

Abina, whose schools covered the first five Christian centuries. It is *possible* that they may have borrowed expressions from John; it is *probable* that they were influenced by the prevalent sentiment of the Christian ages in which they were living, even as the infidel books of our day are filled with high moral ideas which are taken from the Christian culture they deery. But it is difficult to believe that the intense and bitter anti-Christian spirit of the Jewish Rabbins, what we may call their seclusiveness of thought, would have allowed them to import the exact phraseology of the New Testament into their works. We think it is but fair to assume, especially regarding the customs and rites of the old Jewish Church, which were either still practiced or kept in vivid memory by the tenacity of oral tradition, that the Rabbinical accounts are honest and trustworthy. The actual date at which such customs and traditions were conserved in writing has little to do with the historic value of the statements themselves. We shall, however, pronounce no judgment upon the priority of utterance, as between the Book of Revelation and these "literary remains" of the Jewish mind. We are confident that there is nothing derogatory to the dignity or inspiration of John in the assumption that he made use of some of the more significant and popular of these time-honored proverbs and usages of God's ancient people, in order that he might fill them with a transcendantly deeper meaning than they ever had before, even as Moses and Elias were luminous in the transfiguration glory of Christ.

Much has been made of the parallelisms between the Gospels and Talmud. But they are far fewer than those between the Revelation and the Rabbinical writings; and, at the same time, less significant. They are generally but repetitions of a principle or sentiment—*e. g.*, Our Lord's saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" is paralleled with that of R. Joshua ben Levi in the Sanhedrim, "Behold, how acceptable before the Lord are the humble." Christ's "Blessed are the merciful," "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake;" His sayings against adultery, ostentation in religion, etc., are along the line of the common conscience, and similarity of utterance signifies nothing as to originality. It will be observed, from the instances we give, that the Johannean and Rabbinical parallelisms are of a very different order, and relate to the exact rhetorical form. Without presuming to be exhaustive, the following citations will show the Jewish tinge of John's thought, the hue of the atmosphere through which the divine light passed.

The representation of Christ as the "*Alpha and Omega*," the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (Rev. i: 8), was doubtless suggested by the Rabbinical common saying, "From Aleph to Tau," the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, by which the idea of *completion* was signified. In Yalcut Rub. we read, "Adam trans-