

that taken by most commentators on the Pauline Epistles. I speak advisedly of the commentators on Paul; for the Apostle himself I do not profess to understand. Harnack makes somewhere the remark that in the first two centuries of Christianity no man understood Paul except that heathen-Christian Marcion, and he misunderstood him. Layman as I am, it would be presumptuous on my part to say how far succeeding centuries advanced beyond Marcion. But one thing is quite clear even to every student, and this is that a curious alternative is always haunting our exegesis of the Epistles. Either the theology of the Rabbis must be wrong, its conception of God debasing, its leading motives materialistic and coarse, and its teachers lacking in enthusiasm and spirituality, or the Apostle to the Gentiles is quite unintelligible. I need not face this alternative, and may thus be able to arrive at results utterly at variance with those to be found in our theological manuals and introductions to the New Testament.

The question as to how far the theology of the Rabbis could be brought into harmony with the theology of our age is a matter of apologetics, and does not exactly fall within the province of these essays. With a little of the skill so often displayed by the writers of the life and times of ancient heroes, particularly New Testament heroes, it would certainly not be an impossible task to draw such an ideal and noble picture of any of the great Rabbis, such as Hillel, R. Jochanan