

Hittites, that Rebekah speaks of herself as dreading that Jacob should marry with the "daughters of Heth." We know that Isaac ultimately broke up his encampment at Beer-la-hai-roi. He was driven thence by a famine. He led a wandering life for some time, and died, as we are told, at Mamre. At Mamre, therefore, among the children of Heth, we may imagine Esau and Jacob entering into friendly relations with the Hittites, and the former ultimately contracting marriage alliances with them. What is remarkable in the matter is that Gen. xxvii. 46 is assigned to the redactor. It is P and the redactor, then, writing after the exile, who make this masterly guess at the political conditions of Palestine more than a thousand years previously—a guess, strange to say, entirely corroborated by the recent discoveries among the monuments. We have here, then, another strong argument in favour of the conclusion that the author of Genesis, whoever he may have been, was, if not himself an early writer, at least no fabulist, but a man in possession of authentic information.

—◆◆—

J. J. LIAS.

#### ART. VI.—SOME MODERN VIEWS OF OUR LORD.

EVER since Hess published his "History of the Life of Jesus" in 1768, one of the first attempts to explain and defend the Gospel miracles, scarcely any German theologian has omitted to put forward a Christology of some kind. Herder, Paulus, Schleiermacher, Hase, Neander, Ebrard, Weisse, Ewald, Keim, Baur, Strauss, and Harnack, are a goodly list of writers who have taken a deep interest in the life, personality, and Gospels of our Lord. As it would be impossible in the course of this article to notice their various conceptions of Jesus, I shall confine myself to a short notice of the principal theories of Jesus of which Baur, Strauss, Renan, and Harnack are the representatives.

It is not wise to imagine that Baur's tendency-hypothesis has been wholly exploded. Modern writers are reproducing his arguments. Baur's explanation of the genesis of Christianity is of a piece with his reading of history. Men who lived and wrought are but the embodiments of "the idea," or the mouthpiece of the "tendency." Human and historical characters are bereft of their individuality; they vanish into smoke; they do not act, or think, or speak; the idea or the tendency incarnate for the time in their bodies attends to such matters. Christianity has been the result of a development from a conflict between two of these tendencies—the

proclamation of universal religion and the claim of Messianic honours. And the idea of the Teacher's divinity was the outcome of the love and reverence of His followers, who, if Baur is right, were but poor deluded creatures after all.

While Baur thus explained Christianity as a development by contrasts, Strauss and his successor, Schmiedel, found its origin in the land of myth. In his "Leben Jesu" he has proved to his own satisfaction the mythical origin of the history of the miracles and resurrection of our Lord. He has endowed the evangelists and early Christian writers with wonderful imagination and power of invention, but he does not seem to be aware of this assumption, for he declares that they had everything mapped out for them. They knew exactly what the Messiah was to be, and to do, and to suffer. The Old Testament prototypes, David, Daniel, Elijah, Moses, and the servant in Isaiah, and later Jewish conceptions of the "silent" age, afforded them abundant material from which they could draw and present a comparatively Christian character. These writers did their work of recording as facts things that had never occurred in good faith. They were justified by their "theological interest," and, after all, a myth was merely an unhistorical narrative, in which a religious community recognises a constituent part of its foundation. They required a medium to express their doctrines of forgiveness, the true sacredness of the Sabbath, and that death is but a sleep—ideas that were now rising in the public consciousness. And the mythical Messiah of the Jews was the only form to hand in which they could express these Christian ideas, which were breathed as a new and better soul into narratives based upon the Old Testament and the Messianic hopes.

Common-sense be the judge which of these explanations be the more likely—that the Gospels were the simple records of a superhuman life, or that they were the result of a deliberate attempt of a whole community to compose and accept a narrative which they well knew had no foundation in fact, but which was required as a vehicle for their propaganda. Human imagination could hardly create so simple and so sublime a picture as that of the Christ of the Gospels. And would fraud be successful where fancy would fail? In those mythical stories, the apocryphal Gospels, which were invented for the purpose of glorifying the Master, we have specimens of what human imagination and theological "interest" have done for Jesus. From such a source we are safe in saying that the writers of the historical Jesus did not draw. For if this Jesus be but an artificial creation, it is the most miraculous thing the world has ever seen or known that the

crowning event in the history of the world should be the revolution by which the noblest portions of humanity passed from the ancient religions, comprised under the vague name of "paganism," to a religion founded on the Divine unity, the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God, and that that revolution should have had its origin, at least, in a historical fact, if not in a Divine person. In the opening sentences of his "*Vie de Jésus*," Renan admits that the cause of this revolution was "a fact which took place in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, when there lived a superior person, who, by his bold initiative and the love he inspired in those around him, created the object and marked the point of departure of the future faith of humanity."

No writer, perhaps, shows a truer appreciation than Renan for the human character of the Master: His human-hearted love of Nature; His tenderly mysterious manner, that wins the woman's devotion; His strongly sympathetic spirit, that compels the man's admiration; and His sweet simplicity, that brings the little ones to His arms. No one saw better the significance and tendency of the Master's teaching or valued more the poetry of His soul, and yet no one was less in touch with His Divine nature and mission. The visionary Jew, the gentle Messiah, that earns divinity by His devotion to humanity, the amiable Reformer, who founded the religion of the Father, when separated from the Divine attributes He claimed, the Divine nature He assumed, the Divine powers He commanded, may be an attractive and idyllic figure, but He could not be the "ever-enduring principle of spiritual regeneration" that Mr. Lecky admits He has been. It is impossible to look upon Jesus as a purely human life, described in purely human records as Hase and his school did. For as the cause must be equal to produce the effect, we cannot eliminate miracle and inspiration from the Gospel and the Founder of our religion. In their efforts to reconcile the Christ of the Gospels with the requirements of history, men have been content to look away from those Divine attributes and powers of Christ, which would have made it utterly impossible for them to treat Him as an ordinary man. It may be quite true, as Herder remarks, that it is inexcusable in us who have the moral evidences of Christianity around us to need such credentials as physical miracles, which were but emblems of a higher activity; but we can never forget that the supernatural origin of the Founder is the only rational explanation that can be offered of the supernatural growth of His religion. The German "tendency," "legend," and "vision" are simple myths, while Christ is a sublime reality, as the best writers of our age allow.

In Harnack we have a modern writer of power and piety, who treats the sacred subject of our Lord's personality with reserve and respect. He warns us not to seek to analyze His psychology. That is His secret; we cannot fathom it, and we dare not attempt to do so. In one sense He was the Messiah, and in another sense He was not, for He left that idea far behind Him, and filled it with a new content that burst it—an idea, however, that cannot be altogether incomprehensible, seeing that it had given to a nation the ideals of centuries of its life. But He knew Himself to be the Son of God, and that He had the Father's work to do. He had already determined that matter in His mind before He was baptized. But the rôle He had to play, the suffering and the cross, these things were gradually revealed to His soul as He became aware of the prophecies He was to fulfil. But beyond this Harnack does not attempt to carry us, for the personality of Christ, according to him, has no place in the Gospel, which merely concerns the soul and God. "The Evangel has no Christology, but it has the mercy and love of the Father; it holds forth a choice between God and Mammon, Truth and Falsehood, *and to it belongs, not the Son, but the Father only.* To the Father the Son leads us. Thousands find the Father in Him, who is the way to the Father, not only by reason of His Word, but even more by reason of what He is, and does, and suffers. The Parable of the Sower contains no dogma; it states a fact: The blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them—through Him. In this experience His majesty, which the Father had given Him, shone forth in His hours of trial and combat; and His personal work, being consummated by His death, will remain a fact decisive and effectual for the future. 'He is the way to the Father.' Has He made a mistake? Nay, He has been justified by history. He is not a constituent part of the Gospel; He is the personal realization of His Gospel and the power of the Gospel, and is ever felt to be so. For the experience and knowledge to which He has led men has been the subject of their message, and that message is a living one."<sup>1</sup> These are beautiful words, to be surpassed even in the next chapter, where the death and resurrection of Christ are treated. We are, therefore, hardly prepared for the remark that "the true doctrine of Christ threatens to become the centre of the system, and to pervert the majesty and simplicity of the Gospel."<sup>2</sup> "It was far from His purpose," he had already said (p. 80), "to give any doctrine of His person and His worth independently of the Gospel"; and "He would

<sup>1</sup> *Das Wesen des Christentums*, pp. 90, 91.

<sup>2</sup> Page 115.

have no other devotion to Himself or faith in His person than that which expressed itself in the keeping of His commandments." If that be true, why did our Lord reveal Himself under so many different types—Shepherd, Door, Vine, Bread of Life, Light, and Life—that express nothing if not a personal relation, and introduce them with such emphasis—"I am?" If the doctrine of the Divine personality and two natures of Christ was indeed, as Harnack would show, the discovery of a later age, it was not an invention; it was not due to the identification of the Greek *Logos* with Christ. That identification may, indeed, have given a metaphysical meaning to His nature (p. 128), but it did not create His Church's belief in His divinity and in His oneness with His Father. The Jewish enemies of Jesus knew the claim He made, and crucified Him for what they called His blasphemy. His disciples were equally conscious of that claim, and sealed their faith by dying to maintain it. In the very first statement of their faith—the baptismal formula—they had linked His name with those of the Father and the Holy Spirit. It is true that metaphysical definitions of the personality and natures of Jesus profit little if truth and righteousness and brotherly love be forgotten; but who will dare to say that the simplicity and power of the Gospel are lessened when read in the light of His personality, who, though He was the Son of God, became the Son of man to make the sons of men sons of God? Hess may have dwelt truthfully upon the incomparable grace of His life and the singular appropriateness of the Gospel scenes; Herder may have lingered exclusively over the moral elevation of His character and teaching; Schleiermacher may have tried to reconcile faith and reason in the natural development of His consciousness of God; Neander may have sought a *modus vivendi* between inspiration and natural gifts; Mill may have found consolation in the ideal goodness of His personality; Renan may have sympathetically depicted the historical and psychological growth of His mind and heart; and Harnack may have, in powerful and vivid phrase, depicted the course and consummation of His consciousness as Son of God and Messiah of the Jews; but the Lord of the Christian Church is not the personified ideal of the German rationalists, nor the romantic hero of the French humanitarian, nor the visionary Jesus of the Docetæ, nor the human Messiah of the Ebionites, nor the semi-divine creature of the Arians, but He is the "strong Son of God."

In the "Finding of the Books" the Irish Primate, Dr. Alexander, has uttered this clever satire of the modern conceptions of Christ—the Christ of Renan and Strauss, the Christ made in Germany and France:

"They call Him King. They mourn o'er His eclipse,  
 And fill a cup of half-contemptuous wine;  
 Foam the froth'd rhetoric for the death-white lips,  
 And ring the changes on the word 'divine.'  
 Divinely gentle—yet a sombre giant;  
 Divinely perfect—yet imperfect man;  
 Divinely calm—yet recklessly defiant;  
 Divinely true—yet half a charlatan.  
 They torture all the record of the Life;  
 Give what from France and Germany they get,  
 To Calvary carry a dissecting-knife,  
 Parisian *Patchouli* to Olivet."

But satire, after all, is not argument; there are, indeed, many who honestly doubt His divinity. It is hard, they say, to deify a man. It would indeed be hard for us to raise a man like ourselves to a Divine position. But if one were not altogether like ourselves, if one were superhuman, should we not give Him His Divine honours? The divinity of Jesus has been believed for nearly two thousand years; the burden of proof, therefore, fall upon those who declare Him to be but human. Let them fairly prove that He was so; and without depending on such questionable theories as legend, tendency, vision, and hypnotic power, let them explain the uniqueness of His personality, the triumph of His cross, the marvellous perfection of His character and revelation, and that never-dying principle of spiritual regeneration which He has been, and is, and shall be to the end of the chapter.

F. R. MONTGOMERY HITCHCOCK.

---

ART. VII.—BIBLIOMANCY.

**B**IBLIOMANCY, or divination by the Bible, was introduced into the Church as early as the third century, and has prevailed more or less since then in every part of Christendom. In proportion to the ignorance of the people has been their resort to this superstition. Goethe acutely remarks: "Superstition is a part of the very being of humanity; and when we fancy we are banishing it altogether, it takes refuge in the strangest nooks and corners, and then suddenly comes forth again as soon as it believes itself at all safe." Divination by the Bible was named "*Sortes Sanctorum*," or "*Sortes Sacræ*," (the Lots of the Saints, or Sacred Lots), and consisted in suddenly opening or dipping into the Bible, and regarding the passage that first presented itself to the eye as revealing or predicting with a kind of Divine certainty the future lot or fortune of the inquirer. We have known persons ourselves who in perplexity or trouble sought comfort or guidance in this way, and were