

kernel of permanent truth. Secondly, the Divine method of administering the Kingdom is evolutionary. This is clearly recognized in the parables of Jesus ; and the history of the early Church throws light upon it. The spirit of God used the educative method of liberating the early Christians from the trammels of narrow nationalism. In the kingdom of grace as well as in nature, as has been well said, "The nest is emptied by the hatching of its eggs, and the process of incubation requires patience and time." The spiritual content of Jesus' teaching could not be appreciated all at once by his disciples. Its meaning gradually dawned on the mind of the early church. If we must go to the synoptists for the most accurate record of Jesus' words, we must also seek in the later books of the New Testament for the real Mind of the Master. The Spirit gradually led the church into truth. He brought the words of Christ to their remembrance, and interpreted their spiritual meaning. The language in which the Coming of Christ is set forth in the synoptics is apocalyptic. It seems to favor an outward spectacular Advent. The fourth gospel, on the other hand, represents it as essentially inward and spiritual. We cannot read the farewell discourses of our Lord as given by the fourth evangelist, side by side with his eschatological discourse, as given by the Synoptists, without being struck by the contrast. The popular modern cry is—"Back to the Christ of the first three evangelists." Yes—for the exact words of Jesus, perhaps. But for the spiritual thought—for the real Mind of the Master—should we not go to those who had the longest experience of the Spirit's training and guidance ? The latest Gospel may be taken as a mature interpretation of the words of Christ, and its author leaves us in no doubt that he thought of the Second Coming as essentially inward and spiritual (30).

The same educative process may be noticed in the writings of the Apostles. Peter and James speak of the Coming as an apocalyptic advent—a catastrophic event—which is speedily

30). Compare also Matthew 18 : 20 and Luke 17 : 20-21.