

applied in a lucid form and in elegant language by his pupil.¹

The effect of Strauss's work was enormous, and not less so because the conclusions he came to were premature. To the more sober-minded, who were aware how in many instances Strauss had forestalled

¹ Allowing that the greater part of Strauss's work has become obsolete through subsequent criticism, the Introduction to the first volume and the Conclusion to the second are still well worth reading by those who desire to receive information on two points. First of all, we get in the Introduction a vivid picture of the perplexity and unsettlement which had penetrated into theological circles through the influence of English deism, German rationalism, lifeless traditional orthodoxy, and the Kantian philosophy. We also learn how the idea, which Strauss professes to have worked out in its completeness, the mythical or legendary character of the biblical records, had been prepared, but only partially applied, by previous religious and philosophical thinkers. What he means by the mythical point of view he defines himself. (1st ed., Introduction, p. 75.) "Putting everything together, little stands in the way of finding the mythical in all parts of the Gospel Story. The word 'myth' will, however, give as little umbrage to sensible persons as any mere word should ever do; for all the ambiguity which, through the suggestion of heathen mythology, clings to that word, should disappear through the explanation, according to which the myths of the New Testament are nothing else but quasi-historical representations of genuine Christian ideas

grown through unintentional poetical legends." Further, in the Conclusion to the second volume (p. 729), Strauss refers to Schelling and Hegel as the leaders of that recent philosophy through which the narrow conception of the relation of the Deity to the world, as also the purely moralising theory of Kant, had been overcome. "If God is conceived as Spirit, there is contained in this statement, as man also is spirit, that both are not essentially different. . . . God is not conceived as the rigid Infinite over and outside of the Finite, but as entering into the latter; the Finite nature and mind being His external appearance out of which He ever returns again into unity with Himself. As little as the human exists truly only in its finitude; as little has God reality only in His self-contained Infinity. But the Infinite is only truly Spirit when He unfolds Himself in finite spirits; as the Finite Spirit is likewise only real if He dives into the Infinite. The real and true existence of the Spirit is therefore neither God alone nor man alone, but the God-man." With these two presuppositions—the legendary envelope which surrounds the biblical records and the Hegelian conception of the idea which he himself compares with Plato's Ideology—Strauss with much erudition expounds and explains all the main incidents of the Life of Jesus.