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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

How well the Hebrew Priest, but especially the Prophet, had done his work, may best be seen in that moral element which made Judaism to religion what the Greek spirit had been to the intellectual life of the world. Nowhere out of Judæa were to be found such passionate moral fervor and such intense spiritual yearnings. But this spirit had spent itself as a formative power; it had already overshot the multitude, while higher natures were goaded by it to excess. There was need of a new religious education. This was the desire and expectation of the best men of the Jewish Church. How their spiritual quickening was to come, they knew not. That it was coming was generally believed, and also that the approaching deliverance would in some mysterious way bring God nearer to men. "Of the day and of the hour" knew no man. The day had come when a new manifestation of God was to be made. A God of holiness, a God of power, and a God of mercy had been clearly revealed. The Divine Spirit was now to be clothed with flesh, subjected to the ordinary laws of matter, placed in those conditions in which men live, become the subject of care, weariness, sorrow, and of death itself.