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EDITED BY GEORGE PECK, D. D.

ART. I.—*Reports of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, for the years 1818 to 1846, inclusive*: in ten volumes. 8vo. London: Published by the Society.

It is now more than sixty years since the first Wesleyan missionaries, under the superintendence of Dr. Coke, were sent forth to labor in the colonies of Great Britain. It was not, however, until the year 1817 that the Wesleyan Missionary Society was formed; although, in the interval, the great work had been prosecuted with diligence, and attended with such success that, at the formation of the Society, they had in foreign lands nearly one hundred missionaries, and a membership of two thousand. Having before us the Annual Reports of this Society, from the year 1818 (the first) to 1846, inclusive, we purpose to devote a few pages to its history; hoping thereby, not only to make the reader better acquainted with their labors, their disasters, and their success, but to stimulate our own branch of the Wesleyan family to greater zeal and more systematic efforts for evangelizing the world.

The object of the Society, as stated in their "Laws and Regulations," is confined exclusively to the support and enlargement of *foreign* missions. The annual payment of one guinea, or a donation, at one time, of ten pounds or upward, entitles to membership and to a copy of the Society's Annual Reports. The business of the Society is in the hands of the British Conference; which body appoints a General Committee of fifty, including always the president and secretary of the conference for the time being, to whom is intrusted the entire management of its affairs, subject to the revision of the conference, at their annual sessions. This committee is composed of laymen as well as ministers, of whom eight traveling preachers, and eight other members of the Methodist Society, are selected from the country circuits; the rest from resi-

Passing by "the mode of varnishing with mastic varnish," the methods of removing mastic varnish when necessary, and the modes of repairing injured paintings, we come to the author's conclusion, which, it is perhaps needless to add, has our hearty approval.

"While so much has been prescribed for the preservation and restoration of paintings, it would be quite as useful if something could be done to promote their destruction; for, out of the vast crowd of pictures, old and new, that here as well as in Europe are giving mostly a false direction to public taste, or preventing its expansion, ninety out of every hundred might disappear to the manifest advantage of the art; while of the ten remaining, five are all the better, or would be so, for any obscuration, that in rendering their characteristics less obvious should help also to veil their defects."—P. 296.

To one who simply desires to maintain, for literary or other purposes, a running acquaintance with the terms and phrases of art, the Analytical Index and Explanatory and Critical Dictionary, which fill out the remaining hundred pages of a work comprising, as has been already shown, such an amount of valuable matter, would be well worth the price of the entire volume. As a reference book on this branch of art, it would be a valuable accessory to any library, public or private.

ART. IV.—*The Life of Christ, in its Historical Connection and Historical Development.* By Dr. A. NEANDER. Translated from the fourth German Edition, by JOHN M'CLINTOCK and CHARLES E. BLUMENTHAL, Professors in Dickinson College, Svo., pp. 450. New-York: Harper & Brothers. 1848.*

IT is an essential element of the wisdom of God, in the government of his kingdom on earth, that all heresies and schisms, all errors and diseases, must in the end promote the cause of divine truth and the welfare of the church. This law has been anew illustrated in the history of that notorious book, the "Life of Jesus," by Dr. *D. F. Strauss*, which appeared first in 1835, and, in its fourth edition, in 1840. That work, designed by its author to subvert at once the history of our Saviour and the foundation of our hopes, has called forth some of the most able defenses of the gospel history that have ever appeared; and thus, instead of weakening

* The writer of this article begs the readers of the Review to bear in mind that English is not his native tongue, and to excuse the imperfections of his style on that account. The object of the article is to give a condensed account of one of the most important controversies in modern German theology.

its basis, has established it more firmly than ever. Among these defenses is *Neander's* "LIFE OF CHRIST;" the translation of which has furnished the occasion for this article. It is true that Neander would probably have written a similar work as the necessary complement to his "Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles," and as the foundation of his great work on ecclesiastical history; but it would neither have appeared so soon, nor assumed its present shape, had not Strauss's book first been written.

To write a biography of the God-man is doubtless one of the most arduous and responsible tasks which the theologian can be called to undertake. Indeed, many regard the task as too sacred and lofty for any human pen. Even the genial HERDER wondered how any one could hazard the attempt after the inimitable record by JOHN, "who lay in the Master's bosom." But without the life of Him, who is "the way, the truth, and the life," not only exegesis and church history, but also didactic and moral theology, must remain incomplete. Without it, divinity would lack its corner-stone; the stream of church history its fountain-head; and morality its life-blood and its highest pattern. The entire New Testament is a commentary upon the life of Christ; nay, such also is the history of the church, and the holy life of every true believer. But its proper and principal sources are the four Gospels; for they contain all the material essential to a systematic biography, although they are not given to us as complete *lives* of the Saviour, but only as recording such of his acts, miracles, and discourses, as their special aims and the wants of their readers required an account of. As, therefore, the Gospels are the sources of this department of Biblical literature, it has always been closely connected with the criticism of the Gospels—with all inquiries into their nature, authenticity, and integrity.

Four views have been taken of this important subject, all, of course, affecting the entire system of theology and of practical religion. Three of these belong to the sphere of infidelity, and may be said, even in a *scientific* point of view, to involve greater difficulties than that which we place first in order below—which we deem to be the only true and tenable view, and which has, of late, come out in new triumph from the deep struggles of modern German theology.

1. The first is the *Orthodox* or *Supranaturalistic* view of Christ's life. This view, which is as old as Christianity itself, is held by the evangelical Protestant churches in common with the Roman Catholic Church. Its bearing may be summed up as follows:—

The four Gospels are divinely inspired books, and relate genuine history, without error or contradiction. Christ is God and man in one person; was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. The miracles ascribed to him by the evangelists were truly performed by him, and were the natural manifestation of the power of God dwelling in him. All his words are spirit and life—the revealing of a new spiritual creation. He died on the cross for the sins of men; rose again on the third day; and ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he rules, “head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”

2. The second view is the *Deistic* or *Naturalistic*, according to which the evangelical history was the product of an invention imposed upon the world by its authors; and Christ an ordinary man, who, from selfish and interested designs, has been raised by his followers to the imaginary dignity of a divine being. This position was first taken by the heathen opponents of Christianity, such as *Celsus*, *Porphyrius*, and the emperor *Julianus Apostata*. It was afterward adopted by many of the English Deists, e. g., *Morgan*, *Chubb*, and particularly *Woolston*, in his “Six Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour.” The French infidels of the last century, *Voltaire*, the *Encyclopædists*, and the author of the *Systeme de la Nature*, followed, yea, even exceeded, the English Deists in hatred of Christianity; and brought on, as a natural consequence, the French Revolution, with its horrible scenes, and with its ridiculous attempt to depose God himself, and seat human reason upon the throne of the world. But the most remarkable and scientific exposition of this view is to be found in the anonymous Fragments which *Lessing* discovered in the library of *Wolfenbüttel*, and which he began to publish in 1774, not “because he agreed with them, but because he wished to rouse the spirit of inquiry.” This called forth the witty remark of *Semler*, that *Lessing's* procedure was “like setting a city on fire in order to try the engines.” It is now well known that the real author of these Fragments was *Hermann Samuel Reimarus*.* According to the Fragments, the laws and doctrines of the Old Testament were too barbarous and dangerous to have come from God; the miracles of Scripture were so contradictory, absurd, and incredible, that they could be nothing else but deceptions practiced to secure the reverence and obedience of the superstitious multitude; the design of Jesus was a political one; his relation to John the Baptist rested on a pre-

* *Gurlitt* has put this beyond doubt in the “*Leipziger Literaturzeitung*,” 1827, No. 55.

vious mutual compact to recommend each other to the people; and his plan was finally frustrated by his unforeseen death, which his disciples tried to evade by making the world believe he had arisen, and by cunningly modifying his doctrine accordingly.

It would be, of course, labor spent in vain to set about anything like a serious refutation of such wicked crudities at this day. To build the most sacred experience of millions of Christians, nay, the whole history of eighteen hundred years, upon a wretched imposition, or even upon a skillful trick, of selfish hypocrites, is not only an insult done to Christ and his apostles, but to the human race and common sense. No writer of any self-respect would dare now to fall in with such a view. One glance even at the lofty sublimity of the moral character of Christ and his apostles, as it strikes even the casual reader in every line of the New Testament, is enough to class such a theory among the grossest absurdities which ever proceeded from a perverted human brain.

3. Not so contemptible, but yet not much better if carried out to its ultimate results, is the *Rationalistic* or *Euhemeristic** mode of explaining the life and miracles of Christ. This view was held by several German theologians about the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, and reached its classical perfection in the "Commentaries on the Gospels" and "Life of Jesus," by Dr. PAULUS, a man whose extensive learning and mental acumen might, under the influence of the Spirit of God, have done great service to the cause of truth and piety.

By Rationalism is commonly meant that form of theology which receives only so much of the Christian religion as can be understood by our natural reason, (*ratio*,) or, more properly speaking, by our *common sense*. Interpreters of this school hold reason to be, of course, as pure and sound now as when it proceeded originally from the hands of the Creator; and they make it the rule and judge of all truth, even of the word of God. Whatever goes beyond its horizon, is either rejected as the superstition of bygone ages, or explained away as poetical figure, and brought down to the level of every day thoughts and events. Rationalism has an inborn hatred of mystery, and tries to make everything clear and palpable. *Goethe* has characterized it in his usual masterly way:—

* From *Euhemerus*, the heathen forerunner of the German Rationalist *Paulus*. He explained the gods of the Greek mythology as sages, heroes, kings, and tyrants, whose deeds gained them divine honors.—Cf. *Diod. Sicul. Bibl. Fragm.*, l. vi; *Cicero*, de Nat. Deor. i, 42.

“Daran erkenn 'ich den gelehrten Herrn
 Was ihr nicht tastet, steht euch meilenfern,
 Was ihr nicht fasst, das fehlt euch ganz und gar,
 Was ihr nicht rechnet, glaubt ihr, sei nicht wahr,
 Was ihr nicht wägt, hat für euch kein gewicht,
 Was ihr nicht münzt, das, meint ihr, gelte nicht.”*

The German Rationalists, like our Unitarians, have a very high opinion of the moral beauties of our holy religion; but they reject the doctrinal basis on which it rests. They look upon Christ as the greatest sage and the highest model of character; but they will not admit his divinity in the sense of the church. He is, after all, a mere man, different from others only in degree, *primus inter pares*. Everything, therefore, in the evangelical history which transcends the power of man, and the capacity of common sense, must be either denied or explained naturally. Dr. Paulus sets out with the remark, that the Biblical critic must carefully distinguish between the *fact* itself and the *judgment* of those who performed or who related it; and that his duty is to select the former in its original purity, free from all the disturbing influences and opinions of the time of its occurrence. The miracles of Christ will thus be found to lose their supernatural appearance, and to be either deeds of philanthropy, of medical skill, or of accident and good luck.

To be more clear we shall adduce some specimens of this so-called natural interpretation, which, however, turns out to be most unnatural and absurd. The glory of the Lord, which, in the night of Christ's birth, shone about the shepherds of Bethlehem, was an *ignis fatuus*. The miracle attending Christ's baptism is reduced to thunder and lightning, and a sudden dispersion of the clouds. The tempter in the wilderness was a cunning Pharisee, sent out by the Jewish authorities to try whether Jesus could perform miracles, and whether he might not be *used* against the Roman yoke. The changing of water into wine was a wedding joke, and the delusion of the company must be charged upon the twilight. The feeding of five thousand men can easily be explained by supposing them to have brought their own provisions with them. The daughter of Jairus, the youth of Nain, and Lazarus, were not really

- * Herein I recognize the high-learned man!
- What *you* have never handled—no man can;
- What *you* can't grasp, is sheer nonentity;
- What *you* cannot account for, cannot *be*;
- What *your* scales have not proved, can have no weight;
- What *you* 've not stamped, can never circulate.

dead, and needed only medical assistance. Christ's walking on the sea rests on a false translation; *περιπατεῖν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης*, means only "to walk around the sea on the high bank," which, of course, is nothing extraordinary. The Saviour's resurrection was an awaking from a trance or swoon; and Dr. Paulus attributes a great deal to the spices and the coolness of the grave in resuscitating the slumbering powers of life, and does not forget to quote Josephus, (*Vita* 75,) who makes mention of a man who was brought to life again after having been taken down from the cross. The ascension is explained in this way, namely, that Christ, hidden from his disciples by a cloud accidentally intervening between them, disappeared among the trees, and soon died in some unknown place in consequence of his wounds.

It seems to be almost incredible that men should waste so much learning and acumen of mind in support of such hypotheses, which are not only revolting to our moral and religious feelings, but even to common sense itself, the highest authority of Rationalists. This system, however, as it reached its culmination, dogmatically in *Wegscheider*, exegetically in *Paulus*, is also dying out with them; and it is one of the greatest triumphs of modern German philosophy and theology to have scientifically conquered this form of infidelity. To be sure, the *Rationalismus communis sive vulgaris*, as it is sometimes called in distinction from speculative Rationalism, has a great many adherents yet among older ministers and laymen of superficial education. It has assumed, even within the last few years, a new practical importance in the party of the "*Friends of Light*," with the preacher *Uhlich* at their head, and among the followers of the pseudo-reformer *Ronge*, one of the shallowest men that ever succeeded in making a noise in the world. But it is noticeable, that not one theologian of any distinction as a scholar belongs to them. Among the German universities that of Giessen is the only one where Rationalism has still the preponderance. In Halle, where it had its chief seat before *Tholuck's* arrival, the writer of this recollects very well, that, during his stay there in 1839, Professor *Wegscheider* had only from two to six hearers; while twenty years before, he had from three to four hundred.

The professorship of Paulus, in Heidelberg, was toward the last reduced to a mere title. The general superintendent, *Röhr*, who used to exercise an unbounded authority in the grand duchy of Saxony, has been completely ridiculed in his well-known controversy with *Hase*, professor in Jena. Dr. *Bretschneider*, of Gotha, has only weight yet by his scholarship, which does good service

in his valuable edition of the *Corpus Reformatorum* now in progress. Of his dogmatic theology *Marheineke* remarked, so long as twenty years ago: "The general superintendent, *Bretschneider*, has called my dogmatik at once pietistic, mystical, and transcendental. It is but justice to mention in apology for him, first, that he belongs to a long exploded theological tendency; secondly, that he does not know the meaning of the terms he here uses; and, thirdly, that he professedly judges only according to his own subjectivity, which means as much as nothing." The philosophy of common-sense Rationalism is so shallow that it could not possibly satisfy such profound thinkers as *Schleiermacher*, *Schelling*, and *Hegel*; and they have completely overthrown it. Its general view of life is so prosaic, that the poets of the romantic school, the two *Schlegels*, *Tieck*, and *Novalis*, made it the subject of keen sarcasm. Its interpretation of the Bible, in its vain attempt to reconcile its theory with the sacred text, does such violence to all laws of grammar and sound hermeneutics, that it received its death-blow from the gigantic progress of the later German philology. Even men who sympathize dogmatically, either in whole or in part, with the tenets of Rationalism, such as *Fritzsche*, *Meyer*, *Rückert*, *de Wette*, and *Winer*, reject its interpretations on mere philological grounds; and have to acknowledge that the church, and particularly the reformers of the sixteenth century, have rightly understood the Bible. It is an undeniable merit of *Strauss*, that he has triumphantly exposed the grammatical sins, the philosophical absurdities and inconsistencies, of the *natural* interpretation of the miracles. His "Leben Jesu" is a complete refutation of the "Leben Jesu" by *Dr. Paulus*. Thus one infidel has killed another, justifying the hope that the same fate will fall upon *Strauss*. Indeed, this desirable result has already been partly brought about by the infamous productions of *Weisse* and of *Bruno Bauer*.

It is perfectly obvious, on the stand-point of modern exegesis, that the system which we have been describing is utterly at war with the plain, natural meaning of the sacred writers, and that it charges them with the imbecility of mistaking every-day occurrences for miracles. But who in the world can earnestly believe that those fishermen, who have exerted more influence over the world than all the philosophers, poets, conquerors, and kings, put together, were destitute of their proper senses and ordinary faculties? Rationalism only removes one miracle in order to put a much greater one in its place.

But it must not be concluded that because this kind of Rationalism has been overcome scientifically by modern German theology,

and may be placed thus far among antiquated heresies, that it is also destroyed practically, much less that with it infidelity in general has been silenced. On the contrary, unbelief will constantly assume new forms, and continue to exist as long as the church is militant, compelling it to enter more and more deeply into the nature of our most holy faith. From those very scientific quarters in which the common-sense Rationalism had been slain and buried there arose a more fearful enemy of Christianity who threatened to dissolve the whole history of the Saviour into visions and dreams of the imagination. This leads us to the consideration of the most powerful attack which has ever been made against the Gospels from the department of learning and science, and which has, as already mentioned, helped to call forth the work of *Neander*.

4. The fourth and last point of view in which the life of Christ has been treated is the *Mythic*, which sinks our religion to the level of heathen mythologies, thus destroying its objective reality, and making it the product of speculative fancy. It has been said* that the *allegorical* mode of interpretation is the mother of the mythic. We find it among the Jews in Alexandria, who had largely imbibed the ideas of Greek, particularly Platonic, philosophy, and tried to reconcile it with the Old Testament, which could only be done by going beyond the literal sense. Philo, the cotemporary of Christ, is well known to have reduced this allegorical interpretation to a system. The celebrated *Origen* adopted it, and applied it also to the New Testament. According to his trichotomic anthropology, he distinguished three meanings in the Bible—the literal or historical, the moral or psychic, and the mystical or pneumatic; the first corresponding to the body, the second to the soul, the third to the spirit.† But *Origen's* allegorizing tendency did not lead him to deny the sacred history; and no example can be adduced from his numerous writings on the New Testament in proof that he sacrificed any of Christ's miracles. He only considered the historical sense as insufficient in itself. So also in the Christian church, down to our day, the allegorical interpretation has been largely made use of for practical purposes without the slightest intention of giving up a particle of Biblical history. Still it must be confessed that the tendency to allegorize is in itself unsound, and will easily lead minds of a decided leaning to spiritualism and idealism to a decided disregard of external facts and forms. Besides, it opens the door to all kinds of arbitrary interpretation. It shows a much greater reverence for the Bible, to take out only

* Vide *Strauss*, *Leben Jesu*, vol. i, p. 6, fourth edition.

† *Hom. v*, in *Levit.*, § 5; *De Princip. iv*, 11.

what is in it, than to put in one's own notions and fancies. The allegorical interpretation in most cases turns out to be *imposition* instead of *exposition*.

The mythic interpretation took its rise toward the end of the last century, and was intimately connected with the critical investigations of that period into heathen antiquity, particularly of the origin and nature of the mythological religions. *Heyne*, the celebrated philologist, laid down the principle that all the history, philosophy, and religion of antiquity, proceeded from myths.* The genial *Wolf* tried to make the very existence of Homer doubtful, and ascribed his immortal poems to the poetical spirit of the Greek nation. The great historian *Niebuhr* dissolved the old Roman history, as related by *Livy*, into myths and unreliable traditions. No wonder that in such a critical and revolutionary age the principle of *Heyne* and *Schelling* was applied also to the religion of the Bible. It was done by certain neological critics, who had, from the start, some misgiving at the natural interpretation of their fellow-rationalists. *Gabler*, *Vater*, *de Wette*, *Eichhorn*, and *Lorenz Bauer*, interpreted first some parts of the Old Testament history mythically; *Ammon*, *Gabler*, *Eichhorn*, *Kaiser*, *Bertholdt*, *de Wette*, *Hase*, and *Usteri*, extended the process to the New Testament, but yet only to a partial extent. *Ammon* and *Hase*, for instance, confined the mythic view to the beginning and end of Christ's life; *Eichhorn* and *de Wette* to those parts of the first three Gospels which are not confirmed by the Gospel of *St. John*.

To *Dr. David Friedrich Strauss* undoubtedly belongs the honor (!) of having carried this stand-point consistently through the whole evangelical history. He left his predecessors far in the rear in ability as well as in boldness; and his "*Leben Jesu*" will always remain the classical work of this school. It may be said to be the concentration of all former efforts made by human reason and human learning against the basis of Christianity; and a successful refutation of it would be the greatest triumph of theology. The writer of this sketch, who, soon after the appearance of the work, studied in the university where it was written, and where the personal recollections of the youthful author, and of his stirring lectures to the students of *Tübingen*, were yet quite fresh, recollects very well what an immense sensation this production made throughout Germany. Hardly a day passed that it was not made the subject of the most earnest and exciting discussion. Some

* "A mythis omnis priscorum hominum cum historia tum philosophia procedit."—*Ad Apollod. Athen. Bibl. notae*, p. 3, seq.

thought that the hour of the downfall of the Christian church and religion had struck, while others expected good results from the struggle. "This is the crisis of the disease," they said; "thousands will shrink from the fearful abyss, and return to the good old faith; the church will overcome this enemy as all others, and then stand more firmly than ever." Some even expressed the hope that the author himself, if he sincerely inquired after truth, could not remain in this extreme position, and would, ere long, recall his errors. At first none seemed to venture on the arena to oppose him, but soon a whole host of answers from both orthodox and semi-orthodox theologians appeared, and calmed down the fears of the agitated friends of religion.

Strauss was born in 1806 at Ludwigsburg, in the kingdom of Württemberg. As a student at Tübingen, he was always industrious, retired, seemingly modest, correct, and, at one time, thought even to be pious. In talents and scholarship he stood first in his class. He finished his education at Berlin, from which city he returned, somewhat changed, to Tübingen. He cultivated his mind particularly in the school of Schleiermacher's criticism and Hegel's metaphysical pantheism. His learning is not so extensive as that of *Tholuck*, *Neander*, *Baur*, and others, but very well digested, accurate, nice, and adroitly managed. His acumen is admirable. No discrepancy in the Gospels, how slight soever, escapes his observation. He acts toward the records as a lawyer, who hears their accounts, and seeks to involve them in contradiction, in order to destroy the weight of their testimony. He writes with more elegance, clearness, vivacity, point, and wit, than most of the German theologians. At the same time his work is characterized by an air of calmness and indifference in regard to the result. He pulls down the most venerable structures of antiquity without a sigh or regret. It seems not to cause him the least pain that his conclusions, if they are correct, must deprive millions of their only comfort in life, and their only hope in death. There he stands upon the ruins of the greatest and most sacred life which ever appeared among men, like a marble statue, with the all-sufficient air of a Stoic philosopher. It is true, in the last chapter he affects to build up again what he has destroyed, by referring to an abstract idea what the church finds in the person of Jesus Christ. A miserable substitute indeed! "Humanity as a whole," we are told, "is the God-man, the Saviour of the world, the child of the visible mother, *nature*, and of the invisible father, *spirit*. Humanity is the incarnate God; she performs miracles by subduing nature in her wonderful inventions, such as steamboats and railroads.

We are saved by faith in this Christ, that is, by coming to the painful consciousness of our individuality, and finding ourselves, at the same time, embraced in the general race, which constantly rises from the grave"—the only immortality known in pantheistic philosophy.* In a speculative church like this all worship would have to be the worship of genius, (or hero-worship, as Carlyle calls it;) all prayers must be addressed to the spirit of humanity, that is, must be self-adoration. Can such a system save an immortal soul? Thus far, at least, it has not.

Strauss is a Rationalist in the general sense of the term, so far forth as he rejects everything which he cannot comprehend with his natural reason; but his philosophy is of a very different kind from that of Rationalism proper: it is not deistic, but pantheistic; it does not separate God from the world in an abstract way, but confounds the two by deifying the idea of humanity; it is not popular, but speculative and transcendental; not Ebionitish, but Gnostic. His infidelity is more refined and profound than that of Bahrdt, Paulus, Röhr, or Wegscheider, but on this very account more dangerous where it once has taken hold. While the older Rationalists retain the tenets of natural religion, particularly the three ideas of *Kant*, namely, God, liberty, and immortality, *Strauss* would fain deprive us of a personal God, of a personal Christ, and of individual immortality. While Paulus holds fast to the historical character of Christ's life, only excluding all supernatural and miraculous agency, *Strauss* dissolves nearly the whole of it into mythological fables, produced, not from any impure motives, to be sure, as the Wolfenbüttel Fragmentist would make us believe, but unconsciously, by the creative power of a pious enthusiasm.

Strauss requires from the biographer of Jesus that his heart and mind be perfectly free from religious and dogmatic suppositions and prejudices; and claims, in the preface to his first edition, (vol. i, p. v,) this freedom (*Voraussetzungslosigkeit*) as the fruit of his own philosophical studies. This, however, is a conceit. It is absolutely impossible for a theologian to get rid of all suppositions, else he would have to give up himself, and commence with nothing. But of the creature the maxim is perfectly true, *ex nihilo nihil fit*. It is the privilege of the Creator only to make something out of nothing. We must require, rather, that the biographer of Jesus proceed from *right* suppositions, from sincere love of truth, and deep reverence for Him whom the most superficial observation shows to be the greatest benefactor of mankind, and the only comfort and hope

* *Leben Jesu*, vol. ii, p. 710.

of millions. *Strauss* was full of false prejudices from the beginning, in spite of his assertion to the contrary. He had established in his mind, before writing his work, the principle, that miracles are impossible; that the Hegelian philosophy, as *he* understood it, was the only true philosophy; that the orthodox and rationalistic view of the evangelical history was obsolete; and also many other suppositions, which guide and determine him more or less in all his arguments and conclusions.

Our critic does not reach such a height of folly and absolute skepticism as to deny altogether the historical existence of Jesus Christ; but he reduces it to a mere skeleton. According to him, Christ was a religious genius, who first awoke to the consciousness of the essential unity (or, rather, identity) of God and men. But this is all: in no feature was he *specifically* different from other individual men. The superhuman glory with which the evangelists surround him is nothing but the reflection of their own mistaken ideas. His views may be thus set forth:—

By *mythus* we are to understand the representation of a religious idea in the form of a fact which the author honestly believes to have really happened. It is intimately related to the creations of poetry; but it differs from them, at the same time, in this, that the poet, in most cases, is conscious of the unhistorical character of his productions, while the *mythus* rests always on a self-deception in this respect. The *mythus*, moreover, has not a simply individual character, but proceeds from the *general* spirit of a religious society or of a nation.* Older writers have made a distinction between *historical* and *philosophical* myths. But the first, (historical *myths*), which rest on some fact, are better called *legends*, (*Sagen*, for which we cannot find a term precisely corresponding in English.) Now the first Christian community was pregnant with the Messianic ideas of the Old Testament, which assumed new vigor and life from the person of Jesus. Moses had announced a prophet like him. Deut. xviii, 15; Acts iii, 22; vii, 37. The Messiah was to proceed from the family of David, and from the town of Bethlehem. Isa. ix, 7; xi, 1; Micah v, 1; Luke i, 32; Matt. ii, 5; xxii, 42; John vii, 42; Acts ii, 30. He was to be, according to prophecy, a prophet, priest, and king, performing all kinds of miracles; opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, making the lame man to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing. Isa. xxxv, 5, seq.; xxxii, 3, 4; Matt. xi, 5;

* Comp. *Baur's* Review of *Ottfried Müller's* "Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie," in *Jahn's* Jahrbüchern f. Phil. u. Paedag., 1828, vol. i, p. 7; *Strauss, Leben Jesu*, vol. i, §§ 14, 15.

Luke vii, 21, seq. He was to suffer and to die for the sins of his people, Isa. liii; at the same time, however, he should not see corruption, but rise triumphantly from the grave. Psa. xvi, 10; Acts ii, 31; x, 35. The enthusiasm for Jesus excited in the disciples made them believe that all these prophecies were fulfilled in him, and their own ideas assumed, unconsciously, the nature of external facts. They were not able to hold fast the idea of a divine human Saviour in its abstract universality; and thus the Christian church generally since that time has always identified it with the individual Jesus of Nazareth, until some philosophers and critics in the nineteenth century discovered the incongruence of the absolute and the individual, and succeeded in saving the idea of a God-man by sundering it from the inadequate historical and individual form with which the imagination of antiquity had clothed it.

This is the general substance of the work in question. The manner in which Strauss carries out his principle is rather monotonous. He takes up the different accounts of the Gospels on each part of Christ's life, involves them in contradiction with each other, to prepare the way for the denial of their historical character, and then goes on to show that the orthodox exposition, as represented in our days mainly by *Olshausen*, cannot be maintained; and from this he passes over to the rationalistic interpretation of *Paulus* and others to prove that it is equally untenable from philosophical as well as exegetical reasons. Having thus, as he imagines, destroyed the former interpretations, he thinks himself driven to the mythic view as the only one consistent with the principles of sound criticism.

Without pretending, of course, to bestow a thorough review on the work, which would require us to write a book, we mention some of the arguments which shake the foundation of this dangerous system. The importance of the subject is such that our readers, we hope, will willingly consent to examine it a little further.

The two chief grounds on which Strauss rests his attempt to invalidate the extraordinary events in Christ's life, are the apparent *contradictions in the accounts of the Gospels*, and the alledged *impossibility of miracles*. The first is of a *critical*, the second of a *philosophical*, nature.

Every careful reader of a *Synopsis Evangeliorum* must see at once that the four Gospels differ frequently, not only in chronological arrangement, but also in the accounts themselves. The difference is most striking in the relation of the Gospel of St. John to the so-called Synoptics. But it will be found, at the same time, that these differ-

ences do not affect any essential point either in history or in doctrine. All the leading portions of Christ's life stand out clear and impregnable; yea, the discrepancies go only to confirm the general truth of the gospel history; affording the strongest possible proof that there was no collusion among the evangelists. Each drew from his own observations and sources with perfect honesty and conscientiousness. Moreover, the differences are not *contradictions*, but *complements* of each other. A building or a landscape may be represented from different sides, so as to furnish occasion for many pictures; why not an immortal man also? It was absolutely *impossible* for one evangelist to give a complete picture of the Saviour, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily. Even Socrates, who was a mere man, could not be fully represented by one disciple. How different is Plato's description of his character and system from Xenophon's! And yet the one only gives, as it were, the body, the other the soul, of the same person. There is no doubt that if Strauss had applied the same acumen in harmonizing the four Gospels that he has done in dividing them, he would have been much more successful, because the truth would have been on his side.

But even if we grant that the so-called harmonistic efforts cannot remove all the real differences, does it follow that the life of the Saviour is a mythus? No more preposterous conclusion could be drawn than this. If such a conclusion can rest on such a premise, the *whole history of the world* falls to the ground. That is one of the best portions in *Tholuck's* book against Strauss, in which he proves, with considerable learning, that the same, nay, much greater, discrepancies exist in the accounts given by the greatest historians of facts in profane history which no sane man has ever dreamed of doubting.* We shall only hint at one example. The *Life of Alexander the Great* was written partly by eye-witnesses of his own actions, by his warriors and friends, such as *Ptolemæus*, *Aristobulus*, *Nearchus*, *Marsyas*, *Eumenes*, *Baeto*, &c., of whose writings *Arrian*, *Plutarch*, and *Strabo*, have preserved faithful extracts. A comparison of these writings affords a whole string of discrepancies. One leaves out what the other relates as the most prominent facts in the life of his hero. They do not even agree in regard to the date of Alexander's death. *Eumenes* and *Diodotus*, who wrote down the events daily as they occurred, say that he died the 11th of June; but *Aristobulus* and *Ptolemæus*, who were present at his death-bed, mention the 13th.

* Dr. A. Tholuck, *die Glaubwürdigkeit der evangelischen Geschichte*, second edition, p. 443, seq.

According to *Aristobulus*, Alexander had reigned twelve years and eight months; according to *Diodorus Siculus* and *Castor*, twelve years and seven months; according to the first book of the *Makab.*, *Josephus* and *Eratosthenes*, just twelve years; according to *Cornelius Nepos* and *Livy*, thirteen years; and *Justinus* makes it thirty-five years and one month!

To come down to later times, it is well known that the biographers of Luther disagree about many events in the life of the great reformer: for instance, the place and circumstances of his birth; the time of the death of a certain friend, which decided his conversion; the date of many of his most valuable productions, &c. A learned and witty theologian, the late Dr. *Wurm*, of Württemberg, has written (in opposition to Strauss) a "Life of Luther," in which he dissolves the reformer's entire history into mere fables. This kind of *reductio ad absurdum* is of no little force. There is more agreement, on the whole, among the four biographers of Jesus than in the accounts on any other great man in the history of the world. The differences, therefore, which still may remain in the Gospels do not furnish the least foundation for such a skepticism as we have here under consideration.

It is perfectly plain from the whole "Leben Jesu," that the ruling argument is not a historical or critical, but a *philosophical* one, namely, the supposed impossibility of miracles. This always gives the ultimate decision. Strauss says, "A change of water into wine contradicts the laws of nature; therefore, the second chapter of St. John must relate a fable. I cannot comprehend how the dead can rise from the grave; therefore, the resurrection of Lazarus and of Jesus is an impossibility." Thus he makes his mental capacities, in ridiculous and wicked presumption, the measure of all truth. But this argument proves too much, and, consequently, nothing, according to a well-known law in logic; for neither Dr. Strauss, nor any philosopher, has succeeded yet in understanding the fact of the first creation, or the generation of a single individual, or the nature of the union between soul and body.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

To confess the imperfection of our present knowledge, and to bow before the infinitude of truth, is wisdom; to reject the reality of things because we do not understand them, is folly itself, and reminds one of the blind man, who denies the existence of the sun and of colors because he cannot see them. The skepticism of Strauss has its ultimate root in his *pantheism*, that is, in the denial

of a personal living God. His God is a sheer abstraction, the *idea* of humanity, which comes to self-consciousness and active reality only in individual men. It is the object of philosophy and of speculative theology to show the utter untenableness of such a conception of the divine Being. Wherever God is understood to be the almighty, omnipresent, self-conscious, ever-living, and independent ground of all existence, we must ascribe to him likewise the power of suspending, or rather of subordinating, the laws of nature, the work of his own hand, to the higher objects of his spiritual kingdom. And if we once believe the solemn declaration of Jesus Christ, that he and the Father are one, we *must* expect from him miraculous works. It would be a miracle, indeed, if the Saviour of mankind had not done things surpassing the standard of merely human actions. With him, miracles are rather *natural*, a matter of course; the necessary manifestations of a higher world in this lower sphere of existence in order to raise the latter to the life of God itself.

Mythological fables originate in times, and among nations, in which the conception of the one true God is wanting, and fantastic imagination rules over clear reason. But the age of Christ was comparatively a critical one, and was distinguished by the highest culture which antiquity attained. The productive period of Grecian and Roman mythology had long passed away; and the educated heathen philosophers and poets, far from adding new material to the fanciful religion of their ancestors, were rather disposed to treat the whole of it either with skepticism or with downright scorn and sarcasm.

Moreover, the creation of myths requires, that the real or imaginary person to which they refer be removed from the writer or inventor by a considerable distance of time. It is impossible to imagine that the whole gospel history should have been thus invented within the short period of thirty years after Christ's life on earth. He was known personally by hundreds and thousands. His miracles, his words, his death, were not obscure occurrences, but public before the world. The apostles and disciples, in spite of their oriental origin, had *at least* as good sense as we have. St. Paul, moreover, was a scholar of keen mind, and such a depth of thought as to leave even the greatest sages of Greece far in the rear. He most certainly could not be so easily imposed upon, much less as he was originally an enemy to Christianity and a persecutor of the church of the Most High.

The whole theory of Strauss, therefore, is *destitute of foundation*, and falls to the ground, if it can be proved that the Gospels

were written by the men whose names they bear. He feels this very sensibly, and tries, therefore, in the introduction to his work, to unsettle this old belief of all Christendom, and more particularly to shake the authenticity of the Gospel of John. But this is the very weakest portion of his book. He passes over this most important question, which ought to be settled first, before he has any right to proceed, with remarkable levity and superficiality. The genuineness of the Gospels is better supported by the oldest traditions than that of any book of antiquity. It is true we have no satisfactory testimony in favor of the Gospel of St. John from the first century, at least not satisfactory to a skeptical mind. But *Irenæus*, who flourished after the middle of the second century, declares distinctly, that John, the disciple of the Lord, who "leaned upon his bosom," wrote, after the other evangelists, his Gospel during his stay at Ephesus.* This testimony is the more important, as *Irenæus* had spent his youth in Asia Minor, and lived there in intimate intercourse with the venerable martyr *Polycarp*, the disciple and personal friend of St. John himself. "I recollect," says *Irenæus*, in one of his letters,† "those scenes of my youth much better than things which have happened but recently; for what we learn in our youth grows up with the soul, and becomes so much interwoven with it, that I am still able even to point out the places where the blessed *Polycarp* used to sit in delivering his discourses, that I still remember his going out and coming in, the peculiarities of his mode of life, the form of his person, the orations which he delivered to the people, and how he spoke of his intercourse with John, and the others, who had seen the Lord; how he related their speeches, and what he heard from them about the Lord, his miracles and doctrine—all of which *Polycarp* communicated as received from those who were eye-witnesses of the word of life, and in agreement with the Scriptures. To all these things I listened at that time carefully, according to the grace of God given unto me; I marked them not on paper, but on my heart; and repeat them constantly, according to the same grace." But still more, *Polycarp* and *Papias*, the apostolic fathers, and cotemporaries of John, knew and quoted his first epistle,‡

* *Adv. Hær.*, iii, 1, "Ἐπειτα Ἰωάννης ὁ μαθητὴς τοῦ Κυρίου, ὁ καὶ ἐπὶ στήθος αὐτοῦ ἀναπεσὼν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξέδωκε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν Ἐφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας διατριβών.

† *Ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* v, 20.

‡ *Eusebius, Hist. Eccl.*, iii, 39, *Κέχρηται δ' ὁ αὐτὸς (ὁ Πάπιας) μαρτυρίας ἀπὸ τῆς προτέρας Ἰωάννου ἐπιστολῆς. Polycarpi Epist. ad Philipp. c. 7: Πᾶς γὰρ, ὃς ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῇ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθέναι, ἀντίχριστός ἐστι, (cf. 1 John iv, 3.)*

which every critic must acknowledge to have proceeded from the same pen as the Gospel, so much so, that both productions must stand or fall together. Yea, even in the concluding verse of the Gospel itself we have, in all probability, a testimony of the disciples of John and elders at Ephesus, John xxi, 24: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we* know that his testimony is true."

All these testimonies of the oldest church tradition are most powerfully supported by the *internal* evidences of the fourth Gospel itself in favor of its genuineness. The writer must have been an eye-witness of the events which he relates, according to his own declarations. John i, 14; xix, 35; 1 John i, 1-3. He speaks of himself in a somewhat mysterious way, calling himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved," (John xix, 26; xx, 2,) or the "other disciple," (John xx, 3, 4, 8,) or the disciple who was "leaning on Jesus' bosom." John xiii, 23, 25. It is evident, however, from these passages, that the writer must have been one of the three favorite apostles of the Lord. It cannot be St. James; for he died as early as A. D. 44, before any book of the New Testament was written. It cannot be Peter; for the disciple who was leaning on Jesus' bosom is expressly distinguished from him. Therefore it must have been St. John; yea, it is very likely that the appellation of the disciple "whom Jesus loved," is nothing but an explanation of his own name, which, according to the Hebrew, signifies "Jehovah (that is, Christ, in the Old Testament, John xii, 6) has been merciful."

If Strauss would be consistent, he could not possibly stop with his theory, but must proceed to the monstrous conclusion, that the writer of the fourth Gospel, and in fact all the authors of the New Testament, were willful impostors, and thus fall back upon the position of the basest of English Deists, French infidels, and of the Wolfenbüttel Fragmentist. Although his *Leben Jesu* is written with more scientific force than all former attacks against Christianity, it labors under most difficulties, and can be most readily reduced *ad absurdum*. Take, for instance, his view on Christ's resurrection. According to him, it rests on mere visions of the apostles. But what sensible person can earnestly persuade himself to believe that not only eleven, but, according to St. Paul's report, (1 Cor. xv,) fifty persons had the same vision at one and

* From this we conclude that there was more than one who wrote this verse, as the evangelist, in speaking of himself, always uses the third person singular.

the same time in clear daylight? And then, again, to make the whole history of the church, this most powerful and overwhelming of all realities, rest on a false dream—what a preposterous imagination! This really is substituting a much greater miracle in the place of those which the plain Christian humbly receives, and from which he derives all his comfort in life and hope in death.

Thus we are forced back, even by the process of a critical investigation, to that view of Christ's life which is as old as Christianity itself, and which will live as long as He who is the life and the resurrection itself, while all systems of infidelity are doomed to oblivion and perdition. We may fairly say, even of Strauss, that he belongs already to a bygone age. He will never revive again, except it be among transcendental Unitarians and Universalists in the *new world*. In Germany his palmy days are for ever gone. His book has called forth a great number of most valuable productions, by which our good old faith in the historical Christ has been more firmly established than ever.

To this anti-Strauss literature belongs Dr. *Neander's* "Leben Jesu Christi," a book which has not only a passing, polemical, but also a permanent, positive value. The opposition to Strauss, to be complete, required a work which should cover the whole ground, and should put a new building in the place of that deplorable ruin of a spirit rejoicing in destruction. We are very glad that this book has made its appearance in the English language. Professors *M'Clintock* and *Blumenthal* have a claim to the lasting gratitude of American theologians for executing this task, which was by no means easy, owing partly to the subject itself, partly to the peculiarities of Neander's style. But they were well qualified for it. Professor Blumenthal is a German by birth and education; Professor M'Clintock by inoculation, at least as far as the language is concerned; and we cannot but believe that their united labors have produced about as good a translation as anybody in this country could have prepared.

We have detained our readers already too long to enlarge upon the production of one of the greatest theologians of the age. Besides, it needs no recommendation from our pen; *our* praises would be rather presumptuous. The reputation of the venerable man who occupies a prominent place not only among the regenerators of evangelical theology and piety of modern Germany, but also among the divines of all ages, and who has justly been styled the father of church history, has long been established in Europe and America. His extensive and thorough learning, his tender conscientiousness, his unfeigned humility, and his truly catholic

spirit, are acknowledged on all hands, and will be found fully manifest in this production. We would, therefore, only make a few remarks with the intention to prevent, if possible, his work before us from misconstruction.

Neander's *Leben Jesu* takes substantially what we have called the *orthodox* view on the life of the Saviour, acknowledging him to be the God-man, and the only ground of salvation, and receiving the New Testament as divinely inspired truth. But it is probable that some who are not intimately acquainted with German theology will doubt the soundness of some of his positions. We confess that we ourselves, with all our veneration for this truly great and good man, cannot approve of all he says, and wish many portions and expressions of his work were rather more strongly marked, particularly on account of his English and American readers. But two considerations must always be kept in view, tending greatly to modify the unsatisfactory impression which some readers might at first receive. In the first place, Neander's style is characteristically loose and indefinite; and this is, to a great extent, connected with some of his virtues, his liberality and conscientiousness, but also with a certain carelessness as it regards form. Thus we must account for many expressions on the divine nature of Christ, which, at first sight, and severed from their connection, might seem to approach even Arian or semi-Arian views. It would be the greatest injustice, however, to charge him with any such heresy. His *Church History* (vol. ii, part 2) sufficiently shows the contrary. In the second place, it must not be forgotten that the German theology had to pass through gigantic struggles, of which we in this country can hardly form any clear idea. Rationalism, in the wide sense of the term, may indeed be considered the most powerful antagonist of the church which ever has made its appearance in history. It is the more so, as it wears in Germany the respectable dress of great learning, moral earnestness, and sometimes even of a certain piety, as, for instance, in the case of *de Wette*. Should we wonder to find that those men, who, by divine Providence, have been called upon to overcome this fearful enemy, have brought away some wounds from the battle-field? Even thus Clemens and Origen, in opposing Gnosticism, were tinctured with some of its features; and even Augustine could not deny altogether the school of Platonism, through which he had passed into the church. But we must go further, and say, that Rationalism is not *absolutely* false; it has some right to exist. There are some things in the old orthodoxy—or perhaps we should say in the received mode of philosophizing

upon Christian doctrine—which must undergo severe criticism. It is, after all, a human system which requires constant reformation. The mouth of reason cannot be stopped entirely. It ought humbly to submit, to be sure, to the divine reason, as revealed in the Bible and in the faith of the church. But it is the object of Christianity to enter not only into man's heart, but also into his mind and thought. Theology and Christian philosophy is a constant process, by which revelation and reason are to be brought nearer and nearer together, until ultimately, to speak in the language of St. Paul, we may see as we are seen, and know even as we are known. Neander would not embrace an orthodoxy of mere comfort and convenience, but he would carefully weigh the arguments on both sides, and rather leave a matter undecided than to pronounce a hasty judgment merely to suit the taste of blind traditionists.

Germany has the great mission to settle scientifically, for the benefit of the whole church, the great question involved in the very nature of Protestantism, between Rationalism and Supernaturalism, private judgment and authority, reason and revelation; and thus to restore the old faith, but in a new form, which shall mark a real progress toward the ultimate reconciliation, and free, intelligent agreement, of the human mind with divine truth. This mission, it must be confessed, is not fulfilled yet. German theology, and, we may say, all Protestantism, is at the present time in a transition state. But if we really believe in that God who rules the hearts, and also the thoughts of men, and by his adorable wisdom turns the whole stream of history to his glory, we cannot possibly despair; we must rather, full of hope, look for a new reformation, which shall complete the glorious work of the sixteenth century.

P. S.

Mercersburg, Pa., Jan. 22, 1848.

ART. V.—*History of the Conquest of Peru, with a Preliminary View of the Civilization of the Incas.* By WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT. 8vo., 2 vols. New-York: Harper & Brothers.

IN our last number we attempted an analysis of Mr. Prescott's powers and processes as an historian, and hazarded some general remarks on Ferdinand and Isabella, and the Conquest of Mexico. We were compelled to postpone the consideration of his last work