consistency demanded that the hopes that clustered around the realization of this kingdom be modified to harmonize with the general thought. The blessings of "the times to come" must be of such a character as to exalt Israel as a nation, and on this basis the carnal and worldly expectations of Christ's contemporaries are easily understood. They are the logical outcome of the changed position taken in regard to the central dogma of their faith. The crude and crass notions of the Pharisees, seen in almost every page of the gospel record, were the natural fruit of centuries of false thought.

It is, accordingly, indicative of a true perception and understanding of the thoughts of the day when John the Baptist announces the advent of Christ with the words, "The kingdom of God is at hand." With this he came much nearer to the hearts of this people than if he had announced his advent as that of the Messiah, since in the popular conception of the day, the character and work of the Messiah was entirely subordinate to that of the kingdom of God, indeed was not even a necessary attendant. But the declaration of the advent of this kingdom meant the advent of the *αἰὼν ἐρχόμενος*, together with all the temporal glories expected with it. Therefore the Jews did not at once reject Christ. They preserved a critical attitude toward him, to see if he would attempt the realization of this kingdom in the shape and form in which they were expecting it, from which, it appears, their constant clamoring for "signs and wonders" is perfectly logical, and not entirely mere idle curiosity. Only when he began to criticise the superficial and erroneous conceptions of the day, and to preach a

return to repentance and faith as the biblical prerequisite of citizenship in the spiritual kingdom of God, did they turn as one man against him. They had been so encrusted in the errors of their schools that they could neither understand nor appreciate the truth when it was declared to them.

Out of this leading and fundamental error, which made the kingdom of God a kingdom of this world, of a necessity grew corresponding false views which give their religious system at least the appearance of consistency and inner agreement. As the soul had been expelled from the highest ideal of religious thought, the real vital principle of this thought as far as man's relation to this *summum bonum* was also discarded as useless. Instead of the principle of faith, which had already in the covenant with Abraham been established as the subjective condition in the kingdom of God (Rom. iv. 3 *seq.*; Gal. iii. 6 *seq.*; Heb. ix.; Gen. xv. 6), the nomistic principle was substituted.¹ The sum and substance of all practical religion is the compliance with the minutiae of the law, a compliance which was asked to be no deeper than outward and formal. This is readily recognized as the substitution of the means for the end and as a one-sided development of an element in Old Testament religion for which at best only a temporary predominance could be claimed.

¹ Weber, "Die Lehren des Talmuds," p. 9, puts it in this shape: "This principle produced an entirely new world of religious thought, which not only differs from the teachings of the Old Testament, in which it has its roots, but even contradicts them, since it accepts the nomistic principle as the only legitimate rule of religion, which principle in the Old Testament is only the basis of the prophetic proclamation of Salvation." This work of Weber's, which is edited by Professor Franz Delitzsch and Dr. Georg Schnedermann, and in its second but not revised edition, as recently published by the "Institutum Judaicum," of Leipzig, is the first satisfactory summary of the doctrinal teachings of later Judaism. In its scientific and objective character it differs materially from such partisan works as Eisenmenger's "Entdecktes Judenthum" and in its systematic arrangement of the subject from such otherwise excellent collections of materials as Schöttgen's and as Lightfoot's "Horae Talmudicae," which for critical purposes are little better than a *ruda indigestaque moles*.

In the Old Testament economy the law was indeed to have a high historical mission (Gal. iii. 1 *seq.*), namely, to lead to a recognition of transgression and in that way to lead to the knowledge of the necessity of a Saviour. Such an end could be effected, however, in case the spiritual character of the whole religious faith of the people could be preserved, and the obedience to the law would be looked at from the standpoint of its spirit, and not from that of mere outward observance. But the despiritualizing perversion of the true object of revelation led to a similar perversion in the chief agency necessary in the realization of this object.¹ As the religious ideal had now become Israel as a nation and the blessings expected were temporal and earthly, the same outward and formal character was assigned to its principal agency. The chief object of Israel's existence, in order to become the partakers of the glories expected, must be to preserve their national individuality over against the influence of foreign nations. The distinguishing feature of Israel over against the Gentiles, her peculiar possession, was her law, and it was but logical that the stringent observances of its commands were regarded as the only safe means of preserving Israel true to her historical mission. The highest law is the *οὐκ ἔξεστιν* (John v. 10 *seq.*). The measure of religious merit was accordingly the completeness and fidelity in the observance of the law and readily led to an acceptance of the traditions of the fathers besides the written law as a means to the end. The nomistic principle is in character and development a legitimate outcome of the general religious teachings of the day.

How entirely its formalism and superficiality had usurped the place of the true principle of biblical religion, can be well

¹ Schürer, *l. c.*, § 28 (p. 389 of the German edition), says, in full agreement with the above: "In this whole period the religious life of the Jews circles around two poles, namely, the fulfilment of the law and the hope of future glory. The zeal for the former draws its vitality and life from the latter."

seen in the polemics of Paul against the Jewish self-righteousness in the early Christian congregation. Notably is this the case in Romans and Galatians. In the four leading epistles of the great preacher of the "*Sola Fides*" the word νόμος is found no less than one hundred and ten times, and in the little letter to the Galatians alone no less than seventy times. It would be a misinterpretation of Paul to think that his attacks are directed against the law as such. Indeed, he more than any other New Testament writer is explicit in teaching his readers the genuine purpose of the law (e. g. Gal. iii.). His polemics are directed not against the use, but against the abuse of the law, against the very abuse of which New Testament Judaism as a religious system had been guilty, namely, allowing the outward obedience to the law to be accepted as full and satisfactory obedience, and in this way to suffer nomism to make it impossible for man to recognize his own condition and thus bring him to repentance and faith.¹ *Mutatis mutandis*, it is the same opposition to popular views that was already taken by John the Baptist, when he announced the advent of the expected kingdom, but coupled with it the injunction, "repent." For those in whose system the highest duty was "obey," the scriptural idea of repentance, a μετάνοια, was perfectly unintelligible, just as that of regeneration and the spiritual character of the relation between God and man was incomprehensible even to a Nicodemus. It stood outside of the world of religious thought and life, which to them was an outward sphere, and was not, as Christ tells them the kingdom of God is, "within them."

A third feature in which the differences between the teachings of Christ and his opponents are brought out in bold relief is on the subject of the person of the Messiah. From the preceding exposition of the leading principles of

¹ Cf. Grafe, *Die Paulinische Lehre vom Gesetz*, 1884, a small (24 pp.) but thorough pamphlet on the subject.

the Pharisaic system, it is readily seen that in reality the Messiah can occupy but a subordinate position in the establishment of the Messianic future. It must be distinctly remembered that in many cases the Messianic times were thought of as arriving and as existing without the presence of the Messiah at all. In some of the descriptions of the day he is a mere figure-head or a *deus ex machina*, employed by the author simply to relieve God, after the manner of the LXX., Philo, and contemporary Jewish thought, of the anthropomorphics and anthropopathics attending the consummation of these times through the immediate intervention of God himself. So much is this the case that scholars have repeatedly claimed that the Messianic ideas in so far as they refer to the person of the Messiah as an active factor in last times, had been entirely lost in Israel and were mechanically revived by Christ and his apostles. But this is an extreme view of a germ that existed in fact, and is easily refuted by New Testament records and by contemporary and earlier Jewish literature.¹ But so much is certain that the general tendency of the times was to push the personal Messiah into the background. Wellhausen, in his work already quoted, on the Pharisees and the Sadducees,² has shown that just at this time there was a decided reaction among the Pharisaic teachers against the prominence before given to the personal Messiah.³ A one-sided perusal of the New Testament, notably of the fourth Gospel, has sometimes led Christians to think that the personal recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah was *the* great point of controversy between Christ

¹ Cf. Schlirer, § 28, for particulars.

² Cf. p. 22 *seq.*

³ This fact, so often overlooked by writers on this period, explains why in some of the literature of the day, where the Messianic future is so prominent, the Messiah played at best but an insignificant role. This is, e. g., the case in the groundwork of the Book of Enoch. Cf. the writer's translation of Enoch (Andover, 1882), chaps. 89 and 90, together with notes and Introduction.

and his opponents. It became so in the end, but only when it was seen that his Messianic ideals would not accord with theirs. Had he been willing to modify his scriptural ideas to their unscriptural views, he could readily have secured national recognition, as the times were ripe for any leader who would promise to lead them in the struggle for national independence, which was one and a principal step toward the Messianic times. Schnedermann (p. 66) says correctly: "The Messiah in Judaism had no controlling position as a divinely appointed messenger of God, but he was regarded as the *servant* of the people of God."

This negative attitude toward the Messiah in New Testament times can historically be easily understood. Where the law and providential government of Jehovah from the beginning of Israel's national existence had failed to teach them the true character of the human heart and the consequent need of Messiah who would be Redeemer and Saviour, the necessary prerequisites for appreciating Jesus as the "Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world," as his mission was announced by John the Baptist, were not present. Since in the dominant system citizenship in the new kingdom was made dependent upon the conduct of the individual and the nation over against the law, naturally no important work in securing this citizenship of the people could be assigned to the Messiah. His services could even be dispensed with entirely. It is not by any means an accidental matter that the opponents of Christ have at their tongues' end the predictions that refer to the outward features of the Messiah's work and mission, but are ominously silent or ignorant of those prophecies that speak of his regenerating work in them and in the world and of his spiritual realm. They will remember that he is to be born in Bethlehem, that he is the son of their greatest king, David; but when their attention is called to the peculiar character of this sonship which induced David to call his

own son "Lord," they are silent. Throughout the whole New Testament they never once hint that there are in existence such evangelistic predictions as those of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. This silence speaks volumes.¹

Here again we find the one-sided development of an idea accompanying the biblical, or Old Testament idea, of a Messiah, but, abstractly considered, in itself, not essential to the work of the Messiah, namely, that he should be of Israel and should labor in Israel. And again, here as before, the outward features of his work are emphasized, and his inner and real mission is disregarded. In every case we have seen the exaltation of a subordinate biblical truth to the exclusion of the leading truth in relation to which it only had any importance. These, we think, are the leading principles of New Testament Judaism, in their real character and in their mutual relationship. Understood in this way they aid materially in understanding the historical background of the world of thought in the New Testament and thus help in elucidating one of the leading problems of New Testament theology, namely, the *status controversiæ* between Christ and his opponents. Negatively at least the understanding of these matters aids also in appreciating the positive evangelical teachings of both Christ and his apostles.²

¹ One of the most interesting studies in the history of Jewish theology is to trace the wonderful manoeuvres of their exegesis in the interpretation of the "Suffering Servant of God" in Isa. liii. For them it is the most perplexing chapter in the whole Old Testament. Cf. for the data of this period, Schürer, § 29 (close of paragraph), and Castelli, *Il Messia Secondo gli Ebrei*, pp. 216-224, 329, 335.

² This development of this line of thought has been followed with special references to the Pharisaic system as we find it in the New Testament pages. The *ex professo* exposition of the tenets of this school, given by Josephus and reproduced and discussed by Schürer, § 26, was written especially for Roman readers, and, particularly on the subject of the *εὐαγγέλιον* modified to suit Greek and Roman philosophical terminology. At any rate, the statements made by Josephus can have only secondary importance for the New Testament student, however much they may be of aid to the historian of philosophy. The New Testament account of the Pharisees is even an historical evidence more reliable than Josephus, and by fair-minded Jewish scholars is regarded as fair and just; e. g., by Jost.

Such being the character of New Testament Judaism, the questions as to its origin and development are naturally suggested. How came these things to be such? What forces, what agencies, what factors, were operative in the historical development of post-exilic Israel that could make them, the people of God, with the rewards of revelation constantly before them as a guide and corrective, become unfaithful to their historical mission and end in a sect entirely the opposite of what divine Providence had intended them to be? On the face of matters it is evident that the status of affairs as we find them in New Testament times must be the outcome of a long course of historical growth. The orthodoxy of the Pharisees cannot be a mushroom growth, cannot be, like Jonah's gourd, the product of a night. Nor are their tenets, as far as they can be called a system, the whim of a school of philosophy, an outcome of the ratiocination of the intellect. It requires but a slight appreciation of the facts, as also but little understanding of psychology and the philosophy of history, to recognize that this religious system is but the fruits of seed that must have been sown long before. The mighty tree that could resist the powerful agitation caused by Christ's recall to the old truth must have its roots struck deep in historical soil.

And such indeed is also the case. The beginning of which New Testament Judaism is the end goes back to the days of Ezra the Scribe. However much it may be the case, as has been seen above, that the all-controlling thought of the false view of Christ's contemporaries was the perversion and despiritualization of the fundamental conception of all revelation, namely, the idea of the kingdom of God, certain it is, on the other hand, that the erroristic development did not, at least not in any way consciously, start from this misconception. It originated in the establishment of the nomistic principle by Ezra and his coadjutors as the sole and only.

controlling principle in the religious life of the people. Whether this was a re-establishment of this principle, as the conservative scholars maintain, or the first and original establishment, as the advanced school teaches, does not materially affect the problem. In the Old Testament dispensation the law has indeed an important role to perform; but still it is a subordinate role. In the main it is propaedeutic and intended to prepare the way in history and in the hearts of the people for the reception of prophecy, or the gospel elements of the dispensation, as the higher form of revelation and the further step in that development of the kingdom which should end in the "fulness of time." These two elements are complementary and supplementary in the unfolding and growth of Israel's religion. Logically, and we are convinced also chronologically, the law precedes prophecy, although in a certain sense and degree they were contemporary. Neither is intelligible as a factor in this religion without the other, and for the final achievement of God's purposes, both were to go together preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah. The beginning of an erroristic development was introduced into Israel's religion when through Ezra's and Nehemiah's activity the law became the sole controlling religious factor to the almost total exclusion of the prophetic element. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah contain abundant testimony to this effect, and particularly are Ezra ix. and Nehemiah viii.—x. classical and instructive chapters in this regard. Prominent features in the conception of this nomistic principle, were, first, that then already outward compliance with the very words of the law was deemed essential, as is seen, e. g., from the new departure in celebrating the feast of the tabernacle כִּנְחֻלֵּי, Neh. viii. *seq.*; and, secondly, that this observance of the law is regarded as the maintenance of the covenant with God (Ezra x. 2, 3; Neh. x. 1 *seq.*).¹ But throughout the whole new régime the

¹ Cf. Weber, *l. c.*, p. 3 *seq.*

law alone is looked upon as establishing the proper relationship between God and his people, and this relationship was essentially as juridic in character—a feature that characterized the whole later development. But the fatal error of the new departure was its exclusion of the prophetic feature, and in this regard it proved unfaithful to Old Testament precedents and premises. Nomocracy pure and simple ruled supreme.

Nor is the origin of this one-sided development difficult to understand historically. The exile was by the prophets declared to be the punishment of the people for their infidelity to Jehovah and his laws. The repentant people confessed the correctness of the charge and determined that matters should change. All eyes turned to the law, and the future prosperity and the eventual securing of the hopes held out by revelation to Israel as the people of God was regarded as dependent upon the obedience to that law, the disobedience toward which, by their fathers, had almost destroyed the very existence of the people, and thus put the realization of their mission into the dim future. The transition from one extreme to another is a pendulum performance, so often witnessed in the history of individuals and of nations, and that the one extreme may be as dangerous as the other, is also not unnatural. Israel's existence was now wound up in the observance of the law, and the very stringency with which this new principle was observed, defeated the very object which actually was to be the aim of this observance, according to the purposes of God, by blinding the people to the spirit of the law and allowing them to see only the letter that killeth the understanding and appreciation for the lessons and blessings to which the law was to lead. Matters progressed so rapidly in this direction that Malachi, the last of the inspired prophets, was compelled to raise his voice against the extreme legalistic standpoint.

Such was the inner source and fountain of the aberration of the people's faith. Possibly the false line of development might have found its corrective in the course of time through the post-exilic prophecy, or through the study by the "Sopherim" of the earlier prophets. But unfortunately for the best interests of Israel, the historical agencies that influenced its life from without during the centuries that followed were all such as to strengthen, and not to correct, the false position taken. That the law was the peculiar possession of Israel over against the nations round about her, and that the very existence was dependent upon obedience to this law, was in a certain and leading sense indeed the correct view, based upon the declaration of revelation. Hence any attack, direct or indirect, upon the law was an attack upon the very existence of the people, and such attacks were made in various ways. Outwardly and with brutal force it was made by the Syrian rulers, notably by Antiochus IV. Epiphanes (sometimes and more appropriately called Epimones the Furious), which led to the insurrection under the Maccabees, 167 B. C. The Maccabean wars were made decidedly for the law. Mattathias (1 Macc. ii. 27) appeals to *πᾶς ὁ ζηλῶν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ ἐστῶν διαθηκῆν* to come out and fight with him. Judas says (1 Macc. iii. 21) that they are fighting for their lives *καὶ τῶν νομίμων*. Cf. also 1 Macc. vi. 59; 2 Macc. vii. 2, 23, 30, 37. The enemies too understood that this was an insurrection for the law. They search the houses of the Jews for *βιβλία τοῦ Νόμου*, and kill those who are found to possess such books (1 Macc. i. 56-58). The allegiance of the people to the law is seen in this that circumcision was preferred even at the risk of death (1 Macc. i. 61, 62; ii. 46); death was preferred to breaking the Sabbath (1 Macc. i. 14), and to eating anything unclean (1 Macc. i. 63; 2 Macc. vi. 17 *seq.*; vii.; xi. 31).¹

¹ Cf. Weber, *l. c.*, p. 8 *seq.* and especially the exhaustive articles of Schnedermann on the Judaism of the Mosaic books in Luthardt's *Zeitschrift für Kirch. Wissenschaft und Kirch. Leben*, 1883-1884.

Opposition of this sort could not but strengthen a principle for which the life-blood of the nation had been spilled.

Another and still more dangerous force from without that led to a still further emphasis of the nomistic principle was the Hellenistic culture that had undermined the national existence of the other peoples of the East. A new thought, antagonistic to Jewish religion and coming with the influence of all the powerful and mighty upon the earth, sought an entrance into the hearts of the people, and when this could not but denationalize them, too. It was against these dangerous innovations that the conservative watchfulness of the people crystallized in the *Chasidim* or pious party of the Maccabean times, and later in the Pharisees, that *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, as Wellhausen aptly calls them, who made it the object of their existence to defend the law and the traditions against all the subtle agencies of Greek culture and civilization that threatened their absolute authority over the people.

That the existence of such dangers to the individuality of the people should develop to an extreme limit the adherence to that principle with the observance of which the national existence and the hopes of the people were identical, is but natural. And that in view of such a terrible history of woe and calamities, the eyes of the people, who knew they were the chosen of God to whom the promises as well as the law had been given, should emphasize those promises which appeared to predict a future of glory the very opposite of the dire ills of the present, is also no more than natural. The constant growth of the power of the nomistic principle, as well as the constant growth of the carnal hopes for a Messianic future, with all the glories of a world not known to them now, is just what might be expected as the outcome of such a history and such experiences. Indeed it would have been unnatural if the outcome had been different. Merely as an historical phenomenon,

New Testament Judaism is not an enigma. It is the natural result of the centuries that preceded it, the era of the silence of prophecy in Israel.¹

¹ It would be impossible here to trace in detail the various steps and stages by which was unfolded that phase of thought which we meet with as the orthodox beliefs of Christ's contemporaries. Nor indeed can this be done completely, as some links in the historic chain are lost. But enough evidences yet remain to trace the growth of the leading ideas of the Pharisaic system, and to follow out this line of development will be an interesting task for some painstaking scholar. The leading data on the development of the Messianic ideas in Christ's day, have been collected and discussed by the writer, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for April, 1884. A similar method could be pursued in the elucidation of other features of New Testament Judaism.