

CHRIST AND HIS TIMES.

(1) Jesus and Hillel. 2to revidito aufago, 1867. (2) Handwörterbuch zur Zeit Jesu. (Artisan Life at the time of Jesus), 1868, Erlangen, A. Döcher. (3) Ein Tag, (A Day) in Capernaum, 1871. (4) Tahet teeteh etn Menach I (Behold, what a Man!) 1872, Leipzig, J. Neumann.

For the BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

This title suggested itself as a fitting superscription to the above four minor works of Prof. Franz Delitzsch, which might be translated and put in book form. The book would present to the English reader many a novel and truthful idea about the person of Jesus, "the greatest secret and the greatest wonder in the world's history," as Delitzsch most pithily says. It matters not that the New Testament is daily in our hands, that we read in it how our Lord the Messiah disputed with and rebuked the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes and Chief Priests, how he taught the promiscuous crowds, who heard gladly his original and non-Pharisaically-stereotyped interpretations of Moses and the Prophets, and who anon turned about, muttering half unbelievingly among themselves, in wonder, "how does this man know letters?" he being a mere carpenter's son, and either unknown or not prominent in the Rabbinical schools. It matters not that we read frequently of Herod and his minions, of Pilate and his open or covert contempt of the Jews, and of a thousand other incidental details of the then every-day life, which is entombed for us in almost every line of the sacred monument of our faith, viz:—the writings of the New Testament. It may be that our very familiarity with these betrays us into a congratulatory belief that we know all about Christ, whom truly to know is life everlasting. But meantime there are moments—blessed moments they are—when the best informed of us in mind and heart, so long for that knowledge of His personality, for that vivid concept on of the divine Man of Nazareth, that we cannot be satisfied until a sweet, overpowering sense of Him bends our knees in worship, lifts our suppliant hands and eyes, and brings our very hearts to our lips with the word, "Rabbanu, our Master!" For the same action and reaction, which every thinking Christian discovers to have existed between the divinity and humanity of Jesus, is perpetually repeating itself in the individual Christian life. And no wonder, for Christ has been from the beginning of this world what He was during his brief career in the land of Israel, what He is now in the conquered parts of Scriptural Israel's world, and what He ever will be till the Father shall have put all things under his grace-dropping feet. Such have always been the characteristic longings of deeper Christian experience since the theophany of Jehovah in Jesus the Messiah. Whether the simple story of the Cross, or the overpowering and dumb-striking effulgence of a Pauline vision converts the sin-born human soul from a passive or an active anti-Christianity into a Christ-loving, the Christian heart will ever desire to know more of the Man Christ Jesus, or of Christ the Son of God. A preconceived philosophical system of theological doctrines and anthropological morals may, indeed, happen to tally with the consequences growing out from the divinity of Jesus. But then it happens, too, that the personality of Jesus, as well as indeed the personality of God, is regarded by the advocates of such a system as of more secondary importance. For the pantheistic unbeliever in a personal God there is no need for a personal Christ. Spinoza's Christ was, as he said himself, not the historic Jesus of flesh and blood, but the hominum or even mundi salvator, who happened to fit, as Spinoza honestly believed, precisely into his system. But as Pantheism, even at its best, is only a pious idealism, which, in a creature like man, must pass, as we know it always has passed over first into an idealistic and then into a gross materialism, and at last ended in a chaotic destruction of all that soul and body calls rightfully its own in the world, so the idea of a panoterie, merely divine Christ, soon passes over, first into the idea of "every man his own Christ," then into a blighted denial of the very existence of sin, into a boastful conceit of being born free of sin, and finally ends in a taking up of stones to kill the same Jesus whose ideality alone was at first adored; and then Jesus is hid from the sight of the very temple crowd, though passing through its very midst. (John viii. 58-59.) I think we may safely assert, in view of the hitherto teachings of the history of Philosophy, Theology and Christianity, that as the first two must prove baseless without a divine personality, so must the last one prove to be utterly salvationless, without a historic, personal, human Jesus, such as he really was. Curtly and comprehensively, says Delitzsch, (Ein Tag in Capernaum p. vii.), "In whatever way the problem of the mysterious union of the divine and human nature in the person of Jesus Christ may be solved, (and the Talmud too counts 'Yahoe our Righteousness' among the names of the Messiah) one thing is certain, that any and every solution is untenable which either divides the unity of His personality or which encroaches

on the truth of His humanity." And the true Christian must yet be found, or sought and not be found, to whom the humanity of our dear Lord is not as precious as His soul-saving grace. And every feeling Christian will surely say with Delitzsch, "There is nothing more delightful than, while looking up to the exalted Saviour, to live and dream oneself into His daily life below." It is in aid of this delightful exercise that I wish every Christian would read these works of Prof. Fr. Delitzsch, which I shall attempt now to review for the reader. We cannot make a personal acquaintance with any historic personage, still less with Jesus, the incomparably greatest and central of all, unless we first acquaint ourselves with the times and localities of such personages. The brochure "Jesus and Hillel" will aid us in this. The author directed it particularly against Renan's Vie de Jesus, and the lectures of Dr. Geiger, Rabbi of the reformed congregation at Frankfurt on the Main. Although controversial, the pamphlet is happily void of the usual controversial acrimony, and manifests through ut its pages that ever attractive meekness, the characteristic of profound knowledge and soul-pervading discipleship of Jesus the Messiah.

Delitzsch refers to the personal description of Jesus, which Nicephorus Colisti of the 14th century gives on the authority of ancient authors, one of whom might have been John of Damascus, of the 8th century, and he too, if honestly, would have confessed the picture to be but a poor work of the fancy. For, while we have the numerous pictures of Augustus and Thiberius, the imperial Roman contemporaries of Christ; while we can see to-day yet, on the temple-walls of Egyptian Komath the picture of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and on the palace walls of Khorsabad and Kuyunduk the contemporary pictures of King Sargo in his war-chariot, and of King Sanheil on his throne, we have hardly any traditions, still less any picture, of the external appearance of Jesus. Significantly pertinent is the historic fact that in the church before and after Constantine there was a standing disagreement as to how the earthly appearance of Jesus was to be conceived to have been, whether ungainly or ideally beautiful, and neither opinion was attempted to be supported by a reference to ancient records, but by passages from the Old Testament Scriptures. As a side piece to that medieval fancy picture of Christ, by N. Calisti, Delitzsch cites a passage from Renan's "Life of Jesus." There we are informed that Jesus was born in Nazareth. The streets where the child used to play, we are told, were mere paths separating the houses from each other. Joseph's house is said to have been like one of those poor eastern huts in which the door is the only avenue for the light; a hovel, serving at once as workshop, kitchen and sleeping room; the entire furniture of which consisting of a floor-mat, a few bolsters scattered on it, a pair of earthen jars, and a painted coffer. At the now ruined well, we are told by Renan, Mary no doubt stood daily with water-jug on shoulder, chatting with her countrywomen, who were unknown to the world. To this day, so says Renan, the Syrian type of female beauty is yet preserved there. The smiling and grand natural scenery of the place was, says R., the early teacher of Jesus. Thence he went yearly to the great festivals at Jerusalem. Joseph died before his son began to act in public, and Mary, says R., removed to Cana. In Nazareth, Jesus spent his maturing youth, and here the first notice was taken of him. The voice of the young carpenter, now appearing as a public teacher, suddenly assumed, according to Renan, such an extraordinary softness that those who knew him before did not recognize him again. His amiable character, and his face—very likely, says it further—one of those enchantingly attractive ones occasionally met with in the Jewish race, created a charmed circle around his person. For the most part, we are told, Jesus kept himself close to Hillel. Fifty years before Jesus, Hillel repounded those aphorisms which so much resemble his. In virtue of his humbly borne piety, his mild character, his opposition to priests and hypocrites, Hillel, says R., was in fact the real teacher of Jesus, if indeed—the qualifications—we can speak of a teacher where such an exalted originality is concerned. So far Renan. As a fancy picture his one of Jesus may pass current. But, says Delitzsch, speaking of it with that certainty which Renan does, his picture is in unjustifiable contradiction to the historic facts recorded by the Evangelists. Jesus was not born in Nazareth. Mary's removal to Cana is simply an assumption of Renan. The description of Joseph's house after the fashion of one of those inhabited by the present degraded Palestinian population, the adulation of the female beauty of Nazareth, of which no other or other traveller speaks, the speaking of Jesus' extraordinary fitness of voice and enchanting beauty of face, of all of which Renan speaks with an indefinite "very likely," all these are nothing more than the picturing of a fantastic imagination. And yet, this Renan's "Life of Jesus" has achieved a conquering march through the educated world. And why? It is not owing to the free-thinking audacity of the book, nor to the fundamental tendencies of our age, which is estranged from Christianity as a religion of revelation and miracles. The applause it has gained is chiefly explainable by the consideration that to the mischief-joy of thousands it so dissolved the ancient church dogma of the God-Man, in the so-called progressive enlightenment of the world, that that dogma became a mere dream of old and outworn times. The reading world, stupified, as it is, by the most refined rancors of excitement, greedily devoured the proffered pungent stuff called "Vie de Jesus," which, like the Mysteres de Paris, might also have been entitled "Mysteres de Jesus." Sentimentality and sensuality found equally rich pabulum in this book, where the sensuous arts of a Piero Lacour are combined with that of a Suetonius or Dumas, where frivolous speeches, received only by enthusiastic outpourings of soul, tickle the natural inclinations down to

very carnality. And even the revolutionary dissatisfaction with the political state of the times felt itself also attracted by that book which represents the person of Jesus as that of a noble, enthusiastic republican, something like that of a Camille Desmoulins; which held up the times of Jesus as a mirror for the then imperial France, as a programme of a new social revolution. Still all these are insufficient to account wholly for the influence of this book. There is yet a better reason, which explains it in part. It withdrew, namely, the person of Jesus from the mist in which it was lost from the sight of thousands, and roused again the old question—"What is to be thought of him, the burning one of to-day?" But, in throwing this most determining, really critical question of humanity, far into the consciousness of Jew and Christian readers, the author served a divine purpose, far different from the one he himself intended. And, to make the person of Jesus again, as the author did, the central point of the consciousness of our times, in this he could not succeed without the use of all the means and arts of modern belles lettres in giving outline and color to the person of Jesus. It is a justifiable undertaking to meet the natural Christian demand for a vivid delineation of the mutual relations which existed between Christ and His times. But Renan's picture of Jesus is not a historic one; it is but a caricature composed of the most disagreeing features of characters, a counterfeit based upon falsifications of historic truth. Renan is yet too much of a Christian to make Hillel the true founder of Christianity. This, he says, he could not become; while Dr. Geiger, the Rabbi of a reformed (Jewish) congregation, is too much of a Jew to place Hillel under Jesus, and says, "Jesus was a Pharisee walking in the footsteps of Hillel. A new thought Jesus never uttered, while Hillel's appearance is that of a true reformer, and is besides a perfectly historic personality, unadorned with the disfiguration of fables and miracles, which only conceal the true character of the individual." The side looks of the Rabbi are easily discernible.

The lectures of D. Geiger, a 2nd edition of which was published in 1855, had a wide circle of readers, and were extensively reviewed in the public press. The unprejudiced Christian and Jewish readers will, therefore, be well served by an impartial and closer consideration of that Hillel whom Renan puts equal to, and whom Dr. Geiger puts above Jesus. Hillel is really an amiable and great individual, well worthy of our sympathy. No contemporary of Jesus, when compared with him, is so well calculated to bring out the incomparable uniqueness of Jesus into a brighter light. There is, besides, a double advantage connected with Hillel. Firstly, the exceptionally abundant records of him in the Talmud, which, though not void altogether of curious exaggerations, e. g. his understanding the languages of mountains, villages, plants, beasts and demons, still are for the most part trustworthy. Secondly, there is no danger of being influenced in the consideration of Hillel's character, either for or against him, since his activity falls in the time of Herod the Great, and reaches, therefore, only to the childhood of Jesus. Hillel might possibly have officiated as president of that Sanhedrim, which, according to Matt. ii. 4, was asked by Herod where the Messiah was to be born, and which answered scripturally, that Bethlehem Ephrata must be the place. Much later than this, Hillel's time could not have reached. He never had the opportunity of either denying or accepting the Messianic claims of Jesus, he being in reality of a pre-Christian era. In his considering Hillel by himself, and in company with Jesus, Delitzsch adheres strictly to the Jewish traditions on the one hand, and to that part of the New Testament, on the other, which even the critic E. D. Stauss has left untouched. The Gospel by Mark is at present honored by certain critics as being the most original and faithful of all, and to this Gospel our author refers chiefly. Delitzsch discusses three points. (1.) How did Hillel and how did Jesus become the great teachers? (2.) What did Hillel the Babylonian, and what did Jesus the Nazarene teach? (3.) A comparison of the characteristics of the two. These three points are to be answered by the histories of the two.

The writer of this review has taken the pains to consult the Rabbinical original writings and verify the reference which Delitzsch makes to them. It is certainly true that no writer on the subject in hand can be too careful in this direction, particularly in our day of copyists. The double pleasure of reassurance in the just deductions of Delitzsch amply compensated the writer of this for his special labor. The following narrative of an event which happened about 50 years before the Christian Era is taken from the Talmud:—One night of a Friday to Saturday, about the end of December, the then celebrated teachers, Thumaya and Abtalion, instructed their pupils. When the sun should have risen, the room was still dark. Thinking it was cloudy they looked up to the skylight of the room and discovered there the shape of a man. Ascending there, they really found a man covered up with snow, whom, bringing down half dead, they placed him before the fire and applied the means of restoration, the Rabbins declaring that such a man was worthy to have the Sabbath violated in his behalf. That man was Hillel. He was a humil descendant of the royal family of David, as proven by a genealogical register at Jerusalem, and belonged to a poor exiled family in Babylon. In company with his brother Thumaya, he left Babylon and went to Palestine, the former in search of riches, the latter for learning. Hillel was so poor that he worked as a common laborer for a typton (84 cents) a day. And yet he divided even this pittance, and with one-half of it he maintained his family, and the other he paid for his daily admittance to the school of Thumaya and Abtalion. On the Friday mentioned above he happened to find no work, and was unable to enter the school, and at dusk he managed to climb up its roof unobserved, and from the skylight he heard and saw what he so much loved. At last, overcome by fatigue and cold, he was benumbed into that perilous sleep from which he was awakened by the efforts of the Rabbis on the Sabbath day. From that time onward he was a pupil of Thumaya and Abtalion. His

brother contributed to his maintenance, and learning the exposition of the law from the greatest authorities of his time, he at last became himself a great authority. So it is related that in the long dispute about the propriety or impropriety of killing the Passover on a Sabbath day that happened to be the preparation day of the feast, Hillel's decision in the affirmative was accepted by all, for it was admitted to be in conformity with a tradition which he alone preserved in integrity. His eminent learning, peaceful character, and moderate Pharisaic tendencies secured to his unsettled and degenerated generation the peaceful development of the ritual. But a reformer he was in no sense. It is only Dr. Geiger who elevates him to that position in order to degrade Jesus in comparison. He only can be called reformer who, endowed with a creative genius, restores the debased or perverted religion of a people to its ancient pure state, who breathes the new life, which he feels within himself, into the decayed mass of a great community. Samuel and Ezra were such reformers. But Hillel left everything as he found it. The reforms which he attempted relate to the civil code in matters of borrowing and selling, and in these too he based his opinions on a cunning evasion of the letter of the Mosaic law. In the main, Hillel only developed further still the well known Pharisaic system of laws and observances, but hardly touched the religious popular conscience, and he certainly did not do so for the elevation of the religious life of his people, by any new impulses, to retrieve it from the decay in which it was sunk. Such was Hillel. What Jesus of Nazareth was, history tells sufficiently plain for any one who does not purposely shut his eyes to the record of facts. If Hillel was a reformer we know nothing worthy of his reformings. Jesus was the founder of a religion which stands in relation to the Old Testament as does the kernel to the enclosing shell. He is the founder of a humanity which was unheard of before Him, of a religion of human love, which abolished the religious walls of partition between nations, which patronized all mankind by the all embracing love of God. And how did Jesus become such a founder of such a religion? He too, was according to the Talmud, a scion of the then impoverished royal family of David, both on the side of his mother as well as that of his adopting father. But his family did not emigrate, like Hillel's, to Babylon, where Jewish learning rivalled that of Palestine. Jesus lived in Galilee, the portion of all Palestine which Judeans most heartily despised, as the Greeks did Boetia and the inhabitants, as the Parthians of our own day despise the Gascon. Nazareth, the home of Jesus, was the obscurest of its despised country. There is no record of any eminent man having been born or brought up there. There is no mention of it among the 204 overpopulous cities and villages which Josephus enumerates in Galilee. Had we the only mention of it in the Gospels, modern criticism would certainly have denied its ever having existed at all. Happily it is preserved to this day, lying in a secluded nook among the mountains. Jesus could have had no means of cultivation there except the humble house of prayer. Hillel's wisdom was really the offspring of that of Thumaya and Abtalion. But of the teacher of Jesus no one knows. Although the Talmud fables about Yeshua ben Perahia being first the teacher of Jesus, and then His excommunicator under the solemn blast of 400 rams' horns, this is a poor absurdity on its face, that J. ben Perahia having lived at least one hundred years before Jesus. From the liberal tendencies of Egyptian Judaism, Jesus could have known nothing, He having been there in His earliest childhood only. Still more impossible is the Talmudic accusation against Jesus of having brought slavery with Him from Egypt. But Jesus must have received a world of impressions both from His reputed parents and other people, both from those who attracted and from those that repelled Him, all of which His ungodward life digested and made part of himself. Yet the principal means of His education was His communion with God through the recorded Word of His Wit. This Word without told him what His own people and what the world needed, and the God within Him told Him what He was called upon to do for these; not, indeed, to develop still further the system of laws and observances, as Hillel did, but rather by removing this externalizing ceremonial service, to substitute in its stead an immediate, spiritual, free relation between God and man, and for this high calling to make of Himself an entire sacrifice. In other words, Jesus recognized Himself in God, and that with an ever increasing certainty, as being the Messiah promised by Moses and the Prophets. He experienced in Himself that which the servant of Jehovah said of himself through Isaiah, (L. 4.) "The Lord Jehovah gave unto me a disciple's tongue, that I know to support the weary with words; morning by morning he waketh, waketh my ear, that I hear as disciples do." The deeper he entered into the prophecies, and the more he recognized the people's deadness through the works of self-righteousness, so much the more clearly must He have seen the terrible sufferings which awaited Him, and so much the more intense was His prayer for courage and cheerfulness, to be able to say of Himself, in accordance with Isaiah's prophecy, (L. 5-6.) "The Lord Jehovah opened my ear, and I was not rebellious—backwards I did not move. My body I offered to the smiters, and my cheek to them that pluck my face; I hid not from abuse and scorn." In this school of profound inward experience the disciple of God matured into the divine teacher who, in the form of a servant, like the travelling Galilean religious teachers of His times, love in Himself the immense consciousness of being the Messiah of Israel. His contemporaries, who knew only His external origin, were the more puzzled at this phenomenon of a teacher without a teacher. In the synagogue at Nazareth, when he read the memorable words from Isaiah LXI. 1-2, these being part of the prophetic lesson for that day, He preached from these as His text to His astonished hearers, and certain that He and no one else was the servant of Jehovah, he concluded by exclaiming: "This Scripture is today fulfilled in your ears." (Luke IV. 16.) The people were astonished at the preaching of this carpenter's son, so much the

more since he had not that Rabbinic diploma which they thought necessary for every public teacher to have. He stood outside the traditional succession, and in just this very point He differed from Hillel, who succeeded to the school wisdom of Thumaya and Abtalion. Jesus came from no Rabbinical school, and neither acknowledged nor built up any existing system. He drew freely and directly from the fullness of the Divine Spirit, and independent of any man, His holy inward life was taught by the Word of God alone. Ever since His childhood He had stood in communion with God, and because of this, He alone, like no other man, was able to say those astounding words, "No man knoweth the father except the son, and he unto whom the son will reveal Him." (Matt. xi. 27.) It was on this account that His teaching and the manner of it, and His who he appeared so much astonished His contemporaries, and in the despised Galilee was fulfilled the ancient prophecy of Isaiah, (ix. 1.) "The people that walk in darkness saw a great light, the dwellers in the land of the Shadow of Death, light hath shone upon them." In accordance with this the Talmud says that the redemption of Israel will begin at Tiberias. And the Solar says that the Messiah is to be revealed in the land of Galilee. (To be Continued.)

BY THE WAYSIDE.

Two aged men entered a street car a few days ago, in a neighboring city. One of them, who was paralyzed, said, in reply to a question of the other as to his welfare: "I have a very large interest in the next world?" When asked, "How are you off for this world?" He replied pleasantly that he had enough to meet his wants while he lived, and then again he added, "But I have a very large interest in the next world." The conversation attracted the attention of other passengers, and one of them who narrated it said that these words kept ringing in his ears all the rest of the day. He could not get rid of the deep impression made by the singular earnestness and happiness of the old disciple.

Suchy this is the beauty of old age, its joy and blessedness, the calm assurance of a portion beyond this life in "the immutability of the saints of light."

Little, too, did the veteran think of the power of his reiterated sentence upon the hearts of fellow-travellers who did not even know his name. Yet these wayside utterances of warm-hearted Christians are often the most eloquent lay-preaching both to unconverted people and to believers who happen to overhear them. Our unconscious influences are chiefly the best or the worst that we exert.

But the best of all is when the pilgrim life draws near its close, and when the staff and sandals are soon to be laid aside, to feel that our best and largest "interests are in the next world." The treasure grows at more than compound interest. Its value increases as the vision of it widens like the firmament. These riches cannot "take to themselves wings and fly away." It is a life interest for eternity, and faith only asserts its own divine prerogative, "while we look not at things which are seen, but at the things that are not seen, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."

The old age which is brightened by this prospect cannot be the senile, sour, morose, unlovely thing that we sometimes see. But this is the beautiful golden sunset of the human autumn. It has "the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." And this is the inventory which another old disciple once made, for his fellow-Christians: "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Has the reader a share in this—"all things?"—Christian Intelligencer.

THE FOUNDATION.

When the house in which you live was built, the builder did not begin by putting on the roof. First of all, before even the walls could be commenced, he was obliged to dig a large hole and make a foundation. When that was done, he could begin to put up the wall, and make the doors and windows and roof.

Now, in the same way, a Christian's life must begin with the foundation.

Before we can have holiness, or happiness, or usefulness, we must first of all come to Jesus, and be "justified by faith" in Him.

"Justified"—what does that mean? You remember the publican who stood in the temple, with his head bowed down, smiting his breast, and crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" God heard his prayer, and he went down to his house "justified." His load was taken away, his sins were forgiven, he had found pardon, and peace, and joy—he was "justified."

To be justified means to be proved just, to be reckoned righteous and holy; and when we trust in Jesus as our Saviour, he takes away our sin, and he does make us holy, for he gives us his own holiness. We read in English history that when Canute gained a victory over the Saxon king, Edmund, they made a treaty after the battle, and Canute, in token of peace and reconciliation, exchanged garments and weapons with his conquered foe. And just in the same way does Christ make an exchange with his people; he has taken their sin upon him, and he gives them instead the spotless robe of his glorious righteousness.

It is only when we know that this beautiful robe is our own that we can have true joy and peace—that blessed "peace of God which passeth all understanding." (Phil. 4: 7.) "Peace I leave with you," said the Saviour to his disciples; "my peace I give unto you" (John 14: 27.) To us he says the same, for he has "made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. 1: 20.) So now we can have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."—The Testimony.