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An Angel in the House.

How sweet it were, if without feeble fright,
Or dying of the dreadful, beauteous sight,
An angel came to us, and we could bear
To see him issue from the silent air
At evening in our room, and bend on ours
His divine eyes, and bring us from his bowers
News of dear friends, and children who have never
Been dead indeed—as we shall know forever.
Alas! we think not that we daily see
About our hearths—angels that are to be,
Or may be if they will, and we prepare
Their souls and ours to meet in happy air;
A child, a friend, a wife whose soft heart sings
In unison with ours, breeding its future wings.

LEIGH HUNT.

For the American Spiritualist.

Angel Ministry.

When night comes on and you weary throng
Have sunken in sweet repose,
When the voice is hushed and the lip of song,
And the scourge is dropt from the hand of wrong,
When the spells of slumber are woven strong
And the earth forgets her woes,

Then millions of stars, like the angels' eyes,
Look on my child through the dusky skies;
Then the ivory portal opens free,
And thy spirit father, comes to thee.

The tissue of grosser scenes that fold
Round thy inner vision we backward roll;
Sweet blue eyes shine lovingly there;
Mid the floating tendrils of golden hair
Soft, white hands from thy weary brain
Will sweep the shadow and soothe thy pain,
Till daylight fades and memory seems
Melted and blended in balmy dreams.

You will thank your God for the wondrous glow
That breaks on the gloom of time,
For the gales of wind that balmy blow,
And the fount where the living waters flow—
That your precious dead of the long ago
Are blooming in life sublime!

A. H. A.

The Christianity of the Apostles.

BY D. LYMAN.

THE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM.

[From the French of Michael Nicolas.]

The first Christian community, founded at Jerusalem by the Apostles, was made up of Jews who were distinguished from the rest of the children of Israel only by the simple belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah foretold by Moses and the prophets. The kingdom of the Messiah was in their opinion destined only for the elect race, and in any event it was solely by union with that race by adoption, by submitting, of course, to Jewish usages, that Gentiles could be admitted to it. The primitive Christians did not intend to break with Judaism. For them Christianity was not a new religion, it was simply the crown of the edifice of which the foundations had been laid by Moses, and the walls raised by prophets and doctors of the law. The temple of Jerusalem was for them, as for all Jews, eminently the holy place; they took part in its worship, (Acts ii, 46) they frequented the synagogues (Acts xxvi, 11), the high priest had lost nothing of his dignity in their eyes, and the ceremonial law preserved for them its divine and obligatory character.

The mass of the nation on the other hand, saw in them only Israelites more pious and fervent than others. Even after they had on several occasions resisted the authority of the Sanhedrim, the disciples of Jesus Christ passed among the people neither for apostates nor for the partisans of a new religion; at

the most they were regarded but as a new sect in Israel, and we may say with M. Reuss (History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age) that for a long time the Christians were really but a Jewish sect.

This is neither hypothesis nor mere conjecture, it is a fact attested by the book of the Acts of the Apostles. The number of those who at Jerusalem had embraced the new faith amounted to several thousands; "but all were full of zeal for the law" (Acts xxi, 20); these are the words with which the proselyters assembled in the house of James, (Acts xxi, 18) to inform Paul of the sentiments of the church of that city, and they add that it was not without indignation that the faithful in Jerusalem had heard that he held circumcision and the ceremonial rites to be unnecessary, and that it was important to show them that this rumor was without foundation, by himself practicing in their midst the precepts of the law. (Acts xxi, 18, 24.)

THE HELLENIST JEWS.

Christianity had, however, already arrived at a clearer consciousness of what it in reality was. It had found adherents among the Hellenist Jews, who dwelt in Jerusalem, or who were temporarily drawn thither, either by religious motives or by interest less exalted; and the Hellenist Jews, in embracing the new faith, had not been able to accept it in the same sense as the Jews converted from the ranks of the Pharisees who were filled with all the prejudices of Palestine. The Mosaic ceremonies had lost, in their eyes, a great part of their value, and Messianic expectations either had for them no importance or were understood in a novel and allegorical sense; their religious tendencies, different from those of the Palestine Jews, and their education in every respect dissimilar, inclined them to separate Christianity at once from Judaism, or at least to give it a more Spiritual coloring. What is certain is, that there was very early at Jerusalem, a nucleus of Christians converted from among the Hellenist Jews, who formed a separate society side by side with the Christians of Palestine Jewish origin. (Acts vi, 1-9). How radical was the division between these two parties, it is difficult to determine with accuracy; but we see that there was already a decided tendency among Hellenist Christians to separate Christianity from Judaism. One of their number, Stephen, was put to death for having spoken of Mosaicism as of an old and effete institution, (Acts vi, 11-14), and the little Hellenist church was driven from Jerusalem, whilst the Christians who had not separated from Jewish tradition continued to dwell there.

The division became more profoundly radical when Christianity, overflowing the circle of Jewish nationality, began to be diffused among the Gentiles. It was impossible that in this new field, it should not burst the Jewish envelope in which it had been previously confined. The new faith was preached for the first time to men alien to the Jewish race, by those Hellenists proscribed by the Sanhedrim, after the martyrdom of Stephen. (Acts 4, 6, 26, 38; xi, 19, 26). It was again a Hellenist, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, and a graduate of the school of Gamaliel, who, after having been a fanatical enemy of the new faith, became its most zealous propagator among the Gentiles. It is probable that the remembrance of his antecedents, more poignant doubtless in the presence of those whom he had at first persecuted with a blind animosity, rendered his abode in Palestine odious to St. Paul, and inclined him to direct his steps to other countries. Perhaps, too, his early education which had been Greek, the facility with which he spoke the language, in that age the most generally diffused through the Roman empire, and his more exalted conceptions in regard to the character of Christianity, combined to make him select the pagan world for his field of labor.

ANTIOCH AND THE GENTILE CHRISTIANS.

Christianity had been brought to Antioch by the Hellenist Christians scattered abroad by the punishment of Stephen; its expansion there had been so considerable that its adherents

were designated by a particular name; they were called Christians. (Acts xi, 26.) In a short time Antioch had become the centre of what might be styled Gentile Christianity. Saint Paul had fixed his residence there; thence he set out to carry the gospel into other cities of Asia Minor; thither he returned to rest from his apostolic journeyings. Christianity assumed in this city, and doubtless in all other cities of Asia Minor, a different character from that which it bore at Jerusalem. While in the centre of Judaism the disciples of Jesus Christ who were of the family of Jacob still observed all the precepts of the law; the Christians of Antioch, who were for the most part of Gentile origin, neither knew nor practiced any of the Jewish ceremonies. A few Christians who had come from Jerusalem to that city, scandalized at finding the Mosaic ordinances laid aside, loudly protested against what seemed to them an impiety, and declared to the Christians of Antioch that if they were not circumcised according to the usage prescribed by Moses they could not be saved. Saint Paul and Barnabas rebelled against this pretension. (Acts xv, 1, 2; Gal. ii, 1-5.) That was the beginning of a controversy destined to survive those between whom it had arisen.

RUPTURE BETWEEN PETER AND PAUL.

This dissension assumed more considerable proportions a few years later, and Antioch was again the scene of its manifestations. Saint Paul and Saint Peter were there at the same time, living in perfect concord, and together admitting into the bosom of the Christian brotherhood the gentiles deemed worthy of it by their character, without binding them to the observance of the ceremonial law. But messengers from Saint James having arrived from Jerusalem, Saint Peter fearing to wound the scruples of his brethren from Judea, separated from Saint Paul and ceased his intercourse with the Christians of Gentile origin. His example was followed by all the members of the church who were Jews by birth. Explain as we may the conduct of Saint Peter, it was none the less a censure of the Christian liberty to which the Christians who had been converted from heathenism, had been accustomed. Saint Paul deemed it his duty to condemn these tardy scruples: "I withstood him to the face," said he, "for he deserved to be blamed." From that moment the two parties lived in open hostility. (Gal. ii, 11-22.)

THE QUESTION AT ISSUE.

The occasion of the separation related neither to an insignificant circumstance nor to mere incidentals. The character and the very essence of Christianity were in question, a matter which it is of importance to clearly understand. The subject which caused the division was the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian communion. The Palestine Apostles wished that they should first be received into the family of Israel by circumcision, and that they should be obliged to perform the Jewish rites, for Saint Paul it was enough that they should exhibit the moral character demanded by the Christian faith; everything besides was in his eyes unimportant. Consider now what each of the respective views assumes.

If the Gentile in order to become a Christian needed first to enter by adoption the household of Israel, the mission of Jesus Christ was restricted to the limits of Judaism; it was simply a complement of the old covenant; Christianity remained the religion of the Jews, a national religion; Jewish exclusiveness continued to prevail; God would still be the Father only of the descendants of Jacob, and Pharisaic prejudices, of which Jesus Christ had been the constant opponent, would with unquestioned right take possession of the Christian communion.

On the other hand, if the conditions of admission to the Christian communion were purely moral, and could be fulfilled by all men of sincere purpose without distinction of nationality or language (Rom. iii: 22.); if to be a Christian it were sufficient to adopt as one's rule of life the principles taught by Jesus Christ and to acknowledge him as his only Lord and