

any reference to the supernatural in the epistolary writings of the New Testament. Moreover, the canonical gospels differ as widely from the pseudo-gospels, which the early Church rejected, as the apostolic epistles differ from the earliest apologetic writings of the fathers, who admittedly lived within two centuries of the Christian era.

The idiosyncrasies of each of the principal disciples who became the first missionaries of the Church, the differences of opinion bred of differences in temperament and early training, and the opposing course of action which necessarily resulted, are told most naturally in the Acts, which constituted the first chapter of the history of the apostolic Church. But, just as in every community or school there are a few who by force of character become prominent, while the many merely exercise that intangible influence which emanates from every life, however insignificant, so of the many disciples who gathered round the Master, or who, like Paul, were won afterwards to his cause, a few only were conspicuous in promulgating his doctrine after his ascension. Of these, James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, were distinguished by the possession of traits of the most opposite complexion, if we accept the traditional authorship by them of the epistle of St. James, inculcating practical ethics, and the gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse, with their deep esoteric meaning. Peter, the irrepressible, who was presumptuously impulsive while under the gentle restraint of his Lord and Master, was afterwards the foremost in facing danger and in proclaiming the gospel. And, as might be expected, he was obstinate in maintaining his view of what he believed his Lord and Master's principles were. He was a Jew and his Saviour had been a Jew, who observed Jewish ordinances and practised the Jewish ritual; and Peter, therefore, even after the vision at Joppa had convinced him that Jesus' message was to be delivered to the Gentile as well as to the Jew, differed from Paul the philosopher as to the extent to which the breach with Judaism should be carried. Ritualistic symbolism may probably claim