

gogue over the land, that, on the Sabbath and feast days and as well on every Monday and Thursday, portions of the Law and the Prophets should be read, a translation into Aramaic or Hellenistic Greek, as the case might be, given, and thereto such explanations as might be needed of the passages read. Jesus had been accustomed to this kind of instruction at His home, and at Jerusalem simply uses His better opportunity to satisfy His desire for a knowledge of the law of His fathers. From this activity as a scholar in the schools, and from His contact with various teachers, came His large acquaintance with the sects of the Jews, and their doctrines. From Matthew v. 47, and vi. 7, it is concluded that He had also some knowledge of the paganism of His time.

The learned author does not accord with his sources when he says that the baptism of our Lord was an act of consecration to His future mission. John's baptism was one of repentance, and he objected to administer it to our Lord; but Jesus said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." This is not the language of formal consecration to His mission, but a reason for His undergoing an act which symbolized repentance. The incidents occurring immediately after He had undergone the water ordinance made up the consecration, but they are no part of the baptism.

The conception of the mission of Jesus as spiritual—the establishment of a mystical kingdom of God on earth—is one to which no Christian will take objection. But hardly so, when it is said that the mystical element was not original with our Lord, but was an earlier secret teaching among certain sects of the Jews, who borrowed it from Parsism and the Indian religions. "The ban of secrecy under which these doctrines were held was broken in the last century before the destruction of the Jewish State by two men; they were John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth." What can we say to these views? I feel quite sure that Oriental mysticism had found its way into Jewish theology and into some Jewish hearts before Christ came, and we may readily believe that many transcendental teachings would be kept for initiated ones only. One may go further, and grant that Jesus published some views of a mystical character which had been previously kept secret. But, still, there is no record anywhere of a teaching private or public like His—transcendently spiritual and beautifully practical.

"The life, clothing, and food, and the sojourn in the wilderness on the part of both John the Baptist and Jesus, especially the latter, make it appear that they were disciples of the Essenes."

No one who is acquainted with the exclusive life of the Essenes would say that this statement could be verified. John and his Master were only more like the Essenes than they were like the other Jewish sects, nothing beyond that. In a passage occurring later on, the author admits that the Essenes disbelieved in the resurrection of the body, and that the teaching of our Lord was much fuller than theirs.

"This idea of the dissolution of any bond between Jerusalem and the Temple, on the one side, and the true religion on the other, is one which, even before the appearing of Jesus, had taken possession of the Jewish mind among the Diaspora in Egypt and in the other distant lands, in which the Jews remained in only very loose connection with Jerusalem and the Temple. The Temple of Onias in Egypt, the synagogues in Alexandria, Rome, Antioch and other places, were independent temples, with each a system of worship of its own which displaced, for the Jews in these respective places, the Temple in Jerusalem. Beside the Essenes, who had also proclaimed the separateness of the kingdom of God from Jerusalem and the Temple and no longer offered sacrifice there, the same view prevailed with some of the Hellenists. This idea was no new one with Jesus, He only defined it, and gave it distinct utterance." This passage calls our attention to a preparation for the Christian dogma of the universality of worship and Divine communion with men. We believe the author to be correct in his position at this point.

Teaching of this kind, this Jewish writer says, could not be forbidden though intensely distasteful to the ecclesiastical authorities, for the reason that freedom of speech and of teaching was an inviolable right in Judaism. A teacher could be arrested only when he incited to resistance against the recognized authority in Church or State.

The expressions used in relation to the Sermon on the Mount appear remarkable. A comparison is begun with the Ten Commandments of Sinai, and then follow the words: "The ten commandments belong to the world of reality, and in the performance of them men meet with no opposition from circumstances which are extraordinary. On the other hand, the demands of the Sermon on the Mount are not suitable to all conditions of men; it cannot be expected that they should be universally followed; they remain pious wishes, which can only be brought to actualization in a narrow circle of men especially devoted to that end." They are said to be doctrines of the over-pious. A rational reading of the Sermon of our Lord could hardly lead to any such conclusion as that enunciated. It seems as though the letter of the precept had been so magnified as to shut out any view of the spirit and sense.

Speaking of our Lord's success these words are used: "His following was formed of the lower, discontented populace on whom the higher and better classes were accustomed to look with contempt; the country people, who did not adopt the prescriptions of the teachers of the law . . . further, restless, agitating persons, law-breakers, the poor and the suffering, and to these, later, a part of the Hellenistic Jews. These persons were drawn to Jesus as a following in consequence of His assaults on the scribes and teachers of the law." The last sentence of the passage we may question, but we think it true that the following of Christ did embrace people of the despised classes enumerated. We have, nevertheless, good reason to feel sure that some of the more honourable people found the message of Christ an acceptable one, and even if they had not found it so, it is no disgrace to any religion that it becomes a blessing to the poor and even vicious classes of society.

"The number of them (apostles) was first twelve, not without reference to the twelve tribes of the Israelitish people; later, He enlarged their circle to seventy men, in all likelihood after the example of the seventy elders under Moses, and the number of members of the Sanhedrim, also in relation to the seventy peoples of the world." Here is confusion; the record says, "He appointed other seventy also," not apostles, these were a distinct group. The symbolism of the choice of our Lord we may adopt, if we wish. It affects the truth to no extent.

We come now to the most important portion of the tractate under review. It deals with the causes of the arrest and condemnation of Jesus, and the manner of the process against Him. The definite beginning of the trouble was the action of driving out, and this author says, inciting His following to drive out the sellers of offerings and money changers from the Temple.

Here, no doubt, we have a cause for action against Him by the ecclesiastical authorities, but Dr. Hamburger lays the condemnation of Jesus, not at the door of the Jewish rulers as a whole, but of Annas and Caiaphas and their partisans, and also at the door of the Romans. We believe it will be understood that Jesus showed Himself to be justified by the highest authority in doing what He did, and, besides, we do not find any record of His having incited His following to act with Him in the case.

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the acceptance of the homage of the people to Him as the heir to David's throne are said to have been the causes of Pilate's undertaking any action against Jesus. St. John's account quickly shows that Pilate found Jesus guilty of no crime against the Roman authority.

The grounds of offence against Judaism are enumerated as follows: (1) The announcement of the Kingdom of God as a Kingdom of Heaven, that is as *spiritual*. (2) The claim of the disciples that Jesus was the Messiah. (3) The expansion of the ancient law. (4) The rejection of the ordinances of the teachers of the law, and the public contemning of the same. (5) The forgiveness of sins. But, continues the writer, it must be repeated that neither the teaching nor the personal views of Jesus were ground of action against Him, but solely His resistance to authority and His inciting of others to resistance.

"It is remarkable that the accusation against Jesus as it is given in the Gospels speaks only of criminal action against the Roman authority, and makes no mention of punishable conduct in relation to religion. The cause of this is that Jesus was not an ordained teacher, and the penal regulations of the Law were to be applied to such persons only."