

CONCLUDING DISSERTATION.

THE DOGMATIC IMPORT OF THE LIFE OF JESUS.

§ 144. NECESSARY TRANSITION FROM CRITICISM TO DOGMA*

THE results of the inquiry which we have now brought to a close, have apparently annihilated the greatest and most valuable part of that which the Christian has been wont to believe concerning his Saviour Jesus, have uprooted all the animating motives which he has gathered from his faith, and withered all his consolations. The boundless store of truth and life which for eighteen centuries has been the aliment of humanity, seems irretrievably dissipated; the most sublime levelled with the dust, God divested of his grace, man of his dignity, and the tie between heaven and earth broken. Piety turns away with horror from so fearful an act of desecration, and strong in the impregnable self-evidence of its faith, pronounces that, let an audacious criticism attempt what it will, all which the Scriptures declare, and the Church believes of Christ, will still subsist as eternal truth, nor needs one iota of it to be renounced. Thus at the conclusion of the criticism of the history of Jesus, there presents itself this problem: to re-establish dogmatically that which has been destroyed critically.

At the first glance, this problem appears to exist merely as a challenge addressed by the believer to the critic, not as a result of the moral requirements of either. The believer would appear to need no re-establishment of the faith, since for him it cannot be subverted by criticism. The critic seems to require no such re-establishment, since he is able to endure the annihilation resulting from his own labours. Hence it might be supposed that the critic, when he seeks to rescue the dogma from the flames which his criticism has kindled, acts falsely in relation to his own point of view, since, to satisfy the believer, he treats what is valueless for himself as if he esteemed it to be a jewel; while in relation to the believer, he is undertaking a superfluous task, in labouring to defend that which the latter considers in no way endangered. But on a nearer view the case appears otherwise. To all belief, not built on demonstration, doubt is inherent, though it may not be

* [Internet transcription editors – Unfortunately George Eliot, the translator of this work from German, seems to have completely misunderstood the meaning Strauss intended by the title of this chapter, *Nothwendiger Übergang der Kritik in das Dogma*. He is not saying that Criticism should lead on to Dogmatics. Almost the opposite: he is saying that after Critical scholarship has investigated the historicity of the Gospels, it should go on and make a similar study of the development of Christian dogma – a task he himself undertook in his *The Christian Faith in its Doctrinal Development and Conflict with Modern Science* and, to a lesser and provisional degree, in this chapter. The point of the title of this section is perhaps summed up in the 4th. paragraph – "Thus our historical criticism is followed up by dogmatical criticism, and it is only after the faith has passed through both these trials, that it is thoroughly tested and constituted science."]

868

developed; the most firmly believing Christian has within him the elements of criticism as a latent deposit of unbelief, or rather as a negative germ of knowledge, and only by its constant repression can he maintain the predominance of his faith, which is thus essentially a re-established faith. And just as the believer is intrinsically a sceptic or critic, so, on the other hand, the critic is intrinsically a believer. In proportion as he is distinguished from the naturalistic theologian, and the free-thinker,—in proportion as his criticism is conceived in the

spirit of the nineteenth century,—he is filled with veneration for every religion, and especially for the substance of the sublimest of all religions, the Christian, which he perceives to be identical with the deepest philosophical truth; and hence, after having in the course of his criticism exhibited only the differences between his conviction and the historical belief of the Christian, he will feel urged to place that identity in a just light.

Further, our criticism, though in its progress it treats of details, yet on becoming part of our internal conviction, resolves itself into the simple element of doubt, which the believer neutralizes by an equally simple veto, and then spreads anew in undiminished luxuriance all the fulness of his creed. But hereby the decisions of criticism are only dismissed, not vanquished, and that which is believed is supported by no intermediate proof, but rests absolutely on its own evidence. Criticism cannot but direct itself against this absence of intermediate proof, and thus the controversy which seemed ended is renewed, and we are thrown back to the beginning of our inquiry; yet with a difference which constitutes a step forward in the discussion. Hitherto our criticism had for its object the data of Christianity, as historically presented in the evangelical records; now, these data having been called in question in their historical form, assume that of a mental product, and find a refuge in the soul of the believer; where they exist, not as a simple history, but as a reflected history, that is, a confession of faith, a received dogma. Against this dogma, presenting itself totally unsupported by evidence, criticism must in deed awake, as it does against all deficiency of proof, in the character of a negating power, and a contender for intermediate proof: it will, however, no longer be occupied with history, but with doctrines. Thus our historical criticism is followed up by dogmatical criticism, and it is only after the faith has passed through both these trials, that it is thoroughly tested and constituted science.

This second process through which the faith has to pass, ought, like the first, to be made the subject of a distinct work: I shall here merely give a sketch of its most important features, that I may not terminate an historical criticism without pointing out its ultimate object, which can only be arrived at by dogmatical criticism as a sequel.

869

§ 145. THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE ORTHODOX SYSTEM.

The dogmatic import of the life of Jesus implicitly received, and developed on this basis, constitutes the orthodox doctrine of the Christ.

Its fundamental principles are found in the New Testament. The root of faith in Jesus was the conviction of his resurrection. He who had been put to death, however great during his life, could not, it was thought, be the Messiah: his miraculous restoration to life proved so much the more strongly that he was the Messiah. Freed by his resurrection from the kingdom of shades, and at the same time elevated above the sphere of earthly humanity, he was now translated to the heavenly regions, and had taken his place at the right hand of God (Acts ii. 32 ff., iii. 15 ff., v. 30 ff.; and elsewhere). Now, his death appeared to be the chief article in his messianic destination; according to Isa. liii., he had suffered for the sins of his people and of mankind (Acts viii. 32 ff.; comp. Matt. xx. 28; John i. 29, 36; i John ii. 2); his blood poured out on the cross, operated like that which on the great day of atonement the high priest sprinkled on the mercy-seat (Rom. iii. 25); he was the pure lamb by whose blood the believing are redeemed (i Pet. i. 18 f.); the eternal, sinless high priest, who by the offering of his own body, at once effected that, which the Jewish high priests were unable to effect, by their perpetually repeated sacrifices of animals (Heb. x. 10 ff., etc.). But, thenceforth, the Messiah who was exalted to the right hand of God, could not have been a common man: not only was he anointed with the divine spirit in a greater measure than any prophet (Acts iv. 27, x. 38); not only did he prove himself to be a divine messenger by miracles and signs (Acts ii. 22); but also, according as the one idea or the other was most readily formed, either he was supernaturally engendered by the Holy Spirit (Matt. and Luke i.), or he had descended as the

Word and Wisdom of God into an earthly body (John i.). As, before his appearance on the earth, he was in the bosom of the Father, in divine majesty (John xvii. 5): so his descent into the world of mortals, and still more his submission to an ignominious death, was a voluntary humiliation, to which he was moved by his love to mankind (Phil. ii. 5 ff.). The risen and ascended Jesus will one day return to wake the dead and judge the world (Acts i. ii, xvii. 31); he even now takes charge of his church (Rom. VI. 34; 1 John ii. i), participating in the government of the world, as he originally did in its creation (Matt. xxviii. 18; John i. 3, 10; Col. i. 16 f.). In addition to all this, every trait in the image of the Messiah as sketched by the popular expectation, was attributed with necessary or gratuitous modifications to Jesus; nay, the imagination, once stimulated, invented new characteristics.

How richly fraught with blessing and elevation, with encouragement and consolation, were the thoughts which the early Church

870

derived from this view of the Christ! By the mission of the Son of God into the world, by his delivery of himself to death for the sake of the world, heaven and earth are reconciled (2 Cor. v. 18 ff. ; Eph. i. 10; Col. i. 20); by this most stupendous sacrifice, the love of God is securely guaranteed to man (Rom. v. 8 ff., viii. 31 ff.; i John iv. 9), and the brightest hopes are revealed to him. Did the Son of God become man? Then are men his brethren, and as such the children of God, and heirs with Christ to the treasure of divine bliss (Rom. viii. 16 f., 29). The servile relation of man to God, as it existed under the law, has ceased; love has taken the place of the fear of the punishment threatened by the law (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 1 ff.). Believers are redeemed from the curse of the law by Christ's sacrifice of himself, inasmuch as he suffered a death on which the law had laid a curse (Gal. iii. 13). Now, there is no longer imposed on us the impossible task of satisfying all the demands of the law (Gal. iii. 10 f.)—a task which, as experience shows, no man fulfils (Rom. i. 18—iii. 20), which, by reason of his sinful nature, no man can fulfil (Rom. v. 12 ff.), and which only involves him who strives to fulfil it, more and more deeply in the most miserable conflict with himself (Rom. vii. 7 ff.): whereas he who believes in Christ, and confides in the atoning efficacy of his death, possesses the favour of God; not by works and qualifications of his own, but by the free mercy of God, is the man who throws himself on that mercy just before God, by which all self-exaltation is excluded (Rom. iii.

1 ff.). As the Mosaic law is no longer binding on the believer, he being dead to it with Christ (Rom. vii. 1 ff.); as, moreover, by the eternal and all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, the Jewish sacrificial and priestly service is abolished (Heb.); therefore the partition wall which separated the Jews and Gentiles is broken down: the latter, who before were aliens and strangers to the theocracy, without God and without hope in the world, are now invited to participate in the new covenant, and free access is opened to them to the paternal God; so that the two portions of mankind, formerly separated by hostile opinions, are now at peace with each other, members in common of the body of Christ—stones in the spiritual building of his Church (Eph. ii. 11 ff.). But to have justifying faith in the death of Christ, is, virtually, to die with him spiritually—that is, to die to sin; and as Christ arose from the dead to a new and immortal life, so must the believer in him arise from the death of sin to a new life of righteousness and holiness, put off the old man and put on the new (Rom. vi. 1 ff.). In this, Christ himself aids him by his Spirit, who fills those whom he inspires with spiritual strivings, and makes them ever more and more free from the slavery of sin (Rom. viii. 1 ff.). Nor alone spiritually, will the Spirit of Christ animate those in whom he dwells, but corporeally also, for at the end of their earthly course, God, through Christ, will resuscitate their bodies, as he did the body of Christ (Rom. viii. 11). Christ, whom the bonds of death and the nether world could not hold,

871

has vanquished both for us, and has delivered the believer from the fear of these dread powers which rule over mortality (Rom. viii. 38 f.; I Cor. xv. 55 ff.; Heb. ii. 14 f.). His resurrection not only confers atoning efficacy on his death (Rom. iv. 25), but at the same time is the pledge of our own future resurrection, of our share in Christ in a future life, in his messianic kingdom, to the blessedness of which he will, at his second advent, lead all his people. Meanwhile, we may console ourselves that we have in him an Intercessor, who from his own experience of the weakness and frailty of our nature, which he himself assumed, and in which he was in all points tempted as we are, but without sin, knows how much indulgence and aid we need (Heb. ii. 17 f., iv. 15 f.).

The expediency of describing in compendious forms the riches of their faith in Christ, was early felt by his followers. They celebrated him as Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us, CristoV o apoqanwn, mallon de kai egerqeiV, oV kai estin en dexia tou qeou, oV kai entugcanei uper hmwn (Rom. viii. 34); or with more particularity as Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, I. C. o KurioV, genomenoV ek spermatoV Dabid kata sarka, orisqeiV uioV qeou en dunamei kata pneuma agiwsunhV, ex anastasewV nekrown. (Rom. 1. 3 f.); and as confessedly the great mystery of godliness, omologoumenwV mega thV eusebeiaV musthriou, the following propositions were presented: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory, qeoV efanerwqh en sarki, edikaiwqh en pneumatih, wfhq aggeloiV, ekhrucqh en eqnesin, episteuqh en kosmw, anelhfqh en doxh. (i Tim. iii. i6).

The baptismal formula (Matt. xxviii. 19), by its allocation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, presented a sort of framework in which to arrange the materials of the new faith. On this basis was constructed in the first centuries what was called the rule of faith, regula fidei, which in divers forms, some more concise, others more diffuse, some more popular, others more subtle, is found in the different fathers.* The more popular form at length settled into what is called the creed of the apostles. This symbol, in that edition of it which is received in the evangelical church, has in its second and most elaborate article on the Son, the following points of belief: et (credo) in Jesum Christum, filium ejus (Dei patris) unicum, Dominum nostrum; qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria virgine; passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, descendit ad inferna; tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad cœlos, sedet ad dextram Dei patris omnipotentis; inde venturus est, judicare vivos et mortuos.

* Iren. adv. hér. 1. 10. Tertull. de préscr. hér. xiii. adv. Prax. ii. de veland. virg. i. Orig. de principp. prooem. iv

872

Together with this popular form of the confession of faith in relation to Christ, there was also framed a more rigorous and minute theological digest, occasioned by the differences and controversies which early arose on certain points. The fundamental thesis of the Christian faith, that the Word was made flesh, o logoV sarx egeneto, or, God was manijčsted in the flesh, qeoV efanerwqh en sarki, was endangered on all sides, one questioning the Godhead, another the manhood, and a third the veritable union of the two natures.

It is true that those who, like the Ebionites, denied the Godhead, or like that sect of the Gnostics called Docetė, the manhood of Christ, separated themselves too decidedly from the Christian community, which on her part maintained that it was necessary that the mediator of God and man should unite both in friendship and harmony by means of a proper relationship to each, and that while he represented man to God, he should reveal God to man.* But when it was merely the plenitude of the one nature or the other, which was contested,—as when Arius

maintained that the being who became man in Christ was indeed divine, but created, and subordinate to the supreme God; when, while ascribing to Christ a human body, he held that the place of the soul was occupied by that superior being; when Apollinaris maintained that not only the body of Jesus was truly human, but his soul also, and that the divine being only served in the stead of the third principle in man, the *nouV* (understanding) ;—these were opinions to which it was easier to give a Christian guise. Nevertheless the Church rejected the Arian idea of a subordinate God become man in Jesus, for this reason among others less essential, that on this theory the image of the Godhead would not have been manifested in Christ ; † and she condemned the idea of Arius and Apollinaris, that the human nature of Christ had not the human *yuch* (soul), or the human *nouV* (understanding), for this reason chiefly, that only by the union of the divine, with an entire human nature, could the human race be redeemed. ‡

Not only might the one or the other aspect of the nature of Christ be defaced or put out of sight, but in relation also to the union of the two, there might be error, and again in two opposite directions. The devout enthusiasm of many led them to believe, that they could not draw too closely the newly-entwined bond between heaven and earth; hence they no longer wished to distinguish between the Godhead and manhood in Christ, and since he had appeared in one person, they acknowledged in him only one nature, that of the Son of God made flesh. Others, more scrupulous, could not reconcile themselves to such a confusion of the divine and the

* Iren. adv. hér. iii. xviii. 7.

† Athanas. contra Arianos, orat. 2, 33.

‡ Gregor. Naz. Or. 51, p. 740, B. to gar aproslhpton aqerapeumon. o de hnwtai tw qew touto kai swzetai.

873

human : it seemed to them blasphemous to say that a human mother had given birth to God: hence they maintained that she had only borne the man whom the Son of God selected as his temple; and that in Christ there were two natures, united indeed so far as the adoration of his followers was concerned, but distinct as regarded their essence. To the Church, both these views appeared to encroach on the mystery of the incarnation: if the two natures were held to be permanently distinct, then was the union of the divine and human, the vital point of Christianity, destroyed; if a mixture of the two were admitted, then neither nature in its individual quality was capable of a union with the other, and thus again no true unity would be attained. Hence both these opinions were condemned, the latter in the person of Eutyches, the former, not with equal justice, in that of Nestorius; and as the Nicene creed established the true Godhead of Christ, so that of Chalcedon established his true and perfect manhood, and the union of the two natures in one undivided person. When subsequently there arose a controversy concerning the will of Christ, analogous to that concerning his nature, the Church, in accordance with its previous decisions, pronounced that in Christ, as the God-man, there were two wills, distinct but not discordant,, the human will being subordinate to the divine.

In comparison with the controversies on the being and essence of Christ, the other branch of the faith, the doctrine of his work, was developed in tranquillity. The most comprehensive view of it was this: the Son of God, by assuming the human nature, gave it a holy and divine character * —above all he endowed it with immortality ; † while in a moral view, the mission of the Son of God into the world being the highest proof of the love of God, was the most efficacious means of awakening a return of love in the human breast. ‡

* Athanas. de incarn. 54. For other expressions of the kind, see Münscher, Dogmnengesch., herausg. von Cölln, 1, § 97, Anm. 10.

† Münscher, § 96, Anm. 5, s. 423 f.

‡ Augustin, de Catechiz. rudib. 7.

874

To this one great effect of the appearance of Christ, were annexed collateral benefits: his salutary teaching, his sublime example, were held up to view,* but especial importance was attached to the violent death which he suffered. The idea of substitution, already given in the New Testament, was more fully developed: the death of Jesus was regarded, now as a ransom paid by him to the devil for the liberation of mankind, who had fallen into the power of the evil one through sin; now as a means devised by God for removing guilt, and enabling him to remit the punishment threatened to the sins of man, without detriment to his truthfulness, Christ having, taken that punishment on himself. † The latter idea was worked up Anselm, in his book entitled *Cur Deus homo*, into the well known theory of satisfaction, by which the doctrine of Christ's work of redemption is placed in the closest connexion with that of his person. Man owes to God perfect obedience; but the sinner—and such are all men—withholds from God the service and honour which are His due. Now God, by reason of his justice, Cannot suffer an offence against his honour: therefore, either man must voluntarily restore to God that which is God's, nay, must, for complete satisfaction, render to him more than he has hitherto withheld; or, God must as a punishment take from man that which is man's, namely, the happiness for which he was originally created. Man is not able to do the former; for as he owes to God all the duties that he can perform, in order not to fall into sin, he can have no overplus of merit, wherewith to cover past sins. On the other hand, that God should obtain satisfaction by the infliction of eternal punishment, is opposed to his unchangeable goodness, which moves him actually to lead man to that bliss for which he was originally destined. This, however, cannot happen consistently with divine justice, unless satisfaction be made for man, and according to the measure of that which has been taken from God, something be rendered to him, greater than all else except God. But this can be none other than God himself; and as, on the other hand, man alone can satisfy for man: it must therefore be a God-man who gives satisfaction. Moreover this cannot consist in active obedience, in a sinless life, because every reasonable being owes this to God on his own behalf; but to suffer death, the wages of sin, a sinless being is not bound, and thus the satisfaction for the sins of man consists in the death of the God-man, whose reward, since he himself, as one with God, cannot be rewarded, is put to the account of man.

This doctrinal system of the ancient church concerning the person and work of Christ, passed also into the confessions of the Lutheran churches, and was still more elaborately developed by their theologians.‡ With regard to the person of Christ, they adhered

* Vid. Miinscher, § 96.

† *ibid.* § 97.

‡ *Comp. Form. Concord., Epit. und Sol. dcl. VIII. p. 605 ff. and 761 ff. ed Hase. Chemniz, de duabus naturis in Christo libellus, and loci theol., loc. 2, de filio ; Gerhard. 11. th. i, p. 640 ff. (ed. 1615); Quenstedt, theol. didact. polem. P. 3, c. 3. Comp. De Wette, bibl. Dogm. § 64 ff.*

875

to the union of the divine and human natures in one person: according to them, in the act of this union, *unitio personalis*, which was simultaneous with the conception, it was the divine nature of the Son of God which adopted the human into the unity of its personality; the state of union, the *unio personalis*, was neither essential, nor yet merely accidental, neither mystical nor moral, still less merely verbal, but a real and supernatural union, and eternal in its duration. From this union with the divine nature, there result to the human nature in Christ certain preminent advantages: namely, what at first appears a deficiency, that of being in itself impersonal, and of having personality only by its union with the divine nature; further, impeccability, and the possibility of not dying. Besides these special advantages, the human nature of Christ obtains others also from its union with the divine. The relation of the two

natures is not a dead, external one, but a reciprocal penetration, a *percursus*; an union not like that of two boards glued together, but like that of fire and metal in glowing iron, or of the body and soul in man. This communion of natures, *communio naturarum*, is manifested by a communication of properties, *communicatio idiomatum*, in virtue of which the human nature participates in the advantages of the divine, and the divine in the redeeming work of the human. This relation is expressed in the propositions concerning the person, *propositionibus personalibus*, and those concerning the properties, *idiomaticis*; the former are propositions in which the concrete of the one nature, i.e. the one nature as conceived in the person of Christ, is predicated of the other, as in 1 Cor. xv. 47: the second man is the Lord from heaven,- the latter are propositions in which determinations of one or the other nature, are referred to the entire person (*genus idiomaticum*), or in which acts of the entire person are referred to one or the other nature (*genus apotelesmaticum*), or lastly, in which attributes of the one nature are transferred to the other, which however is only possible from the divine to the human, not from the human to the divine (*genus auchematicum*).

In passing through the successive stages of the work of redemption, Christ with his person endowed with two natures, experienced, according to the expression of the dogmatical theologians, founded on Phil. ii. 6 ff., two states, *statum exinanitionis*, and *statum exaltationis*. His human nature in its union with the divine, participated from the moment of conception in divine properties : but as during his earthly life Jesus made no continuous use of them, that life to the time of his death and burial, is regarded as a state of humiliation: whereas, with the resurrection, or even with the descent into hell, commenced the state of exaltation which was consummated by the *sessio ad dextram patris*.

As to the work of Christ, the doctrine of our Church attributes to him a triple office. As prophet, he has revealed to man the highest truth, the divine decree of redemption, confirming his testimony by miracles; and he still unceasingly controls the announcement of this truth.

876

As high priest, he has, on the one hand, by his irreproachable life, fulfilled the law in our stead (*obedientia activa*); on the other, he has borne, in his sufferings and death, the punishment which impended over us (*obedientia passiva*), and now perpetually intercedes for us with the Father. Lastly, as king, he governs the world, and more particularly the Church, which he will lead from the conflicts of earth to the glory of heaven, completing its destiny by the general resurrection and the last judgment.

§ 146. OBJECTIONS TO THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE CHURCH.

The Reformed Church did not go thus far with the Lutherans in their doctrine of the person of Christ, for they did not admit the last and boldest consequence drawn by the latter from the union of the manhood and God-head—the *communicatio idiomatum*, or communication of properties. The Lutherans themselves did not hold that the properties of the human nature were communicated to the divine, nor that all the properties of the divine nature, eternity for example, could be communicated to the human ;* and this gave occasion on the part of the Reformed Church, to the following objection: the communication of properties must be reciprocal and complete, or it is none at all; moreover, by the communication of the properties of an infinite nature to a finite one, the latter is not less annihilated as to its essence than an infinite nature would be, were it to receive the properties of a finite one.† When the Lutherans sought shelter in the position, that the properties of the one nature were only so far shared by the other, as according to its character is possible, *uti per suam indolem potest*,‡ they in fact did away altogether with the *communicatio idiomatum*; and indeed this doctrine has been explicitly given up even by orthodox theologians since Reinhard.

But the simple root of this complicated exchange of properties, the union of the divine and human natures in one person, has also met with contradiction.

The Socinians denied it on the ground that two natures, each of which alone constitutes a person, cannot be united to form a single person, especially when they possess properties so opposite, as where the one is immortal, the other mortal, the one uncreated, the other created; § and the Rationalists

* See the Oratio appended to the locus de pers. et offic. Chr. Gerhard, ut sup. p. 719 ff.

† Vid, Gerhard, II. th. 1, p. 685 ff. ; Marheineke, Instit. symb. § 71 f.

‡ Reinhard, Vorles. über die Dogm. s. 354, conformably to the proposition urged by the Reformed against the Lutherans: Nulla natura in se ipsam recipit contradictoria, Planck, Gesch. des protest. Lehrbegriffs, Bd. 6, s. 782.

§ Fausti Socini de Christi natura disputatio. Opp. Bibi. Fr. Pol. 1, p. 784; Catech. Racov. Q. 96 ff. Comp. Marheineke, Instit. symb. § 96. Spinoza, also, ep. 21, ad Oldenburg, Opp. ed. Gfrörer, p. 556, says: Quod quédam ecclesié his adduut, quod Deus naturam humanarn assumpserit, monui expresse, me, quid dicant, nescire; imo, ut verum fatear, non minus absurde mihi loqui videntur, quam si quis mihi diceret, quad circulus naturam quadrati induerit.

877

agree with them, insisting more particularly that the formulé of the Church, in which the above union is defined, are almost entirely negative, thus presenting no conception to the mind, and that in a Christ, who by the aid of a divine nature dwelling within him, withstood evil and kept himself from sin, the man who is destitute of such aid can have no true example.*

The essential and tenable points of the rationalistic objections to this doctrine, have been the most acutely perceived and arranged by Schleiermacher, who, on this subject as on many others, has brought the negative criticism of the dogmas of the Church to completeness.† Before all else he finds it a difficulty, that by the expression, divine nature and human nature, divinity and humanity are placed under one category, and what is more, under the category of nature, which essentially denotes only a limited being, conceived by means of its opposite. Further, while ordinarily one nature is common to many individuals or persons, here one person is supposed to partake of two different natures. Now if by person be meant the permanent conscious unity of a living being, and by nature, the sum of the laws which govern the conditions of life in that being: it is not to be conceived, how two opposite systems of conditions can have but one centre. The absurdity of this doctrine becomes, according to Schleiermacher, especially evident in the supposition of two wills in Christ, since, for consistency, two wills must be associated with two understandings, and as the understanding and will constitute the personality, Christ would on this supposition be inevitably divided into two persons. It is true that the two wills are supposed always to will in unison : but, on the one hand, there results from this only a moral, not a personal unity; on the other hand, this unison of wills is not possible in relation to the divine and the human will, since the latter, which from its very essence can only exercise itself on particulars as they present themselves in succession, can as little will the same with the former, whose object is the whole in its development, as the human understanding, which acts by reasoning, can think the same with the divine understanding, which acts intuitively. Hence it evidently follows also that a communication of properties between the two natures is not to be admitted.

The doctrine of the work of Christ did not escape a similar criticism. Passing over what has been objected in point of form to the division of this work into three offices, the ideas of revelation and miracles, under the head of the prophetic office, were chiefly called in question. It was argued that these ideas agreed neither

* (Röhr) Briefe über den Rationalismus, S. 378 ff. ; Wegscheider Inst. theol. § 128; Bretschneider, Handb. der Dogm. 2, § 137 ff.; also Kant, Relig. innerhaib der Gränzen der blossen Vernunft. 2tes St. 2ter Absch. b.

† Glaubenslehre, 2, §§ 96—98.

878

objectively with just conceptions of God and the world in their reciprocal relation, nor subjectively with the laws of the human intellect; that the perfect God could not have created a world which from time to time needed the extraordinary interposition of the Creator, nor more particularly a human nature which was incapable of attaining its destination by the development of its innate faculties; that the immutable Being could not operate on the world first in this manner, then in that, at one time mediately, at another immediately, but that he must always have operated on it in the same manner, namely, in himself and on the whole immediately, but for us and on individuals mediately; that to admit an interruption of the order of nature, and of the development of humanity, would be to renounce all rational thought, while, in the particular case in question, a revelation or miracle is not confidently to be recognized as such, since, in order to be sure that certain results have not proceeded from the powers of nature and the faculties of the human mind, a perfect knowledge of the resources of both would be requisite, and of such a knowledge man is not possessed.*

But the main difficulty lay in the office of high priest, attributed to Jesus— in the doctrine of the atonement. That which especially drew forth objections was the human aspect which in Anselm's system was given to the relation of God to the Son of man. As it well becomes man to forgive offences without exacting vengeance, so, thought Socinus, might God forgive the offences committed against him by men, without satisfaction.† To meet this objection Hugo Grotius argued, that not as in consequence of personal injuries, but to maintain the order of the moral world inviolable, or in virtue of his *justitia rectoria*, God cannot forgive sins without satisfaction.‡ Nevertheless, granting the necessity for satisfaction, it did not appear to be met by the death of Jesus. While Anselm, and still more decidedly Thomas Aquinas,§ spoke of a *satisfactio superabundans*, Socinus denied that Christ had even borne as much punishment as men have deserved; for every individual man having deserved eternal death, consequently, as many substitutes as sinners ought to have suffered eternal death; whereas in this case, the single Christ has suffered merely temporal death, and that as an introduction to the highest glory; nor did this death attach to his divine nature, so that it might be said to have infinite value, but only to his human nature. On the other hand, Duns Scotus,|| in opposition to Thomas, and subsequently Grotius and the Arminians (equi-distant from orthodoxy and Socinianism), adopted the expedient of maintaining, that the merit of Christ was indeed in itself finite like its subject, his human nature, and hence was inadequate

* Spinoza, tract. theol. polit. c. vi. p. 533. ed. Gfrörer, and ep. 23, ad Oldenburg. p. 558 f. Briefe über den Rat., 4ter, 5ter, 6ter, 12ter. Wegscheider, §§ 11, 12. Schleiermacher, §§ 14. 47.

† Proelect. theol. c. xv.

‡ In the work: *defensio fidei cath. de satisfactione Chr. adv. F. Socinum.*

§ Summa, P. 3, Q. 48, A. 2

|| Comm. in Sentt. L. 3, Dist. 19.

879

as a satisfaction for the sins of the world; but that God accepted it as adequate out of his free grace. But from the admission that God can content himself with an inadequate satisfaction, and thus can forgive a part of the guilt without satisfaction, it follows necessarily, that he must also be able thus to forgive the whole. Besides these more precise definitions, however,, the fundamental idea of the whole fabric, namely, that one individual can take upon himself the punishment due to the sins of another, has been attacked as an ignorant transference of the conditions of a lower order of relation to a higher. Moral transgressions, it has been said, are not transmissible obligations; it is not with them as with debts of money, which it is immaterial to the creditor who pays, provided they are paid; rather it is essential to the

punishment of sin, that it should fall on the guilty only.* If, according to this, the so-called passive obedience of Christ cannot have been vicarious, still less can his active obedience have been so, since as man he was bound to render this on his own behalf.†

In relation to the kingly office of Christ, the hope of his second advent to judge the world lost ground in the sentiment of the Church, in proportion as the opinion obtained, that every individual enters on a state of complete retribution immediately after death, for this opinion made the general judgment appear superfluous.‡

§ 147. THE CHRISTOLOGY OF RATIONALISM.

The Rationalists, rejecting the doctrine of the Church concerning Christ, his person, and his work, as self-contradictory, useless, nay, even hurtful to the true morality of the religious sentiment, propounded in its stead a system which, while it avoided all contradictions, yet in a certain sense retained for Jesus the character of a divine manifestation, which even, rightly considered, placed him far higher, and moreover embodied the strongest motives to practical piety. §

According to them, Jesus was still a divine messenger, a special favourite and charge of the Deity, inasmuch as, furnished by the disposition of Providence with an extraordinary measure of spiritual endowment, he was born in an age and nation, and guided in a career, the most favourable to his development into that for which he was destined; and, especially, inasmuch as he was subjected to a species of death that rendered possible his apparent resurrection, on which depended the success of his entire work, and was encompassed by a series of circumstances which actually brought that resurrection to pass. The Rationalists hold that their idea of the

* See, besides Socinus, Kant, *Relig. innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, 2tes Stück, 1ter Abschn., c.

† Töllner, *Der thätige Gehorsam Christi untersucht*. 1768.

‡ Wegscheider, § 199.

§ Compare with what follows especially the *Briefe über den Rationalismus*, s. 372 ff. Wegscheider, §§ 128, 133, 140.

880

Christ is not essentially below the orthodox one, as regards his natural endowments and his external destiny, for in their view also he is the greatest man that ever trod the earth—a hero, in whose fate Providence is in the highest degree glorified: while, as regards the internal development and free agency of Jesus, they believe their doctrine essentially to surpass that of the Church. The Christ of the Church, they contend, is a mere automaton, whose manhood lies under the control of his Godhead like a lifeless instrument, which acts with moral perfection because it has no power to sin, and for this reason can neither have moral merit, nor be the object of affection and reverence according to the rationalistic view, on the contrary, Jesus had implanted in him by God the natural conditions only of that which he was ultimately to become, and his realization of this destiny was the result of his own spontaneity. His admirable wisdom he acquired by the judicious application of his intellectual powers, and the conscientious use of all the aids within his reach; his moral greatness, by the zealous culture of his moral dispositions, the restraint of his sensual inclinations and passions, and a scrupulous obedience to the voice of his conscience: and on these alone rested all that was exalted in his personality, all that was encouraging in his example.

As regards the work of Jesus, the rationalistic view is, that he has endeared himself to mankind by this above all else, that he has taught them a religion to which for its purity and excellence is justly ascribed a certain divine power and dignity; and that he has illustrated and enforced this religion by the brilliant example of his own life. This prophetic office of Christ is with Socinians and Rationalists the essence of his work, and to this they refer all the rest, especially what the doctrine of the Church comprehends under the office of high priest. With

them the so-called active obedience has value solely as an example; and the death of Jesus conduces to the forgiveness of sins, solely by furthering the reformation of the sinner in one of these two ways: either, as a confirmation of his doctrine, and a type of the devoted fulfilment of duty, it serves to kindle a zeal for virtue; or, as a proof of the love of God to man, of his inclination to pardon the converted sinner, it invigorates moral courage.*

If Christ was no more, and did no more, than this rationalistic doctrine supposes, it is not easy to see how piety has come to make him her special object, or dogmatism to lay down special propositions concerning him. Consistent Rationalists have in fact admitted, that what the orthodox dogma calls Christology, forms no integral part of the rationalistic system, since this system consists indeed of a religion which Christ taught, but not of a religion of which he is the object; that, viewing Christology as the doctrine of the Messiah, it is merely an accommodation to the Jewish mind,—that even taken in a more noble sense, as the doctrine of the life, the actions,

* For the different views, see Bretschneider, Dogm. 2, s. 353, systematische Entwicklung, § 107.

881

and the fate of Jesus as a divine messenger, it does not belong to a system of faith, for the universal truths of religion are as little connected with our ideas concerning the person of him who first enunciated them, as are the philosophical propositions in the systems of Leibnitz and Wolf, of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, with the opinions we may happen to form of the persons of their authors; that what relates to the person and work of Jesus belongs, not to religion itself, but to the history of religion, and must either be prefixed to a system of religious doctrine as an historical introduction, or appended to it as an elucidatory sequel.* Accordingly Henke, in his Lineaments, has removed Christology from its wonted position as an integral part of systematic theology, and has placed it as a subdivision under the head of anthropology. Thus, however, Rationalism enters into open war with the Christian faith, for it seeks to thrust into the background, nay, to banish from the province of theology, that which is its essential point, and cornerstone. But this very opposition is decisive of the insufficiency of the rationalistic system, proving that it does not perform what is demanded from every system of religious doctrine, namely, first, to give adequate expression to the faith which is the object of the doctrine; and secondly, to place this expression in a relation, whether positive or negative, to science. Now the Rationalists, in the effort to bring the faith into harmony with science, restrict its expression; for a Christ who is only a distinguished man, creates indeed no difficulty to the understanding, but is not the Christ in whom the Church believes.

§ 148. THE ECLECTIC CHRISTOLOGY OF SCHLEIERMACHFR.

It is the effort of this theologian to avoid both these ungrateful results, and without prejudice to the faith, to form such a conception of the doctrine of the Christ as may be proof against the attacks of science.† On the one hand, he has adopted in its fullest extent the negative criticism directed by Rationalism against the doctrine of the Church, nay, he has rendered it even more searching; on the other hand, he has sought to retain what Rationalism had lost, the essential part of positive Christianity : and thus he has saved many in these days from the narrowness of Supranaturalism, and the emptiness of Rationalism. This simplification of the faith Schleiermacher effects in the following manner: he does not set out, with the Protestant, from the doctrine of Scripture, nor with the Catholic from the decision of the church, for in both these ways he would have to deal with a precise, developed system, which, having originated in remote centuries, must come into collision with the science of the present day; but he sets out from the consciousness of the Christian, from that internal experience resulting to the individual

* Röhr, Briefe, s. 36, 405 ff.

† Schleiermacher, on his Glaubenslehre, to Dr. Lücke, 2tes Sendschreiben, Studien, 2, 3, s. 481 ff.

882

from his connexion with the Christian community, and he thus obtains a material which, as its basis is feeling, is more flexible, and to which it is easier to give dialectically a form that satisfies science.

As a member of the Christian church—this is the point of departure in the Christology of Schleiermacher * I am conscious of the removal of my sinfulness, and the impartation of absolute perfection: in other words, in communion with the church, I feel operating upon me the influence of a sinless and perfect principle. This influence cannot proceed from the Christian community as an effect of the reciprocal action of its members on each other; for to every one of these sin and imperfection are inherent, and the cooperation of impure beings can never produce anything pure as its result. It must be the influence of one who possessed that sinlessness and perfection as personal qualities, and who moreover stands in such a relation to the Christian community, that he can impart these qualities to its members : that is, since the Christian church could not exist prior to this impartation, it must be the influence of its founder. As Christians, we find something operated within us; hence, as from every effect we argue to its cause, we infer the influence of Christ, and from this again, the nature of his person, which must have had the powers necessary to the exertion of this influence.

To speak more closely, that which we experience as members of the Christian church, is a strengthening of our consciousness of God, in its relation to our sensuous existence; that is, it is rendered easier to us to deprive the senses of their ascendancy within us, to make all our impressions the servants of the religious sentiment, and all our actions its offspring. According to what has been stated above, this is the effect wrought in us by Christ, who imparts to us the strength of his consciousness of God, frees us from the bondage of sensuality and sin, and is thus the Redeemer. In the feeling of the strengthened consciousness of God which the Christian possesses by his communion with the Redeemer, the obstructions of his natural and social life are not felt as obstructions to his consciousness of God; they do not interrupt the blessedness which he enjoys in his inmost religious life; what has been called evil, and divine chastisement, is not such for him: and as it is Christ who by receiving him into the communion of his blessedness, frees him therefrom, the office of expiation is united to that of redemption.

In this sense alone is the doctrine of the church concerning the threefold office of Christ to be interpreted. He is a prophet, in that by the word—by the setting forth of himself, and not otherwise,—he could draw mankind towards himself, and therefore the chief object of his doctrine was his own person; he is at once a high priest and a sacrifice, in that he, the sinless one, from whose existence, therefore, no evil could be evolved, entered into communion with the life of sinful humanity, and endured the evils which adhere to it, that he might take us into communion with his sinless and blessed life:

* Glaubenslehre, 2, §§ 92—505.

883

in other words, deliver us from the power and consequences of sin and evil, and present us pure before God; lastly, he is a king, in that he brings these blessings to mankind in the form of an organized society, of which he is the head.

From this which Christ effects, we gather what he is. If we owe to him the continual strengthening of the consciousness of God within us, this consciousness must have existed in him in absolute strength, so that it, or God in the form of the consciousness, was the only operative force within him, and this is the sense of the expression of the church—God became man in Christ. If, further, Christ works in us a more and more complete conquest over sensuality, in himself there must have been an absolute conquest over it; in no moment of his

life can the sensual consciousness have disputed the victory with his consciousness of God; never can a vacillation or struggle have had place within him: in other words, the human nature in him was sinless, and in the stricter sense, that, in virtue of the essential predominance within him of the higher powers over the lower, it was impossible for him to sin. By this peculiarity of his nature he is the Archetype, the actualization of the ideal of humanity, which his church can only approach, never surpass; yet must he,—for otherwise there could be no true fellowship between him and us,—have been developed under the ordinary conditions of human life: the ideal must in him have been perfectly historical, each phasis of his actual life must have borne the impress of the ideal; and this is the proper sense of the church formula, that the divine and human nature were in him united into one person.

Only thus far can the doctrine of the Christ be deduced from the experience of the Christian, and thus far, according to Schleiermacher, it is not opposed to science: whatever in the dogma of the church goes beyond this,—as, for example, the supernatural conception of Jesus, and his miracles, also the facts of the resurrection and ascension, and the prophecies of his second coming to judge the world,—ought not to be brought forward as integral parts of the doctrine of the Christ. For he from whose influence upon us comes all the strengthening of our consciousness of God, may have been the Christ, though he should not have risen bodily from the dead, and ascended into heaven, etc. : so that we believe these facts, not because they are involved in our internal experience, but only because they are stated in Scripture; not so much, therefore, in a religious and dogmatical, as in an historical manner.

This Christology is undeniably a beautiful effort of thought, and as we shall presently see, does the utmost towards rendering the union of the divine and the human in Christ conceivable; but if its author supposed that he kept the faith unmutated and science unoffended, we are compelled to pronounce that he was in both points deceived.*

* This opinion has been already put forth in the most noted reviews of Schleiermacher's system; comp. Braniss, über Schleiermacher's Glaubenslebre; H. Schmid, über Schl. Glaubensl. s. 263 ff. ; Baur, die christl. Gnosis, s. 626 ff., and the Review of Rosenkranz, Jahrb. für wiss. Kritik, 1831.

884

Science opens its attack on the proposition, that the ideal man was historically manifested in the person of Christ. It did not escape Schleiermacher himself that this was a dangerous point. No sooner has he put forth the above proposition, than he reflects on the difficulty of supposing that the ideal should be realized in one historical individual; since, in other cases, we never find the ideal realized in a single appearance, but only in an entire cycle of appearances, which reciprocally complete each other. It is true that this theologian does not hold the character of Christ, as the ideal man, to extend to the manifold relations of human life, so as to be the archetype for all the science, art, and policy, that are developed in human society; he confines it to the domain of the consciousness of God. But, as Schmid has justly observed, this does not alter the case, for the consciousness of God also, being, in its development and manifestation, subject to the conditions of finiteness and imperfection; the supposition that even in this department exclusively, the ideal was manifested in a single historical individual, involves a violation of the laws of nature by a miracle. This, however, is far from alarming Schleiermacher; on the contrary, he maintains that this is the place, and the only place, in which the Christian doctrine must necessarily admit a miracle, since the originating of the person of Christ can only be conceived as the result of a special divine act of creation. It is true, he limits the miraculous to the first introduction of Christ into the series of existences, and allows the whole of his further development to have been subject to all the conditions of finite existence: but this concession cannot repair the breach, which the supposition only of one miracle makes in the scientific theory of the world. Still less can any help be derived from vague analogies like the following: as it is still possible that matter

should begin to agglomerate and thence to revolve in infinite space; so science must admit, that there may be in the domain of spiritual life an appearance, which in like manner we can only explain as the commencement, the first point, in a higher process of development.*

This comparison suggests the observation made by Braniss, namely; that it would be contrary to the laws of all development to regard the initial member of a series as the greatest—to suppose that in Christ, the founder of that community, the object of which is the strengthening of the consciousness of God, the strength of this consciousness was absolute, a perfection which is rather the infinitely distant goal of the progressive development of the community founded by him. Schleiermacher does indeed attribute to Christianity perfectibility in a certain sense: not as a capability of surpassing Christ in his nature, but solely in the conditions of its manifestation. His view is this: the limitation, the imperfection of

* 2ter Sendschreiben.

885

the relations of Christ, the language in which he expressed himself, the nationality within which he was placed, modified his thoughts and actions, but in their form alone; their essence remained nevertheless the perfect ideal. Now if Christianity in its progressive advancement in doctrine and practice, rejects more and more of those temporal and national limitations by which the actions and teaching of Jesus were circumscribed; this is not to surpass Christ, it is rather to give a more perfect expression of his inner life. But, as Schmid has satisfactorily shown, an historical individual is that which appears of him, and no more; his internal nature is known by his words and actions, the condition of his age and nation are a part of his individuality, and what lies beneath this phenomenal existence as the essence, is not the nature of this individual, but the human nature in general, which in particular beings operates only under the limitations of their individuality, of time, and of circumstances. Thus to surpass the historical appearance of Christ, is to rise nearer, not to his nature, but to the idea of humanity in general; and if we are to suppose that it is still Christ whose nature is more truly expressed, when with the rejection of the temporal and national, the essential elements of his doctrine and life are further developed: it would not be difficult, by a similar abstraction, to represent Socrates, as the one who in this manner cannot be surpassed.

As neither an individual in general, nor, in particular, the commencing point in an historical series, can present the perfect ideal: so, if Christ be regarded decidedly as man, the archetypal nature and development which Schleiermacher ascribes to him, cannot be brought to accord with the laws of human existence. Impeccability, in the sense of the impossibility of sinning, as it is supposed to exist in Christ, is a quality totally incompatible with the human nature; for to man, in consequence of his agency being liable to guidance by the motives of the senses as well as of the reason, the possibility of sinning is essential. And if Christ was entirely free from inward conflict, from all vacillation of the spiritual life between good and evil, he could not be a man of like nature with us; for the action and re-action between the spiritual nature in general and the external world, and, in particular, between the superior religious and moral powers, and the operations of the mind in subordination to the senses, necessarily manifests itself as a conflict.*

If, on the one side, the Christology in question is far from satisfying science, it is equally far, on the other side, from satisfying the faith. We will not enter into those points in which, instead of the decisions of the church, it at least offers acceptable substitutes (concerning which, however, it may be doubted whether they are a full compensation).† Its disagreement with the faith is the most conspicuous in the position, that the facts of the resurrection and ascension do not form essential parts of the Christian faith.

* Schmid, *Ut sup.*

† *Comp. Rosenkranz, ut sup. s. 935 ff.*

886

For the belief in the resurrection of Christ is the foundation stone, without which the Christian church could not have been built; nor could the cycle of Christian festivals, which are the external representation of the Christian faith, now suffer a more fatal mutilation than by the removal of the festival of Easter: the Christ who died could not be what he is in the belief of the church, if he were not also the Christ who rose again.

Thus the doctrine of Schleiermacher concerning the person and conditions of Christ, betrays a twofold inadequacy, not meeting the requirements either of the faith of the church, or of science. It is clear, however, from his doctrine of the work of Christ, that in order to satisfy the former so far as is here done, such a contradiction of the latter was quite unnecessary, and an easier course might have been pursued. For resting merely on a backward inference from the inward experience of the Christian as the effect, to the person of Christ as the cause, the Christology of Schleiermacher has but a frail support, since it cannot be proved that that inward experience is not to be explained without the actual existence of such a Christ. Schleiermacher himself did not overlook the probable objection that the church, induced merely by the relative excellence of Jesus, conceived an ideal of absolute perfection, and transferred this to the historical Christ, from which combination she continually strengthens and vivifies her consciousness of God: but he held this objection to be precluded by the observation, that sinful humanity, by reason of the mutual dependence of the will and the understanding, is incapable of conceiving an immaculate ideal. But, as it has been aptly remarked, if Schleiermacher claims a miracle for the origination of his real Christ, we have an equal right to claim one for the origination of the ideal of a Christ in the human soul.* Meanwhile, it is not true that sinful human nature is incapable of conceiving a sinless ideal. If by this ideal be understood merely a general conception, then the conception of the perfect and the sinless is as necessarily co-existent with the consciousness of imperfection and sinfulness as the conception of infinity with that of finiteness; since the two ideas conditionate one another, and the one is not possible without the other. If, on the other hand, by this ideal be meant a concrete image, the conception of a character in which all the individual features are portrayed, it may be admitted that a sinful individual or age cannot depict such an image without blemish; but of this inability the age or individual itself is not conscious, not having any superior standard, and if the image be but slightly drawn, if it leave room for the modifications of increased enlightenment, it may continue to be regarded as immaculate even by a later and more clear-sighted age, so long as this age is inclined to view it under the most favourable light.

We may now estimate the truth of the reproach, which made Schleiermacher so indignant, namely, that his was not an historical,

* Baur, *ut sup.* s. 653.

887

but an ideal Christ. it is unjust in relation to the opinion of Schleiermacher, for he firmly believed that the Christ, as construed by him, really lived; but it is just in relation to the historical state of the facts, because such a Christ never existed but in idea; and in this sense, indeed, the reproach has even a stronger bearing on the system of the church, because the Christ therein presented can still less have existed. Lastly, it is just in relation to the consequence of Schleiermacher's system, since to effect what Schleiermacher makes him effect, no other Christ is necessary, and, according to the principles of Schleiermacher respecting the relation of God to the world, of the supernatural to the natural, no other Christ is possible, than an ideal one :—and in this sense the reproach attaches specifically to Schleiermacher's doctrine, for according to the premises of the orthodox doctrine, an historical Christ is both possible and necessary.

§ 149. CHRISTOLOGY INTERPRETED SYMBOLICALLY. KANT. DE WETTE.

The attempt to retain in combination the ideal in Christ with the historical, having failed, these two elements separate themselves: the latter falls as a natural residuum to the ground, and the former rises as a pure sublimate into the ethereal world of ideas. Historically, Jesus can have been nothing more than a person, highly distinguished indeed, but subject to the limitations inevitable to all that is mortal: by means of his exalted character, however, he exerted so powerful an influence over the religious sentiment, that it constituted him the ideal of piety; in accordance with the general rule, that an historical fact or person cannot become the basis of a positive religion until it is elevated into the sphere of the ideal.*

Spinoza made this distinction when maintaining, that to know the historical Christ is not necessary to felicity, but only to know the ideal Christ, namely the eternal wisdom of God, which is manifested in all things in the human mind particularly, and in a pre-eminent degree in Jesus Christ—that wisdom which alone teaches man what is true and false, good and bad.†

According to Kant, also, it ought not to be made a condition of salvation to believe, that there was once a man who by his holiness and merit gave satisfaction for himself and for all others; for of this the reason tells us nothing; but it is the duty of men universally to elevate themselves to the ideal of moral perfection deposited in the reason, and to obtain moral strength by the contemplation of this

* Thus Schmid, *ut sup.* s. 267.

† Ep. 21, ad Oldenburg. Opp. ed. Gfrörer, p. 556 :—dico, ad salutem non esse omnino necesse, Christum secundum carnem noscere; sed ad aeterno illo filio Dei, h. e. Dei eterna sapientia, quae sese in omnibus rebus, et maxime in mente humana, et omnium maxime in Christo Jesu manifestavit, longe aliter sentiendum. Nam nemo absque hac ad statum beatitudinis potest pervenire, utpote quae sola docet, quid verum et falsum, bonum et malum sit.

888

ideal. Such moral faith alone man is bound to exercise, and not historical faith.*

Taking his stand on this principle, Kant proceeds to interpret the doctrines of the Bible and the church as Symbols of the ideal. It is humanity, or the rational part of this system of things, in its entire moral perfection, that could alone make a world the object of divine Providence, and the end of creation. This idea of a humanity well-pleasing to God, has existed in God from all eternity; it proceeds from his essence, and is therefore no created thing, but his eternal Son, the Word, through whom, that is, for whose sake, all things were created, and in whom God loved the world. As this idea of moral perfection has not man for its author, as it has been introduced into him even without his being able to conceive how his nature can have been susceptible of such an idea, it may be said to have come down to us from heaven, and to have assumed the human nature, and this union with us may be regarded as an abasement of the Son of God. This ideal of moral perfection, so far as it is compatible with the condition of a being dependent on necessities and inclinations, can only be conceived by us under the form of a man. Now just as we can obtain no idea of the amount of a force, but by calculating the degree of resistance which it can overcome, so we can form no estimate of the strength of the moral disposition, but by imagining hard conflicts in which it can triumph: hence the man who embodies the perfect ideal must be one who would voluntarily undertake, not only to perform every duty of man on his own behalf, and by precept and example to disseminate the good and the true around him as extensively as possible; but also, though tempted by the strongest allurements, to submit to all sufferings, even to the most ignominious death, for the welfare of mankind.

In a practical relation this idea has its reality completely within itself, and it needed no exemplification in experience in order to become a model binding on us, since it is enshrined as such in our reason. Nay, this ideal remains essentially confined to the reason, because it cannot be adequately represented by any example in outward experience, since such an

example would not fully disclose the inward disposition, but would only admit of our forming dubious inferences thereon. Nevertheless, as all men ought to be conformed to this ideal, and consequently must be capable of such conformity, it is always possible in experience that a man may appear, who in his teaching, course of life, and sufferings, may present an example of a man well-pleasing to God: but even in this manifestation of the God-man, it would not properly be that which is obvious to the senses, or can be known by experience, which would be the object of saving faith; but the ideal lying in the reason, which we should attribute to this manifestation of the God-man, because he appeared to us to be conformed to it—that is, indeed, so far only as this can

* Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft. drittes Stück, 1te Abthl. vii.

889

be concluded from outward experience. Inasmuch as all of us, though naturally generated men, feel bound, and consequently able, ourselves to present such an example, we have no reason to regard that exemplification of the ideal man as supernaturally generated, nor does he need the attestation of miracles; for besides the moral faith in the idea, nothing further is requisite than the historical conviction that his life was conformed to that idea, in order to accredit him as its personification.

He who is conscious of such a moral disposition, as to have a well-founded confidence, that under temptations and sufferings similar to those which are attributed to the ideal man, as a touchstone of his moral disposition, he would adhere unalterably to this exemplar, and faithfully follow his steps, such a man alone is entitled to consider himself an object of the divine complacency. To elevate himself to such a state of mind, man must depart from evil, cast off the old man, crucify the flesh; a change which is essentially connected with a series of sorrows and sufferings. These the former man has deserved as a punishment, but they fall on the new: for the regenerated man, who takes them on himself, though physically and in his empirical character, as a being determined by the senses, he remains the former man; is morally, as an intellectual being, with his changed disposition, become a new man. Having by this change taken upon him the disposition of the Son of God, that which is strictly a substitution of the new man for the old, may be represented, by a personification of the idea, as a substitution of the Son of God, and it may be said, that the latter himself, as a substitute, bears for man, for all who practically believe in him, the guilt of sin; as a redeemer, satisfies supreme justice by suffering and death; and as an intercessor, imparts the hope of appearing justified before the judge: the suffering which the new man, in dying to the old, must perpetually incur through life, being conceived in the representative of mankind, as a death suffered once for all.*

Kant, like Schleiermacher (whose Christology in many respects recalls that of Kant),† carries his appropriation of the Christology of the church no further than the death of Christ: of his resurrection and ascension, he says, that they cannot be available to religion within the limits of pure reason, because they would involve the materiality of all existences. Still, in another light, he employs these facts as symbols of the ideas of the reason; as images of the entrance into the abode of blessedness, that is, into communion with all the good: while Tieftrunk has yet more decidedly given it as his opinion, that without the resurrection, the history of Jesus would terminate in a revolting catastrophe; that the eye would turn away with melancholy and dissatisfaction from an event, in which the pattern of humanity fell a victim to impious rage, and in which the scene closed with a death as unmerited as sorrowful; that the history

* Ut sup. 2tes Stück, 1ter Abschn. 3tes Stück, 1te Abthlg.

† This is shown by Baur, christl. Gnosis, s. 660 ff.

890

requires to be crowned with the fulfilment of the expectation towards which the moral contemplations of every one are irresistibly drawn—with the passage into a compensating immortality.*

In the same manner, De Wette ascribed to the evangelical history, as to every history, and particularly to the history of religion, a symbolical, ideal character, in virtue of which it is the expression and image of the human mind and its various operations. The history of the miraculous conception of Jesus represents the divine origin of religion; the narratives of his miracles, the independent force of the human mind, and the sublime doctrine of spiritual self-reliance; his resurrection is the image of the victory of truth, a fore-shadowing of the future triumph of good over evil; his ascension, the symbol of the eternal majesty of religion. The fundamental religious ideas which Jesus enunciated in his teaching, are expressed with equal clearness in his history. This history is an expression of devoted enthusiasm, in the courageous ministry of Jesus, and in the victorious power of his appearance; of resignation, in his contest with the wickedness of men, in the melancholy of his premonitory discourses, and above all in his death. Christ on the cross is the image of humanity purified by self-sacrifice; we ought all to crucify ourselves with him, that we may rise with him to new life. Lastly, the idea of devotion was the key-note in the history of Jesus, every moment of his life being dedicated to the thought of his heavenly Father.†

At an earlier period, Horst presented this symbolical view of the history of Jesus with singular clearness. Whether, he says, all that is narrated of Christ happened precisely so, historically, is a question indifferent to us, nor can it now be settled. Nay, if we would be candid with ourselves, that which was once sacred history for the Christian believer, is, for the enlightened portion of our cotemporaries, only fable: the narratives of the supernatural birth of Christ, of his miracles, of his resurrection and ascension, must be rejected by us as at variance with the inductions of our intellect. Let them however only be no longer interpreted merely by the understanding as history, but by the feelings and imagination, as poetry; and it will be found that in these narratives nothing is invented arbitrarily, but all springs from the depths and divine impulses of the human mind. Considered from this point of view, we may annex to the history of Christ all that is important to religious trust, animating to the pure dispositions, attractive to the tender feelings. That history is a beautiful, sacred poem of the human race—a poem in which are embodied all the wants of our religious instinct; and this is the highest honour of Christianity, and the strongest proof of its universal applicability. The history of the gospel is in fact, the history of human nature conceived ideally, and exhibits to us in the life of an individual, what man ought to be, and, united with him

* Censur des christl. protestantischen Lehrbegriffs, 3, s. 180.

† Religion und Theologie, 2ter Abschnitt, Kap. 3; comp. bibl. Dogmatik, § 255 ; kirchliche, § 64 ff.

891

by following his doctrine and example, can actually become. It is not denied that what to us can appear only sacred poetry, was to Paul, John, Matthew and Luke, fact and certain history. But it was the very same internal cause which made the narratives of the gospel sacred fact and history to them, which makes those narratives to us a sacred mythus and poetry. The points of view only are different: human nature, and in it the religious impulse, remains ever the same. Those first Christians needed in their world, for the animating of the religious and moral dispositions in the men of their time, history and fact, of which, however, the inmost kernel consisted of ideas: to us, the facts are become superannuated and doubtful, and only for the sake of the fundamental ideas, are the narratives of those facts an object of reverence.*

This view was met immediately on the part of the church by the reproach, that instead of the riches of divine reality which faith discovers in the history of Christ, it palmed upon us a collection of empty ideas and ideals; instead of a consolatory work effected, an overwhelming

obligation. For the certainty, that God once actually united himself with human nature, the admonition that man ought to obtain divine dispositions, offers a poor compensation for the peace which the redemption completed by Christ brings to the believer, it is no equivalent to put before him the duty of freeing himself from sin. By this system, man is thrust out of the reconciled world in which Christianity places him, into an unreconciled world, out of a world of happiness into a world of misery; for where reconciliation has yet to be effected, where happiness has yet to be attained, there is at present enmity and unhappiness. And, in truth, the hope of entire deliverance from these conditions, is, according to the principles of this system, which only admits an infinite approximation towards the idea, a deceptive one; for that which is only to be reached in an endless progression, is in fact unattainable.

But not the faith alone, science also in its newest development, has found this system unsatisfactory. Science has perceived that to convert ideas simply into an obligatory possibility, to which no reality corresponds, is in fact to annihilate them; just as it would be to render the infinite finite, to, represent it as that which lies beyond the finite. Science has conceived that the infinite has its existence in the alternate production and extinction of the finite; that the idea is realised only in the entire series of its manifestations; that nothing can come into existence which does not already essentially exist; and, therefore, that it is not to be required of man, that he should reconcile himself with God, and assimilate his sentiments to the divine, unless this reconciliation and this assimilation are already virtually effected.

* Ideen über Mythologie u. s. w. in Henke's neuer Magazin, b. s. 454 ff. Comp. Henke's Museum, 3, s. 455.

892

§ 150. THE SPECULATIVE CHRISTOLOGY.

Kant had already said that the good principle did not descend from heaven merely at a particular time, but had descended on mankind invisibly from the commencement of the human race; and Schelling laid down the proposition: the incarnation of God is an incarnation from eternity.* But while the former understood under that expression only the moral instinct, which, with its ideal of good, and its sense of duty, has been from the beginning implanted in man; the latter understood under the incarnate Son of God the finite itself, in the form of the human consciousness, which in its contradistinction to the infinite, wherewith it is nevertheless one, appears as a suffering God, subjected to the conditions of time.

In the most recent philosophy this idea has been further developed in the following manner.† When it is said of God that he is a Spirit, and of man that he also is a Spirit, it follows that the two are not essentially distinct. To speak more particularly, it is the essential property of a spirit, in the distribution of itself into distinct personalities, to remain identical with itself, to possess itself in another than itself. Hence the recognition of God as a spirit implies, that God does not remain as a fixed and immutable Infinite encompassing the Finite, but enters into it, produces the Finite, Nature, and the human mind, merely as a limited manifestation of himself, from which he eternally returns into unity. As man, considered as a finite spirit, limited to his finite nature, has not truth; so God, considered exclusively as an infinite spirit, shut up in his infinitude, has not reality. The infinite spirit is real only when it discloses itself in finite spirits; as the finite spirit is true only when it merges itself in the infinite. The true and real existence of spirit, therefore, is neither in God by himself, nor in man by himself, but in the God-man; neither in the infinite alone, nor in the finite alone, but in the interchange of impartation and withdrawal between the two, which on the part of God is revelation, on the part of man religion.

If God and man are in themselves one, and if religion is the human side of this unity: then must this unity be made evident to man in religion, and become in him consciousness and reality. Certainly, so long as man knows not that he is a spirit, he cannot know that God is man: while he is under the guidance of nature only, he will deify nature; when he has learned

to submit himself to law, and thus to regulate his natural tendencies by external means, he will set God before him as a lawgiver. But when, in the vicissitudes of the world's history, the natural state discloses its corruptions, the legal its misery; the former will experience the need of a God who elevates it above itself, the latter, of a God who descends to its

* Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums, s. 192.

† Hegel's Phänomenologie des Geistes, s. 561 ff. ; Vorlesungen über die Philos. der Relig. 2, s. 234 ff. Marheineke, Grundlehren der christl. Dogmatik. 5. 174 ff. Rosenkranz, Encyclopädie der theol. Wissenschaften, s. 38ff., 148 ff.; comp. my Streitschriften, 3tes. Heft, s. 76 ff.

893

level. Man being once mature enough to receive as his religion the truth that God is man, and man of a divine race; it necessarily follows, since religion is the form in which the truth presents itself to the popular mind, that this truth must appear, in a guise intelligible to all, as a fact obvious to the senses: in other words, there must appear a human individual who is recognised as the visible God. This God-man uniting in a single being the divine essence and the human personality, it may be said of him that he had the Divine Spirit for a father and a woman for his mother. His personality reflecting itself not in himself, but in the absolute substance, having the will to exist only for God, and not at all for itself, he is sinless and perfect. As a man of Divine essence, he is the power that subdues nature, a worker of miracles; but as God in a human manifestation, he is dependent on nature, subject to its necessities and sufferings— is in a state of abasement. Must he even pay the last tribute to nature ? does not the fact that the human nature is subject to death preclude the idea that that nature is one with the divine? No : the God-man dies, and thus proves that the incarnation of God is real, that the infinite spirit does not scorn to

descend into the lowest depths of the finite, because he knows how to find a way of return into himself, because in the most entire alienation of himself, he can retain his identity. Further, the God-man, in so far as he is a spirit reflected in his infinity, stands contrasted with men, in so far as they are limited to their finiteness: hence opposition and contest result, and the death of the God-Man becomes a violent one, inflicted by the hands of sinners; so that to physical degradation is added the moral degradation of ignominy and accusation of crime. If God then finds a passage from heaven to the grave, so must a way be discoverable for man from the grave to heaven : the death of the prince of life is the life of mortals. By his entrance into the world as God-man, God showed himself reconciled to man; by his dying, in which act he cast off the limitations of mortality, he showed moreover the way in which he perpetually effects that reconciliation: namely, by remaining, throughout his manifestation of himself under the limitations of a natural existence, and his suppression of that existence, identical with himself. Inasmuch as the death of the God-man is merely the cessation of his state of alienation from the infinite, it is in fact an exaltation and return to God, and thus the death is necessarily followed by the resurrection and ascension.

The God-man, who during his life stood before his cotemporaries as an individual distinct from themselves, and perceptible by the senses, is by death taken out of their sight; he enters into their imagination and memory: the unity of the divine and human in him, becomes a part of the general consciousness; and the church must repeat spiritually, in the souls of its members, those events of his life which he experienced externally. The believer, finding himself environed with the conditions of nature, must, like Christ, die to nature—but only inwardly, as Christ did outwardly,—must spiritually crucify himself and be buried with Christ, that by the virtual suppression of his own sensible existence, he may become, in so far as he is a spirit, identical with himself, and participate in the bliss and glory of Christ.

§ 151. LAST DILEMMA.

Thus by a higher mode of argumentation, from the idea of God and man in their reciprocal relation, the truth of the conception which the church forms of Christ appears to be confirmed, and we seem to be reconducted to the orthodox point of view, though by an inverted path: for while there, the truth of the conceptions of the church concerning Christ is deduced from the correctness of the evangelical history; here, the veracity of the history is deduced from the truth of those conceptions. That which is rational is also real; the idea is not merely the moral imperative of Kant, but also an actuality. Proved to be an idea of the reason, the unity of the divine and human nature must also have an historical existence. The unity of God with man, says Marheineke,* was really and visibly manifested in the person of Jesus Christ; in him, according to Rosenkranz,† the divine power over nature was concentrated, he could not act otherwise than miraculously, and the working of miracles, which surprises us, was to him natural. His resurrection, says Conradi,‡ is the necessary sequel of the completion of his personality, and so little ought it to surprise us, that, on the contrary, we must rather have been surprised if it had not happened.

But do these deductions remove the contradictions which have exhibited themselves in the doctrine of the church, concerning the person and work of Christ? We need only to compare the structures, which Rosenkranz in his Review has passed on Schleiermacher's criticism of the Christology of the church, with what the same author proposes as a substitute in his Encyclopædia, in order to perceive, that the general propositions on the unity of the divine and human natures, do not in the least serve to explain the appearance of a person, in whom this unity existed individually, in an exclusive manner. Though I may conceive that the divine spirit in a state of renunciation and abasement becomes the human, and that the human nature in its return into and above itself becomes the divine; this does not help me to conceive more easily, how the divine and human natures can have constituted the distinct and yet united portions of an historical person. Though I may see the human mind in its unity with the divine, in the course of the world's history, more and more completely establish itself as the power

* Dogmatik, § 326.

† Encyklopädie, s. 160.

‡ Selbstbewusstsein und Offenbarung, s. 295 f. Comp. Bauer, Recens. des L. J., Jahrbücher f. wiss. Kritik, 1836, Mai, s. 699 ff.

895

which subdues nature; this is quite another thing, than to conceive a single man endowed with such power, for individual, voluntary acts. Lastly, from the truth, that the suppression of the natural existence is the resurrection of the spirit, can never be deduced the bodily resurrection of an individual.

We should thus have fallen back again to Kant's point of view, which we have ourselves found unsatisfactory: for if the idea have no corresponding reality, it is an empty obligation and ideal. But do we then deprive the idea of all reality? By no means: we reject only that which does not follow from the premises.* if reality is ascribed to the idea of the unity of the divine and human natures, is this equivalent to the admission that this unity must actually have been once manifested, as it never had been, and never more will be, in one individual? This is indeed not the mode in which Idea realizes itself; it is not wont to lavish all its fulness on one exemplar, and be niggardly towards all others † —to express itself perfectly in that one individual, and imperfectly in all the rest: it rather loves to distribute its riches among a multiplicity of exemplars which reciprocally complete each other—in the alternate appearance and suppression of a series of individuals. And is this no true realization of the idea? is not the idea of the unity of the divine and human natures a real one in a far higher sense, when I regard the whole race of mankind as its realization, than when I single out one

man as such a realization? is not an incarnation of God from eternity, a truer one than an incarnation limited to a particular point of time.

This is the key to the whole of Christology, that, as subject of the predicate which the church assigns to Christ, we place, instead of an individual, an idea; but an idea which has an existence in reality, not in the mind only, like that of Kant. In an individual, a God-man, the properties and functions which the church ascribes to Christ contradict themselves; in the idea of the race, they perfectly agree. Humanity is the union of the two natures—God become man, the infinite manifesting itself in the finite, and the finite spirit remembering its infinitude; it is the child of the visible Mother and the invisible Father, Nature and Spirit; it is the worker of miracles, in so far as in the course of human history the spirit more and more completely subjugates nature, both within and around man, until it lies before him as the inert matter on which he exercises his active power;‡ it is the sinless existence, for the course of its development is a blameless one, pollution cleaves to the individual only, and does not touch the race or its history. It is Humanity that dies, rises, and ascends to heaven, for from the negation of its phenomenal life there ever proceeds a higher spiritual life; from the suppression of its mortality as a personal, national,

* Compare with this my *Streitschriften*, 3 Heft, s. 68 ff. 125,

† With this should be compared the explanation in the *Streitschriften*, ut sup. s. 119.

‡ Of this also there is an explanation in the *Streitschriften*, 3, s. 166 f.

896

and terrestrial spirit, arises its union with the infinite spirit of the heavens. By faith in this Christ, especially in his death and resurrection, man is justified before God; that is, by the kindling within him of the idea of Humanity, the individual man participates in the divinely human life of the species. Now the main element of that idea is, that the negation of the merely natural and sensual life, which is itself the negation of the spirit (the negation of negation, therefore), is the sole way to true spiritual life.*

This alone is the absolute sense of Christology: that it is annexed to the person and history of one individual, is a necessary result of the historical form which Christology has taken. Schleiermacher was quite right when he foreboded, that the speculative view would not leave much more of the historical person of the Saviour than was retained by the Ebionites. The phenomenal history of the individual, says Hegel, is only a starting point for the mind. Faith, in her early stages, is governed by the senses, and therefore contemplates a temporal history; what she holds to be true is the external, ordinary event, the evidence for which is of the historical, forensic kind—a fact to be proved by the testimony of the senses, and the moral confidence inspired by the witnesses. But mind having once taken occasion by this external fact, to bring under its consciousness the idea of humanity as one with God, sees in the history only the presentation of that idea; the object of faith is completely changed; instead of a sensible, empirical fact, it has become a spiritual and divine idea, which has its confirmation no longer in history but in philosophy. When the mind has thus gone beyond the sensible history, and entered into the domain of the absolute, the former ceases to be essential; it takes a subordinate place, above which the spiritual truths suggested by the history stand self-supported; it becomes as the faint image of a dream which belongs only to the past, and does not, like the idea, share the permanence of the spirit which is absolutely present to itself.† Even Luther subordinated the physical miracles to the spiritual, as the truly great miracles. And shall we interest ourselves more in the cure of some sick people in Galilee, than in the miracles of intellectual and moral life belonging to the history of the world—in the increasing, the almost incredible dominion of man over nature—in the irresistible force of ideas, to which no unintelligent matter, whatever its magnitude, can oppose any enduring resistance? Shall isolated incidents, in themselves trivial, be more to us than the universal order of

* Herein lies the answer to the objection which Schaller (*der historische Christus und die Philosophie*, s. 64 ff.) has made to the above view; namely, that it teaches only a substantial, not a personal unity of man with God. That unity which exists in the determination of the race has already been present in individuals separately, according to the different measure of their religious development, and thus the substantial unity has become, in different degrees, a personal unity.

† *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, 2, s. 263 ff. Compare the collection of the several propositions of Hegel on the person of Christ and the evangelical history, in my *Streitschriften*, 3 Heft, s. 76.

897

events, simply because in the latter we presuppose, if we do not perceive, a natural cause, in the former the contrary? This would be a direct contravention of the more enlightened sentiments of our own day, justly and conclusively expressed by Schleiermacher. The interests of pity, says this theologian, can no longer require us so to conceive a fact, that by its dependence on God it is divested of the conditions which would belong to it as a link in the chain of nature; for we have outgrown the notion, that the divine omnipotence is more completely manifested in the interruption of the order of nature, than in its preservation.* Thus if we know the incarnation, death and resurrection, the duplex negatio affirmat, as the eternal circulation, the infinitely repeated pulsation of the divine life; what special importance can attach to a single fact, which is but a mere sensible image of this unending process? Our age demands to be led in Christology to the idea in the fact, to the race in the individual: a theology which, in its doctrines on the Christ, stops short at him as an individual, is not properly a theology, but a homily.

In what relation, then, must the pulpit stand to theology,—nay, how is the continuance of a ministry in the church possible when theology has reached this stage? This is the difficult question which presents itself to us in conclusion.

§ 152. RELATION OF THE CRITICAL AND SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY TO THE CHURCH.

Schleiermacher has said, that when he reflected on the approaching crisis in theology, and imagined himself obliged to choose one of two alternatives, either to surrender the Christian history, like every common history, as a spoil to criticism, or to hold his faith in fee to the speculative system; his decision was, that for himself, considered singly, he would embrace the latter, but that, regarding himself as a member of the church, and especially as one of its teachers, he should be induced rather to take the opposite course. For the idea of God and of man on which, according to the speculative system, the truth of the Christian faith rests, is indeed a precious jewel, but it can be possessed only by a few, and he would not wish to be that privileged individual in the church, who alone among thousands held the faith on its true grounds. As a member of the church, he could have no satisfaction but in perfect equality, in the consciousness that all receive alike, both in kind and manner, from the same source. And as a teacher and spokesman to the church, he could not possibly attempt the task of elevating old and young, without distinction, to the idea of God and of man: he must rather attack their faith as a groundless one, or else endeavour to strengthen and confirm it while knowing it to be groundless. As thus in the matter of religion an impassable gulf would be fixed between two parties in the church, the speculative

* *Glaubenslehre*, 1, s. 47.

898

theology threatens us with the distinction of an esoteric and exoteric doctrine, which ill accords with the declaration of Christ, that all shall be taught of God. The scientific alone have the foundation of the faith: the unscientific have only the faith, and receive it only by means of tradition. If the Ebionitish view, on the contrary, leave but little of Christ, yet this

little is equally attainable by all, and we are thereby secured from the hierarchy of speculation, which ever tends to merge itself in the hierarchy of Rome.*

Here we see presented, under the form of thought belonging to a cultivated mind, the same opinion which is now expressed by many in a less cultivated fashion : namely, that the theologian who is at once critical and speculative, must in relation to the church be a hypocrite. The real state of the case is this. The church refers her Christology to an individual who existed historically at a certain period: the speculative theologian to an idea which only attains existence in the totality of individuals; by the church the evangelical narratives are received as history: by the critical theologian, they are regarded for the most part as mere mythi. If he would continue to impart instruction to the church, four ways are open to him:

First, the attempt already excluded by the above observations of Schleiermacher, namely, to elevate the church to his own point of view, and for it, also, to resolve the historical into the ideal :—an attempt which must necessarily fail, because to the Church all those premises are wanting on which the theologian rests his speculative conclusions; and upon which, therefore, only an enthusiast for interpretation would venture.

The second and opposite measure would be, to transport himself to the point of view of the church, and for the sake of imparting edification ecclesiastically, to descend from the sphere of the ideal into the region of the popular conception. This expedient is commonly understood and judged too narrowly. The difference between the theologian and the church is regarded as a total one; it is thought, that in answer to the question, whether he believes in the history of Christ, he ought to say exactly, no; whereas he says, yes: and this is a falsehood. It is true, that if in the discourses and instructions of the spiritual teacher, the main interest were an historical one, this would be a correct representation of the case: but, in fact, the interest is a religious one,—it is essential religion which is here communicated under the form of a history; hence he who does not believe in the history as such, may yet appreciate the religious truths therein contained, equally with one who does also receive the history as such: the distinction is one of form merely, and does not affect the substance. Hence it is an evidence of an uncultivated mind, to denounce as a hypocrite a theologian who preaches, for example, on the resurrection of Christ, since, though he may not believe in the reality of that event as a single sensible fact,

* In the 2ten Sendschreiben on his Glaubenslehre.

899

he may, nevertheless, hold to be true the representation of the process of spiritual life, which the resurrection of Christ affords. Strictly considered, however, this identity of the substantial truth, exists only in the apprehension of him who knows how to distinguish the substance from the form of religion, i.e., of the theologian, not of the church, to whom he speaks. The latter can conceive no faith in the dogmatical truth of the resurrection of Christ, for example, apart from a conviction of its historical reality: and if it come to discover that the theologian has not this conviction, and yet preaches on the resurrection, he must appear in the eyes of the church a hypocrite, and thus the entire relation between the theologian and the church would be virtually cancelled.

In this case, the theologian, though in himself no hypocrite, would appear such to the church, and would be conscious of this misconstruction. If notwithstanding this, he should continue to instruct the church under the form of its own conceptions, he would ultimately appear a hypocrite to himself also, and would be driven to the third, desperate course, of forsaking the ministerial office. It avails nothing to say, he has only to descend from the pulpit, and mount the professor's chair, where he will not be under the necessity of withholding his scientific opinions from such as are destined to science; for if he, whom the course of his own intellectual culture has obliged to renounce the ministerial office, should by his instructions lead many to the same point, and thus render them also incapable of that office, the original

evil would only be multiplied. On the other hand, it could not be held good for the church, that all those who pursue criticism and speculation to the results above presented, should depart from their position as teachers. For no clergyman would any longer meddle with such inquiries, if he thus ran the risk of being led to results which would oblige him to abandon the ministerial office; criticism and philosophy would fall into the hands of those who are not professed theologians, and to the theologian nothing would remain but the faith, which then could not possibly long resist the attacks of the critical and speculative laity. But where truth is concerned, the possible consequences have no weight; hence the above remark ought not to be made. Thus much, however, may be maintained in relation to the real question: he whom his theological studies have led to an intellectual position, respecting which he must believe, that he has attained the truth, that he has penetrated into the deepest mysteries of theology, cannot feel either inclined or bound just at this point in his career to abandon theology: on the contrary, such a step would be unnatural, nay, impossible.

He will therefore seek another expedient; and as such there presents itself a fourth, which is not, like the two first, one-sided, nor like the third, merely negative, but which offers a positive mode of reconciling the two extremes—the consciousness of the theologian, and that of the church. In his discourses to the church, he will

900

indeed adhere to the forms of the popular conception, but on every opportunity he will exhibit their spiritual significance, which to him constitutes their sole truth, and thus prepare—though such a result is only to be thought of as an unending progress—the resolution of those forms into their original ideas in the consciousness of the church also. Thus, to abide by the example already chosen, at the festival of Easter, he will indeed set out from the sensible fact of the resurrection of Christ, but he will dwell chiefly on the being buried and rising again with Christ, which the Apostle himself has strenuously inculcated. This very course every preacher, even the most orthodox, strictly takes, as often as he draws a moral from the evangelical text on which he preaches: for this is nothing else than the transition from the externally historical to the inward and spiritual, it is true, we must not overlook the distinction, that the orthodox preacher builds his moral on the text in such a way, that the latter remains as an historical foundation; whereas, with the speculative preacher, the transition from the biblical history or the church doctrine, to the truth which he thence derives, has the negative effect of annihilating the former. Viewed more closely, however, the transition of the orthodox preacher from the evangelical text to the moral application, is not free from this negative tendency; in proceeding from the history to the doctrine he implies at least thus much: the history is not enough, it is not the whole truth, it must be transmuted from a past fact into a present one, from an event external to you, it must become your own intimate experience: so that with this transition, the case is the same as with the proof of the existence of God, in which the cosmical existence, which is the point of departure, apparently remains as a foundation, but is in fact negated as a true existence, and merged in the absolute. Nevertheless, there remains a marked distinction between these two propositions: since, and in so far as, this has happened, so and so is your duty and your consolation—and: this is indeed related as having happened once, but the truth is, that it always so happened, and both in and by you ought to happen. At least, the community will not receive both as identical; and thus, here again, in every excess or diminution which the more or less spontaneous relation of the teacher to critical theology, together with the variety in the degrees of culture of the community, introduces,—the danger is incurred that the community may discover this difference, and the preacher appear to it, and consequently to himself, a hypocrite.

In this difficulty, the theologian may find himself driven either directly to state his opinions, and attempt to elevate the people to his ideas: or, since this attempt must necessarily fail,

carefully to adapt himself to the conception of the community; or, lastly, since, even on this plan, he may easily betray himself, in the end to leave the ministerial profession.

We have thus admitted the difficulty with which the critical and speculative views are burthened, with reference to the relation of the

901

clergyman to the church; we have exhibited the collision into which the theologian falls, when it is asked, what course remains for him in so far as he has adopted such views? and we have shown that our age has not arrived at a certain decision on this subject. But this collision is not the effect of the curiosity of an individual; it is necessarily introduced by the progress of time and the development of Christian theology; it surprises and masters the individual, without his being able to guard himself from it. Or rather he can do this with slight labour, if he abstain from study and thought, or, if not from these, from freedom of speech and writing. Of such there are already enough in our day, and there was no need to make continual additions to their number through the calumination of those who have expressed themselves in the spirit of advanced science. But there are also a few, who, notwithstanding such attacks, freely declare what can no longer be concealed—and time will show whether by the one party or the other, the Church, Mankind, and Truth are best served.