

ARTICLE VIII.

THE ADORATION OF JESUS IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE.¹

BY PROFESSOR THEODOR ZAHN, D. D., ERLANGEN, GERMANY, TRANSLATED
BY PROFESSOR C. J. H. ROPES, BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

AMONG the great historical religions of the world, of whose origin and development we have a more or less definite knowledge, Christianity is the only one which from the beginning has found the distinctive expression of its character in the adoration of its founder. If we may speak of a human founder of Judaism, and regard Moses or Abraham as occupying that position, then no proof is needed that the Jewish nation never at any period of its long career felt tempted to honor and adore as divine beings those great figures of its distant past. Not against such deification of men, but against the polytheism and idolatry of the heathen among whom Israel dwelt, was directed the exhortation "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." This became most prominent as the fundamental creed of Judaism, when a part of the nation had acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, and prayed to the Crucified One as the Lord enthroned in heaven. One of the most serious reproaches made against this heresy from Judaism, was that it acknowledged two rulers in heaven.²

¹ [This is the first essay in a volume just published, entitled, "Skizzen aus dem Leben der alten Kirche."]

² Not against the doctrine of the Trinity as an incomprehensible mystery, but against the exaltation of the man Jesus to divine dignity, was the polemic of the rabbins directed, in opposition to the Jewish Christians in Palestine. (Cf. Weber, *System der altsynagogalen Theologie*, p. 148; Laible, *Jesus Christus im Thalmud*, p. 48f.) In the dialogue of Justin with the Jew, Trypho, all turns in this connection only on the question whether Jesus is a God to

The Rabbi Akiba, one of the bitterest enemies of Christianity, is said to have breathed out his life, as a martyr of Judaism, with the word "One."

The confession of Islam, of faith in the One God, and in Mohammed as his prophet, was also primarily directed against heathen polytheism; and yet it was from the beginning held in antagonism to the supposed deification of a man on the part of the Christians. When, in the course of the Middle Ages, the contact of Christian nations with Mohammedan and Jewish culture had ceased to be exclusively hostile, it became customary, from very different points of view, and in very different connections, to class Judaism, Christianity, and Islam together, as the three monotheistic religions, on which depended the development of the world's civilization. Even Lessing in his "Nathan" makes use of this mediæval tradition.

Not until the last century did Buddhism come within the horizon of general culture in Europe. The foreigner from India met with a remarkably sympathetic reception, and that not alone among those whom philosophy had brought to a view of the universe akin to Buddhism. Buddhism has been classed with Christianity and Islam, as one of the religions which show their vigor by sustaining missions, and in results, as evinced by the number of converts, Buddhism surpasses even our faith. Recently some have advanced the view that a considerable part of our gospel narrative is an imitation of the legends of Buddha. But apart from such rash ventures, there are significant features of similarity, which force themselves on the most superficial view. In Buddhism, as in Christianity, we see at the head of a religious movement extending through thousands of years, the august figure of be worshipped, or the adoration which the Christians offer to this man is forbidden by the text "my honor will I not give to another." (Dial., chap. lxiii., Otto p. 224; chap. lxiv. *init.*; chap. lxv. from beginning to end, with Otto's note 12, p. 233; further Dial., chap. xxxiii. *init.*; chap. lxviii., especially p. 242 note 6, p. 246 note 21; chap. lxxvi. *fn.*; chap. cxxviii. *init.*)

an enlightened man, who, in antagonism to a rigid national religion, reached direct convictions of divine truth, and imparted it through the gentle medium of the spoken word to his disciples, and through them to the nations. In both, we find the message of a redemption to which all can attain: in both, likeness to the founder as the goal of the moral and religious efforts of all his converts. And yet Christianity shows its distinctive character more clearly in comparison with Buddhism than with either of the other religions named. A recent writer on Buddhism¹ says: "The Buddhist doctrine might still be in all essentials that which it actually is, if the idea of Buddha were to be eliminated from it." But what would Christian doctrine be without Christ? The same authority adds: "Buddha has entered Nirvana; if his disciples wished to call upon him, he could not hear them. Therefore (genuine) Buddhism is a religion without prayer." Christians were, from the first, worshippers of Christ. With this assertion I reach my subject.

In the year 112 A. D. Pliny, a highly educated Roman official, had occasion, as governor of a province of Asia Minor, to describe to the emperor Trajan certain judicial proceedings which he had instituted with numerous Christians belonging to his sphere of administration. Among these were some who testified that they had indeed been Christians, but had withdrawn, a longer or shorter time before, from the faith and worship of the Christians. They confessed, among other things, that formerly, when they were members of the Christian community,² they had been accustomed to assemble on

¹ H. Oldenberg, *Buddha* (1881), pp. 329 f., 377 f. [Eng. Transl., pp. 322, 369 f.]

² This I believe I have for the first time clearly proven in my "Ignatius von Antiochien" (1873), p. 586. F. Arnold, *Studien zur Plinianischen Christenverfolgung* (1887), who has learned this from others (pp. 49, 53), clings at the same time to the old error, that those apostate Christians had withdrawn from participation in the celebrations of the Lord's Supper only in consequence of Pliny's edict against the *Hetæriæ* (pp. 16, 48, 53). But according to the plain sense of the words they had, some for a longer, others for a shorter time,

a regular day in the early morning, in order to sing together a hymn of praise to *Christ as if he were a God*, or, to *Christ as a kind of God*. Such, according to the account of the heathen judge, was the declaration, not of Christians, but of apostates from Christianity, concerning the place which Christ occupied in the Christian worship of that time. Christ the quasi-God, whom the church in the hymns and prayers of her worship praises and addresses as though he were God: such is the creed of many to-day, who yet lay great stress on belonging to the church, and on the connection of their faith with primitive Christianity. Historical errors naturally result. It is characteristic that one of our modern lights has recently succeeded in representing that designation of Christ as quasi-God, which the heathen Pliny attributes to the apostate Christians, as the appropriate expression for the common belief of the Christians in the subapostolic age. If that were correct, we should have to assume, but also to prove, that in the course of the second century, or even of the third, the quasi-God Christ was transformed into a real God, and the altogether ceased to be Christians, and therefore to participate in any of the acts of Christian worship mentioned. The "desisse" in § 7 coincides with the "desisse" in § 6. "Quod ipsum" refers therefore not to the single observance, but to all that they had before enumerated as their former customs, and had included under the head of "summa culpæ suæ vel erroris." The whole of § 7 is a report of the testimony of former, now apostate, Christians, whose accuracy we have no reason to doubt. This is true also of the "carmen Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem." It is significant that Tertulian (Apol. ii.) says, instead, "ad canendum Christo ut deo." The former is appropriate from the apostates, and from the judge who exactly reports their utterances; the latter is fitting as the utterance of the church. There is therefore no reason to assume (with Arnold, p. 56 note 5) a Grecicism yet to be proven in Pliny's use of the word "quasi." We have here the same "quasi" as, e. g., Plin. Epist. viii. 16, 1 & 2. That the heathen of the second and third centuries regarded the adoring worship of Christ as in brief the essence of Christianity, is well known; cf. Martyr. Polycarpi xvii. 2 (where, however, Jews are speaking to heathen); Lucian, de morte Peregrini 11, 13; Origen, c. Celsum viii. 12-14 (where the defence of Origen deserves notice no less than the attack of Celsus); X. Kraus, Roma sotterranea, ed. 2, p. 257; the caricature-crucifix on the Palatine.

hymn of praise of the church to her exalted founder became a real adoration of Jesus, an invocation of his grace and help. We should have to prove further that the early church either in like manner honored and glorified Jesus only as quasi-God, or that not even so much as this was ventured. Then we could follow step by step the development through which the devout and humble man of Nazareth was transformed into the adored God and Lord of Christianity. But all the testimony of history contradicts this. Jesus was adored by the believers among his contemporaries. Those who had seen him eye to eye, and had heard from his mouth the word of his teaching, were accustomed, after they could no longer see and hear him, to call upon him in prayer, assured that he heard them and possessed the power to help them. Herein is the proof that, wherever in the second and third centuries among Jewish or Gentile Christians we find a lower view of Christ's person than in the writings of the New Testament, this is not a survival of the original common belief, but only a consequence of the same inability to maintain the elevation of the apostolic view, which manifests itself in so many other aspects of the doctrine and life of that period.

I wish first to demonstrate the fact of the adoration of Jesus in the apostolic church, and then to try to answer the question, What does this fact presuppose, or, how is it to be accounted for?

I.

Twenty-seven years had passed after the death of Christ, when Paul was writing his first letter to the Corinthians. The apostle found it necessary to say several times in this letter, that by their arrogance of opinion, and arbitrary conduct, they were much endangering not only their own unity, but also their relations to him, their spiritual father, and to the whole of Christendom. For this reason he reminds the Corinthians in his first greeting, that they are what they are, not

by themselves alone, but only in connection with all the Christians on the earth. This is what he means when he addresses them as: "called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours." This then was the sign by which all Christians were known, the bond of union of the separated churches: prayer to Christ. We hardly need to be reminded, that this is not to be understood as though in the church of that day the "calling upon" God, the Father of Christ and of Christians, had ceased or even been relegated to the background, as compared with "calling upon" Christ. All the writings of the New Testament bear witness to the fervor and perseverance of the prayers of God's children to their Heavenly Father. The Lord's Prayer was not forgotten, nor was it the less valued because it might be offered by a Jew also. Worship, like life, in the apostolic church, did not give prominent nor exclusive expression to antagonism towards other religious communions. The apostles in Jerusalem continued to participate in the Jewish worship, and to visit the temple at the usual hours of prayer, in order to pray to the God of their fathers with and for their own nation.¹ But prayer reflects the features of faith. Beside that which was common to both Christians and Jews and united them, the specific peculiarity of the Christian knowledge of God sought clear expression in worship, and found it in prayer to Christ. This separated Christians from all other worshippers of the One God, this united them together. Great and manifold as might be the differences existing inside single churches, or between the larger groups of similar churches, their unity on this point was such an indubitable fact, that "those who call on the name of Jesus" was a designation at once understood as descriptive

¹ Acts iii. 1; xxii. 17. Paul includes himself (Acts xxvi. 7) in the ceaseless service of prayer for the fulfilment of the promises, in which the twelve tribes are engaged. Compare the story of Hegesippus concerning the tireless praying of James in the temple. (Euseb., H. E. ii. 23, 6.)

of the whole body of Christians. And this was appropriate when it was important to emphasize the essential thing in which every member of the widely scattered fellowship must unite with the rest, if his Christian character was to be preserved.

The most important of the differences which imperilled the unity of early Christianity, a difference which even then on several occasions led to bitter strife, was that between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians. The former were gathered in considerable numbers in Palestine and lived their Christian life in the forms of Jewish piety, and in the ordinances of the Mosaic law. The latter were the prominent element in the churches which Paul and his helpers had organized and then defended in their independence of Jewish rules of life. But even over against this difference, Paul emphasizes that unity of Christians which finds expression in the adoration of Jesus. He writes to the church in Rome, to which this antagonism between Jewish and Gentile Christians was specially important: "There is [here, among the followers of Christ] no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. x. 12). Here too we see how much stress was laid on prayer to Christ, for immediately afterwards the apostle proves the importance of such prayer, by citing a word of the prophet Joel, in which is predicted of the latter days: "It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Paul knew as well as we, that the prophet was there speaking, not of Jesus, the Lord of Christianity, nor of the Messiah in whom Israel hoped, but of the God of Israel, whose own name, Jehovah, was translated in the Greek version of the Old Testament by "Lord." But he sees the prediction of the prophet fulfilling itself in the "calling on" Jesus by believers; this is as necessary and effectual as the worship of Jehovah required by the law and the prophets, yea it is therewith identical. The Christian Jew, Paul, knows that when

he in faith prays to Jesus, he thereby fulfils in spirit and in truth the condition of salvation which the God of his fathers had imposed on all who would be saved. Without changing or lessening its religious significance, the Old Testament adoration of Jehovah is transformed into the adoration of Jesus; and to reach this result, both among those who have long worshipped the one God of revelation, and among those who have lived in heathen ignorance of him, is, as Paul further shows, the object of the sending of the messengers of peace throughout all lands. Wherever these messengers fulfil their errand with success, wherever the gospel preached by them finds acceptance in the hearts of men, there results not only the confession that the risen Jesus is the Lord, but also prayer to Jesus. In this respect there was among the Christians of that time no other difference than that which will endure so long as men of flesh and blood bow the knee in prayer; I mean the difference to which Paul once refers (2 Tim. ii. 22) between those who call on the Lord out of a pure, that is upright, heart, and hypocrites, who draw near him with their lips, while their heart is far off. This difference, however, is almost entirely hidden from human knowledge and from historical consideration. But, on the other hand, the testimony of Paul which we have adduced, shows beyond a doubt that within less than thirty years after the death of Jesus, the original apostles, and the brethren of Jesus, as well as the later-born apostle to the Gentiles, the hundreds of Jewish Christians who had seen Jesus before and after his resurrection with their own eyes, and the thousands of Israelites who had joined themselves to them,¹ as well as the Gentile Christians in Ephesus and Corinth,—all were worshippers of Jesus, as they had been before worshippers of the God of Israel, or of dumb idols. That, however, which was then universal among Christians, that which was superior to all differences within the church, cannot have recently sprung up in any

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 6; Acts xxi. 20; Rom. xi. 4 f.; Origen, tom. I., 2 in Joann.

one locality, but must rather have grown from the one root of the far-spreading tree of Christianity. Moreover, within the twenty to thirty years since the birth of the church there is to be discovered no momentous event, no pervasive new development, which could have resulted in the universal adoration of Jesus. Paul could not so speak as we have heard him, if he had not come to know the disciples in Damascus and the apostles in Jerusalem as worshippers of Jesus, when from a persecutor he became a follower of Christ. There is, therefore, no reason for the suspicion that the Acts carries back the language of a later time into the first age of the church, when it makes the Christian Ananias and the Jews of Damascus designate the Christians as those that call upon the name of Jesus ;¹ or when it describes the dying Stephen as praying to Jesus for himself and for his murderers (as Jesus himself on the cross prayed to his Father), "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!"² Even at Pentecost Peter quoted that saying of Joel: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," plainly in the same sense as that in which Paul uses it later; for the sermon connected with this prophetic text leads to the conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth, the wonder-working man whom the Jews had killed, had now through his resurrection and exaltation become Christ and Lord.³ Jesus is therefore now the Lord, by calling on whom in faith, all in this deeply guilty nation may be saved.

The "Kyrie eleison" of our church hymns is as old as the church itself. We see, also, that the adoration of Jesus was not a laudatory glorification of the departed Master, not an extravagant expression of reverence and enthusiasm for him. Nor can it be compared with the saint-worship of a

¹ Acts ix. 14, 21 ; xxii. 16.

² Acts vii. 59 f.; cf. Luke xxiii. 34, 46 ; John xix. 30. It is perhaps doubtful whether in Acts i. 24 Jesus or God is addressed.

³ Acts ii. 21, 36, as already explained.

later age, to justify which artificial distinctions had to be invented. On the contrary, it was a conscious transfer to Jesus of the worship which is due to God, and it was an earnest praying for the benefits which God alone can bestow. No longer is it to Abraham's bosom that the angels bear the souls of the good, but it is Jesus, who dwells in heaven, who receives them and welcomes them into his Father's house. As on earth he exercised the authority to remit to men their sins, so now he does the same in fulness of power from heaven,¹ no longer as an authorized servant of God, but as the Lord whose personal grace and favor are all-important. He is not only the herald and mediator of the grace of God, but it is his own grace, whose bestowal on his servants is invoked by the apostles at the beginning and close of their epistles. To experience his mercy is to enter the state of grace in which Christians rejoice.² His mercy assures the salvation of each Christian, here and hereafter.³ The Epistle to the Hebrews only carries out the idea found everywhere in the New Testament, of the sole mediation of the grace of God through Jesus exalted to God's right hand, when it describes him as the high priest, who, on the ground of his own past experience of human life, can and does sympathize with Christians in their manifold infirmities and need of help. When the same author urges us to draw near with boldness to God's throne as a throne of grace, which we can do only in prayer, this prayer must be not only a calling on the omnipotent God, but also an appeal to the sympathetic heart of the high priest who shares God's throne.⁴ For Jesus has not only a general relation to his church as a whole, but also to each individual who calls upon him. And unto them all,

¹ Acts vii. 60; perhaps also viii. 24.

² 1 Cor. vii. 25 (where *κύριος* without the article designates Jesus the second time as well as the first); 1 Tim. i. 12-16.

³ 2 Tim. i. 16, 18; iv. 17 f.

⁴ Heb. iv. 15 f.; cf. x. 19-22; ii. 17 f.

however far apart they dwell, however various and numberless their wants may be, he is as rich as they would be poor without him. Even earthly needs and physical wants are not excluded from prayer to him.

Let us take an illustration which will also bring into view other characteristics of prayer to Jesus. Paul carried about with him some severe bodily affliction.¹ We do not know exactly what it was, but it must have been very painful and at the same time uncanny, since he compares it to a sharp stake which penetrates his flesh, and traces it to an angel of Satan who buffets him, and also speaks of his sickness as a temptation to the hearers of his preaching to despise, even to loathe, him. Three times, he confesses to the Corinthians, he besought the Lord for release from this evil. It may be asked, Why only three times? Would it not be a subject of *daily* prayer with this energetic man? But the apostles did not think lightly of a prayer without result. Prayer is petition, which asks an answer, and when it receives none, finally is silenced. The prayer of Christians is only unceasing where it finds response. Paul's prayer too did not remain unheard. He became in his heart certain of this answer: "My grace is sufficient for thee," that is, 'Continue to bear thine affliction, which does not prevent thy possession of my grace, but rather serves to make my strength manifest mightily in thy weakness.' But Paul repeated his first prayer a second and a third time. Did this perhaps happen after renewed attacks of sickness, and after long intervals, so that there was cause for the question on the part of the petitioner, whether he had not now endured this trial long enough? We do not, however, need this assumption, when we remember the threefold prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane. Not until the same response had come a second and a third time, did Paul cease to pray on this subject. His prayer was for the blessing of bodily health, but he did not direct his imploring petition to the almighty

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 7-9; Gal. iv. 13 f.

Creator and Father, but *to the Lord*, and that means *to the Lord Jesus* everywhere with Paul, when he is not quoting Old Testament words, and especially here, as the following context unmistakably shows. With Jesus, therefore, Paul maintains an intercourse in which he brings to expression all that troubles him; an intercourse in which matters do not end with the asking and petition of the man who needs help, but an answer follows, and that a satisfying answer, even in cases where no change of condition in the life gives outward sign that the prayer has found a hearing. If now the intercourse of Paul by prayer with Jesus was such, how much more natural would a similar relation be to the personal disciples of Jesus, who in a companionship with him lasting several years had become accustomed to turn to him in every need and perplexity, and to be upheld by the staff of his word, by the glance of his eye, by the clasp of his hand, when they feared they must sink. Only if they had held that he was dead, and had not believed in his resurrection, could it have seemed to them impracticable to continue their personal intercourse with him? But they were convinced that he was living; and in those days after the resurrection in which they gained this conviction, they learned also that Jesus now, after his glorification, was no less interested than in the days of his flesh, in each of them with his peculiar needs, and still adapted himself specially to each disciple. The appearances of the risen Lord ceased, but not their faith in the unabated continuance, nay in the increased activity, of communion and fellowship between Christ and Christians. To the faith and feeling of the first disciples it was a personal intercourse with the unseen Lord which they maintained in praying to Jesus. It may be questioned whether this prayer to Jesus, when shared by larger numbers, and by those who had not previously enjoyed personal companionship with Jesus, could still preserve the same character of personal intimacy. But the example of Paul shows that this was certainly the case. As,

according to the account in Acts, a dialogue between Jesus and Paul was the experience decisive for his conversion, so did this apostle afterwards continue, waking and in vision, an intercourse of petition and answer with Jesus.¹ And though we have many confessions of his weakness, yet we cannot discover a trace of his ever having doubtfully entertained even for a moment the possibility of self-deception in this direction. Indeed the first witnesses, the "friends" of Jesus, as he himself called them, assert that, in respect of communion with the Lord, there exists no difference between them and the other Christians, who have not seen the Lord and yet love him.² Jesus too assumed no other aspect towards the praying church than that which had ineffaceably impressed itself on the memory of the eye-witnesses of his life. They had learned to know him, not only as the preacher of the gospel for the poor, as the saviour of souls, as the bestower of forgiveness of sins, but also as the physician of the spiritually and bodily sick, as one who had power even over nature. When daily bread was lacking, they had seen him feed thousands miraculously, yet with real bread. Even for luxury they had seen him provide, when wine was wanting at the wedding feast. And these were not isolated acts, whose object lay entirely outside of the acts themselves. The healing of the sick, also, was his constant occupation; it is represented as an essential part of the work to which he was called. With this exhausting labor, they had seen him occupied like a much sought physician even into the night, until his strength was spent. Such miracles would measure the faith with which the church prayed to her exalted Head. It was impossible that they should think of his activity as limited to the spiritual life. Nay, not limited, but raised above all confining limita-

¹ Cf. Acts xviii. 9 ; xxii. 17-21.

² 1 Pet. i. 8 ; 2 Pet. i. 1 ; 1 John i. 3. Especially would 1 John v. 14 ff. belong here, if, as some used to maintain, it referred to prayer to the Son of God.

tions, was the Lord, in their view, since his exaltation to God. Though he formerly wrought his works only on those who were privileged to approach him physically, now he was accessible to all who in faith looked up to him in his exalted position. And though before, only a few out of the innumerable multitude of the suffering on earth addressed to him the cry "Lord, have mercy," now all who in the wide world had attained to faith in him could call on him in like manner, even in every trouble of the physical life. And they did this with the certainty that he who was once poor was now rich, rich enough to hear and to answer them all. This faith was confirmed by experience of the might of the name of Jesus, even over bodily sickness. Isolated occurrences of this kind, such as Acts often mentions, might have been viewed as exceptions, as specially distinguishing the apostles, and so have remained without any pervasive influence on the consciousness of the praying church. But we see from the Epistle of James that it was viewed as something quite usual to cure those who were dangerously sick by believing prayer and anointing in the name of Jesus. Even the antichristian Jewish literature attests this belief of ancient Christianity in Palestine¹ by a witness which cannot be suspected of partiality. But the cure of the sick was ascribed to the same Lord in whose name and service they were thus treated.² So this healing prayer was addressed to Jesus. Such practices assume, or rather include, the belief that the exalted Lord is in possession of divine knowledge and power; that there is no sphere of human or earthly life over which he has not dominion; that even the angels and spirits, through whom God accomplishes his will in the various provinces of nature, are

¹ E. g., cf. Derenbourg, *Histoire et géographie de la Palestine*, p. 360.

² Cf. Acts iii. 6, 16; xix. 11-17; Luke x. 17; Mark vi. 13; ix. 38; Matt vii. 22; also Matt. xviii. 19f., where the object of the prayer is left undetermined, and I Cor. v. 3-5, which refers to a miraculous punishment; and, for a slightly different view, Acts ix. 34; Jas. v. 14f.

now, to a far wider extent than during his earthly life,¹ subject to Jesus as servants and instruments of his will.² It was this conviction of the full participation of Jesus in God's government of the world, which found its current expression in the words "sitting at the right hand of God."³ If we now ask in what name the church expressed that which Jesus was to her as the object of her adoration, we might almost wonder that the answer is not simply "God." For this name seems, after all, the only appropriate one for him who was prayed to with such audacity of faith, with such ardent fervor, with such inclusive petitions, as were manifest from the first in the adoration of Jesus. Nor is this name entirely wanting. Paul designates Christ once as the one "who is over all, God blessed for ever";⁴ and elsewhere we find him called "our God and Saviour."⁵ And there is no significance in the fact that we do not find this mode of expression in older writings than the epistles of Paul. For we possess no earlier Christian literature than these epistles, save perhaps the little Epistle of James, in which Christ is mentioned at all only four or five times, unambiguously.⁶ The name by which he is there mentioned is "the Lord"; this is, however, also "the name above every name," in which apostolic Christianity most commonly expressed its faith in Jesus,⁷ and which we find used regularly where there is reference to praying to him. It is characteristic of the moderation of the religious language of the apostles, that this trite word "Lord" sufficed them to express their highest meaning. It was then in customary use as a

¹ John i. 51 (52); cf. Matt. viii. 9.

² 1 Pet. iii. 22; Eph. i. 20 ff.; Col. ii. 10.

³ Acts ii. 33 f.; vii. 55 f.; Rom. viii. 34; Col. iii. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Heb. i. 3; viii. 1; x. 12; xii. 2; Rev. v. 6.

⁴ Rom. ix. 5. The ancient controversy over this passage is not founded on exegetical difficulties.

⁵ Tit. ii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 12; 2 Pet. i. 1.

⁶ Jas. i. 1; ii. 1; v. 7 f., 14 f. (i. 7; iv. 15; v. 11).

⁷ Rom. x. 9; 1 Cor. xiii. 3; Phil. ii. 11.

courteous or honorific title in addressing one with whom the speaker was not intimate, or who ranked above him.¹ In its Greek form, preserved in the "Kyrie" of our old hymns and liturgies, it had been adopted into the conversational speech of the Palestinian Jews. Perhaps in this form, and certainly in this signification, the disciples had regularly used it in intercourse with Jesus (John xifi. 13). And they retained it even when they prayed to him as the partner of God's throne. Their language was not the pompous speech of the declamatory orators, and of the servile poets, who with ardent zeal vie with one another in predicates more and more exaggerated, in order to clothe the slender subject of their discourse with the garb of greatness. The precept of the Master, that their speech should be: "Yea, yea; Nay, nay," was to them not only a prohibition of frivolous oaths, but also a rule to be observed in the attestation of their faith. The evil theology which says both Yea and Nay at once, because it is not in earnest with either, was foreign to the apostles. Measured but fully weighed was their Yea, as also their Nay. They knew that there are many who are called lords, and in a sense are lords. When they, notwithstanding, called Jesus, absolutely "the Lord" or "their Lord," and themselves his servants, they took the word in its full truth, in the full meaning which it had previously had, when Israel spake of God as "the Lord." To such lords, adoration should be rendered, and to him who is so adored, is due the confession that he is the Lord, beside whom his church has no other.² And yet those who so spake of him and to him, had seen him when, weary from the journey, he seated himself hungry and thirsty at the well; they had eaten and drunk with him; they had heard him pray to God as a man who needed help. What-

¹ John iv. 11; xii. 21. In Epictetus, for example, the physician is so addressed by the patient (Diss. ii. 15, 15; iii. 10, 15), the soothsayer by his interrogator (ii. 7, 9), the orator by his admirer (lii. 23, 19).

² 1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iv. 5.

ever of the miraculous they may have experienced in his company could not obliterate the impression which the daily life had made, that the norm of ordinary human existence was for him also the rule. On the calm consideration of those who are impartial, the question forces itself, Was Jesus a man whom his friends deified a few weeks after his death?

[*To be concluded.*]