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THE BEGINNINGS OF

CHRISTIANITY

BY

PAUL WERNLE

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AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BASEL

Translated by

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VOL. I.

THE RISE OF THE RELIGION

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE

14 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

AMONG Continental theologians of the younger generation there are few,

if any, that occupy a more distinguished place than Professor Wernle of

the University of Basel, and his work on the Beginnings of the

Christian Religion, which is now presented to the English-speaking

public, is the most matured and exhaustive product of his scholarship.

It may not be possible for all of us to see eye to eye with him in the

vast and sometimes obscure field covered by his brilliant study; but it

is impossible for any one to withhold admiration from the freshness,

the vivacity, the vitality, the penetrating insight which Professor

Wernle exhibits in his handling of the origin and primitive development

of the Christian faith. The book is addressed to all who are prepared

to accept the bolder results of New Testament criticism, and the

central idea running through the whole of it is a very simple one. It

is first of all to ascertain what the Gospel is as seen in the teaching

and character of the Redeemer; and secondly, to measure all the later

expositions of the Gospel, contained in the teachings of the New

Testament writers, by the Gospel itself. In order to ascertain what the

Gospel really is, Professor Wernle considers it necessary to liberate

its eternal substance from the historic forms in which it is expressed.

The Gospel arose under a certain definite set of historic

circumstances, and had to act upon the world through the medium of

historic conditions. These conditions and circumstances are of

necessity of a temporary and transitory character: they are not the

Gospel itself, but only its historic envelope, and Professor Wernle

strips off this envelope in order to seize hold of the imperishable

substance of Christ's message to mankind. How far he has succeeded in

separating the substance from the form of the Redeemer's message and

personality, and (considering the fragmentary nature of the sources)

how far it is possible to do so on purely historical grounds, it is for

the attentive reader to judge.

According to Professor Wernle, Jesus prepared the ground for a new

religious community but did not organise it Himself, and the disciples

of the Master who had denationalised the Jewish conception of the

kingdom of God were unable to liberate themselves from Judaism or to

produce much impression upon the Gentile world. Both of these tasks

were the work of St Paul; and as this work was of transcendent

importance to the future of the Christian faith, Professor Wernle

devotes a considerable part of this volume to an examination of the

character and theology of the great apostle. His treatment of St Paul's

theology is particularly striking and suggestive. It was a theology

which derived its character from the situation in which the apostle was

placed. He had to defend himself at once from Gentiles, Jews, and

Judaizers, and his theology assumed the form of a powerful apologetic

directed in turn against each one of these adversaries. The apologetic

form in which Pauline thought is cast, sometimes affects the clearness

and purity of the Gospel message, and the comparison which Professor

Wernle institutes between the Gospel as understood by St Paul and the

Gospel as taught by Jesus, is fresh and illuminating.

St Paul was a trained theologian, the writer of the Apocalypse was a

layman, and this volume closes with an analysis and estimate of that

remarkable work. It is the oldest and only document springing out of

lay Christian enthusiasm, and Professor Wernle thinks that it

represents the general lay opinion of the Church in primitive Christian

times. At the bottom of this enthusiasm lay the belief that the world

was rapidly coming to an end, and that the supreme duty of man was to

seek salvation from the coming judgment by watchfulness and repentance.

Men in such a condition of mind had no thought of setting up stable

ecclesiastical forms and institutions. But these men had a new life in

them--a life of self-mastery, a life of love to God and to each

other--such as the world had never seen before. And they were conscious

that this new life of theirs proceeded neither from ecclesiastical

forms nor institutions, but from the living spirit of the Redeemer.

Such in brief is Professor Wernle's conception of the beginnings of the

faith and of its effects on the human mind in apostolic times. The

entrance of this new faith into the world is the most momentous event

in human history, and the manner in which it took place is presented to

us in this volume with unusual life, freedom, sympathy, and power.

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PREFACE

IN the summer of 1900 I delivered lectures on New Testament Theology in

the University of Basel. These I have now expanded into a book, which,

however, is by no means intended to rival any handbook to New Testament

Theology. My only aim in preparing my lectures was to present my pupils

with a clear idea of that which I conceived to be the real meaning of

the Gospel, and to trace the great changes it underwent up to the rise

of Catholicism. I purposely excluded from the scope of my work all that

appeared to be unimportant for the aim that I had in view. Theological

ideas came under consideration only in their relation to the Gospel of

Jesus. I have striven to be true to my original purpose in compiling

this book from my lectures.

In publishing my lectures my aim is a practical one, and there is no

reason to conceal it. An age of transition such as ours needs above all

else a constant recurrence to the Gospel of Jesus for guidance. But it

is well known that the Gospel does not lie everywhere on the surface,

even of the New Testament, in its primitive simplicity, but has in many

instances been covered up or transformed.

Now, though it is perfectly true that "Cowper's pious peasant woman"

can understand Jesus in all that He was and all that He wanted, yet

theological enquiry should surely never abrogate its great calling,

which is to give all possible help to the simple comprehension of

Jesus.

This, of course, theology can only do by self-suppression--i.e. by

helping to liberate the Gospel from theology. If Jesus was, above all

else, our Saviour from the theologians, then we theologians are truly

His disciples only by the constant renewal of this saving work of His.

To do this, two conditions are pre-eminently necessary, the existence

of which, alas, cannot be assumed as a matter of course amongst

Christian theologians. They are, firstly, true reverence for that which

alone deserves reverence; and secondly, fidelity to the Christian

conscience. I reckon as an essential part of true reverence, the

frankest and fullest renunciation of that false reverence for formulae,

symbols, rites and institutions in which the free word of God is

imprisoned and fossilized. He who does not completely reject the false

can never find room in his heart for the true. And in like manner

fidelity to the Christian conscience implies the clearest and most

unflinching criticism of all that contradicts it, even though it be

received upon the authority of a St Paul or a St John--i.e. the Gospel

is to be employed practically as the canon and standard for all its

later historical accretions. He who cannot see eye to eye with me in

these two conditions had better leave my book unread; for even if he

were to read it, he would not understand why I have been obliged to

write so many passages in the style of a polemical pamphlet rather than

in that of a purely historical essay.

THE AUTHOR.

BASEL, December 1900.

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

THE publication of my work in an English translation is especially

gratifying to me, for it is indebted in more than one place to English

thought. I consider myself fortunate in having made the acquaintance of

Thomas Carlyle while I was still a student at the University. He has

become my leader and the leader of many of my friends. Here and there

in this book the English reader will perhaps catch an echo of certain

passages in Carlyle's writings.

The translation strictly follows the German edition of 1900. It is only

the first two chapters about Jesus which have been altered, and that

merely so far as to make them correspond with statements contained in

the author's later publications.

THE AUTHOR.

BASEL, February 1903.

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The Beginnings of Christianity.

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THE PRESUPPOSITIONS.

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CHAPTER I.

THE POPULAR BELIEFS OF ANTIQUITY.

IT is no doubt true that Christianity is a daughter of the Jewish

faith: yet it strikes its roots deep down into a soil which we may call

beliefs common to all the religions of antiquity. In that soil the

characteristic features of the various religions of the ancient world

are not as yet distinguishable. Among these common beliefs may be

included the whole body of ideas concerning the earth, nature, man, the

soul, and the world of spirits. Before the dawn of science these

popular ideas bore undisputed sway, and they live on even to the

present time engaged in a ceaseless struggle with scientific

conceptions of the universe.

According to the popular beliefs of antiquity, this earth is, of

course, the centre of creation, the only scene of any history

concerning God and mankind. Over it is the vault of heaven, and there

the sun and all the stars, "the powers of the heavens," run their

courses, yet the earth is the world; in the Sermon on the Mount, for

example, the two terms are interchanged as denoting the same idea. But

the earth itself is small and little known. The thoughts of men can fly

to the "ends of the world" in an instant. From one end to another

flashes the lightning, and, like the lightning, so shall the Son of man

appear to all men at once. The devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of

the world and the glory of them from the top of one exceeding high

mountain. If one wished to speak of a geography of the New

Testament--the term would be a misnomer--its western limits would be

Spain and its eastern the kingdom of the Parthians.

This limited view of earth and world had naturally not been without

influence upon religion. The unwavering faith in Providence, as well as

the hope in the coming of the kingdom of God upon earth, have their

chief support in this undoubted geocentric system. In like manner

missionary zeal was kindled by the belief that it would be possible to

preach the gospel to all the world in one single generation. Men had no

idea then of the size of this earth, such as we know it now, nor of the

infinite and persistent variety among the different races of men, which

cause such great difficulties to missionary enterprise. And in like

manner they had no conception of the universe as a whole or of this

earth's nothingness in comparison with it. However little reason we may

have to boast of knowledge for which we are not indebted to ourselves,

as little right have we to hide from our selves the chasm which

separates us in this point from early Christianity as a child of

antiquity.

The next point of difference goes a good deal deeper still. It is the

boundless faith in the miraculous which early Christianity shares with

all world-religions. The whole earth is thereby transformed into an

enchanted world. As yet there is no trace of any knowledge of the law

of natural causation. All things are possible for God and for those

that believe, and all things are mystery.

In the first place, the world of nature is a world of wonders. St. John

iii. 8 is a typical instance: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and

thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh,

and whither it goeth." And just because of this arbitrary and

mysterious character it is so well suited to represent the supernatural

powers of the spirit. This belief in nature as a realm of marvels meets

us most distinctly in the various eschatologies of the New Testament.

According to these conceptions the fashion of this world shall pass

suddenly away, and the heavens shall vanish with a great noise, the

elements shall melt with fervent heat, and there shall be new heavens

and a new earth. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to

blood; the stars shall fall from heaven, the sign of the cross shall

appear in the air, and the Son of man shall descend upon the clouds of

heaven. Faith in the miraculous positively revels in the enumeration of

signs of the approaching end of all things; in the vision of the seven

seals and of the seven trumpets and of the seven bowls the fancy of the

writer of the Apocalypse runs riot altogether, passing the bounds of

all possibility. But this faith will not suffer itself to be limited to

the distant future. In the history of Jesus and of His apostles it

finds and creates for itself the material for an actual embodiment in

the present. Here, too, there is nothing that is impossible, and the

truth of the saying as to the faith that removeth mountains receives a

striking confirmation. Jesus stills the tempest on the sea and causes

the fig tree to wither, in both cases merely by the utterance of a

word. He walks on the sea by night and enables Peter to do likewise. He

changes water into wine, He divides a few loaves and fishes among five

thousand and again among four thousand people. He calls Lazarus forth

from the tomb on the third day in spite of the corruption that had

already set in; He himself rises on the third day from the grave that

is closed with a sealed stone and guarded by a watch; He enters the

room though the doors are closed, and yet He can eat and suffer Himself

to be touched; and finally, so we are told in the Acts of the Apostles,

He ascends visibly to heaven, whence He shall come again visibly. The

Acts now become the great book of the miracles of the Apostles and of

the first Christian saints, whose leaders work wonders even with their

shadows and their napkins. Thus faith in the miraculous surpasses all

bounds, and yet it is not consciously dealing with exceptional cases,

far less with breaches of the law of nature the very conception of such

a law does not exist--but with everyday phenomena which are perfectly

natural.

The religious value attached by the early Christians to miracles

surprises us to-day, even more than the entire absence of the critical

faculty. It is not merely those Christians to whom we owe our Gospels,

who find the proof of the truths of their doctrine in the stories of

the miracles. Jesus Himself appeals to His miracles (and that not only

in the Fourth Gospel), and sees in them the beginning of the kingdom of

God. Hence we can readily understand that the miracle of the

Resurrection must needs serve as the foundation of the Christian faith.

Whereas, amongst the Jews, miracles were intended as a proof of

doctrine; amongst the Gentiles they bear witness to the manifestation

of a God (Renan); and just as it twice happened in St Paul's journeys,

that he was on the point of receiving divine honours because of his

miracles--once when he healed the lame man, and again when the viper's

bite did him no harm--so Jesus was actually regarded by the Gentile

Christians as God, because of the miracles that were related of Him.

The theology of miracles occupies a higher position in the New

Testament than one is usually inclined to accord to it, and the

Divinity of Christ is bound up with this theology.

Nowhere is the difference between modern and early Christian modes of

thought seen in so clear a light as in the fact that the stories of the

miracles of the New Testament, which were once one of the chief proofs

of the truths of our religion, are themselves to-day the object of long

apologetic writings.

Like nature without, so the human mind within is a mystery to the early

Christians. Here, too, they have no idea of a fixed sequence of events,

but everything happens independently and arbitrarily. It is true that

Jesus, and after Him the theologians Paul and John, just touched upon

the thought of an inner necessity, but it was only by the way, and led

to no further consequences. The belief in the freedom of man under all

circumstances and at all times is for all that presupposed by the New

Testament authors without an exception. Jesus confirmed this belief by

the great demand that He made upon man, and it is the very life of

Christian missionary work. But this belief is simply a special instance

of belief in the miraculous.

But the true domain of mystery lies in the real inner life of the soul,

in the unconscious with its enigmatic utterances. The miraculous itself

is contained in every human being, and can manifest itself suddenly in

ecstatic conditions. Unchecked by any Philistine spirit of rationalism,

the early Christians bestowed upon all manifestations of the mysterious

inner life of the soul a far more serious and more impartial attention

than we moderns, who are often inclined to be somewhat too precipitate

in determining the limits of that which is possible. In those days men

were at once more childlike and more dogmatic in their explanation of

mental processes. Even though they built up no system, the conception

prevailed amongst them that these phenomena were the manifestations of

some external agent. It was not we ourselves, but a demon, an angel, or

a spirit that was the efficient cause; sometimes this agent is

conceived of as intimately connected with our soul, but at others he is

an entirely extraneous being that has forced his way into our body from

without through one of its many pores, and now dwells within it and

rules over it. Here we have the origin of the conception, not only of

demoniacal possession, but of that of the Holy Spirit, whose

operations, save that they work the will of a beneficent Deity, are

pictured as analogous to those of the demons. Speaking with tongues and

prophesying, the seeing of visions and the state of enhancement, the

working of miracles, are above all else the manifestations of this one

and the same spirit, as they are presented to us in chaps. xii. and

xiv. of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, our principal New

Testament authority on this subject. The conception of the double

appears rudely materialized in St Peter's conversation with Rhoda, and

then in a lovely form in Jesus' words concerning the little children's

angels, and especially spiritualized in that passage in St Paul where

God's Spirit testifies to our spirit that we are the children of God.

We trace these naive conceptions in theological trains of thought: the

whole dogma of the Atonement, as well as, on the other hand, that of

Inspiration, stand and fall in their ecclesiastical shape with this

childlike psychology of the ancient world. Where we stand face to face

with the phenomena of the unconscious in man and marvel, and yet even

here at least suspect natural causation, the early Christians at once

presupposed the supernatural agency of a good or of an evil spirit.

We may here mention in passing that in like manner the anthropology of

the early Christian laity--possibly not that of the theologian St

Paul--maintains its close connection with the popular beliefs of the

ancient world, when it still conceives of matter and spirit as in some

manner merged in each other. The soul, the spirit itself, is something

corporeal, though far more sublimated than our flesh and blood. The

rich man in Hades sees, hears, suffers thirst and torments in the

flames, although his body already rests in the grave. At the foundation

of the rite of Baptism lies the conception, though possibly no longer

consciously, that the water cleanses the soul together with the body.

How strange at bottom do the words of Jesus sound to our modern modes

of thought! "Be not over-anxious for the soul what ye shall eat and

drink, nor for the body wherewith ye shall be clothed." The

appearances, too, of the risen Master, with their hybrid character of

visionary and grossly material features, can be more readily understood

from the point of view of this anthropology, which is as yet not

strictly dualistic. It is true that St Paul, as a clear thinker,

endeavoured to arrive at a distinct separation of body and soul, but

after all his efforts he only reaches the conception of the spiritual

body, which still betrays his original starting-point.

After external nature and the mystery of the soul, we come finally to

the third great wonderland, the domain of the Spirit. That which has

become for us moderns a dead formula, or else the play of the freest

fancy, was the deepest of all realities that regulated life for the age

of early Christianity. Jews and Persians did, it is true, divide

spirits according to an ethical standard into angels and demons, but as

Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, the operations of

the two groups are often surprisingly similar; and finally, the

original contrast of harmful and helpful spirits can be plainly traced

even in the New Testament itself. The spirits fill the whole of the

upper world, the realm of the air, and yet they live at the same time

upon earth and among men. All kinds of diseases--even fevers or

dumbness, but in the highest degree, of course, mental diseases--are

caused by them. A spirit can enter into a man with seven others or even

with a whole legion. The expulsion of these inmates is itself the

effect of a spiritual process, the means employed being fasting and

disenchantment. The helpful spirits, on the other hand, are welcome

saviours in every kind of distress, and mediators between men and the

highest God. Now, no one lived in the midst of these conceptions

regarding the world of spirits with a more childlike simplicity of

belief than Jesus Himself. He fights with Satan, and with the hosts of

Beelzebub in the solitude of the wilderness, and in the midst of the

habitations of men. He is under the painful necessity of seeing His

most trusted follower become the emissary of Satan. St Paul is ever

being parted from God by dominions, principalities and powers, and it

is in defiance of them that he clings so fast to God's love. In one of

his last letters he tells us of the prince of the power of the air, the

spirit that worketh even now in the children of disobedience, and he

thus summons the Christian to the last struggle of all, not against

flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers,

against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts

of wickedness in the heavenly places. The weapons which he there

recommends are the grand Christian substitutes for the ancient spells

and charms. It was only by assuming the existence of demons that the

early Christian Church could explain the might of Rome and the power of

the heathen world. And everywhere the clear distinction between good

and bad spirits rests upon the foundation of the ancient conception of

the spirit world.

Nothing is easier than the proof that all these conceptions of the

enchanted world with its three wonderlands are neither specifically

Christian nor Jewish, but simply belong to the ancient popular belief,

and not to it alone. The early Christians were perfectly conscious that

they shared this belief with the heathen. That is why they made such

frequent use of all these elements in their apologetic writings. The

myths and miracles of Jesus are there compared with perfect

ingenuousness with their Greek parallels (the earliest passage is in

Justin Martyr, First Apology, chaps. xxi. and xxii.): "If the

Christians relate cures of lame and palsied men, and of men sick from

their birth, and the raising of the dead, then all this is similar to

that which is said to have been done by Asclepius." The belief in the

Resurrection of Jesus has its parallel among the Jews in the report of

the risen Baptist, and among the heathen in the belief in Asclepius,

who was struck by lightning and ascended into heaven. For the

miraculous birth of the Son of God, both friends and foes of

Christianity adduced, though with opposite intentions, the

corresponding cases of the origin of sons of God amongst the heathen.

Though Jesus compared His casting out of devils with that of the Jewish

exorcists, this art was not specifically Jewish, but belonged to the

ancient world in general. The Jew whom Celsus introduces as the

opponent of the Christian, mentions Egyptian, i.e. heathen Goetes,' who

for a few obols cast out devils, blow away diseases, bring up the souls

of the dead, etc. The same applies to the prediction of future events.

If we find Christians as early as in the New Testament appealing to the

so-called proof from prophecy in order to convince the heathen, they

presuppose the fact that their heathen adversaries attach a high value

to the gift of divination.

So deeply spread and so deeply rooted was the belief in ecstasy as a

divinely-caused state, that the apologists declared that

euhemerism--i.e. the attempt to explain the heathen religions by the

deification of men--failed because of the fact of oracles. But the

agreement of Christians with heathen in the belief in demons is most

palpable in the controversy of Origen with Celsus. Both entirely concur

in the assumption of an intermediary race or species of beings who are

the givers of all gifts such as bread, wine, water, air, only Celsus

calls them demons and Origen angels,--so narrow is the dividing line

which here separates the friends and the foes of Christianity. A pure

monotheist was hardly to be found either then or in the time of Jesus.

Such are some of the reasons that may be advanced in confirmation of

the statement that the popular belief of the ancient world is the soil

from which Christianity took its rise. In all these conceptions it is a

child of its age and no revelation of God. Owing to the rise of science

the props which still supported this belief in the midst of

Christianity have gradually been withdrawn. Thus originated the great

conflict between faith and knowledge. If it were really true, as many

of its defenders maintain, that faith in the enchanted world

constitutes the substance of Christianity, then, of course, the doom of

our religion would be sealed.

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CHAPTER II.

JUDAISM.

CHRISTIANITY stands to Judaism indubitably in a relationship at once of

the closest affinity and yet of the most striking contrast. What did it

take over from Judaism? What did it reject? It rejected the Jewish

idea, the pivot on which Judaism turns. To all its other elements it

stands in a positive relationship; although the part which it rejected,

involved as a necessary consequence an inner transformation of the

whole Jewish system.

What is the Jewish idea? It is the conception of religion as a legal, a

national system. Nowhere else was it developed with such uncompromising

severity. Speaking generally, religion is for the Jews a system of law

(no'mos) which is definitely drawn up between a particular God and a

particular people. In contrast to all the false religions of the

Gentiles, the true religion is the Jewish law (or constitution). The

God of the whole world, so it is said, granted to Israel alone its law

in order to give them the whole earth for their inheritance, provided

they were faithful citizens under this law, so that all other people

might accept the law of Israel and become its subjects. Technically

speaking, that is the formal principle of Judaism. The material may

readily be inferred from the contents of the law. That is, it is

nothing else than Jewish national custom conceived as the commandments

of God. In other words, it is the sum of all the ceremonial judicial

and social peculiarities whereby, in the course of time, the Jews

imagined that they were differentiated from their neighbours. In the

forefront they placed circumcision and claimed it to be the distinctive

sign of the tribe. A bold claim, and one that rested on no historical

foundation--the early Christians knew that already. Then followed

prescriptions as to the taxes to be paid to God and His holy servants,

the ceremonial regulating attendance at the Holy Place and the worship

to be there tendered, penal laws and those regarding compensation, and

commandments relating to moral and many other matters. All this

together constituted the immensely complicated body of laws to which

God had bound Himself and His people. To be religious meant to be a

citizen of this state, to belong to the Jewish Church.

For the Church is simply the converse of this constitution. It is

exactly the same thing if you call Judaism a Church or if you call it a

constitution. The Church is the realization of the law which exists at

first as an idea. There never was a time when the Church excluded true

piety on the part of the individual, but the emphasis was laid on that

which affected the community--nay, more, on that which affected it as a

codified system of law. The Church is religion conceived as a spiritual

State. Such was the position of Judaism from the exile onwards that it

could only exist as a spiritual State in the midst of the world powers.

In the time of Jesus religion meant a legal code and a Church.

It is well known that Jesus did not come forward as the opponent of the

law or of the Church, but as the enemy of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The simple reason of this is that they are the visible representatives

of the Jewish law. For this law demanded a very minute acquaintance. It

needed men to act as commentators and to develop it still further. It

was not something that had been laid down once for all. It was

constantly growing. Only one portion was committed to writing in the

Thora. The greater part, the customary law, was handed down by oral

tradition. And the written law itself was composed in a dead language.

Besides this, the whole was very complicated and very learned. Hence

the necessity of a learned caste--the theologians who are, of course,

rather to be considered as lawyers. They formed a close corporation

into which a man only entered, and that for life, after long years

spent as disciple at the feet of honoured masters, and after due

ordination. Nothing could possibly exceed the esteem in which this

caste was held. The Scribes were God's mediators and revealers--the

only living authority in God's stead. All others were laymen and in the

position of minors. Such was Jesus. Hence His attitude of opposition.

Now the aim and object of the Pharisaic propaganda was to drive this

learned system into the heads of the people. The Pharisees wanted to

see the law, which the Scribes first of all distilled as pure theory,

in a position of practical and universal supremacy. They were zealous

in good works; they loved a typical ritual; their energy was tireless;

they were critical and censorious. Such were their characteristics. In

Jesus' time they posed publicly as the pattern of what a religious man

ought to be. He that did not accept their propaganda counted as a

sinner or as am-ha-'arets,' country-folk that knew not the law. The

Pharisees are the incarnation of the Jewish law. They represent an

ideal of life which is distinct from everything else. One can realize

it best by taking note of the judgments they pass on things of the

world, of their estimate of the actions and destiny of men.

All external things are either clean or unclean, sacred or common. The

duty of the religious man is to keep himself undefiled by all unclean

things, kinds of food, vessels, etc.

The actions of men are of different value in God's sight. All

extraordinary works' are especially pleasing to God; such, for

instance, are, first and foremost, acts of worship, sacrifices, the

paying of tithes, fasting, pilgrimages.

The end of man is holiness. He is nearest God who holds himself aloof

from publicans, sinners, and Samaritans, and renounces the wicked

world.

We need no further evidence to see that in opposing the Scribes and

Pharisees, Jesus indirectly set Himself against the whole Jewish idea,

law, and Church, and that St Paul rightly understood Jesus when he said

"Christ is the end of the law."

And herein it is especially instructive to observe how the layman Jesus

and the Scribe Paul attack different sides of the Jewish idea and thus

complete each other in their criticism. It is the content of the Jewish

ideal of life that arouses the indignation of Jesus--the terrible

externalization of religion, the essential being completely buried

beneath hypocrisy and folly. St Paul, on the other hand, fights against

the form of the Jewish religion which is fitting but for hirelings and

slaves, and reverses the true religious relationship, the sonship of

man to God. It is only when we combine the two lines of attack that we

have a complete criticism of the Jewish idea.

And then, after all, the same Jewish idea in its modified Christian

form enters upon a new lease of power--a magnificent dominion destined

to last for centuries. Would that it had been otherwise.

But even in the time of its degeneracy the Jewish religion was

pre-eminent, surpassing every other upon earth. Christianity could only

arise in Jewish soil. Nowhere else did such faith in God, so high a

moral standard, and so lofty a hope for the future, lie full of promise

side by side, waiting to be unified and exalted into a world-religion.

It is important to realize clearly the distinctive feature in the

Jewish faith in God. It cannot be monotheism. For a long time past that

had become the common property of the enlightened Greek world, as far

as it had any understanding for religion, and even in Israel itself it

had been modified by a belief in angels which bears clear marks of its

polytheistic origin. One need but read, for instance, the Epistle to

the Colossians if one would form some idea of the weakness of Jewish

monotheism, not to mention the Greek prologue to the Fourth Gospel,

which places a' God, the Logos, by the side of the God. Neither,

however, is it the simple belief in Providence, in a God that punishes

and rewards, that constitutes the peculiarity of the Jewish religion.

The Christian apologist Lactantius was able to postulate an individual

Providence as an elementary truth current among all the better

heathens. When the Jews in Jesus' time pictured the world to themselves

as a kind of household instituted by God, and superintended by Him,

then the Greeks presented them with the word for the idea--dioikesis.

It is only the historical and teleological character of this faith in

God that marks the pre-eminence of the Jewish religion. While with the

Stoics the belief in Providence is based upon the order of nature that

is, on the impression afforded by the world of a rational whole bound

together by laws of cause and effect--with the Jews it is built up on

the foundation of the deeds of Jahwe, of His promises and of His

designs. Jahwe is free, in subjection to nothing but His own will;

therefore religion never turns into philosophy amongst this people, but

becomes faith in the God that creates things anew. To the Jews God

never appears as the being who merely sets the world in motion and

regulates its course, though that is a part of His government, but He

is the free creator, the creator in every moment of time. All is

history, even nature. Wherever they arrive at the idea of a necessary

causation there it immediately finds its place in history as

predestination, as the act of God before the beginning of time. And

even where particular provinces of this history are assigned to the

supervision of intermediary beings, they do not count as in anywise

independent powers, but merely as the executors of the commands of God.

The first of God's acts was the creation of the world, the last shall

be the restitution of Israel and of the fallen world by the violent

destruction of the present evil condition of things. The beginning and

the end are united by an unbroken chain of divine acts. So far removed

is the thought that the God that creates the new world is perchance

another than He that created the old world, that it is just the

apocalypses that are especially fond of singing the praises of God the

Creator. It is none other than John, author of our book of the

Apocalypse, who sings: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and

honour, and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy

pleasure they are, and were created." So, too, we read in the "Shepherd

of Hermas" from the true Jewish point of view: "Behold the Lord of all

power, He that created the world and established the heavens and

founded the earth above the waters; behold He removeth heavens and

mountains and high places and seas, and all paths are made straight for

His elect."

One frequently meets with the expression nowadays, "the transcendency

of the Jewish idea of God," but in employing these words sufficient

caution is not always observed. It is quite true that to later Judaism

God has become a far-off, mysterious being. Everyone who reads in

succession the theophanies of an Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and John

realizes that. A further proof may be found in the awe with which the

utterance of the name of Jahwe is avoided. "Hallowed be Thy name"--that

is, may it be thought of with the reverence due to the unspeakable.

Angels stand between God and man, whole hierarchies of dominions and

powers and thrones. Living religion is often concerned with them

instead of with God. One finds indications that God will only fully

reveal Himself in the future, that at present He is visible to none,

and no man can approach Him. This can be proved by many passages in the

writings of St Paul and St John. For Paul, the whole present evil world

is fallen away from God and is under the dominion of hostile powers,

sin, death and demons. Satan is called the God of this world. It is

only in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus that we have irrefutable

evidence of God and His love. John, too, calls Satan the prince of this

world, and God, so it is said, no man hath ever yet seen, not even the

prophets of the Old Testament. All our knowledge of God comes to us

through Jesus that revealed Him. That, it is true, is a complete

transcendency of the idea of God. But then we remember that St John and

St Paul are theologians, they are not simple representatives of the

popular belief, and that both of them, as Christian apologists, are

interested in removing the world with out Christ very far from God.

Their writings prove nothing as to the belief of the laity in the time

of Jesus. If in Jesus we meet with a faith in God of unexampled

freshness and ingenuousness, which nevertheless is nowhere bound up

with any claim to novelty, then the foundations for this must have

already been securely laid among the Jews. Nor is it difficult to find

proof of this. For Jesus, it is God that gives the rain and the

sunshine, that feeds the fowls of the air and clothes the flowers of

the field, that hears all prayers, that protects the sparrow on the

roof, and much more man himself. That is the simple piety of the

Psalms. The Psalms of Solomon, which date from the age of Pompey, are

in point of time our nearest documentary evidence. The greater part of

the canonical Psalter is not much older. This simple, childlike faith

in God Jesus presupposes as possessed by those to whom He addresses

Himself, and it knows nothing of transcendency. But it is subject to

the narrowest national limitations. The Lord of heaven and of earth was

the Father of Israel. Only the Jew dare pray to "Our Father." Yet there

was no loss in this; the limitations of this faith were also a sign of

its truth and power. The chief point, too, for these simple layfolk was

that this God, the source of all life in this world, through His deeds

and through His gifts, promised to found the kingdom of God. Then

should He manifest Himself fully as the God of deeds who is bound by

His love but by no order of nature.

The second great advantage of the Jewish religion is its moral

character. Jahwe was not only the God of great deeds but the God of a

lofty morality, who by His person was a pledge for the indissoluble

connection between faith and life. Both Jews as well as early

Christians realized how immensely important were the consequences

implied by this connection, when they compared the Homeric gods with

their Jahwe. They were indeed themselves aware that the work of the

Greek thinkers and poets had arrived at a great purification and

moralization of the polytheistic religion. This, however, they might

safely ignore, as the influence of Homer never ceased, and could for

them only be compared to the influence of their Bible. There were, it

is true, not wanting in the Jahwe of the Old Testament features which

betrayed the fact that He did not from the first possess all that lofty

morality. Yet in the great collection of writings these features are a

vanishing quantity by the side of His ethical character--though even

thus they were only too visible to the gnostic critic. Or if they were

once noticed they were immediately cleared of all contradiction with

the moral consciousness by means of exegesis--especially allegorical.

For the aim of Jewish theologians was to remove the offence caused by

any instance of anthropomorphism, which already appeared to them as

likely to be prejudicial to the purity of the idea of God.

It is a consequence of the strictly moral character of the Jewish God

that the outer forms of worship in this religion are entirely

subordinate to its moral elements. This statement would not appear to

be consistent with the contents of the Law, the longest portions of

which are devoted to the regulation of public worship, nor with the

practice of the Pharisees, who placed the ceremonial law above all

purely human duties. But it can be inferred, were it but from the

following two facts, first, that the cessation of the Temple worship at

Jerusalem had as good as no influence whatever upon Judaism; and next,

that we find no disputes amongst the Christians as to questions of

ceremonial or of abstention from public worship. Neither God nor His

worshippers needed the sacrifices. At the most the priests were pleased

when rich contributions thus fell to their share. If amongst

religiously-minded people any importance was attached to public

worship, then this was simply for the sake of obedience. They just

accepted the fact that it had been ordered as a divine institution. It

was a part of the will of God, the strict and punctual observation of

which, according to the ritual under all circumstances, and simply as

an act of moral submission, secured the divine favour. But it was not

the chief part of God's will. Whenever Jesus used the words "to do

God's will," neither He nor those that heard Him ever thought of the

sacrifices, but of the regulation of the daily life. It was a moral,

not a ceremonial doing.' When St Paul founded his churches amongst the

Greeks, he noticed for the first time how alien to the Greek mind was

that which he had assumed as a matter of course. For them the Christian

congregation was an association for worship analogous to other similar

associations. It neither ipso facto excluded the participation in other

forms of worship, nor did it imply any pledge to regulate the life that

lay outside of the services. It was therefore one of the chief tasks of

the Christian teachers to impart a simple ethical meaning to the

ceremonial prescriptions of the Old Testament which concerned

sanctification.

It is true that Jewish ethics present us with an entirely contradictory

picture in which the ugliest features are not wanting by the side of

the most pleasing and sympathetic. Amongst the former one would reckon

the preference given to the negative avoidance of sin over the positive

doing of good, the equally important position assigned to morally

indifferent and important commandments, the merely external summary of

duties without any classification, the interest in sexual questions,

casuistry, and the seeking for reward. It was not without reason that

the Jew could find his pattern in the Pharisee, who merely exaggerated

the tendency of the average morality of religious people themselves,

and this the more readily, because every disposition thereto is

contained in the written law itself. The seeds sown by the Priestly

Code attain to their full growth in Pharisaism.

But, on the other hand, this transformation of morality into its

opposite, is not the only characteristic that one notices in later

Judaism. We are not justified in affirming that Jesus came to His

simplification of the demands of religion through His opposition to the

Pharisees. He would have delivered His message exactly as He did

regardless of the Pharisees, and again not as something entirely new,

but as containing the elements of sound vitality which He found already

existing. Here, too, there is no lack of documentary evidence in Jewish

writings. The ethical teaching of the Psalms and Proverbs, and of Jesus

the Son of Sirach, points in this direction, and analogous elements may

be found in the oldest form of the "Testament of the Twelve

Patriarchs." Even a Christian document such as the Epistle General of

James, derives its life rather from the simple Jewish popular morality

than directly from the Gospel of Jesus.

In the first place, we notice here that what is demanded is extremely

simple. There is scarcely anything ceremonial or subject to national

limitations. Jesus meets the tempter in the wilderness with the very

simplest words from the Book of Deuteronomy. In the decisive moments of

His ministry He appeals to the decalogue, the commandments of love,

things that everyone knows to be axiomatic truths. Surely this

presupposes an education in an entirely sound moral atmosphere. In the

next place, even His spiritualization of the claim, His insistence on

the motive, are not entirely unprecedented. Does not even the Talmud

lay stress, only too much stress, upon sins of thought? The "Testament

of the Twelve Patriarchs," "The Two Ways," "The Shepherd of

Hernias,"--all writings which do not depend directly upon Jesus,

emphasize inner purity and simplicity, just as much as external good

works. Truly, then, there is no lack of parallels to the Sermon on the

Mount. There is still enough and to spare of what is great and original

in the work of Jesus, if we freely admit that He could only have arisen

from this people, and that He found noble forerunners amongst them. The

morality of a people must in deed have attained to a very high level if

it strives in so resolute a fashion to pass beyond mere external

legality in order to reach inner purity of motive.

And is not, after all, the Jewish eagerness to believe that good deeds

will be rewarded, the distortion of a true and great thought--that the

good seed will under all circumstances ultimately bring forth good

fruit? If we admit that Jesus was a sounder and saner teacher than our

modern schoolmen, we may well ponder over the fact that He did not

reject the scheme of rewards and punishments, but made use of it. Was

not the true conviction thereby strengthened that idle piety is

something entirely bad, and that God is not mocked? But in so doing

Jesus did of course lay such stress upon the thought of the coming

judgment that all easy-going optimism was purified by the most terrible

earnestness.

This brings us to the third great legacy which Judaism bequeathed to

Christianity--eschatology. Just as the origin of the new religion

cannot be conceived without the Jewish hope in the coming kingdom of

God, so in the lifelong struggle with the Roman state the victory is

won through the Jewish hope in the Resurrection. The fact that the

early Christians did not adversely criticise the Jewish hope in any

book of the New Testament, and that they were able to treat Jewish

apocalypses without further addition as Christian, proves how deeply

indebted they felt themselves to the Jews in this point above all

others.

How confused a maze of eschatological conceptions could coexist often

in one and the same person we can see most simply by a few instances

from the New Testament. We have an eschatology of the synoptists, and

that a twofold one (Mk. xiii. and Luke xvi.), we have a series of

apparently contradictory eschatologies in St Paul (1 Thess. iv., 2

Thess. ii., 1 Cor. xv., 2 Cor. v., Rom. xi., Phil. ii.), a whole bundle

of eschatologies in the Apocalypse, and finally a peculiar variety in 2

Peter. It is far more difficult to find even two entirely parallel

visions of the future state, when one looks through the Jewish

apocalypses dating from the time immediately preceding or succeeding

Jesus. The thoughts of the learned differed from those of the common

people, and the ideas of the Jews of the dispersion were unlike those

of their Palestinian brethren. It will be sufficient for our purpose if

we examine the different groups of these conceptions.

The most important chapter in eschatology, especially for the populace,

excited as it had been ever since the wars of the Maccabees by

patriotic aspirations, is the national hope. The heading of the chapter

is "Israel and the Gentile World." The people of God--recipients of the

promises, and who in spite of them serve the Gentiles, the kings of the

earth, and the city of Babylon, shall be liberated and exalted to

lordship, over the whole world, while the neighbouring peoples shall be

humbled. It is just the chief ideas of the New Testament--the kingdom

of God and the Messiah--that belong to this political group of

conceptions. But first the great reign of terror must pass by--the time

of tribulation and temptation when Israel shall be humiliated yet

further, and the heathen shall deliver their fiercest assaults upon the

whole city and the Temple, led at times by Anti-christ, the devilish

king of the last days, the enemy of God. When the need is highest,

God's help is nighest: He confounds the enemy and establishes His

kingdom. In all these pictures the kingdom of God is always conceived

of as a political organization, in opposition to the kingdoms of the

rulers of this earth and of the demons. It is placed upon the earth,

or, with greater particularity, in Palestine, with Jerusalem for its

capital. It denotes the supremacy of Israel over all the world. Her

enemies and her tyrants are either rooted out or are subject to her as

her slaves. They bring their tribute to Jerusalem and accept the Law of

Israel. On the other hand, the patriarchs and the pious men of old,

especially the martyrs, have now risen from the dead in order to

participate in the joy of the kingdom which shall be--so men gradually

tended to think--for everlasting. Either God Himself is regarded as the

King, or He has raised the Messiah, the lawful descendant of David, to

the throne, that He may judge and rule over His people in

righteousness. While the older writings presuppose the continuation of

the Davidic dynasty, the later accept the everlasting rule of the one

descendant of David. Now all this is a continuation of earthly circum

stances under somewhat higher and more spiritual conditions. This

vision of the future might be called a patriotic Jewish Utopia.

It is, however, characteristic of the age of Jesus that this political

expectation seldom stands by itself, but has to suffer admixture with

elements of an entirely different nature, with the eschatology of the

whole world and of the individual. Two important questions, the fate of

the world and the fate of the individual soul, are added to the

previous subject: "Israel and the Gentile World." They are of especial

importance for the new religion, because though it arose from the midst

of the national eschatology, it quickly freed itself from it and turned

its attention to the other problems. In the first place, we find that

in later Judaism the whole realm of action--heaven as well as earth and

the world of spirits--are all drawn into the historical drama, until at

length--though the transition is not yet quite clear to us--the

conception of the essential similarity between the future and the

present gives way to the conception of the new aeon which in many

important points is to be the exact opposite of the present world. Here

is death, there everlasting life; here flesh, there spirit; here sin,

there innocence; here God is far away, there He shall be seen face to

face. This vision embraces the fate of the whole of creation, of the

whole human race, so that Israel's glory merely appears as one special

case amongst many. Of course it likewise furnishes us with evidence of

the incapacity of the Jew to leave the world of phenomena behind him,

for the future life never appears to him as the spiritual in our sense

of the word, but always as the hyperphysical.

In the next place, men are now free to reflect upon the fate of the

individual. The hope of salvation, first of the rescue of the

individual in the great struggle that shall be in the last days, and

then of his future blessedness--this hope takes its place beside that

of the kingdom of God. The goal is one and the same, but many roads

lead to it. Either the conception of the resurrection of the dead and

of the day of judgment are accepted, and the emphasis is laid upon the

judgment of the individual soul by God. The soul appears before the

great judgment seat with the result of its whole life, there to receive

everlasting joy or endless torment. In this case the old idea of the

shadowy life of the soul in Sheol suffices to describe its condition

until the day of the final resurrection. Or else the powerful light of

the faith in retribution is flashed even into Hades itself, and that at

once, so that for the individual death is followed immediately by

judgment and the dead are portioned out between Gehenna and Paradise

without waiting for the final judgment. But in this case the soul

itself must be conceived of as something phenomenal, as sensible to

bodily pain and pleasure.

In all this there is nothing clear and distinct--there is no unity of

conception. The sources of all these ideas are so various that complete

harmony is out of the question. Here we go back to the patriotic

enthusiasm of the prophets and to their prophecies of the coming doom,

and again to Animism, old as the human race itself, though it has been

transformed by the dogma of retribution; and, lastly, to possibly

Persian notions of the resurrection and the new world. It is true that

attempts at reducing these varied elements into some sort of system are

not entirely wanting. Such are the millennial theories of our Book of

Revelation, parallels to which may be found in the fourth book of Ezra

and in Baruch. First of all, room is found for the national Utopia, but

then comes the final catastrophe, followed by the universal

resurrection of the dead and the day of judgment; and so it turns out

to be merely a provisional state of things preparatory to the new

world. But for Jesus, the kingdom of God and the new world run into

each other; there is no provisional state of things, but the most

intimate blending of earthly and transcendental features. And after

all, the most important point was not the manner of the realization,

but the fact itself. Israel possessed the religion of Hope. No other

people had anything like it. With the same battle-cry with which

Christianity arose, "The kingdom shall yet be ours," Israel itself went

forth to the last dread war of destruction and after that into its

desolation. But as for the kingdom itself, it is in God's hand alone;

that every Jew and every Christian knew. It is the gift of God, and He

gives it when He will. Men cannot bring it about. Neither in Jewish nor

in Christian writings is there the slightest suspicion of the thought

that men's, acts, their works, or their piety, can cause the kingdom to

come. Complete passivity is man's duty. He must wait, and he must hope,

and make ready in serious earnest. Between this world and the next

stand the catastrophe and the resurrection of the dead and the judgment

to come. It is perfectly immaterial whether this life and the next

stand to each other, as they do in the popular conception, in the

relation of the deed and its reward; or, as from a deeper point of

view, in the relation of seed and harvest. In each case the strictly

supernatural character of the promise is retained.

The early Christians clearly felt and expressed their dependence upon

the Jewish religion. They called their God the God of the Fathers; they

declared the Old Testament to be their sacred book; they took the

prophecies and the apocalypses as the basis of their hope. It was only

the Jewish idea, the law, that they decisively rejected after a short

period of hesitation; and even this only with the help of allegorical

explanations which served to hide the defection from their eyes. But

from the second century onwards, Christianity separates into two great

movements. The one endeavours to realize the theory that the Christians

are the true Israel, and finally gives the Jewish Church a fresh lease

of life in Roman Catholicism. The other movement proceeds in part with

rapid strides, and in part gradually, to the Hellenization of

Christianity, to its transformation into Greek philosophy and

mysticism; but in so doing it clearly shows us that in disassociating

itself from Judaism, it has disassociated itself from the Gospel, which

has this in common with Judaism, that it is a religion of practical

morality.

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CHAPTER III.

THE FULNESS OF THE TIME.

WHEN the early Christians maintained that Jesus had come into the world

in the fulness of the time, they were not at all thinking of an

especially favour able conjunction of affairs in the world, but simply

of the termination of that apocalyptic age--the duration of which was

unknown to themselves--which God had determined should precede the end

of all things. The historian, too, has to exercise the greatest caution

in the use that he makes of such statements as to the necessity of any

occurrence in history. Even if he can prove in a general way that the

conditions favourable to this or that event were present, he has done

no more thereby than to point out that the thing was possible in the

abstract. For who can say that these conditions were not already

present a few decades earlier, or were present in a still more

favourable degree a few decades later? By the side of the proof that

the age was especially favourable to the spread of the Gospel, it would

be possible to advance the counter proof with almost equally cogent

arguments that the rapid transformation and decay of Christianity was

due to the unfavourable circumstances of the age. It is sufficient for

our present purpose to draw attention to some especially important

characteristics of the position of Judaism in that age, without drawing

any conclusions from them beyond what the actual facts warrant.

First, then, we have the facts that throughout the Mediterranean

countries we find a type of civilization which was on the whole

uniform, and that the Jews were affected by it. This is shown above all

by the universal supremacy of the Greek language into which the Old

Testament was translated, in which the Jews philosophized, which St

Paul spoke and understood, in which the greatest portion of early

Christian literature was written. Community of language implies to a

very great extent community of thought. Traces of this community we

find in the latest books of the Old Testament, but above all in

Alexandrian Judaism. The Jews take possession first of the forms of

Greek literature--we even find hexameters in the Sibylline books, then

of the conceptions and of the aims and objects of Greek philosophy.

Cosmology and ethics are developed into sciences in the Greek sense of

the word; allegory becomes the connecting link between the Jewish word

and the Greek spirit. We can already trace the first steps of that

Jewish apologetic and criticism which paved the way for their Christian

successors. The earliest form of Christianity is little influenced by

all this, as long as it does not go beyond the boundaries of Palestine.

The Greek spirit had no influence upon Jesus either directly or

indirectly. But even the great missionary, who in many ways betrayed so

anti-Greek, or at least anti-philosophical an instinct, cannot avoid

contact with Greek conceptions. The literature of the sub-apostolic

age, then, consciously throws the bridge over to the Greek world.

Besides this, the guild system, which had grown up amongst the Jews of

the dispersion, and was afterwards taken over by the Christians, was a

creation of the Greek mind, which managed to bring together again in

new combinations the individual atoms that were floating about

separately in that great cosmopolitan age, when all old bonds were in

process of dissolution.

The mingling of religions was a prominent factor in the civilization of

that age. It was effected consciously by the propaganda of the Oriental

religions, unconsciously by the strange intermixture of all nations.

This, too, was a preparation for Christianity. The only question is

whether Christianity had not from the very first partaken of all these

foreign elements, since Judaism, from which it had sprung, had been

drawn into the process of decomposition. If in reality the Babylonian,

Persian, Syrian, Egyptian, and Greek religions had been influencing

later Judaism from all the different quarters of this chaos of people,

then Christianity would have acquired its character of world-religion

even from its very origin.

We are scarcely in a position yet to put these questions, let alone

answering them. One thing is certain, that Jesus and His Gospel are

intelligible from Judaism alone; and for this, for Jesus and for His

relation to Palestinian Judaism, other and more accurate data are

available. He appeared in the last dying moments of the theocracy and

before the exclusive rule of the Rabbis which succeeded it. Here, it is

true, it can be affirmed that only a few decades later the origin of

Christianity would be inconceivable. The political situation was a

decisive factor in this case. The little Jewish people had freed itself

from the embrace of the vast surrounding empire in a magnificent

struggle for liberty, only soon after to share the fate of every other

Mediterranean country and bow the neck beneath the Roman yoke. It

retained, however, its hatred of the foreigner and its aspirations for

liberty, and consoled itself with the thought of its glorious future.

It was these feelings, passions, and Utopias that gave birth to the

last terrible insurrection which ended in destruction. Now Christianity

arose while the ground was being prepared for this insurrection. In the

New Testament itself mention is made of the Zealots, of the murder of

the Galileans, of false Christs, all signs of this preparation. Through

its most distinctive phrases, Kingdom of God' and Messiah,' the Gospel

stands in the closest and most direct connection with this period of

political ferment. It precedes the judgment of the year 70 A.D.,

exactly as the old prophecy once preceded the fall of the two kingdoms

of Israel and Judah.

In the next place we have to endeavour to present to ourselves the

state of feeling among the Jews before Jesus appeared. It was a

mysterious and a restless age. True, there was no lack of mercenary

souls and of worldlings, who, leaving the future to take care of

itself, devoted themselves to deriving what profit and pleasure they

could from the passing moment. Jesus comes into contact at every step

with this materialistic spirit, that knows not the signs of the times.

But then besides these there are countless others, expectant, anxious

and exultant souls, eagerly longing for the future. There were men and

women there ready to sacrifice house and hearth, family and fatherland.

It was a great time, pregnant with heroes and martyrs.

All the hopes and longings, the serious earnestness, and the anger that

lived in this people, were concentrated in one man--John the Baptist.

He was the "fulness of the time" of Jesus. He stirred the masses as no

man had done before. His preaching is only handed down to us in the

Christian tradition, and therefore we do not know it accurately. The

results of his activity were twofold. He suddenly applied the thought

of the coming judgment, which lay forgotten and ineffective amidst the

great confused mass of eschatological fancies, not to the Gentiles, but

to the Jews themselves, and thereby shook their ecclesiastical system

to the very foundation. The wrath of God descends upon the children of

Abraham; it is of no avail to belong to the sacred people. Thereby in

the next place the Baptist set each individual man the anxious

question, What shall I do to be saved? This question, with which so

many came to Jesus, is very far indeed from being a matter of course

for a Jew, and not for a Jew alone. It was the result of the Baptist's

preaching.

Directly, John the Baptist was merely the founder of a sect which

succumbed to the influence of the Pharisaic tendency. The entrance to

this sect was through baptism. Then followed ascetic observances to

prepare for the judgment. There had been many movements like this

before. The merely negative predominated, and that after all does not

lead men out from Judaism. John hurled his decisive nay' against all

the church life of the Jews. Jesus took up the nay' and added to it His

yea.'

Jesus Himself was stirred by John to enter upon His own work. That was

the greatest thing that John did.

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THE RISE OF THE RELIGION.

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CHAPTER IV.

JESUS. THE CALL.

CHRISTIANITY arose because a layman, Jesus of Nazareth, endowed with a

self-consciousness more than prophetic, came forward and attached men

so firmly to His person that, in spite of His shameful death, they were

ready both to live for Him and to die for Him. Jesus imparted new

values to things: He scattered new thoughts broadcast in the world. But

it was only His person that gave these new values and these new

thoughts that victorious power which transformed the world. It is men

that make history and that imprint their personal character on great

spiritual movements. If our century has had reason enough to learn

that, then surely it is high time that the senseless chatter should

cease about the religion of Christ which each Christian ought to

acquire for himself. As if His power as Redeemer, His

self-consciousness, His royal humility, could ever find a habitation in

our little souls, quite apart from the fact that no one takes His

external mode of life for a pattern. The difference between the prophet

and the believer belongs to the elementary characteristics of every

religion. The great historical religions, far from removing it, have

but deepened and intensified it. It is impossible that a time should

ever come for Christianity when any single Christian should acquire for

his fellow-Christians the significance of Jesus.

What is the starting-point of our enquiry? Not the titles of Jesus;

their meaning has itself partly to be explained by the

self-consciousness. Not the stories of the Birth, Baptism, and

Transfiguration; these are possibly but attempts at explanation on the

part of the early Church. No; we must begin with Jesus testimony to

Himself and with His mode of life.

Jesus comes to a man and says to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." He

does on the Sabbath what ever seems good to Him, and calls Himself Lord

of the same. As a new Moses He sets His "But I say unto you" against

the words of the law. Himself a layman, He sets Himself in the place of

the Scribes and declares to His audience of lay people that all

knowledge of God has been given Him, and that He will impart it to

them. He says: "Here is one greater than Jonah, greater than Solomon,

the least of whose disciples is greater than John Baptist." He

exclaims: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass

away." He bids all those that labour and are heavy laden come unto Him

that He may refresh them. They are to take up His yoke and learn of

Him. And, on the other hand, He declares it to be the most grievous sin

and one for which there is no forgiveness, if a man should blaspheme

against the Holy Ghost who through Him works miracles. He comes to this

or that individual with the brief command "Follow Me," and He calls for

an immediate break with his previous mode of life. If need be, all are

to be able to suffer and to die for Him and for His cause. If any man

confesses Him before men and suffers for Him, then Jesus will certainly

plead for him in the day of judgment.

These passages have all been taken from the Synoptists; they are the

more significant, because Jesus does not here, as in the Fourth Gospel,

press His personality upon men's notice, but rather conceals it. Now it

is clear that a self-consciousness that is more than merely human

speaks from these words. And this is the mystery of the origin of

Christianity. What we need to do above all is to accept it as a fact--a

fact which demands a patient and reverent hearing.

For scarcely more wonderful than the lofty self-consciousness of Jesus

is the clear feeling of His limitations. Jesus prays to God as to His

master, and teaches the disciples to pray to God. The deepest humility

and subjection to the Lord of heaven and earth is His characteristic.

Jesus will not suffer Himself to be called good--God alone is good. He

knows nothing as to the last hour. God alone knows that. It is not His

to assign the thrones of honour in the kingdom of God. That is God's

sole prerogative. He speaks of God as the only judge whom man need

fear. In Gethsemane He prays to God that the cup may pass, yet so that

not His but God's will may be done. On the Cross there even escapes

Him--according to the tradition--words that express a feeling of

abandonment by God. So He stands, altogether a man on the side of men,

with the feeling of the division that separates all things created from

God.

The Church did not extend the reverence that it felt for Jesus to these

expressions of His humility. In sharpest contrast to what Jesus Himself

had said it set up the attributes of sinlessness and Godhead, and made

the right to bear the name of Christian dependent on agreement

therewith. This tendency can be traced back to the New Testament

writings of the Apostle John. In the end this has brought about a

reaction. Men have believed only in the humble words of Jesus, while

they have increasingly distrusted the declarations of His majesty. But

both belong together. The most wonderful feature in Jesus is the

co-existence of a self-consciousness that is more than human with the

deepest humility before God. The same man that exclaims, "All things

are given Me by the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son,"

answers the rich ruler, "Why callest thou Me good? No one is good but

one, God." Without the first He is a man just such as we are; without

the second He is an idle visionary. Jesus conceived of Himself as a

Mediator. The Mediator is altogether man, without subtraction of

anything that is human. But He has received from God an especial call

and commission to His fellow-men, and thereby He towers high above

them. Jesus shares this feeling of being a mediator with other men like

Him. Even if it has in His case attained the highest degree of

constancy, depth, and reality, yet no formula can define its exact

limits.

Let us leave the form of His consciousness, of His call--the Messianic

idea--entirely on one side for the present and look only at the fact

itself. And how stupendous a fact it is. Jesus is a simple country

child without any higher education or knowledge. Above all, He is no

theologian. Up to His thirtieth year He was an artizan. In His native

town no one pays any particular attention to Him. His parents have no

forebodings of His greatness. This layman, an artizan by trade, comes

forward in God's name. He deposes all the Scribes. They do not know

God. Jesus alone has recognized Him. He sets on one side the propaganda

of the Pharisees. "Come unto Me and I will refresh you!" He sets aside

the Baptist John. He belongs to the old order. His simple word shall be

God's word His help God's help. And all this without ever falling into

the merely fanatical or visionary. He is always modest, humble, sane

and sober, and yet with this superhuman self-consciousness. It is quite

impossible to realize such an inner life as this. Revelation,

Redemption, Forgiveness, Help--He has all those and offers them to such

as shall surrender themselves to the impression of His personality.

Jesus' mode of life is as far removed from the ordinary as His

self-revelation. He stands entirely outside of human society. He does

not mean to be a pattern for ordinary life. He has forsaken His

calling, His family and His home, and has given Himself up to the life

of an itinerant missionary. He has freed Himself from all the duties of

social intercourse. He enters in again amongst men from without, but as

a guest and as a stranger. In this manner He suffers Himself to be

entertained hospitably with food and with shelter and to have His feet

washed, and then He will leave the place, never perhaps to return

again. He says expressly that He recognizes but a spiritual family--the

men and the women that do God's will.

Besides this separation from the world we must notice the mysterious

power of working miracles which Jesus possesses in a very high degree

and which He can transmit to others. Even though Jesus uses all these

powers in the service of ministering love they only thereby become the

more extra ordinary. If He passes nights in solitary prayer, if in His

zeal for preaching and healing He forgets both food and rest, if He

interrupts the ordinary sequence of natural laws, or, Himself subject

to some mysterious power, appears to His companions as a being of

another world and to His ignorant relations as one

possessed--everywhere there is the same impression of the superhuman.

All this is quite peculiar to Himself, and is not intended to be

typical. His companions, too, whom He attached to His own mode of life

in order that they might help Him in His missionary labours, He

distinctly separated by this very fact from the disciples in the world

whom He and His companions wished to serve.

It is important to notice that the self-revelation of Jesus coincides

with His mode of life. It was the same great calling which filled Him

with the consciousness that He was the Redeemer, and which compelled

Him to work as a homeless wanderer. Both in His words and in His life

He represents the exceptional.

The fact that Jesus possessed a peculiar consciousness of His call

stands firmly established as a portion of the New Testament which is

proof against all the attacks of controversy. Now we must discover its

form, the especial idea under which the call presented itself.

The whole of early Christianity gives one unanimous answer. Jesus is

the Messiah, and has considered Himself such. The question now arises

whether the belief of the early Church really was the belief of Jesus

Himself. For the statement of the Church is attended by difficulties

which have caused doubts to arise in connection with it.

The idea of a Messiah originated in narrow Jewish patriotism. It

embodies the national aspirations of the Jews for a position of

magnificence in the world such as they conceived had already existed in

the time of David. The 17th Psalm of Solomon is our chief source for

this idea. After the Messiah has driven away the enemies and cleansed

the land of every abomination, He is to divide it justly among the Jews

and govern them justly and wisely from Jerusalem as a theocratic

prince. In reality, the idea of the Messiah had something

archaeological about it, even for the Jews. It had been revived by the

learned from a bygone age, and had gradually taken root among the

people. It no longer quite fits in with the kingdom of God, with the

new earth, with the transfigured body, and the whole transcendentalism

of later Judaism. Hence the Messiah is a favourite figure in the

intermediate state of things in learned apocalypses, whilst in the

final state no room is found for Him.

The question, then, rightly arises, Can Jesus have clothed His lofty

self-consciousness in so narrow a national Jewish idea? The answer

depends, in the first place, on the reliability of the oldest

tradition, and next on considerations of a general character. We have

the trial of the King of the Jews, the entry into Jerusalem, the

confession of Peter, the dispute for the places of honour on the right

hand and on the left of the Messiah, which can scarcely all be

inventions of disciples who inserted a later belief in the Messiah into

the life of Christ. This result of our enquiry into the oldest Gospel

(Mark's) is confirmed by the oldest collection of Logia, in which Jesus

answers the Baptist's question, "Art thou He that shall come, or do we

look for another?" by the simple reference to the beginning of the

Messianic age of miracles; and in like manner ascribes to His victories

over the demons the signification that in them the kingdom of God has

come. Surely facts lie at the basis of these traditions, which, whether

they be pleasant or not, demand a hearing and can only be suppressed by

forcible means.

In addition to this there are considerations of a general character.

The belief of the disciples in their Messiah must be older than Jesus'

death, for it could not entirely arise after that death, which was such

a grievous disappointment to so many expectations. If it is older than

Jesus' death it is incredible that Jesus did not share it, and yet

suffered it to be held.

If Jesus did not consider Himself to be the Messiah, then He must have

thought of Himself as a prophet. This by itself would possibly be

sufficient to explain all that was extraordinary in His mode of life.

But Jesus could not come forward as a prophet--e.g. like John because

the prophet always points to one higher than himself, and thereby

assigns a provisional character to himself, while Jesus knew Himself to

be God's final messenger, after whom none higher can come. That is the

decisive consideration. The superhuman self-consciousness of Jesus,

which knows nothing higher than itself save God and can expect none

other, could find satisfactory expression in no other form but that of

the Messianic idea. That which weighs with Jesus in accepting this idea

is not its political but its final and conclusive character.

This last consideration has brought us face to face with the question

as to the origin of the Messianic consciousness. It is, however, only

honest to confess that this origin is a mystery for us: we know nothing

about it. All that we can say is how this consciousness did not arise

in Jesus. It was not through slowly matured reflections of an

intellectual nature: such are never the basis of certainty. The

self-consciousness of a clever theologian might possibly thus be

accounted for, but not that of the Son of God. Nor, again, was it owing

to the influence of His surroundings; the voices of demons and of the

world might make a man of genius vacillate: they could never impart a

divine certainty to him. The fact, too, that Jesus appears from the

very first with unswerving constancy and immovable certainty as one

sent by God causes us to abandon both explanations. There is nowhere

any hesitation, or doubt, or development from presentiments to

certainty. Jesus learns new things as to the manner of His calling, but

never anything fresh as to the fact itself. He acts His whole life long

under the stress of compulsion. He knows Himself sent, nay, driven by

God. He has only one choice: to obey or to disobey.

The Gospels date the Messianic consciousness of Jesus from the Baptism.

He saw the Spirit of God descending in the fashion of a dove, and heard

a voice, "Thou art My Son." The great Old Testament prophets were, it

is true, called in visions, and St Paul became a Christian and an

apostle by means of a vision. So far the evidence is in favour of the

evangelists story. But there is one consideration which should weigh

very strongly in the contrary direction. The strange occurrence at the

Baptism could have been told the disciples by none other than by Jesus

Himself. If Jesus told them, then it could only be for the purpose of

obtaining authority for His mission. But Jesus never appealed to

visions. That is just His great distinction, His immense advantage over

Mahomet. The whole edifice of Mahomet's self-consciousness falls to

pieces as soon as the truth of his visions is questioned. But in Jesus'

case you may cut out the story of the Baptism and of the

Transfiguration and everything remains the same. All the outer

processes which served the Old Testament prophets as means of

communication with God, fall into disuse when we come to Jesus. That is

just what constitutes His greatness. The consciousness of His call does

not depend upon voices and visions, which everyone who has not himself

experienced them is at liberty to doubt, but simply upon inner

compulsion. How this compulsion came upon Him, whether it was in the

end connected with some visionary experience, that is not for us to

know. And after all, the important matter is not that Jesus had some

experience of an especial nature with God, but that this experience

compelled Him to turn to men. The historian who contents himself with

this observes thereby the reverence that is due to this mystery.

But then, on the other hand, the inadequacy of the Messianic idea for

Jesus Himself is likewise clear. Besides the one thought, the Messiah

is God's last messenger, nothing but Jewish narrowness was connoted by

this title. Happily Jesus is something else, something greater than the

Messiah of the Jews. The traces are still preserved in the gospel

tradition of the wrestling of Jesus with the inadequacy of the idea, of

His labouring with the conception till finally its contents were

completely transformed.

It is the story of the Temptation that shows us first of all that there

is a complete want of inner harmony between Jesus and the Messianic

idea. This story signifies the breach of Jesus with all that is

fanciful and politically dangerous in the conception of the Messiah.

The Messiah is a miraculous being who can do everything. Is Jesus to

depend upon this, and thereby win over the people? The Messiah is a

king of this world who attains to his dominion by force, deceit,

treachery and cunning, just like other kings here on earth. Shall Jesus

gain the sovereignty of the world by these means? No. He cries; it is

the voice of Satan which is thus appealing to My feelings as Messiah.

Away with it. In so doing He had already won the victory over that

which presented the greatest danger in the conception of the Messiah,

and had subjected Himself in obedient faith to God.

But what next? The Messiah of the Zealots had been cast aside. There

remained the Messiah of the Rabbis. According to the true dogma, the

Messiah was to remain concealed somewhere or other, perhaps in the

desert, until God. exalted Him on His throne. That is to say, He was to

do nothing and wait for the miracle to be wrought. But Jesus returned

from the desert back into the world, in order to help men and prepare

them for the Messianic time. He did not wait, but went about doing

good. All the great redemptive activity of Jesus has no place in the

Jewish conception of the Messiah; or, in other words, that which is

great in Jesus from the point of view of the history of the world, is

not a consequence of the idea of the Messiah, but is an original

addition of His own.

Messiah' and Israel' are two ideas that are inseparably connected

together in the Jewish mind. The Messiah is Israel's future king--that

and nothing else. Jesus, too, remained faithful to this dogma, and

confined His activity during the whole of His life to His own people.

But through bitter and grievous deception He had to learn that Israel

as a whole was not receptive: that it would not accept the message, and

that it was blindly hurrying along the road that led to judgment. At

the same time, glimpses that open out into the heathen world fill Him

with hope. And so He resigns Himself to be, if God so wills it, the

Messiah whom Israel rejects and the Gentiles accept. Thereby all that

is merely national is almost entirely banished from the idea of the

Messiah. It is turned into the formal conception of king; judged by its

contents, it becomes a paradox.

In the Jewish fancy Messiah is surrounded by all manner of heavenly and

earthly glory. David's fame is reflected upon him. But the bitter

experience that Jesus has gained in His dealings with His people causes

the thought of the necessity of suffering, and even of death, to ripen

in His soul. From the day at Caesarea Philippi onwards He begins to

familiarize the minds of the disciples with it, and utilizes the very

occasion when their enthusiasm bursts into flame, to give them their

first solemn lesson.

The thought of death was the stumbling-block to the Jews; it was the

simple negation of the Messiah. No Jew before Jesus ever applied Isa.

liii. to the dying Messiah. By thus submitting to this new necessity

Jesus completed the purification of an idea which was at first by no

means pure. The Messianic glory now becomes an object to be aimed at,

not one which falls into the lap of some privileged person by some

exceptional piece of good fortune, but one which has to be obtained

through endless labour and renunciation: yea, even by death itself in

voluntary obedience.

Thus did Jesus after much labour purify the title of Messiah which He

had at first assumed through an inner compulsion. Even for us after all

these centuries there is something surprisingly grand as we observe how

the idea is emptied of all the merely sensual and selfish elements, so

that finally the king in all his pomp and glory is turned into the

tragic figure on the Cross. Herein, in one word, consists Jesus'

greatness. He introduces the tragic element where others joyously

revelled in material Utopias.

But the end of this work is no renunciation of the title of Messiah,

but the distinct claim upon it advanced before His death. That was

necessary for Jesus, otherwise He would have had to renounce both

Himself and God. He left His disciples the hope in the restitution of

all things as a legacy in connection, it would seem, with Daniel's

vision of the Son of Man who is to descend upon the clouds of heaven.

Jesus died with this belief in His speedy return in Messianic glory.

The belief in the return causes every thoughtful person the greatest

difficulty at the present day. Compared with this, even the Messianic

problem has but little importance. In the first place, it is a fact

that Jesus was mistaken in the point of time: He thought of the return

as to His own generation amongst whom He had worked, by whom He had

been rejected. If our account of the trial of Jesus has any historical

value, then Jesus did in fact say to His judges, "We shall meet again."

But this meeting did not take place either for foe or friend. Yet that

is not our real difficulty and stumbling-block. Apart from everything

else, it is an altogether fantastic idea for us--that a dead person

should return upon the clouds of heaven. This picture is the product of

the idea of the world and of the psychology current in antiquity, and

it is only in connection with them that it is endowed with any

vitality. And so the doubt will arise whether it was really Jesus

Himself, whether it was not, after all, His disciples who were the

authors of this fantastic and erroneous conception.

But we must silence our modern modes of thought when facts speak so

clearly and so decisively. However much may be a later addition in the

eschatological speeches of Jesus, the constant element in them is just

this thought of the second coming. It is this thought around which the

whole of the apocalyptic theory has crystallized, and not vice versa.

The word Son of Man' is not essential. Paul has the idea, the

expectation, of the parousia without this word. And besides, the chief

difficulty is, after all, removed as soon as we place ourselves in the

position of one to whom the ancient cosmology and psychology were

realities, for then the thought of a homo redivivus' will become

perfectly familiar to us.

The question was for Jesus to find a sanction for His mission. The

superhuman in Him accepted the form of the idea of the Messiah. The

Messiah is, and remains, king in the kingdom of God. Taking His stand

upon this presupposition, death appears to Him to be one of two things.

It is either a proof that He is in the wrong, or it is a transition to

a higher right that shall manifest itself to a world which now fancies

that it is triumphing. By announcing His return Jesus declares that God

is on His side, and that He is in the right. And for this very same

reason the early Christians laid all the emphasis on the parousia as

their strongest piece of evidence. Even though this evidence consisted

merely in a hope--a hope unfulfilled--it was yet powerful enough to

help Jesus and His disciples over their greatest difficulty.

At the same time, it is obvious that that which is inadequate in the

idea of the Messiah, here wins its first and last victory over Jesus.

In His prophecy of the second coming Jesus yields its due to the faith

of the age. Here for a moment the wild fancies of later Judaism, the

magic world of the ancient popular belief, intrude in the midst of the

grand simplicity of Jesus consciousness of His call. There was no

harmony between Jesus and the Messianic idea. He accepted the idea

under compulsion, because it was the outer form for that which was

final and highest. He laboured with it, broke it up, re-cast it; yet a

portion of the deception which it contained was transmitted to Him.

What were the titles which Jesus chose to express His

self-consciousness? The question belongs to the close of our enquiry.

In the first place, be cause the meaning of the titles can only be

derived from the self-consciousness and not this latter from the

titles; and next, because there is an especial difficulty in

distinguishing in this connection between what is to be assigned to

Jesus and what is to be referred to the oldest theology of the early

Christian Church. The evangelists ascribe to Jesus the titles Messiah,

Son of God, and Son of Man. The first He never used of Himself,

according to their account. They merely narrate that in His answers to

the Baptist, to Peter, and to the high priest during His trial He

accepted it--affirming the fact. On the other hand, the two other

expressions are handed down to us as self-designations. The word Son of

God fell into discredit amongst the Jews in later times, because the

Christians showed a preference for this title. But in the time of Jesus

it may very well have been current amongst the people as a popular

Messianic expression. Does not God address the Messianic King in the

2nd Psalm with these words, "Thou art My Son"?

And yet it is striking how very seldom Jesus uses the word. In reality

only once. It was one of the culminating points of His life. In tones

of exultation He spoke out of the fulness of His heart to those that

were nearest to Him. Just as Father and Son know and trust each other,

so do God and He. Thus He uses the Messianic title as the expression of

the closest intimacy with God, of the most absolute trust in Him. But

the title did not turn out to be a blessing for the early Church,

destined as it was to migrate to heathen surroundings. It gave rise to

physical and metaphysical speculations, and so caused a long series of

misfortunes.

The commonest self-designation of Jesus in the Gospels is the phrase

Son of Man.' Would that we knew for certain whether Jesus used it

Himself! The phrase is to be traced back to the vision of Daniel (ch.

vii.), where it is still used figuratively and without any Messianic

application. Originally it signifies just human being,' homo. Just as

the hostile empires appear in the vision as animals, so the kingdom of

the saints appears to the seer as a man. But long before the age of

Jesus this Man' had been transformed into the Messiah. A very slight

change was needed for this. Jesus calls Himself the Man,' first where,

referring to the passage in the book of Daniel, He prophesies His

coming down from heaven to establish the kingdom of God; next, when he

foretells His Passion; lastly, in other passages of various contents.

But did He really so call Himself? One is struck by the fact that He

speaks of Himself in the third person as though of some one else, and

that He prophesies His coming as if He were already removed from earth.

It is as easy to conceive of these forms of expression being used by

the disciples after Jesus' death as it is difficult to imagine Jesus

Himself employing them while He was still in their midst. If Jesus ever

did speak of Himself as the Man, then He can only have done so a short

time before His death and in the expectation of that death. One will

then have to suppose that at the time when the thought of His

approaching death gradually grew to be a certainty for Him, and the

idea of His future restoration to sovereignty likewise arose in His

mind, He drew comfort and confidence from this passage in Daniel. It

suddenly acquired a living personal application to Himself. He saw

Himself as the Man' exalted to God's side after His death and

descending from heaven in glory. And now He created the paradox of the

Son of Man who first must suffer. We may suppose the term to have

originated in some such manner as this, and yet it is quite possible

that it was the disciples who were the first to find this explanation

of Daniel's words. But the expression, which was in any case derived

from the Jewish apocalyptic writings, was altogether unintelligible to

the Greeks, and hence we find Paul already avoiding the use of it. It

was only very much later, when the Gospels had come to be regarded as

sacred books, that they made an attempt of their own to find a meaning

in it.

Thus from the very first the titles turned out to be the misfortune of

the new religion. With the titles either the old or the perverted new

ideas creep in--Messiah,' Son of God.' Son of Man.' How inadequately at

bottom all this applies to Jesus. Not one of these words expresses even

remotely what He was amongst men, or what He was called to be by God

for all time. Hence it is a part of true reverence for Jesus that we

should venerate, not the titles, but Himself.

There was in Him something entirely new, a surpassing greatness, a

superhuman self-consciousness which sets itself above all authorities,

declaring God's will and promises, imparting consolation, inspiring

courage, delivering judgment with divine power, a new mediatorship

between God and man, that left all the former far behind it. But this

that was new in Jesus appeared clothed in a contemporary and at bottom

unsuitable form, His consciousness as Messiah. And in spite of all His

labour to change the antiquated, the petty, and the transitory, He did

not entirely destroy it. Hence immediately after Jesus' death a twofold

movement can be traced amongst the disciples. Jewish patriots attach to

the one word Messiah all the fancies and all the political Utopias of

Judaism. But those who under stand Him continue His work and set Him

entirely free from these Messianic surroundings. The one road leads to

the Messiah of the Apocalypse, the other to the Second Adam' of Paul

and the Logos of the Fourth Gospel. The future belongs to the latter

alone.

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CHAPTER V.

JESUS.--THE PROMISE.

JESUS began His ministry with a clear and simple promise: "The kingdom

of God is at hand." By so doing He proves His acceptance of the Jewish

eschatology in its simplest form. The Jews waited for the kingdom of

God as the state of things when Israel should be free and exalted to a

position of power and splendour, when the Gentiles should be in

subjection, and the patriarchs and holy men of old should have risen

from the dead, and God be enthroned visibly amidst the people. Jesus

original hope, too, must have been very similar to this, though not

exactly the same. This we necessarily infer from the following

considerations. Jesus never explained the conception of the kingdom of

God, for He presupposes it as well known, nor does He anywhere

criticise any false conception of the kingdom of God, He merely lays

all the emphasis on its near approach, and on the conditions of

entrance. Furthermore, He addresses His promise exclusively to the

Jews, His own people, and not to the Gentiles. Lastly, He speaks of

being together with the patriarchs, and thus reveals the Jewish

foundation of His message.

The Jewish starting-point of the promise of Jesus will therefore form

the first portion of our enquiry. But Jesus' greatness begins in every

case where He sets Himself free from these Jewish presuppositions.

Three points deserve notice: The place and the manner; the time; the

recipients of the Promise.

1. The national pride of the Jews, the fantastic and material turn of

the Oriental mind, combine to embellish the Jewish hope in the kingdom

of God with a number of individual touches. This process can be traced

from the apocalypses, both Jewish and Christian, down to the Koran.

Read in the Apocalypse of St John the song of triumph over the fall of

Babylon, the exultation over her misfortunes, the description of the

final battle with all its cruel details, the delineation, at once

fantastic and material, of the Jerusalem which is far indeed from being

heavenly, with its arrogant contempt of the Gentiles. Mahomet's

descriptions of Paradise with their repulsive sensuality may be passed

over in silence. Even so harmless a vision of the future as is

contained in the Magnificat and the Benedictus, the songs of Mary and

of Zacharias, that St Luke has preserved for us, is limited to the

political liberation of the people. We may not indeed conclude that

because the political and the fantastical elements are almost entirely

absent from the sayings of Jesus, that therefore He never thought or

spoke of these things. Jesus never expected that the kingdom of God and

the Roman empire could co-exist. The latter would have to pass away

with the advent of the former. His other conceptions, too, will

probably have been fantastic enough to our way of looking at things.

But the Evangelists were under the impression that all these

traits--the political as well as the material embroidery--were

meaningless for Jesus, did not belong to the essential which alone He

emphasized. Jesus must have understood how to purify and to simplify

the hopes of His disciples, and to concentrate them on the religious

kernel. They remained indeed Jewish hopes, but such as had passed

through Jesus soul. Without setting Himself in opposition to His

surroundings, the hopes of a religious genius such as Jesus were from

the very first of a different nature. All those features of

vindictiveness, ambition, cruelty, sensuality, the artificial and

fantastical pedantry, the minute and subtle calculations, did not

harmonize with the simplicity of His soul. The acceptation of the

Jewish eschatology by Jesus is of itself tantamount to its

purification.

No very great importance, therefore, attaches to the place and the

outer circumstances of the kingdom of God. It is clear that Jesus did

not think of heaven or the other world. This earth, or, more strictly

speaking, the land of Palestine, is the scene of the kingdom. There is

no breach of continuity between the life that men live here and now,

and their existence yonder. They eat and drink and take their pleasure;

they live as men and not as spirits. To speak of the metaphorical

language of Jesus is of itself enough to impair the na�vet� of the

whole picture. The entire harmlessness and innocence of Jesus are

reflected in the simplicity of His expectations. For Jesus the earthly

and the simply human are entirely free from any suggestion of the

sinful. Why should that God to whom we pray for bread here below be

less likely to give us food and drink in His heavenly kingdom? There is

something almost countrified in Jesus' language about the future. Even

an inhabitant of Jerusalem would have used richer colours in his

picture. That is why we are told nothing of the city, the length and

the breadth and the height of which are equal, and the streets of which

are of gold.

But what an entire misunderstanding it is of Jesus when emphasis is

laid, as it often is to-day, upon the earthly elements in His hope.

That which He pictured to Himself, being a Jew of His age, in earthly

guise, He would have imagined in a later century just as easily after a

heavenly fashion. All the emphasis is laid, not upon the place, but

upon simple happiness and upon community with God. When His kingdom

comes, all suffering, all sorrow and lamentation, all sense of

abandonment by God, shall be changed into joy, exultation, and the

blessed feeling of nearness to God. To behold God, to be called the

Children of God, to experience God's comfort and mercy--that is the

centre of the promise. Therefore, too, the picture of the kingdom is

enriched by a multitude of features which go beyond the earthly

framework: the resurrection of the dead, the angelic body, the

everlasting life. Even if this earthly stage is never left, yet the

barriers between this world and the next have been removed, and the

visible communion with God and with all His saints, conjures forth a

new world. But there is one fact which, plainer than all else, shows us

of what little importance this world is after all for Jesus' promise.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, blessedness and torment

follow immediately after death, but not upon earth. There is no

contradiction here for Jesus with the hope in the kingdom of God,

because for Him nothing depends upon the place, but every thing upon

the condition of men.

Expressed in simple terms, what Jesus' promises in the kingdom of God

is everlasting life, man's entrance into unbroken community with God.

In common with His Jewish contemporaries, He pictures this everlasting

life to Himself upon an earthly stage and with earthly features, but it

is in the centre of the picture that He places that which is

everlasting--nearness to God, such as is not known here upon earth.

And the door that leads to life eternal is the judgment of God that

appoints unto every man everlasting bliss or everlasting torment. The

later theology, which postponed blessedness to the next world, to

heaven, understood Jesus after all better than our modern

archaeologists, who in their interest for earth forget heaven. When He

said the kingdom of God is at hand, He wished to place all those that

heard Him in the presence of God and of eternity, in comparison with

which this earth and world are of very little worth.

2. The Jews of Jesus' time entirely postponed the coming of the kingdom

of God to the future. No trace of that kingdom could be perceived as

long as the Roman ruled in the land. It had not, of course, been so at

all times. When the Asmonean high priests and kings set up their empire

and conquered many of the neighbouring tribes, then the Messianic Age

appeared to them and to many of their followers to have begun already.

The King and Son of God was there already, the promise which Jahwe had

given His people seemed to be about to be fulfilled. In the Messianic

Psalms, ii. and ex., the beginning of the kingdom of God and of its

king are already celebrated. But all this was nothing but beautiful

dreams. We do well to remember this when we come to examine the

question, Does the kingdom of God exist for Jesus in the present or in

the future? Does He promise it, or does He bring it with Him?

The Gospels themselves, if asked for an answer, appear to be in doubt.

By the side of passages which speak of it as still future, there are

others which declare that it is just being established upon earth.

The former passages are the most numerous, and are to be found from the

beginning to the end of Jesus ministry. His disciples are to hand on

this same message with which He began: "The kingdom of God is at hand";

they are not to change it and say the kingdom has come with Jesus. In

the Lord's Prayer they are to pray "Thy kingdom come," not, "may it be

fully established," for it is not here at all as yet. So Jesus ever

speaks of entrance into the kingdom as of a future event. The

Beatitudes are all promises, one just as much as the other, "for theirs

is the kingdom of God," as much as "for they shall see God." On the

last journey to Jerusalem the sons of Zebedee beg for the seats of

honour in the future kingdom, and Jesus acquiesces in the form of their

request. And even at the Last Supper He looks towards the future when

He says that He will not drink of the fruit of the vine with His

disciples until the kingdom of God shall come.

The chief passage, too, which would seem to prove the present nature of

the kingdom, points likewise to the future, if rightly understood (Luke

xvii. 20: "The kingdom of God is already among you"). In the first

place, it is quite certain that the right translation is "among you"

and not "in you," for Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, so the

evangelist expressly tells us. And next, we must notice the connection

of the phrase with its context. It is immediately succeeded by the

great eschatological speech of the sudden coming of the Son of Man, who

shall appear all at once like the lightning. But first shall come days

of tribulation and longing all in vain. The whole speech therefore

presupposes that the kingdom of God is yet to come. And it is preceded

by these words: "The kingdom of God shall not come in a way that

attracts attention, nor will people say, Look, here it is!' or there it

is!' but . . . ." Now the only possible antithesis to these future

tenses is: the kingdom will be amongst you so suddenly that you will

have no time at all for apocalyptic calculations and disputes. For like

a flash of lightning so is the kingdom of God. This celebrated passage

proves, therefore, just this: that Jesus, in contrast to all

apocalyptic calculations, prophesies the coming of the kingdom of God

as a sudden surprise.

Finally, the force of the argument derived from a consideration of all

these passages is confirmed by certain indirect conclusions. To enter

into the kingdom of God and to inherit eternal life is so entirely one

and the same thing for Jesus, that either expression is used

indifferently. The opposite of the kingdom of God is hell with the

everlasting fire. In the kingdom of God the patriarchs and the souls of

the saved shall meet together. The resurrection of the dead will

therefore coincide with the advent of the kingdom. The vision of God is

a future reward. The judgment and the kingdom of God are to come

together. The latter cannot be said to be present as long as the

separation of men into good and bad is still impending. Finally, the

coming of the kingdom is brought about by the return of Messiah.

Now if we add to these considerations the fact that the early

Christians all expected the kingdom of God in the future, we may look

upon it as one of the facts which we know with the greatest certainty

that in the message of Jesus the term kingdom of God has an

eschatological connotation, that it stands for the new world that is to

come.

There are, however, it is true, passages which point in another

direction, and these need to be examined as well. The question is

whether they can be explained, starting as we have done from

eschatological premises.

In His casting out of the devils Jesus saw the beginning of the kingdom

of God. "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of

God is come unto you." His victories over the devils seem to Him to be

so many blows struck against the empire of Satan, leading on to its

down fall. God's Spirit works through Jesus and lays the foundation for

the transformation of the world. When the Baptist asks Him, "Art thou

He that should come?" he receives the answer: "The blind receive their

sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear;

the dead are raised up." Once more it is the miracles by which one

recognizes the dawn of the New Time. Even though much has still to be

awaited--hence the warning, "Blessed is he that shall not be offended

in Me"--yet for the believer a visible pledge of the final

accomplishment is ready to hand.

This point we may look upon as established be yond all doubt. Jesus

regarded--we must admit it--His momentary miracles as the first signs

of the coming kingdom of God. We may perhaps call that the enthusiasm

of Jesus.

Another saying seems to point in the same direction. We have to piece

it together from Matthew and Luke. Its meaning is somewhat mysterious:

The law and the prophets until John.

Henceforth the kingdom of God suffereth violence,

And the violent take it by force.

But no sooner do we realize that Jesus uttered this in triumphant

exultation than the words come to be full of life for us. The kingdom

is no longer a far-off divine event as in the ages when the law and the

prophets prepared the way for it. It is even now being established upon

earth, and that with violence, while men take possession of it. So

speaks one who beholds with joy how the promise passes into

accomplishment. Therefore, too, Jesus can say that His disciples stand

in the midst of the kingdom of God, and are for that reason greater

than even John himself.

These words are the expression of a mighty enthusiasm. With more of

calm, but with no less certainty and joy, Jesus praises the beginning

of the kingdom here and now in certain parables.

In the double parable of the mustard seed and of the leaven, Jesus

contrasts the small beginning with the mighty end. So it is with the

kingdom of God. It begins small and unnoticeable--so small that the

great and the wise of this earth pay it no attention whatever. But its

end brings about the transformation of the world. And so it is that all

the great future is already contained in the small beginning. As we

read these parables we must picture to our selves Jesus going about

teaching and ministering in that little corner of Galilee, and then try

and imagine how this obscure activity is to lead up to the great

world-catastrophe.

In the next parable, that of the seed growing of itself, two thoughts

struggle for the mastery. In the first place that expressed by the

words of itself,' the unshaken confidence in the necessary progress of

God's cause, independent of all human activity; on the other hand, the

steps in the development, the sure insight embracing the whole process

of evolution by slow and gradual laws. Of the two the first thought is

to be ascribed to Jesus with greater probability. There is no mention

in this connection of miracles. The parables breathe an atmosphere of

joy, courage, and confident resignation.

The modern mind is only too apt to read its own thoughts of evolution,

immanence, and the universal character of the divine and the good, into

these words. Jesus appears to have placed everything that is

supernatural on one side. But that is just appearance. Under all

circumstances Jesus imagined the kingdom of God to Himself as something

supernatural. It always brings along with it the world of miracles to

which belong the judgment, the new earth, the resurrection of the dead,

and the vision of God. And that is just why Jesus and His disciples

recognize the beginning of the kingdom in the miraculous powers that

issue from Him. The only thing that is new in Jesus point of view is

that He regarded His own work not as preparation but as beginning

(after all, the difference between the two is very slight), and

recognized the dawn of the new age in His deeds. Here we stand once

more in presence of what we have called the enthusiasm of Jesus. There

was a time in the life of Jesus when hope swelled His breast in a quite

unusual manner, when the people seemed to be coming over to Him, when

all the devils yielded to His miraculous powers, when heaven descended

upon earth. "I beheld Satan fall from heaven like lightning," cried

Jesus at that time. "The harvest is great, but the labourers are few."

"Blessed are your eyes to behold what ye behold;--that which prophets

and kings have sought in vain to behold." At that time Jesus still felt

Himself to be in harmony with all the good influences at work amongst

His people. Patriotism and religion were one, and hope ran into vision.

That was the happiest period in His life. It was then that He uttered

the words about the kingdom of God being present here and now.

But the question is whether He retained this enthusiastic belief until

the end. That period of jubilant hope was followed by a season of deep

disenchantment brought about by the recognition of the fact that He and

the people would not agree together in the long run. If the unclean

spirit that has been driven forth can return to the house from which he

has been driven, taking unto himself seven other spirits, then the last

state has become worse than the first. In the end the great miracles

only serve unto the towns in which they have been performed for a

greater condemnation; that surely sounds a great deal sterner than the

answer to the Baptist. Finally, Jesus foresaw destruction for His

people and suffering and death for Himself. But even in the midst of

this painful experience He did not surrender the certainty of His

hopes. At the Last Supper, just before His death, He looked forward to

the meeting once more in the kingdom of God, when He should drink anew

of the fruit of the vine with His disciples. He bequeathed to His

disciples the daily and hourly expectation of the coming of the

kingdom: they were to be prepared every moment. The present generation

should not pass away till all be fulfilled. They that have seen the

works of Jesus shall likewise see the accomplishment thereof. This and

that particular disciple--the later tradition substituted a vague

certain'--shall not taste of death until they behold the kingdom. While

Jesus points so decisively towards the future, the thought of the

present commencement of the kingdom appears to have receded for Him

into the background, but He never expressly abandoned it; and so the

early Church, too, clung fast to it in spite of the Master's death. But

the emphasis is laid on the future. Just as in the parables before

mentioned, our looks were forcibly directed away from the small

beginning to the great end.

And so Jesus Himself made of Christianity the religion of hope. All His

work breathes a spirit of expectation, of longing for the great

invisible, for perfection. The goal of religion has not yet been

reached. It cannot, it may not, be in our possession. During the whole

period of His work on earth, Jesus never wearied of directing the gaze

of His people forwards and upwards, and of balancing the blessedness of

the future against all the suffering of the present. He did that in the

Beatitudes no less than in the parable of poor Lazarus. It was only to

the self-satisfied and contented, to the worldlings, that He had

nothing to offer. We should picture Him entering into rich man's house

and poor man's cottage with the greeting of peace, and then inviting

His listeners in the simplest, most childlike strain to the joys of the

life eternal. If Paul in a later age preaches the religion of longing

in words of enthralling eloquence, he is merely continuing in his own

language the Beatitudes of Jesus. This longing was the best element

even in the Jewish religion, but here the Jewish nationalism--the

Church--was in its way. Jesus had to remove the impediment.

3. The Jews believed that the kingdom was for Israel, and that Israel

should be the ruling people in the kingdom. It is evident that Jesus

shared this belief at first. Not only do isolated sayings of His show

this clearly, but above all the fact that He purposely confined His

message to His own people. Jesus seeks out the publicans and sinners

for this very reason, because they, too, are the children of Abraham.

And therefore His gospel is one of gladness, because it promises His

people in the first instance joy and happiness. But in course of time,

the message of judgment takes the place of the message of gladness, and

the kingdom of God is emptied of all its national connotation.

From the very first the kingdom and the judgment were for Jesus

inseparable. By the side of the kingdom was Gehenna, by the side of the

invitation the threat. So the Sermon on the Mount rightly reproduces

the thoughts of Jesus. The thought that every Jew as such had a right

to the kingdom never entered into Jesus mind. Yet at first the promise

was throughout of a glad and enthusiastic character. But soon one

disappointment follows another, and thus the Galilean ministry comes to

an end. It is to disciples full of enthusiasm indeed, but not of

changed life, that the word is uttered as to the mere saying of Lord,

Lord.' To them also refer the parables of the tares and of the drag-net

in their original form. Jesus cries woe upon the towns of Bethsaida and

Chorazin and Capernaum, because all the miracles have been of no avail.

The whole people He compares now to children at play in the market

place, whom no one can satisfy, neither John nor Jesus; and now to the

unclean and relapsed spirit, whose last state is worse than the first.

The Jews cannot and will not understand the signs of the time: they

live carelessly for the day; they eat and they drink; they marry and

are given in marriage; they buy and they sell--that is their life, and

nothing but that. The terrible warnings which God sends them are all in

vain--the massacre of the Galileans of Jerusalem--the fall of the tower

of Siloam. All in vain is the great sign that Jesus gives them by His

preaching of repentance--how far more successful was Jonah with the men

of Nineveh! In vain, too, is the respite that God still gives them,

that they may repent before the end. Irresistibly the whole nation is

tottering down the road to ruin.

So the glad message of the kingdom finally turns into the announcement

of the doom upon Israel. Jesus ranges Himself on the side of John. In

the last days, just before His death, Jesus announced the fall of the

Jewish Church, and even of the sanctuary, in clear and unmistakable

terms. Not one stone shall remain standing on the other. At the same

time the world of the Gentiles bursts into view and takes Israel's

place. In the parables we are told how, instead of the invited guests

who refuse the invitation, others are called to take their places at

the table which is ready; how the vineyard is let out to other

husbandmen, in the place of those who refuse to pay the fruits thereof

to the lord of the vineyard; and then without a parable: instead of the

children of the kingdom, many shall come from the east and from the

west, and shall sit at meat with the patriarchs in the kingdom of God.

How this admission of the Gentiles shall be brought about Jesus leaves

to His God. He just gives the promise without giving His disciples any

command to go forth as missionaries. The history of the apostolic age

is sufficient proof of this statement.

But was the rejection of Israel on the part of Jesus final? Not only

did Paul believe in the final salvation of Israel; the twelve apostles,

too, encouraged by this hope, were unwearied in their attempts to

convert their fellow-countrymen. In this particular point, however,

much caution must be exercised in the way in which we deal with the

tradition. It may be that even the patriotism of the disciples would no

longer resign itself to accept this terrible conclusion. The early

Christians only retained the parable of the fig-tree to which a season

of grace had been granted, while the parable of the barren fig-tree was

turned into a miracle and so deprived of all its serious meaning. All

indications point to the fact that Jesus broke with the national hope

more uncompromisingly, more decisively than His disciples. For

individuals, even for many such, He had hopes stretching beyond His

death, for that death was itself to be the means of the salvation of

many. But the people as a whole He gave up as lost, obeying therein the

teaching of facts better than the great apostle.

Thus, then, the message of Jesus retains its eschatological character

from first to last. It is the announcement of the end, of the near

approach of the judgment and of the kingdom, and such it remains. It is

only the national element that is removed; the soberness and the glad

joyfulness remain: they are the marks of eternity. Thereby Jesus so

purified and so deepened the Jewish eschatology that it was able to

conquer the world, and that the later change of the earthly expectation

into the heavenly did not affect it at all. That which is great and new

in Jesus is not to be found in the thought of a present and immanent

kingdom of God--thoughts which Jesus Himself soon abandoned, and which

have never been a motive power in history, but in the denationalization

of the Jewish hope.

Here, again, we can trace two divergent tendencies in the early Church,

both of which start from Jesus eschatology. There is first the national

Jewish tendency, fragments of which can be found in the

Apocalypse--even St Paul did not show himself quite free from

it--Israel must be saved, cost what it may. And there is the freer,

broader view which throws a bridge over to Greek thought and finally

transforms the whole Jewish eschatology into a religious hope of the

next world. This latter alone understood the meaning of the work of

Jesus' life.

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CHAPTER VI.

JESUS.--THE CLAIM.

IN the eyes of Jesus and of the Jews, the kingdom is a gift of God. It

is established upon earth without any human intervention, in a

supernatural manner by means of a series of miracles and catastrophes.

Even in the period of His most confident hopefulness Jesus did not

expect it to come about through His work or that of His disciples; it

grows of itself. The thought of hastening the coming of the kingdom by

any efforts on our part is in its origin neither Christian nor Jewish.

It only originated when the idea of the supernatural was abandoned and

the conception of the kingdom of God was entirely transformed. And how

should Jesus and. His disciples be able to bring about the judgment,

the resurrection, the suspension of death, the vision of God? Such

phantastic thoughts are entirely foreign to Jesus. What they have to do

is not to try and hasten the coming of the kingdom, but to prepare

themselves so that they may receive it worthily.

Jesus wished to urge men into this preparation by the call to

repentance. Like the later Christian Church, the Jewish Church had

certain definite regulations for penance--the Teschuba.' If any one had

sinned he could recover God's mercy by a confession of sins accompanied

by sorrow, fasting and self-chastisement. It would seem that the right

of renewed participation in the church services depended upon such acts

of penance. Jesus starts from this point, but He immediately makes the

same change which Luther afterwards repeated in the be ginning of his

theses. In the face of the approaching kingdom of God, He would have

the whole life to be such an act of repentance--no merely external

ecclesiastical penance, but a breach with the former superficial life

and a drawing near to God. For this penitence is to consist in nothing

negative or ascetic, as in the Jewish acts of penance, but simply in

the doing of God's will. He that repents--i.e. he that does God's will

may hope to enter into the kingdom of God. What, then, does Jesus mean

by the will of God'? What does the phrase cover as He uses it?

Two observations are here necessary by way of preliminary to remove any

possible misunderstanding.

Jesus makes a clear distinction between the apostles and the disciples

in the wider sense of the word. There is one little company of men whom

Jesus removes entirely from their life in the world, separating them

from their calling, their family, their possessions, their homes, and

associating them with Himself as His followers in His life of constant

wandering. But these are the future missionaries, whom Jesus makes

partners in His own calling. Later on we shall come across them as the

leaders of the first Christian community. On all the other disciples,

on the brothers and sisters who do God's will, Jesus makes no such

claim. He presupposes, on the contrary, that they will live in the

world amid their usual surroundings. In His words to the twelve, when

He sent them forth to preach, Jesus enumerates the duties of the

missionaries, whereas the Sermon on the Mount sets forth the will of

God for the disciples in the world. If, therefore, the omission of the

maxims of civic and industrial ethics in the preaching of Jesus is

often noted, the reason of this omission is that they were assumed as a

matter of course by Him. As He is not speaking to idlers, He has as

little need to tell His hearers how they are to earn their daily bread

as any preacher of to-day. He gives them religious principles, words of

eternal life, which are to regulate their everyday life in this world,

but which in themselves are useless unless applied to the life in the

world.

The most important sayings of Jesus are grouped together in the Gospels

after a very external fashion. A great variety of Logia are collected

together under one or two principal headings. Above all, in the Sermon

on the Mount, Jesus is the new lawgiver who proclaims a great number of

exalted precepts without any inner connection. But it is only fair to

assume that Jesus possessed a definite ideal, and that all His single

utterances must be understood with reference to that ideal. He looked

at man in the definite relation in which he stands to the three great

realities--himself, his neighbour, and God--and that in the presence of

eternity, of the kingdom, and the judgment. That which does not touch,

or only remotely touches, these three realities is no concern of His.

He has nothing to say about it. Whatever, on the other hand, either

furthers or hinders them, He takes up as the subject of His enquiry and

deter mines according to the ideal.

The end which each man should place before himself is self-mastery and

freedom from the world. It is only when he has attained to this goal

that he can appear at any moment before God, and will not be surprised

by the sudden approach of the day of judgment. Self-mastery is to

extend to the inner life of man--Jesus laid great stress upon this--to

the words, the thoughts, the heart from which they come forth. Hence

the importance of keeping words and thoughts under strict control, of

mastering every evil look and every idle word. The feelings of personal

honour and vengeance must in like manner be suppressed, for they

deprive the soul of its freedom. The disciple is to sit in judgment

upon himself, and strive after sincerity and loyal singleness of heart.

Nor is he to shrink from any hardship or privation when the need

arises. Jesus insists upon the strictest temperance which never rocks

itself to sleep in a fancied security; upon watchfulness and prayer,

and the constant struggle against temptation. Cut off hand and foot,

tear out the eye if they cause thee to offend. It is only by means of

this stern self-discipline that it becomes possible for man to be able

to appear at any moment before God.

Freedom from the world and indifference to its attractions, its riches

and its pleasures, as well as its cares and its sorrows, are a part of

this self-discipline. Hence Jesus passed terribly severe judgment upon

the servants of mammon, more than upon all others. For mammon's aim is

to become master of the soul. He would take it captive and drag it down

so that it forgets the eternal. Therefore he is our chiefest foe, of

whom everyone should beware. Jesus discovers the danger that threatens

from this quarter in a great number of sayings and parables. But He

laid down no universally applicable law of renunciation. He demands

that the soul should be inwardly free from mammon, and should be

prepared for an entire sacrifice of all outward belongings as soon as

God should call for it.

Another great enemy is the family. True, it is a divine institution,

but it binds the heart to the world with a hundred chains, and tames

the conscience and the earnest zeal of the individual. Amongst the

Jews, family affection was the be-all and end-all of life. Jesus utters

words which attack this affection with terrible severity and call for

the severance even of the dearest ties. Let the dead bury their dead.

His own mission is the destruction of that affection which makes a

slave of conscience.

Again, another foe is that anxious care for food and clothing which

imprisons men in a narrow cell whence they have no longer any free

outlook on the eternal tasks and objects of life. Such conduct, says

Jesus, is heathen. Take care, He says, of the great things, and God

will take care of the little things. Neither, however, does He spare

the exact opposite of this anxious life, the superficial life of

routine and custom, the life that most people lead without virtue and

without vice, and that enthralls them. He would not have the individual

be the blind slave of public opinion. Let him, on the contrary,

recognize the critical nature of the times, and the serious earnestness

of his own life, and go forward to meet eternity.

In all these demands, therefore, Jesus' object is one and the same: the

rousing of the conscience in presence of eternity. He gives us no rules

of life, no laws whatever in detail.

With other times come other dangers and other duties. While Jesus rends

family ties asunder, St Paul binds them up and strengthens them, and

rightly so, for the heathen world presented a new situation. The key to

the understanding of Jesus is to keep His aim in view and to recognize

that the way that leads thereto is the awakening of the conscience.

The aim of Jesus stands out in the sharpest contrast to the modern

ideal of culture, the free and full development of the individual

personality such as we associate--whether rightly or wrongly--with the

name of Goethe. We of to-day count sin as a part of our development,

and delight therein if it has made us richer. Jesus demands poverty and

a severe discipline. Better enter into the kingdom of heaven with only

one eye than keep both eyes and be thrown into the fiery pit. This one

saying is surely sufficient. By this contrast to the modern ideal Jesus

approaches very closely to pietism, which at all events has understood

the seriousness of the Gospel in the face of eternity. There is in the

ethics of Jesus a kernel of severity and renunciation, nor is this

unnatural when hell and perdition are realities. But, on the other

hand, Jesus separates Himself from much that is called pietism. He

emphasizes the need of the greatest purity, and He does not burden the

conscience with petty and artificial regulations. It is noteworthy that

He never opposed popular custom. Straightforwardness, uprightness, and

unaffectedness, are to be among the marks of the disciple of Jesus.

As regards duties to one's neighbour Jesus simply formulated His

demands in the words of God already contained in the Old Testament,

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But the old commandment

receives a new and exceedingly rich application at the hands of Jesus:

it is flooded by a mighty stream of enthusiastic love which bursts the

national boundaries and spreads over, to the benefit of mankind.

Love is to govern all the relations of the individual to his

surroundings. To the poor and needy it is to appear as liberality, a

royal bounteous munificence free from all solicitude. As we ourselves

receive all our good gifts from God, so the giving of them in our turn

is to be a matter of course to us. Give to those that ask of thee.

Blessed are the merciful. I must be ready to pardon the brother that

wrongs me and that breaks the peace, without setting any limits or

imposing any conditions, even till seventy times seven. We ourselves

only live through God's pardoning love. Were it not for this love we

must all of us needs perish, even the holiest of men. God's pardon is

only limited by man's inability to forgive. To our friend and companion

we must show humility and readiness to help and to serve, and to take

the lower place even if we are the greater. He that will be great, let

him make himself small and of no reputation. Jesus, Himself, the

greatest, is the first to serve. Finally, to our enemies and to those

that oppress us, we must show love, even so far as to pray for our

enemies and to be the first to give way. There is something petty in

bearing spite and ill-will. Let the disciple strive after God's

magnanimity, the love that embraces bad as well as good.

In each one of these relations Jesus demands love as something rich,

boundless, and extraordinary. All that is petty, timorous, and

calculating is to be banished far away. Love is to be revealed as a

sovereign power that no external law can resist. Yet He is not even

aiming herein at any extraordinary actions or exceptional works, but

just at that love which can be realized in the ordinary intercourse of

every day. The sovereign power of love is a thing to be experienced in

the simple everyday relations of men.

This demand for an all-prevailing love appears also to form the basis

of the need that we feel in modern times for the reform of society, but

it is something entirely different. Jesus did nothing for society as a

whole. He did not want to reform it. If we look into them closely, His

demands are unpractical for any form of society. No social organization

can ever dispense with law, without falling into a state of anarchy.

Boundless generosity would imply the abolition of property; boundless

forgiveness, the abolition of all punishment; boundless humility, the

abolition of every idea of honour and of order. Even in the oldest

Christian communities that set up some such ideal, the claims of

reality soon made themselves felt again and the limits of the possible

were restored once more. But Jesus entirely ignores the question

whether His demands suit society or not. And that not merely because it

was impossible for Him to think of any reform of society while the end

of the world was so near at hand, but above all because it was the

individual and his inner life that was His aim and object. Enmity,

anger, hatred, jealousy, implacability, are ungodly and wicked. No one

can appear before God with them. On the other hand, love is that which

is truly Godlike. It ennobles and elevates one's own soul and helps

one's brother to draw nearer to God. Love, that is, not for the sake of

the consequent effects upon society, but because it alone deserves

love.

This, too, is the reason why Jesus entirely neglects social ethics in

His demand upon men. There is at first sight something paradoxical in

the fact that the genius of love showed no interest in the out ward

forms of human society. The state is, of course, out of the question,

being the rule of a foreign power. Jesus saw therein chiefly the love

of rule and dominion on the part of the great of the earth. His

disciples should look upon politics as a deterrent example. But even

into the ethics of family life Jesus does not enter further than to

proclaim the indissolubility of the marriage tie in opposition to the

practice of divorce for frivolous reasons. In so doing He sets up an

ideal for the individual with out further troubling Himself how it can

be maintained in this present evil world. He said nothing as to the

relation of master and servant. He even showed no desire to remove

poverty out of the world: "The poor ye have always with you." The

reform of the laws of the land is a matter of complete indifference to

Him; in His parables He reckons with existent injustice as with

something that must needs be in this world. There is a characteristic

little story, too, of a man who asked Jesus to settle a dispute as to

an inheritance and receives the answer, "Who made Me to be a judge over

you?" At the present day every clergyman has to pay far more attention

to such questions than Jesus ever did. But if we rightly look upon

these matters as coming within the scope of Christian love, we are not

for all that to distort the picture of Jesus into that of a social

reformer. His work was to awaken the individual to love, and to make

the individual realize his responsibility towards his brother. And thus

Jesus did a work which, beyond all others, was for eternity, and still

to-day He calls us back from the distracting maze of programmes and

panaceas for the reform of the world to the reform of our own selves,

which is the thing that is chiefly needed.

Lastly, we come to the question, What is Jesus demand upon man as

regards his duty towards God? There are exceedingly few sayings in the

Gospels which refer to the direct relation of man to God. This

observation leads us straight to the centre of the question. Jesus is

naturally far removed from every kind of speculation as to God, simply

because He is of a Semitic race. In spite of the apparent exception in

the case of Spinoza, the men of that race have had to forego indulgence

in the speculative flights of the imagination. Neither, however, is

Jesus a mystic, nor does He claim of anyone a mystic absorption in God.

There is not even the slightest suggestion of such a thing. Each one of

the petitions of the Lord's Prayer deals with a single concrete

blessing. It never rises into that sphere where world and time and

space are for gotten. Never in any one of His demands does Jesus leave

the circle of the active daily life as it lies spread out before

eternity. He demands no life with God alone, by the side of one's work

and intercourse with one's neighbour. Hence it is that the gnostics

already found nothing very congenial in the Gospel. Everything with God

and under God, but nothing in God alone. And a proof of this is that

even the kingdom of God, towards which the soul is to uplift itself in

longing, is no mystic heaven, but something concrete, a social

organization. The watchword God and the soul--the soul and its God--may

apply to St Augustine; it does not apply to Jesus.

But the ordinary everyday life is to be lived under the influence of

the principles of self-mastery and love with the constant upward look

to God, in fear and in confidence, in faith and in longing. Jesus laid

the very greatest emphasis on the fear of God, for our Father is the

Lord of heaven and earth and the judge of every evil word, who can

condemn body and soul to hell. In forbidding men to judge; in bidding

them have no fear of men; in His parable of the talents, Jesus reveals

a fear of God such as no Old Testament saint expressed more strongly.

The fear of God is always the foundation on which those features of the

Divine character, which inspire confidence and trust as to a friend,

are built up. Where there is no fear, there Jesus' faith in God exists

not. And yet Jesus brought the love of God home to His disciples with

the greatest heartiness and simplicity. He teaches them to pray to Him

just as children to a father, bringing to Him definite wishes in simple

and earnest tones, full of confidence, feeling sure that they will be

heard. They are to cast all their cares upon Him and to trust Him that

watches over them more than over the flowers of the field or the fowls

of heaven. They are to believe Him--that is, they are to endure all

difficulties as children under His protection, and that bravely. So

shall they (even in the present, in the midst of trouble and distress)

make trial of God's love, and soon He shall grant them the attainment

of the object of their desires--the kingdom of God. Hoping and

possessing are inseparably connected. The simple belief in Providence

does not stand by itself alone, but draws its greatest strength from

the sure expectation of the glorious future that awaits it.

However certain it is that the difficulty of the great demand which

Jesus made was substantially lessened by the limitation of His outlook

on the world, of which this earth and Israel were the centre, and by

the boundless belief in the miraculous, it would still be a mistake to

exaggerate the distance which separates Him from us. Even to His

disciples it seemed very strange that Jesus was able to sleep in the

midst of the storm. In fact, they and others with whom Jesus had to do,

constantly reflect our own weak faith. When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane

He knew full well that His enemies were plotting His death, and yet He

accepted it as God's cup. The demand of Jesus was therefore hard or

easy, even in His own time, according as it was received. The

difference between the religious and the irreligious man is ever

this--the one thinks more of God, the other of the world. Jesus called

upon His disciples to think so greatly of God that the fate even of the

smallest was embraced by His love and His forethought. Whether they

understood that or not did not matter. Enough if they believed it,

paradoxical as it seemed, and thus made their way as pilgrims through

this world to the kingdom of God.

Such, then, was the will of God which Jesus preached--a life of

righteousness in the three great realities. As often as He sent forth

His glad invitation to enter the kingdom of heaven--whether He were

speaking in the open air or in a crowded room--He brought these simple

conditions home to His hearers. The right conduct of the individual in

the present was of greater importance to Him than the joys of the

future. He aroused the frivolous, softened the hard-hearted, and gave

courage and comfort to the sorrowful. Just as He Himself insisted, with

the greatest possible emphasis, on the simplest of duties, so He would

allow no other standard to be set up either before God or man. On the

judgment day God Himself will measure men by their self-control, their

love and their trust in Him, and men too are to take these for their

criteria. True, the heart is concealed from them--only God's eye can

pierce as far as that--but they have the fullest right to demand deeds

as the fruits of the heart. Goodness must come to the light. If it

shuns the light it is non-existent.

Thus far we have come across no suggestion of Church, sacrament or

dogma. The will of God, as it is fully and completely contained in the

Sermon on the Mount, is no less entirely distinguished from the claims

of the later Church than from the Jewish law, and it ought really to

produce an impression of entire novelty amongst us at the present day.

But towards the end of Jesus' activity on earth, there is a fresh

addition--the claim of the confession of adherence to Jesus. This was

the starting-point of the later development, and so it appears at first

as if Jesus Himself was the cause of that fateful dogmatic after

growth, and burdened the simple and eternal will of God with a minimum

of dogma and ecclesiastical organization.

It is therefore very important to gain a clear idea of the particular

kind of faith that was demanded, and of the circumstances under which

Jesus called for it. Jesus wants no confession in the later

ecclesiastical sense. He did not even insist upon the words "Thou art

the Messiah or the Son of God," but simply on the recognition that God

had sent Him, and that His words were God's words. "He that heareth you

heareth Me, and he that heareth Me heareth Him that sent me." Hence the

frequent connection, "I and My words," "I and the Gospel," and that

just in the passages relating to the confession. This simple

recognition that Jesus was sent by God, was really a matter of course

for all that accepted His message, for the cause and the person were

one. Jesus was His message. More than this He did not ask. He would

have no faith in Himself that in anywise competed with the reverence to

be felt for God. God remains God and Jesus His messenger, through whom

He could speak.

Now it is one of the grandest features in Jesus' character that He only

came forward with this claim for confession after Caesarea Philippi,

i.e. only from the time when danger approached His disciples and

Himself.

He would have set no value upon a confession unattended by danger and

suffering. Such would have come under the category of the mere lip

worship Lord, Lord.' But now that danger approaches, confession becomes

necessary, so that the cause should not perish together with the

person. Jesus does not shrink from laying this readiness to suffer

martyrdom upon each disciple as a positive duty. That is the original

sense of the words self-denial' and carrying one's cross': no ascetic

practices, but suffering in the following of Jesus. In fact to follow'

Jesus means in the Gospels to suffer with and for Him. Jesus' prayer

for those that confess His name shows us how important this new

condition was felt to be. Martyrdom thereby acquires the power

indirectly to atone for sin. But the first demands that Jesus makes

still hold good. No different conception is attached to the doing of

the will of God. It becomes more serious, that is all; it implies

greater sacrifices, since he who sets out to do it, thereby enrols

himself a member of the fellowship of those that suffer with Jesus.

Surely this readiness to face death on the part of men who had cut

themselves off from their families and had refused to obey their

ecclesiastical superiors for Jesus' sake, was something entirely

different from the zeal for creeds of present-day comfortably-situated

and illiberal theologians.

The demand that Jesus makes is something so completely simple and

positive that it can be described in its entirety without any reference

to the law, the Pharisees, or Jewish ethics. Jesus was not one of those

who can criticize the work of others but produce nothing of their own.

Nevertheless we shall realize His work better if we compare it with the

above-mentioned tendencies and forces.

When we examine the relation of Jesus to the Jewish law, we shall do

well to leave on one side the statement in the Sermon on the Mount: "I

am not come to destroy but to fulfil," and simply to look at the facts.

For that statement belongs in its present form to the age after St

Paul, and is intended to formulate the result of the struggles of the

apostolic age possibly already from an early catholic standpoint. One

reason is sufficient to show that it cannot be ascribed to Jesus, for

its form betrays a theologian for whom the question "destruction or

fulfilment of the law" implied a problem to be solved.

For Jesus there was no such question, no question at all regarding the

law in the strict sense of the word, for He was a layman and was in any

case but moderately acquainted with the law,--had perchance never

studied it at all. Hence He always believed Himself to be in agreement

with the law. In the law stood the commandments to love God and one's

neighbour; there stood the decalogue; there, too, stood the words that

one should serve God alone. In the law, again, righteousness and love

and truth were commanded. There was thus sufficient reason for Jesus to

recognize in the law God's will. So He could see the way to everlasting

life directly marked out in the law. "Keep the commandments," He says

in answer to the question as to how salvation is to be obtained. Thus

Jesus found His own demands sanctioned by the sacred book. He even

found support in the law against the decrees of the elders. In

comparison with them it proved itself to be the will of God as yet not

overlaid by human additions. Jesus spent the whole of His life in the

faith that He had the law on His side and that He Himself was its true

interpreter.

At times, it is true, He came to a certain extent into collision here

and there with this or that passage in the law. He could not approve of

the granting of the bill of divorcement, in spite of Moses, who

authorised it. But here there was a simple way out of the difficulty.

It was one law against the other--God in Paradise against Moses on

Sinai. The reason of the contradiction was the consideration which

Moses showed for the hard-heartedness of the people. If the antitheses

of the Sermon on the Mount, "Ye have heard that it hath been said to

them of old time, but I say unto you," are to be ascribed to Jesus

Himself and do not (which is just possible) owe their present form to

the early Church, then He set himself still more frequently against the

letter of the law, namely, whenever He showed that the inner

disposition was what really mattered and so removed narrowness and

imperfection. But all these were exceptions. For Jesus God's will never

contradicted the law.

It was His incomplete knowledge of the law which was in this point the

cause of an entire deception on the part of Jesus. He took from the law

only that which harmonized with His views, and so overlooked the fact

that His opponents, too, had the law on their side, and that with far

greater right. Pharisaism is a product of the religion of the law.

There is an unbroken line of descent from Ezekiel through the code of

the priests to the Talmud. The separation of sacred and profane, the

preference for the ceremonial, the importance attached to that which

was morally indifferent, the spirit of exclusiveness, the national

fanaticism, were all rooted in the law. The law implied the supremacy

of the Jewish idea, the petrification of true religion, deadly enmity

to the prophetic spirit. The law necessitated the existence of the

Scribes, the murderers of Jesus. But all this Jesus concealed from

Himself throughout His life on earth. He separated the human, the

non-Jewish element, from the rest of the law, gave Jewish maxims an

entirely contrary meaning, deepened and combined all that was limited

and transitory. Jesus' attitude to the root principle of the law was

entirely negative. St Paul was right when, in opposition to the

disciples themselves, he called Jesus the end of the law.

Jesus, therefore, stands to the law as He did to the conception of the

Messiah and of the kingdom of God. He employs the old words throughout,

and that bona fide. He thinks that He is their true interpreter, and

discards just that which is characteristic and Jewish from their

contents. And yet in this very self-deception the great essential

feature of His character betrays itself. He would be positive. He would

build up. He would not destroy. The converse of Jesus positive attitude

towards the law is His uncompromising rejection of Pharisaism. It is so

unsparing, so entirely without any exception, that the very name of

Pharisee has become a term of abuse for all ages. Jesus did riot,

however, begin the battle. The Pharisees drove Him into it by

constantly waylaying Him and spying upon Him. Then their vulgar

self-advertisement and their prostitution of piety greatly stirred His

indignation. Finally, the whole tendency seemed to Him nothing but

hypocrisy.

The aim of the Pharisees was to establish a definite ideal of piety

among the people. Jesus sets up His own--which is related to it in all

points as yea to nay--in opposition.

It is not the things without in the world that are clean or unclean, it

is the human heart within. This inner habitation must be set in order

by the sweeping out of evil thoughts.

All that is without belongs to God, and we have power over it. God

takes no special pleasure in works of supererogation such as the

offering of sacrifices, tithes, going on pilgrimages and fasting, but

He looks for the weightier matters in the law, righteousness and truth

and love. Man is to serve Him in his daily life. That alone is the true

divine service.

Man's end is not a sanctity which withdraws itself timidly from this

wicked world, but love. This love goes out in search of them that have

gone astray and have become estranged, for they are our brothers, and

casts down all the barriers that sanctity erects. A Samaritan that

practises love is dearer to God and to man than a priest and a Levite

with all their zeal for holiness. In opposition to the perverted

sanctification of the Sabbath, Jesus says there is no alternative:

either save souls and do good, or do evil and destroy souls.

That was an opposition which went right down to the root of things: it

was a reversal of all values. The demand that Jesus made was certainly

not one whit less exacting than that of the Pharisees. Nay, it was more

severe, for it embraced the whole of life and made every evasion

impossible. Jesus banished sophistry and hypocrisy, and restored

conscience and reality to their rights. He exiled religious self-esteem

and self-conceit, and brought back love and humanity. He set up a

religion of morality as against one of ceremony.

Above all, this struggle reveals the great reforming element in the

demand of Jesus. He will have the sanctification of life in the world,

the sanctification of one's calling, one's everyday life, one's work

within the limits of human society. All the demands that Jesus makes

are set up, not for monks and ascetics, but for men in the world. Here

is the battlefield, here the preparation for eternity. Hereby every

form of pietism is condemned. Conscientiousness, love, trust in

God--these constitute religion.

The relation of Jesus to Jewish ethics as a whole can now be

considered. The result is a surprising one. Jesus eliminated the Jewish

and retained the human. The sum of His commandments is addressed to the

man in the Jew and to man in general. It is true that Jesus does not

declare the principle in so many words, "Gentiles can be saved just as

well as Jews." As a matter of fact His dealings are with Israel alone.

But what sayings He utters are for all the world to hear. Love makes

the Samaritan better pleasing to God and man than the unloving priest

and Levite. The publican who simply and humbly comes into God's

presence receives God's pardon sooner than the boastful Pharisee. The

Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba will be the victors over Israel in the

day of judgment. Even now there are heathen here and there whose great

faith puts the Israelites to shame and makes its way up to God. All

depends upon the doing of the commandments, upon the fruits and upon

nothing else. And here we have the abrogation of the Jewish system of

ethics, of the Jewish Church, nay, of every Church whatever. As soon as

man examines himself in the presence of God and eternity, he recognizes

that everything that is particular and separate is without permanence.

This discovery of the eternal in man was possible for Jesus, because

His aim was not to set up certain detailed laws, but inner principles,

capable of endless application and adaptation. It was only for marriage

that Jesus laid down a definite law, and this indicates the ideal. So

St Paul already understood Jesus' words, for he approves of divorce in

certain definite cases. With this exception Jesus did not legislate on

any particular point. Conscience is by its nature an individual matter.

Jesus awakened it, but left it untrammelled. There is nothing less

cabined and confined than love, nothing more delicate; and trust in God

is of man's inmost nature. In many cases the legal appearance of some

of Jesus' words can be traced to the efforts of the early Church to

codify the Master's sayings. Jesus asked only for such things as are

matters of course, which every man's conscience sanctions, and that is

why He gave no reasons for His demands. Ecclesiastical dogmas need, to

be sure, to be buttressed by arguments; for the understanding of the

Sermon on the Mount they are superfluous.

There remains, however, an apparent contradiction. What is the relation

between the eternal contents of the demand of Jesus and its

eschatological foundation? Jesus commandments were to prepare the way

for the approaching judgment and kingdom of God, their aim was future

blessedness. In the back ground of all lies the alternative of the two

roads, the prospect of heaven or hell. And is this demand to be for

ever valid in spite of this? Not in spite of, but because of this,

Jesus appeared with His eschatological messages--that is to say, with

the announcement that eternity was near at hand. His demand is that man

should prepare to meet eternity, and fit himself to live in it. But he

can only do that if the eternal within him is endowed with power and

with victory. The approach of eternity awakened in Jesus the

recognition of all that is essential, of all that endures in the sight

of God. Jesus was able to lay the foundation of the religion that was

to last for ever, just because He was the prophet of the judgment that

was to come. And even though later on the eschatological drama receded

ever further into the background, and this earth and the present raised

their claims on man ever louder, yet eternity surrounds us even in the

garb of time, and its demands are the same yesterday, to-day, and for

ever.

One man alone, Paul, maintains the demand of Jesus in its sublimity,

and even he not quite uniformly. In the early Church the new law' at

once secures a footing.

Paul's Gentile Church fell in like manner under the sway of the

religion of law. A new Church--the Christian--took the place of the

Jewish, and its claims are mostly the same: external, ceremonial,

legal, and theological. Jesus' words condemn His own Church down to the

present day.

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CHAPTER VII.

JESUS THE REDEEMER.

WHOEVER, refusing to be led astray by words, surveys the short history

of early Christianity, cannot fail to be struck before long by a

curious observation. All high-sounding words such as redemption,

atonement, justification, the new birth, and the receiving of the

spirit, are wanting in the early Gospels, and yet every reader feels

that those that were about Jesus were raised to a state of peculiar

happiness. On the other hand, the greater the frequency of these

theological expressions in the later writings, the further does the

actual fact of redemption, as of something experienced and imparted to

us even to-day, recede into the background. Even St Paul, who himself

was certainly to be counted amongst the redeemed, set up general

theories about redemption, which were more than once contradicted by

experience in his own congregations. Talk, especially theological talk,

about redemption, stands frequently, if not always, in the inverse

ratio to the actual experience thereof.

We must speak of Jesus as Redeemer, because His activity is not

exhausted in the promise that He gave and the demand that He made, nay,

more, in describing these we have not even mentioned that which was

highest and best in the work of Jesus. He did not merely set up a goal

for men and point out the direction thither, but He helped them Himself

on the road. And this in ways so manifold as completely to outdistance

the poverty of the dogmatic conceptions.

In the Gospels, Jesus appears before us first of all as the physician

of men's bodies, as the redeemer of the sick and suffering. However

great the number of miraculous narratives that we set on one side as

exaggerations or inventions of a later age, a nucleus of solid fact

remains with which we have to deal. Jesus possessed a healing power,

strictly limited, it is true, by unbelief, but capable of producing the

very greatest physical and psychical changes wherever He encountered

faith. This power operated especially in the case of mental diseases,

but was by no means confined to them. Now even though here, too, we see

Jesus completely dominated by the conceptions of His time, and in part

even not scorning to make use of its remedies, we can yet feel the

moral grandeur of His character, and the boundless sympathy with every

form of distress through all the outer folds of magic. He is a

wonder-worker, but how infinitely exalted He appears when compared with

any other worker of wonders. In the time of His enthusiasm Jesus

explained this Redemption' as the beginning of the kingdom of God. On

another occasion He places Himself on a line with the Jewish exorcists,

and once again He expresses doubts as to the persistence of this

driving out of demons. Jesus confines Himself strictly within the

limits of miracles of beneficence; every request to perform a miracle

for mere display, as a sign, He refuses with an emphatic no. Towards

the end of His ministry an almost entire cessation of His miraculous

activity is to be noticed. Yet He bequeathed His powers to the apostles

if they made use of His name. The whole of the Redemption' was

naturally of a transitory character. The evangelists assigned so

important a place to it because of its value from an apologetic point

of view. But there is no doubt that this side of Jews' work as Redeemer

was a very great religious consolation to those that experienced it.

And it is an essential feature in the picture of Jesus that hunger,

sickness and suffering moved Him to help scarcely less than mental

trouble and distress.

Closely connected with the healing of the sick is the restitution of

the alienated, the publicans and sinners. The Pharisees outlawed these

people: Jesus loved them. His great compassion for the common people

was especially directed towards this class. And that gained for Him the

names, given in derision and mockery, of "glutton and winebibber,

friend of tax-gatherers and godless people." He ate and He drank with

them; He sought shelter with them. He called one of them out of the

tax-office to be His partner in His work as missionary. One can

scarcely conceive the strange character of this Home Mission work' of

Jesus. For Jesus brought these alienated classes back, not to any

church party, but to God. It is probable, too, that when He preached to

them He spoke little of sin and of repentance, but He entered

sympathetically into their daily life, and He showed them that God was

to be sought, not outside of it, but within it. Then at times He would

call forth such striking decisions as that of Zacchaeus. He Himself

preferred this company to that of the very pious. He felt there a touch

of sincerity and simplicity and humanity, which are only rarely to be

met with amongst religious people.' Jesus did not say that the

publicans and sinners were sick,' but merely that they were in need of

His love. Some of His greatest sayings, perhaps even the parable of the

prodigal son, arose from His defence of His intercourse with them.

His Home Mission' won for the new religion its most valuable adherents,

because they were theologically the least corrupted. But it was

attended by consequences which were Hostile to the Church. For this

love finally embraced even Samaritans and heathen, and leapt the bounds

of any and every ecclesiastical system. As soon as the new Church was

formed, therefore, it again applied the Pharisaic measure to the

publicans and heathen, so in St Matt. xviii. 17, the unrepentant is to

be treated as you would treat a heathen and a tax-gatherer.

Furthermore, Jesus redeemed' His listeners from the theologians, and

that had consequences that reached still further. The Jewish religion

was decaying, above all, because of the fact that instead of the

prophets as mediators between God and man, stood the Scribes, their

exact opposite. As the whole of the religion was founded upon the

sacred book, and this was written in a dead language and stood in need

of explanation, the interpreters of the book came to be looked upon as

the sole revealers of God. Over against them stood the laity, the

"multitude that knew not the law," the unenlightened and immature. A

perverted distinction, for, in the sight of God, it is the learned who

are the laity rather than the others. These Scribes were ingenious, and

had a good memory--other gifts they had none. The people were under the

impression that they laid upon their shoulders a number of grievous

ordinances with which they likewise burdened themselves, and that they

endeavoured to close the kingdom of heaven to those that sought to

enter therein. Jesus deposed the Scribes. He refused to acknowledge

their gift of revelation. They did not know God. The conclusion to be

drawn from this is, however, not that the laity are no longer babes in

spiritual things or that no mediator is any longer necessary--which is

the fancy of a fantastic liberalism--but that He is the one mediator.

No man--no layman even--hath known the Father but the Son, to whom

all--i.e. in this case, all knowledge--hath been committed, and who can

reveal God to whomsoever He will. Thus, then, Jesus brings redemption

as the revealer of God in place of the Scribes. Herewith the old

religion of the prophets has come to life again. God's word is no

longer contained in a book: it is living. He speaks to the world, not

through oracles and wonders, but through Jesus' words. Since, however,

the Son Himself is no theologian, but--in learning--a layman, so God is

by Him revealed to the childlike and simple. Every child can under

stand Jesus. For He brings nothing but what is obvious to every

conscience. He places each single person in the presence of reality and

eternity. So Jesus can call the multitude to Him: "Come unto Me. all ye

that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. My yoke is

easy and My burden is light." His revelation' implies the great

simplification of religion, the emphasizing of the essential, of the

really important. It implies the end of theology. Christianity is in

its essence a layman's religion, for its prophet was Jesus, a layman.

But even the rise of the Pauline theology brought about the great

change, though Paul himself still knew what Jesus meant. As for

Christian dogma with its revelation of a body of doctrine, it is the

veriest caricature of the Gospel. Jesus redeemed the people from the

Scribes, and by the Scribes He was put to death. The two events are

related as cause and effect. The evangelist, St Mark, has seized upon

this connection very admirably when he portrays Jesus as one who did

not preach like the Scribes, but finally comes to His end by them. In

his book the lay character of the Gospel once more finds utterance.

Next to this, and as an immediate consequence of this redemption from

the theologians, comes the redemption from the Jewish Church. It is in

reality .already contained in the fact that the individual who was

aroused by Jesus' call was made dependent simply upon himself and his

own conscience. Wherever men realize their individuality and individual

responsibility, there the authority of the Church ceases. When Jesus

claimed the personal allegiance of His followers, He was taking a step

that was entirely hostile to every ecclesiastical organization and was

aiming directly at separation. Jesus finally demanded of His disciples

that they should place His person above everything else, and should for

His sake be prepared to endure the breach with their people and the

rulers. It would seem that in His last speeches He directly foretold

the conflict with the Jewish monarchy, and demanded of them in this

case the completest freedom and constancy. It was indeed an immense

demand to make of His disciples, laymen of Galilee, brought up to feel

the deepest reverence for Jerusalem, the Temple and the Sanhedrim. But

for all that they did not belie His expectations. Jesus really trained

a company of martyrs, men who did not fear the council, and obeyed God

rather than men. These disciples possessed richly all those virtues

which the Christians, in later times lost in their own Church.

Jesus aim, however, was never merely negative. Side by side with the

separation from the Jewish Church went the foundation of the new

Christian fellowship--a fellowship, not a Church. Why should Jesus have

founded a Church, filled as He was with the expectation of the near

approach of the kingdom, which was to put an end to all human forms?

The great interest felt in the Church is a product of later times, when

the expectation of the kingdom no longer occupied men's minds in the

first instance. In Jesus' teaching there is as yet no mention of any

external organization, nor does He therefore say anything of the

founding of sacraments, the outward signs of membership in the

fellowship. He does not even, in any of His recorded sayings, exhort

the brethren to foster the growth of the fellowship. But nevertheless

He did found a fellowship through Himself and the Apostles. Whoever is

faithful to Him, whoever receives Him and His messengers, whoever keeps

His commandments and professes His cause before men, he belongs as a

matter of course to the company of those that acknowledge the same Lord

and Master. So then Jesus could from time to time speak of His

family'--that is, all the brothers and sisters that do God's will. It

appears also that He said that whoever forsook his home and his family

for His sake should be recompensed a hundredfold, even in this present

time--i.e. in the community of those who were of like mind with

Himself. Jesus set up the keeping of the commandments, the fruits,' as

the criterion by which men's fidelity to His fellowship was to be

judged. By these the sheep were to be distinguished from the wolf, and

the brethren that were to be recognized by these tokens were exhorted

to lay to heart, as their first and foremost duty, the rendering of

mutual service and assistance. In proportion as all these commandments

are conceived of as purely spiritual precepts without any legal

addition, the deeper, the more heartfelt, is the obligation incurred.

Hence, and hence alone, it came about that within so very short a time

after the first dispersion of the disciples, a new fellowship could be

formed, and in this case as an external organization.

The full scope of the redemptive activity of Jesus was only attained in

this fellowship of the disciples, when the new life that was in Him was

transmitted to receptive hearts and minds. All that was peculiarly His

own in His piety and devotion was transplanted and became the germ of

the piety of the new community. All that is rightly called Christianity

is, directly or indirectly, the after effect of the new life in Jesus,

and must be guided by Him. The first striking characteristic of the

piety of Jesus is the hitherto unexampled concentration and

exclusiveness of the religious relation. God was one and all for Him,

and the service of God the sum of His life. There was no distinction

here between Sunday and week-day, between sacred and profane. Eating

and drinking and sleeping, joy and anger, were all under God's eyes. He

combined an entirely open mind towards the whole wealth of existence

that was accessible to Him with a complete subordination of all things

to God. Of all later writings it is perhaps only Luther's "Table Talk"

that reveals a similar combination. A being so completely united with

God always exercises an influence upon his surroundings. Henceforth

religion is placed in the centre of life, and becomes the dominant

power. The enthusiasm of the disciples that found vent a little later

in the speaking with tongues, and in the joy with which they embraced

martyrdom, is a proof of this. These men were really able to offer up

everything to God.

The next characteristic of the piety of Jesus is a combination of

opposites which is quite peculiar to it the union of the blithesomeness

and innocence of childhood with the courage and the serious earnestness

of manhood. This cannot, of course, be imitated in its perfection by

any one, but its effect nevertheless is that the predominance of the

one quality always tends to be mitigated by the joint action of the

other. It is probably impossible for anyone to form a conception of the

childlike gladness of Jesus. His life was passed in sunshine and in

joy, in childlike trust towards God, in glad exultation over Nature and

good men. In the midst of the raging storm on the lake, He can sleep

like the child in its mother's arms; for why should anything hurt Him?

He looks at the birds. They toil not at all, and yet they enjoy

everything so gladly; or He sees them sitting so safely on the edge of

the roof, and no danger threatens them. Then, again, He finds that the

meanest flowers of the field are robed far more beautifully than King

Solomon in all his grandeur. Truly, men might learn some profitable

lessons here. But dearer than all to Him are the little children. He

folds them in His arms, He presses them to His heart. For He feels that

He is amongst those of like nature with Himself. We men should be able

to accept God's love as the child does the fairy tale that is told him.

That is what the words mean: "He that receiveth not the kingdom of God

like a little child cannot enter therein." All moody and

self-tormenting thoughts, all carking cares, everything done under

compulsion, all unnatural excitation of one's feelings, is entirely

alien to Him. He possessed the full freedom and freshness of an

entirely unspoilt and simple and great soul that rested in God's love.

But side by side with this there dwelt in this same soul an intense

earnestness. Eternity was ever present to Him. There was no playing or

dallying, no forgetting of oneself even for a moment. His gaze was

directed straight forwards to the goal. God's thoughts fill His mind at

all times. God's will is to become His. There is a fearful

alternative--a narrow and a broad way. At the one end stands hell,

where the fire is never quenched and the worm never dies. Better enter

into the kingdom of heaven with one eye or with one foot, than descend

to hell whole with all one's limbs. This terrible saying stands side by

side with that of the reception of the kingdom of God like a little

child, only the two together give us a complete picture of Jesus. And

now this strange combination of sharp contrasts originating from Jesus

imparts itself to others, and produces results of which none can

foretell the end.

First of all, there was the certainty of the goal. Men's hopes were

established and assured. For the Jews the end of the world was

something uncertain and mysterious. They spend their time in minute

studies and subtle reckonings as to its coming, and at the same time

snatch at the pleasures of the fleeting moment. Better enjoy something

tangible here than trust to an imaginary happiness yonder. Through

Jesus hope has become an assured certainty, and thereby a power in

men's lives with which the world has to reckon henceforth. Eternity is

no longer a mere thought but actual reality; whether it comes sooner or

later, the goal stands firmly fixed before men's eyes. And that is how

the early Christians were enabled with quiet confidence to support

their disappointment when the parousia did not come as they had

expected. "The kingdom shall still be ours," was their consolation.

In the next place, man's freedom, his power to do the good, was

incomparably strengthened. In all that He says Jesus appeals to the

will, to the power of free choice. He conceives of God's commandments

as entirely capable of fulfilment. He has absolutely no doubt that man

can do a thing; he is merely lacking in will power. Jesus could so

believe and so speak because He Himself freed and strengthened the will

more than any other in the history of the world. His enthusiasm, His

love, and His courage come to be mighty impulses, the originating

causes of all that is good in His disciples. He is able to demand all,

because everything becomes possible through Him. He is really able, as

the legend says, to make Peter walk upon the sea. It is at all times

incredible what a good and holy man can bring about in weak and little

souls. He enlarges the bounds of that which is possible in the domain

of ethics, just as a discoverer in that of physics. Jesus' disciples

were no heroes. His whole intercourse with them up to the denial of

Peter is a proof of that. And yet what a brave company Jesus made of

them--ready to defy the whole world. In the great and everlasting

struggle between the powers of good and evil, which runs through the

whole history of the world, the appearance of Jesus implies the

greatest addition of power on the side of the good, so that because of

Him it is inconceivable that it should ever be conquered.

It was possible for Jesus to strengthen man's will power to this

extent, because He freed him at the same time from the terror of sin.

The Jewish feeling of sin, which was rather the consequence of

misfortune than of moral depth of character, had already become

something morbid, resting upon men's minds like a nightmare. Paul is

its great interpreter. It is true that the most important Jewish prayer

contained the splendid sixth petition--

Forgive us, our Father,

For we have sinned.

Forgive us, O King,

For we have done unrighteously.

Dost thou not forgive and pardon gladly?

Praised be thou, Lord, most merciful,

Thou that dost pardon so greatly.

It was therefore an article in the Jewish creed that was firmly

believed, that God pardoned the Israelites when they prayed to Him. But

what was the use of fine words if the individual had no sense of

personal certainty and was unable to derive thence the power to live a

glad and joyous life? He was weighed down for all that by the feeling

of sin. Jesus routed these wretched and morbid feelings all along the

line. They vanish before His presence like the mist before the sun.

Jesus turned the theory contained in the Jewish prayer into a fact, and

gave to all that were about Him the certainty of pardon and courage and

joy. If He uttered the divine declaration, "Thy sins be forgiven thee,"

to any anxious soul, then all trouble was at an end. As against the

Pharisees He appears as the advocate of the true Father of Sinners, and

in the parable of the prodigal son He proclaims the principle, that

when God pardons, His justice is by no means diminished. But He taught

His disciples just simply to pray to God for forgiveness and to look

upon this as a fundamental law in the family both human and divine.

Jesus has made it perfectly plain that the child of God is separated by

no sin from God's love, as little as the child of an earthly father

from that father's love. He looked into the human heart deeper than

most rabbis, and He read there "no one is good," "ye that are evil." In

the heart dwell evil thoughts, and even if the spirit be willing the

flesh is weak. He that thus makes His way down into the depths is

inaccessible to any easy-going optimism. But Jesus did not suffer

Himself to be driven to despair by this discovery of sin, because He

knows that God's mercy and love are greater than all our sins. If it is

human to sin, then to pardon is divine. Nay, more: man would cease to

be in the right relation to God were he ever to forego his claim upon

the divine pardon. These are bold articles to put in any creed, yet

they are only fraught with danger for those that know not the God of

Jesus. How miserably all those finely constructed theories of sacrifice

and vicarious atonement crumble to pieces before this faith in the love

of God our Father, who so gladly pardons. The one parable of the

prodigal son wipes them all off the slate. Sin and its burden lie far

away from the disciples of Jesus, and still further is the theology of

sin and propitiation.

The depth and the reality of the sense of the peace of God which Jesus

bestows upon His disciples by this glad gospel is proved by their new

relation to the world. Here, too, Jesus brings redemption from all

cares and terrors. Since Jesus treads them under foot, the demons are

no longer powers to be feared. Imagining that they were surrounded at

every step that they took by a whole host of evil spirits, the Jews had

come to find it hard to go forward otherwise than timidly and

anxiously. The world--so it was said repeatedly--had been handed over

by God to the devil, for was he not the prince and god of this world?

Jesus, who had a mistaken belief in the reality of demons, conceived of

His life as a joyous and brave battle against them, and cried aloud to

men: "The world belongs to God, and it is He that giveth us the

victory." Through His own fearlessness He freed His disciples from all

fear of men. He showed them by His own example that fear of men cannot

exist side by side with fear of God, and that he that stands under

God's protection need not be in the least distressed because little men

hate him and oppress him. Even though God should suffer them to be

vanquished here, they will even then rejoice in Him and will die with

these words on their lips, "The kingdom shall still be ours." He

removed all that was painful from the cares caused by poverty and

necessity by helping them to carry God's fatherly love into all that

was dark and difficult. The words, "Be not over anxious," which Jesus

carried with Him from place to place, acquired all their power through

Him who was free from all anxiety, who had nothing and yet was so glad.

He taught them also bravely to win their way through the temptations of

the world. He Himself overcame them by prayer and a brave word. But

above all, Jesus caused men to look upon suffering and even death in a

new light.

By its precipitate judgments the Jewish doctrine of retribution turned

every misfortune into a divine punishment, thereby doubling the

distress. Jesus entirely rejected this doctrine. He shows, on the

contrary, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus that an entirely poor and

abandoned man can be so much happier than a rich man who satisfies his

every desire, because death so often brings with it a reversal of men's

positions, and therefore Jesus says: "Blessed are the poor, the hungry,

the persecuted, for the future is theirs."

More important, however, than all this both for Himself and for His

disciples was His own death and the whole series of events leading up

to it. At first it was a bitter necessity for Him, a divine purpose

coming into collision with the human, which just had to be obeyed. Then

later He began already to see some positive object therein. Some good

end must surely be intended by His death. It must be fraught with

blessing for many among the people who as yet believed not in Him. And

then once more, in the hour of bitterest anguish, when all consolatory

thoughts were like to be driven away again by the rude reality, Jesus

still clung firmly to this. "It is the Father's cup." And thus He began

His great work of recoining the value of things. Through Jesus' death

the disciples were gradually enlightened. The dogma of retribution was

not true. Suffering and death are not methods of punishment, since God

has inflicted them upon His own Son. Thus the Christians were set free

from all the bitterness that the fear of death contains. It is true

that even the first generation of Christians did not rest content with

the teaching of Jesus herein. The thoughts of punishment, retribution,

and expiation, were lodged too firmly in their heads. They must needs

be applied to Jesus in a new form. But nevertheless in the judgment

that they passed upon their own misfortunes we can see that they began

to grasp the new idea--that the cross' comes from God's love--this idea

is the fruit of Jesus' death.

Thus, then, Jesus does, as an actual matter of fact, redeem His

disciples from the influence of all powers hostile to God, and in so

doing transforms the children of a world of vanity that passeth away

into the children of God. For this was ever Jesus' ultimate aim: so to

unite God and man as He was united with God. He never reduced this aim

to a theoretical formula, nor did it ever occur to Him or to those that

accompanied Him, to remove the boundaries that separated the Master'

from His disciples,' yet He admitted His disciples so closely into His

relationship with God that the prayer of both is the same. And for

Jesus and His friends everything in fact centres in prayer. In prayer

man assumes his normal position--God the giver and he the recipient.

Jesus and His disciples prayed with such joy, intensity and certainty

of victory as perchance never before or since in the history of man.

Philosophers may smile at this, because they do not understand it.

Those have ever been the greatest epochs in the history of religion

when the believer trusted God most of all, and therefore, too, received

most from Him. Here the bounds of possibility are enlarged, new forces

are set free, and cause the world to wonder. We are, however, here

concerned with the contents of the Lord's Prayer.' It is not only the

simplest summary of the redemption' which Jesus effects: it constitutes

the bond between Jesus and His disciples. He that can really pray

it--not as a mere formula--has reached that stage beyond which nothing

higher is to be looked for under the present conditions of existence.

Such a one calling upon God as his father is himself His child and in

so far like unto Jesus. When he prays for the coming of God's kingdom

he enters upon the possession of eternity. And finally, by asking for

his daily bread, for forgiveness and protection during the short time

that still remains, he receives the means of his existence, his peace

and the certainty of his salvation from God's hands, and no power in

heaven or on earth can separate him from God. Therewith his redemption

is completed, as far as it is possible upon earth, and the future is

already within his grasp. He that so prays has gained for himself a

share in the divine power and love within the bounds of this earthly

life.

The disciple of Jesus prays this prayer without making any claim upon

his Master's advocacy or mention of His name. Thereby we are clearly

given to understand in what sense Jesus would be the Redeemer, and in

what sense He would not. His calling was to bring God so near to the

men of His time and not to them alone--by His whole manner of life and

personality, to bind them so firmly to God in the presence of eternity,

that they should never more be able to part from Him. Herein He

succeeded so entirely that the thought never occurred to His first

disciples that He was setting Himself by the side of God, or was taking

God's place as the central object of man's devotion.

They prayed to God alone, and they handed down the saying of Jesus that

He, too, was not to be accounted good. And that was the final proof of

their redemption. But through His humility and His truthfulness, and by

His entire subordination to God, Jesus showed more than by all else

that He deserved the name of Redeemer in the fullest sense of the word.

Looked at from a purely historical point of view, the death of Jesus

was the necessary consequence of His revolt against the divine

authority of the Scribes and the propaganda of the Pharisees. After His

capture, however, Jesus was compelled in the presence of the Sanhedrim

to confess Himself Messiah, and thus furnish an ostensible reason for

His conviction. It would seem that the Roman governor accepted this

political pretext. But that was not the real reason of the hostility

and the violent conclusion of the struggle. The spiritual leaders of

the people, and the party that stood in the greatest odour of sanctity,

recognized that a spirit had appeared in Jesus, which was bound to

sweep them away. Finally, the danger came to be so great that only the

immediate removal of Jesus appeared to offer any possibility of safety.

The death of the leader seemed to them to imply as a necessary

consequence the defeat of the cause, the confusion of His adherents,

and the impossibility of belief in an executed criminal. These

calculations appeared to be confirmed by the flight and the dispersal

of the disciples after the capture of Jesus.

Contrary to all expectations, the dispersed disciples began to gather

together again, at first in Galilee and then in Jerusalem. "He is not

dead," they cried in triumphant enthusiasm to the murderers of Jesus;

"He liveth." The reckoning of the Sanhedrists turned out to be at

fault. Their clever calculations proved to be the greatest folly and

impolicy, for faith in the crucified and risen Lord brought about that

which faith in the living Christ had not accomplished: the foundation

of the new Church, the separation from Judaism, the conquest of the

world.

Whence this sudden change? For that the disciples fled in confusion and

consternation is a certain fact. Their answer was: the Lord has

appeared to us, first to Peter, then to the twelve, then to more than

five hundred brethren together, then to James, then to all of the

apostles, last of all to Paul. From these appearances--the first must

have taken place, according to the oldest accounts, in Galilee--they

inferred the facts of the resurrection and of the present life of Jesus

in glory. In the very earliest time, when St Paul obtained this

information from St Peter, they were content with drawing these

conclusions and required no further proofs. The new faith rests upon

the appearances alone.

Our judgment as to these appearances depends upon the credibility which

we attach to St Paul and his informant, and still more upon our

philosophical and religious standpoint, upon our faith.' Purely

scientific considerations cannot decide where the question at stake is

the existence or non-existence of the invisible world, and the

possibility of communicating with spirits. Hence, too, all attempts at

explanation, which rest upon the axiom that our world of phenomena is

the only reality, are merely subjectively persuasive and convincing.

The Christian faith always reckons with the reality of the other world

which is our goal. A Christian, therefore, has no difficulty in

accepting as the ground of his belief in the resurrection, the real

projection of Jesus into this world of sense by means of a vision.

But there is another reason which prevents the historian from resting

content with this supposition even if he approves of it. The mere faith

in these miracles makes the origin of Christianity dependent on a

chance, as though the cause of Jesus had come to nought but for this

story. But in Jesus' person there resided so mighty a power of

redemption, there was so great a certainty of ultimate victory, that it

could not be destroyed by any death however disgraceful. "He was too

great that He should die" (Lagarde)--i.e. the impression that He had

made, the fellowship in which one had lived with Him, these were too

great, too firm, too indestructible. As during the time of His earthly

life He had continuously imparted to His disciples joy, consolation,

courage, and certainty of victory, so after His death He did not cease

to take up again after a short interval of confusion His work as

Saviour of mankind.

Of John the Baptist, too, it was said that he had arisen, and worked

though Jesus. But his sect disappeared in the confused jumble of Jewish

sects. But Jesus was really the Redeemer even after His death, and

instead of His influence decreasing, He now really began to draw all

men unto Himself. Even, therefore, though He may have helped by means

of His appearances to enable His disciples to recover from their

perplexity, the fact that these appearances produced this effect was

the consequence of the earlier impression which death had not been able

to efface. Faith in the resurrection is the fruit of salvation through

Jesus.

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THE EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE LEADERS.

JESUS did not leave His disciples without leaders. During His lifetime

He had organized and trained a compact body, a little company, the

twelve. By participating in His missionary labours they were to

multiply His activity, and when He was not Himself present, they were

to take His place. Upon the twelve He had laid the duty of leading the

same wandering life as His own. He had given them the authority to

preach and to heal which He Himself possessed. He made them sharers in

all His rights. "He that receiveth you receiveth Me; he that receiveth

Me receiveth Him that sent Me." It was the twelve who accompanied Jesus

when He entered Jerusalem, who received His last commands and were

witnesses of His capture.

The first appearance of the risen Master, soon after the first flight

of the disciples, fell to Peter, the captain of this company. The

second was to all the eleven. We know nothing beyond the bare fact of

these appearances; we do not know what words were then heard. The

consequences alone are evident: the assembling of the company in

Galilee, the start for Jerusalem, city of danger and mournful memories,

their appearance there with the glad confession of the Messiah.

Round the nucleus of this little company there gathered the former

disciples as well as the new adherents. The old name, the twelve,' gave

way to the new official designation, the apostles,' though it is

possible that this did not take place before Greek soil was reached.

The chief recommendation of the new name lay in the fact that it could

be transferred to the later missionaries as well, but its original

meaning was strictly limited: "One who had companied with Jesus in His

missionary work, and had been witness of the resurrection."

Nothing can exceed the significance of the apostles in the history of

the development of Christianity. Jesus did not Himself found the

Church. He who shattered the institution of the Jewish Church had no

understanding for such an organization. But the company of the apostles

is His own peculiar creation. He had faith in the power of the word and

in the influence of personality. The call of the companions of His

mission was the result of this faith. In this call He was not uniformly

successful; that is proved by much else besides the one name Judas

Ischariot. But, on the whole, the work that He had begun lasted. The

foundation of the Church, all the work of consolidating the early

community of believers, rests upon the apostles, upon their enthusiasm,

their courage and their endurance. Here, again, the saying is proved

true, that it is men that make history. The belief in the resurrection,

the future foundation-stone of Christianity, arose in the circle of the

twelve, and here alone.

The apostles were animated by a lofty self-consciousness. They felt

themselves to be the representatives of Jesus. They were continuing His

work. As ambassadors for Christ, they were ambassadors for God. The new

office of mediation between God and man was continued by the apostles.

Their manner of life was an extraordinary one, like that of Jesus.

Besides their work as missionaries, the twelve had no calling: for

their sustenance they depended entirely on the hospitality of the

faithful.

But Jesus' miraculous powers likewise continued effective in the

apostles. It came to be universally accepted that an apostle could

prove himself such by signs and wonders. Jesus Himself, so it was said,

had given them power to tread on serpents and scorpions without danger.

As a reward for their faithful services they should sit upon twelve

thrones in the future kingdom and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

In sayings such as these can be traced the glorification of the legend

which dates from the earliest times. The self-consciousness of the

apostles and the veneration of the disciples helped to complete each

other almost from the first. At all events it was counted as an

especial privilege of this early time that the twelve were there to

lead; the twelve in whom Jesus Himself continued to live.

In spite, however, of all their high authority, there was not the

remotest attempt to place the apostles on the same level as Jesus.

Subordination to the Master, resting in the feeling that he owes his

position to Him alone, is the sure sign of an apostle. The apostle is

to give nothing of his own, but only that which Jesus has already

given. He is to create nothing original: he has simply to hand down

that which Jesus has already created. From the very first the apostles

were to be the incarnation of the idea of tradition. However much they

might differ externally from the rabbis, they were to agree with them

in the value they attached to the careful handing down of the sacred

tradition, in the one case the oral law, in the other the words of

Jesus. Not only were the apostles intended to be this thing, they were

this in reality. The messenger is completely lost in the Master. No

single original saying of an apostle has been preserved for us, and yet

this want of all originality does not diminish their authority in the

very slightest; it was looked upon as perfectly natural.

In the Acts they lead a collective life, partly all together, partly

two and two. They are merely types; there is no single person. It is

true that there were differences enough of temperament, education and

culture among them, but, on the whole, they were the representatives of

the cause of Jesus; that, and nothing more.

The clearest proof of this is to be found in the way in which they

conceived of their calling. It was just to hold firmly to the calling

of Jesus. The judgment and the kingdom were near at hand. In spite of

the rejection of Jesus on the part of the Jews, which His death

involved, the duty of the apostles, after their Master's death, was to

preach repentance to these very Jews, to see whether they might not yet

be converted in time. It is true that Jesus Himself had passed judgment

upon the Temple and upon Jerusalem, in words trenchant and

unmistakable. But could it not yet be averted, after all, even in the

last hour, if the Jews should turn and repent? Once before, Isaiah's

disciples had tried to avert in the last hour the terrible doom

prophesied by him over Judah, by the reform of which our book of

Deuteronomy is the witness. The disciples of Jesus made a similar

attempt when they set out upon their missionary labours. Jesus had

broken entirely with Israel: this they could not grasp. They suffered

themselves to be imprisoned, to be ill-treated, to be executed by the

Jewish authorities, and proved thereby that Jesus was to them more than

all else in the world. But for all that, their own beloved nation was

not to be abandoned. And so the picture has a reverse side: foreign

mission work makes scarcely any progress in the hands of the twelve.

They rejoiced whenever news was brought to them that Gentiles had

joined the ranks of the disciples, but they did not go forth

themselves. The Messiah was to meet His own again in Israel. We have a

clear proof of this in the agreement come to at Jerusalem (Gal. ii.).

James, Cephas, John, the pillars of the Church, declare their

determination to remain constant to their mission to the Jews. If this

is true of the leaders, it is certainly true of all the twelve. They

just suffered St Paul's work; they did not further it. Truly there is a

certain grandeur in the way in which these messengers of Jesus, in

spite of all, never wearied of the attempt to win over the very people

that persecuted them, and whose rulers showed them such illfavour. It

was also necessary and salutary that the connection between the old and

the new religion should be maintained until the separation could be

effected without damage. But progress on the line clearly marked out by

Jesus there was none.

By the side of the twelve there early arose an authority of quite a

different kind: the brethren, and the whole family of Jesus. While

Jesus lived they believed not, or at least they doubted. It was only

after His death that they were convinced of their brother's high

calling. He appeared to James. This occurrence immediately secured him

and the whole family a place at the head of the new community. Paul

speaks of James, the brother of the Lord, once side by side with Peter,

another time as a pillar, together with Peter and John, thus making his

authority equal to that of an apostle. But that which secured the

brethren' their prerogative was just this tie of relationship, and not

the call to the work. The veneration felt for Jesus was transferred

quite naturally to His brethren after the flesh, and these again were

nothing loth to share in the honour paid to their great brother. The

apostles and brethren of the Lord almost became rival powers. We can

find traces of a dynasty of Jesus at Jerusalem. After the death of

James a cousin of Jesus is chosen to be his successor, and so it goes

on, to the great detriment of the new community. The free spirit of

Jesus had not descended upon James, nor had he learnt anything from his

experience in life. In him the unnatural reversion to Judaism found its

leader. Those fanatics who so cowed Peter at Antioch that he refused to

eat any longer with the Gentile Christians were "certain that came from

James." Fortunately, however, the first generation of Christians was

spared such struggles for the succession of the Master as are known to

the oldest history of Islam. But while the apostle to the Gentiles

represents the upward progress and expansion of Christianity, we have

in James the drag on the wheel, the reactionary element.

Both together, apostles and brethren, were the authorities on the side

of tradition. By their side the prophets, the representatives of the

new ideas, find a place. This place depended upon special psychical

gifts and upon religious enthusiasm.

The prophets did not present an entirely new feature in contemporary

Jewish life. They had never entirely died out since the age of the

Maccabees. A prophet, John, is Jesus' forerunner. In the story of the

birth of Jesus, prophets and prophetesses find a place. Jesus foretells

the coming of false prophets, and they appear in great numbers in the

period immediately preceding the final insurrection of the Jews. They

were the stormy petrels before the coming of the terrible tempest.

True, it is possible that the arrival of the Christian prophets on the

scene stood in some connection with the first rumblings of that

mysterious political movement. But for all that something new does here

begin, something unknown to the Judaism of that time. Shortly after the

death of Jesus, the pent-up fires of enthusiasm break forth in the

community of believers at Jerusalem. That mysterious movement began

which, on the one hand, spread, all-powerful, like wildfire amongst the

masses, causing the risen Lord to appear to five hundred brethren at

once, transforming high and low, men and women, into inspired beings;

and, on the other hand, caught up single individuals out of their

ordinary every day life and drove them out into special forms of

activity which often lasted a lifetime. The conception which men then

formed of these single individuals--who alone were rightly call

prophets--was that which had been held in all ages. A spirit enters

into man from without, and from him tells forth God's message by

ecstatic "speaking with tongues," by intelligible words or by symbolic

action. His word then counts as the pure word of God. With reference to

the future it is an oracle; with reference to the present, a command.

Both from the Acts of the Apostles and from St Paul's letters, we see

that prophets' are amongst the distinctive marks of this first age of

Christianity. But we learn at the same time that their authority was

secondary. That is to say, that the ultimate authority, the foundation,

was in all cases the tradition of Jesus. This might be supplemented by

the prophetic word, by the spirit, but never transformed. That was a

principle which does all honour to the perception of the guiding minds

of the new religion. For the spirit which spoke out of the mouths of

the prophets was impersonal, vague, and beyond control; all manner of

influences and tendencies there competed with the influence of the

Jesus of history. It was, after all, the religious impulse in its

exclusiveness, for it forced back all other spiritual powers, but at

the same time in its arbitrariness, and often in its moral

indifference. To make the spirit of the prophets the ultimate authority

would have been tantamount to subjecting oneself to the whims and

fancies of men whose religious nature was powerful while their moral

character was immature and undisciplined. It was therefore indeed

fortunate that the word of Jesus, handed down by the apostles, was

accounted higher than the Spirit, that the master of sane sobriety and

temperance kept in check all those waves of exuberant enthusiasm and

unrestricted power. Yet even with this restriction--this subjection to

the apostles--the influence and significance of the prophets were the

greatest that can be conceived. God spoke again. He continued to speak.

Once more there were men of God on earth, directly inspired. He that

laid hands upon them and blasphemed them committed the sin that should

never be forgiven--blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. These prophets are

of no great importance for the development of theology, but the history

of the mighty religious impulse of the earliest age of Christianity

would be unintelligible without them. The spirits of these men are

still quivering with all the gladness, restlessness and enthusiasm of

Jesus.

But the list of the leaders of the oldest time is far from being

complete yet. We come next to the teachers, men likewise filled with

the Spirit,' who, through their spiritual gifts, fathomed the hidden

meaning of Holy Scriptures. They are the representatives of the

Gnosis,' i.e. of the right spiritual understanding of the Revelation of

God. Thus, Christian theology begins with them. Apollos is the first

typical teacher.' A great future awaits them. Furthermore, there are

the mysterious seven deacons. Stephen and Philip belonged to them. They

were all Hellenists, and, as it appears, originally representatives of

the Hellenists in Jerusalem.

Then there were apostles of the second rank, missionaries like

Barnabas, Judas, and Silas, chosen by the Churches and sent forth by

them or by the twelve as their delegates. As time went on and the

twelve died one after the other, these apostles in the wider sense of

the word stepped into their place. Lastly, there were the heads of the

different Churches, called presbyters or bishops. They, too, were

chosen on the ground of spiritual qualifications and by the voice of

the Spirit. But their position, on the whole, was entirely subordinate

to that of the itinerant leaders into whose hands the Spirit placed the

supreme authority over the whole infant Church that was now just coming

into being. These presbyter bishops did not then dream of the position

of dignity to which they were destined later to attain.

Look where you will, there is nowhere a want of leaders; it is rather

the superabundance, the too great variety in the body of officers, that

strikes one. There would appear to be no one man in supreme command, no

one to dominate all these different spiritual forces and carry on the

work of Jesus without hesitation or confusion. There is indeed

something marvellous in the sight--so soon after the death of Jesus--of

this great organized host of able, enthusiastic, and courageous men all

engaged heart and soul in the work of preserving for the world their

Master's in heritance. The cause of Jesus cannot fail.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH.

EVEN in Jesus' lifetime there was a Christian fellowship in the ideal

sense of the word, the number of all those who recognized Him as the

Lord, as their Head, and kept His commandments in their daily life. But

there was no coherence, no organization. These followed only after

Jesus' death, under the impression produced by the appearances and

under the guidance of the apostles. We cannot fix any exact date, but

we may look upon the return of the disciples to Jerusalem in

expectation of the second advent of Jesus in the place where He died as

the decisive occurrence.

The Christian Church is the child of enthusiasm. The less likely we are

to imagine this as we look at the Church to-day, the greater the

importance of reminding ourselves of this fact. The Church originated

in a hero worship--theologians call it Faith the truest and the purest

that has ever been. It united all the worshippers indissolubly together

and created the new forms quite of itself. They were the tokens of the

same love. Jesus Himself and none other was the centre of the new

community, present in the veneration, the love, the enthusiasm, the

faith of His disciples. The watchword of the brethren in its simplest

form was just this: Jesus is the Lord--with Him through life or death

into the kingdom of heaven; without Him we are lost. All the feelings

of love and reverence for the nation, for the family, for friends,

cherished in each individual soul, were now uprooted and transferred to

Jesus and His followers. The saying of Jesus, "He that is not with Me

is against Me," was now fulfilled in all its practical consequences.

The common faith immediately finds utterance in confession. Faith in

Jesus as the Messiah is still in the background during His lifetime.

Jesus forbade His disciples to speak of it. He had asked men to receive

Him simply as sent by God. Now the formal confession "Jesus is the

Messiah" becomes the distinctive mark between friend and foe. This

confession rested at first on the unique impression made by Jesus the

Saviour. It then acquired consistency and certainty by means of the

appearances, and culminated in the hope that He should come again in

glory on the clouds of heaven to inaugurate the Messianic kingdom. For

faith in the Messiah was hope for the future. Jesus had not yet been

Messiah. He had merely been a candidate for the office. Hence they

spoke of the approaching advent of the Messiah--not of His return. Thus

there crept into the confession, through this element of hope,

something that was uncertain and yet certain, an anxiety, a yearning, a

longing. In reality it could only find expression in enthusiasm. A

terrible fact--death--seemed to contradict it. The appearances brought

comfort, but along with it new questions and perplexities. The

expectation of the advent in the immediate future placed men's minds in

a state of perpetual tension. Thus this confession of the Messiah was

no mere theological formula, but the expression of a very disturbed and

stormy frame of mind; and only thus in connection with all that rich

spiritual experience and longing and love and courage did the

confession of belief in Jesus, who lives in spite of His death and

shall come again in glory, create the Church.

Faith is enthusiastic. Those who are enthusiastic for Jesus are ipso

facto friends and brothers. Wherever enthusiasm is genuine, it is

satisfied with a minimum of outward forms. Wherever an extensive

apparatus of forms and ceremonies is counted necessary and holy, there

as a rule enthusiasm has already beaten a retreat. At first enthusiasm

embraces every one in a similar state with open arms. Herein we may

discover the explanation of the fact that the early Church exhibits

rather an enthusiastic than a legal character. All manifestations of

anything extraordinary were reckoned the surest sign of a disciple:

above all else the speaking with tongues. The impression made by the

story of what Jesus did and of His appearances was so great that it

often happened that not only believing disciples but strangers and new

comers who were present fell into an ecstatic condition as they

listened--an indubitable sign that they were brethren, as God had

vouchsafed the Spirit unto them. So great was their joy, their

gladness, that articulate speech formed no adequate expression for the

overflowing enthusiasm. It could only find vent in stammering and in

stuttering and in inexpressible sighs. In accordance with the

psychology of that age these phenomena were immediately ascribed to

supernatural causation. They were in truth simply the expression of a

mystic state of psychical exaltation. The mystical element in religion

had become a living reality. Yet this talking with tongues was never an

isolated phenomenon. The enthusiasm of the disciples found vent in

deeds as well, such deeds as man only accomplishes in extraordinary

times. Through the migration from Galilee to Jerusalem a great number

of the disciples had lost the means of earning their daily bread and

had sunk into poverty. Without the support of their friends in

Jerusalem, especially of some rich men among them, they would have

actually starved. So it came to pass that the richer brethren gave the

poorer so generous a share of their earnings and their possessions that

the legend of the universal communism of the early Church arose in

later times. Many a man in his enthusiasm sold his fields and brought

the money to the apostles at Jerusalem to be divided amongst the poor.

Charity was exhibited on an unbounded scale. Men gave of their own in

so heroic a fashion that the rigid conception of property was actually

shaken, and it was revealed that there lay in the words of Jesus a

power to change the outer forms of life.

All this enthusiasm was crowned by the heroism of the martyrs. There is

an early Christian hymn:

"Let them take our life,

Goods, honour, child and wife:

Let all these go.

Yet is the gain not theirs:

The kingdom still is ours."

These simple fishermen and artizans of Galilee surrendered their all,

even their lives, and with a glad courage, that shrank not from death

itself, set the seal upon their discipleship of Jesus. They translated

Jesus' words into deeds and accounted death for nought. The first

community of believers was welded together by the blood of the martyrs

far more than by the speaking with tongues. But this was all the

organization that existed thus far. He that spoke with tongues of

Jesus, he that for His sake gave all his belongings to the poor and

died for Him, was His disciple; of that there could be no doubt. No

outer sign was necessary.

And yet an outer form did come to be needed for the whole community. In

the first period of its development Christianity existed as a sect

(heresy). The metamorphosis from sect into Church was a very gradual

process. Step by step the Christian sect separated itself from the

Jewish Church. By slow degrees it emerged from its obscurity into

publicity. But it was only in the reign of Constantine that the

transformation was completed. At first it was a sect, and nothing but a

sect. No one thought of leaving the Jewish Church. All shared in the

public worship of the Church and were subject to the public discipline.

But the community lived its own life hidden from the public gaze. The

earliest services of the Christian Church were secret conventicles,

meetings in the house of a friend with closed doors. We need but read

the closing words of the Gospels, or the 15th chapter of the Acts, if

we want proofs of this. Even the missionary work of the apostles was in

part secretly carried on, and Jesus Himself had said, "Whatsoever ye

have spoken in darkness . . . . and that which ye have spoken in the

ear in closets." Secret assemblies then such were the meetings at which

the Spirit was given, at which the prophets prophesied, at which "all

things were in common," and every meal a Supper of the Lord. Punishment

and imprisonment, even death itself, were the inevitable consequences

of any appearance in public. They ventured forth, it is true, again and

again, but again and again they met with stern repression. For the

Scribes in the Sanhedrim aimed at nothing less than the complete

extinction of the sect. It was this policy of coercion which forced the

Christians into the position of revolutionaries both in Church and

State. We Christians of to-day should ever remember that our earliest

forefathers were sectarians, like the Anabaptists in the time of the

Reformation, and that they only managed to exist by constant opposition

to the State Church.

Their life as sectaries imparted a sectarian character to the outer

forms current among the brother hood. Every one free from suspicion

was, it is true, allowed ready access to the meeting-place of the

brethren. But admission to the brotherhood itself was only granted

after the observance of due formalities. This was the place occupied by

baptism. Baptism was no original Christian institution, but was

borrowed from the disciples of John with one addition. By the utterance

of the name of Jesus, a Christian character was imparted to the rite.

We have no tradition as to the use of baptism in the earliest times.

Its meaning is contained in the old expression, "Baptism of repentance

for the forgiveness of sins." It was preceded by a profession of faith,

a confession of sins and prayer to Jesus, then the pure water cleansed

body and soul alike, and when the disciple came forth from the water,

he was accounted pure and a brother.

As yet no instruction preceded baptism. It was not necessary. The

confession of faith in the Messiah was so simple. But as a rule adults

only were baptized. Had not Jesus promised children the kingdom of God

without laying down any further condition? The baptized now shared in

the meals of the brethren. The chief meal was always, or at least

frequently, connected with the repetition of a portion of the account

of the Last Supper. At the same time they would speak of the blessing

of the death of Jesus, and rejoice at the thought of His coming again.

But the baptized were also subject to the strict discipline of the

brethren. Unworthy members were excluded either permanently or for a

time. He especially who was a cause of offence to the little society

was compelled to leave the community. As far as possible the judgment

was to be given without partiality or respect of persons, even the most

import ant members, the hands and the feet' of the society, were to be

put forth. Either the apostles or the prophets or the community as a

whole were to pass the sentence. It was then counted to be passed by

Jesus Himself, for His real presence in every assembly, were it but of

two or three, was firmly believed in by all. Lastly, the apostles,

prophets and teachers, secured a certain amount of connection between

the scattered congregations by their constant journeys from the one to

the other. Wherever they appeared they stood in God's stead. They

conveyed the collections to their right destination, they fostered the

brotherly love both of individuals and of churches for each other, but

they were always reckoned as the servants of the community, not as its

masters.

The foundation of the sect, however, brings about the first great

change in the new religion. It can be traced in a certain increasing

rigidity both without, where it assumes the shape of exclusiveness, and

within, where it becomes legality. Between the brethren and those that

are without, an impassable barrier has been set up by the institution

of baptism and the profession of faith in the Messiah.

The words orthodox' and unorthodox' come to be used as shibboleths, and

take the place of the distinctive mark given by Jesus Himself:--"By

their fruits ye shall judge them." True, it cannot be for gotten that

to do God's will alone leads into God's kingdom. But the opinion very

soon gains ground that the doing of God's will presupposes faith in

Jesus, and is, therefore, only possible in the company of the faithful.

That is the first fatal step away from Jesus towards orthodoxy. Jesus

had by preference taken as His types people like the publican, the

Samaritan, the prodigal son, who were outside the Church. In people

such as these He could trace so much more clearly just the really

important things, humility, love, repentance. But in His sect it

becomes a principle that outside of the brotherhood there is no safety,

and that all good works--even the best done by those without are

worthless, or at most form a step towards the righteousness which can

be reached by the faithful alone.

Enthusiasm and legality would .appear to be contradictories, and yet

the whole history of sects presents them as existing side by side.

Often enthusiasm is but the sign that something new, something

exuberant, would fain free itself from the confinement of narrow forms.

Amongst the brethren the Gospel very soon became a new law. As soon as

the living person Jesus was no longer in their midst, and yet at the

very same time His authority was immensely increased through the

resurrection, necessarily His every word, even His mode of life, came

to be an authoritative standard. So the rules for the missionaries were

gradually laid down after the pattern of Jesus' life, and often they

proved to be fetters for the new circumstances. So, again, the new law

was now formed for the early Christian community out of the most

important of Jesus sayings, and thereby words of temporary application

often received a typical meaning for all generations. The Lord's Supper

was celebrated with a scrupulous frequency, and finally exalted into a

Sacrament founded by Jesus Himself. Perhaps, too, the example of Jesus

legalized the idea of the reception into the Church by baptism. In the

same way faith in the Messiah comes to be claimed as a dogma which must

be believed. It is no longer self-understood. In the long run, faith in

an absent person can only be maintained by legal forms. Thus, then,

this development of the sect implies at the same time a diminution of

the first freshness, freedom, and originality, a gradual increase of

that mere mechanical copying which belongs to the essence of a Church.

The whole frame of mind altered. Mourning their Master, they began to

fast again like the Pharisees and the disciples of John.

And yet this sect, sharply defined against the world, and with the

Gospel for law, was the necessary vessel for the eternal treasure of

redemption in Jesus. This was the first body which the soul of Jesus

took unto itself in order thence to begin the long journey out from

these narrow borders into the wide world. All reverence to the Divine

in this brotherhood. Here within this small compass lies hidden the

life that is destined to give the world comfort and to inspire it with

strength. These rude but strong characters, at enmity with the world,

their expectant gaze turned towards the eternal mansions, are called to

be the conquerors of the world.

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CHAPTER X.

THE OLDEST THEOLOGY.

THE Spirit' did not merely move men to talk with tongues in the early

Church. He did not only kindle the glad ardour of sacrifice, and

inflame the courage of the martyrs--he was likewise the creator of the

oldest theology. New thoughts and pictures, and peculiar frames of

mind, come into being amongst the brethren in contrast with the

unbelieving world. They are felt to be new, and yet they make their way

with an irresistible compulsion; they obtain authority as inspirations

of the Spirit. They originate partly from enthusiastic laymen who by

sudden illumination solve some dark mystery, partly from learned

students of the Old Testament to whom deep insight into passages

hitherto obscure is vouchsafed by the spirit that prevails in the

community. If the formation of the new thoughts is thus guided by the

Spirit, we can still more clearly recognize the Spirit as their

ultimate source by the opposition of the world which lacks the gift of

the same Spirit. Or, to express the same thing in the language of

to-day, only he who shares to some extent in the enthusiasm of the

disciples for Jesus can understand their thoughts about Him.

Now, as the Christian brotherhood was from the very first a lay

brotherhood, their theology was bound to partake very largely of the

lay character. A theology arises in which unbridled fancy and

enthusiastic feelings have a greater share than the clear conceptions

of the understanding, which is founded, not upon learning, at least not

in the first place, which is ready to accept at once moods of the heart

and mysterious echoes from the unconscious as divine revelations, and

above all, takes the miraculous into account at every turn. These

laymen often accept the contrast to the Scribes as their guiding line.

Whenever any very artificial theory is advanced in the Gospels, which

does not appeal to the heart, it is prefaced by the words "The Scribes

. . . . say unto Him." They themselves would by preference be reckoned

among the babes and the foolish to whom God has revealed that which has

remained hidden from the prudent and the wise. This contrast, however,

soon ceases to be as complete as it was at first. In its teachers the

brotherhood acquired a learned element which differed from the rabbis

only by its readiness to enter into the spirit of the sect. The special

service which these teachers rendered to the community was the

unsealing of the treasures of the whole of the Old Testament, which had

otherwise remained a closed book for the laity, even were it only by

reason of the difficulties presented by the language in which it was

written. But they were also the first to borrow from the Jewish

professional theologians, and introduced from thence into the lay

theology--anticipating St Paul herein--all manner of speculations and

mystic doctrines as well as the whole apparatus of legal conceptions.

Between these two elements--the lay and the theological--there were, of

course, many transitional stages, and for this reason alone it would be

impossible to arrive at any certain differentiation.

There were really two different motives at work leading to the

formation of this earliest theology. On the one hand, the personality

of Jesus Himself challenged reflection in the highest degree, almost

more on account of that which lay hidden in the future, than on account

of that which men already knew concerning it. They could not but feel

impelled to examine in every direction and to attempt to understand His

Messiahship, His death and His resurrection, and above all the mystery

of His miraculous personality.

To this inner motive, the impression made by the personality of Jesus,

there was at once added another--the apologetic interest, the

determination of the relation to Judaism. The object was to win Jews

for Jesus, to defend Him against them. In both cases, whether it were

attack or defence, the employment of Jewish words and conceptions,

common to friend and foe alike, was obviously necessary. All the oldest

Christian theology is therefore Jewish in the means which it employs.

The whole of the great impression made by Jesus culminates in the

confession "Jesus is the Messiah." This was likewise the chief point of

contention with the Jews. If the Jews said, "He is not the Messiah

because He died," the Christians replied, "Yes but He is, for He shall

come again." Jesus answer before the Sanhedrim, "Ye shall see the Son

of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming upon the clouds of

heaven," forms the sum total of the earliest Christian apology. The

parousia is the proof that Jesus is Messiah. True, the proof lay in the

uncertain future, but the comforting thought, "Qui vivra verra," helped

to remove all scruples. Hence the centre of gravity of the Christian

faith was transferred to its eschatology.

Through that one word Messiah it came about that the whole figure of

Jesus was placed within the framework of the Jewish picture of the

things to come that lay there ready and to hand. In the latter no

change was made whatever; the only addition was the name of Jesus. This

oldest Christian dogma is nothing but the filling up of a Jewish

outline with a concrete name. First of all, the prophecies of Daniel

are taken for guidance. So Jesus Himself had done. Hence the "Son of

man" becomes in the Gospels the usual self-designation of Jesus. This,

however, is but the starting-point. Soon all the Jewish apocalyptic

theories with their richness of fantasy, claim the person of Jesus for

their own. Contrary to all expectation, He becomes a mighty conqueror,

hastening on a white steed at the head of the heavenly host to

annihilate all God's enemies upon earth. How strangely inappropriate to

Jesus that the "eagles" should be "gathered together" to devour the

dead bodies of the slain! First come the storm-signals of wars and

rumours of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes, signs in the

heavens, and, most terrible of all, in the midst of these tribulations,

Antichrist. In all this domain there is the completest agreement

between Christians and Jews. Rightly could the heathen Celsus make

merry over their petty quarrels as to whether the Messiah was called

Jesus or whether His name was as yet unknown.

The Jewish faith swallowed up the Christian, and in reality it was the

Jews who came forth the conquerors from these disputes. Jesus the

Messiah' is a Jewish idea. It remains such in spite of all the new

meaning which Jesus put into the conception. All that there is

inadequate in it, which He Himself had repressed as far as possible,

recovered the lost ground immediately after His death.

But how can Jesus return as Messiah if He rests in the grave? This

objection is met by the proof of the resurrection. Unfortunately, the

reality of the appearance was convincing to believers only, for it was

only disciples that had seen the risen Lord. The enemies of the faith

might without further ado declare them to be either deceivers or

deceived. The belief in mere visions would never have made any

impression upon Jews. An objective proof must be furnished.

The story of the empty grave was circulated at a very early period with

the object of providing this desideratum. But who had found the grave

empty? Again, it was only disciples, and women too so writes the oldest

evangelist. Was that a sufficient foundation? It was strengthened by

the additional facts that apostles themselves found the grave empty,

and that the women had besides seen the living Jesus close by the

grave. Thereupon the Jews circulated the report that the body had been

stolen. The story of the watch set upon the grave, making such theft

impossible, serves to refute it. And, finally, in order that the

impression of a possible self-deception, or that the visions were of a

mere phantom, should be entirely removed, legends arose of appearances

of a more material kind wherein Jesus eats and drinks and suffers

Himself to be felt, and Himself declares He is no spirit. It is true

that these final stages in Christian apologetics are, in part at least,

only reached late in sub-apostolic times, but it was necessary to

exhibit the whole process in this place in order that it might be seen

how one proof has to support the other, and no single proof is

sufficient by itself. Faith in Jesus living and victorious can never be

forcibly attained by arguments such as these, in great part invented

for the purpose. Strange how blind men have been to this fact! No, this

theology also was Jewish and obsolete.

But the death of Jesus? How was this greatest stumbling-block, this

direct negation of the Messiahship, to be united with the faith? The

oldest theology of the Cross originated in this question. Jesus own

forebodings and His prophecies were appealed to as proving that His

death had been no surprise to Him. Hence the emphasis laid upon the

prophecies of the Passion in our Gospels. But that was but a poor

comfort! Some few scanty indications given by Jesus as to the salvation

to be brought about by His death were taken as a starting-point. It

would seem that Jesus had Himself imagined that His death would

exercise a salutary influence on many of His fellow-countrymen who were

as yet unbelieving. But the actual setting of all these sayings we owe

to the first community of Christians. The picture of the Martyr whose

sufferings exercise a vicarious power and enlist God's mercy for His

people had long formed an essential portion of the Jewish faith. The

fourth book of the Maccabees is the best known document to which to

turn in support of this statement.

This thought is now brought into connection with the sufferings of

Jesus. Then come the theologians who skilfully apply all their

juridical and ceremonial conceptions to the death of Jesus. When St

Paul became a Christian he already met with the formula, "died for our

sins," on the lips of the leaders of the early Church. Now, all this is

again Jewish theology. The real conclusion which the disciples should

have drawn from the death of Jesus, is that even death itself is no

punishment sent by God but a gift of His love. Christian apologetics

working with Jewish conceptions overlaid and concealed this thought, so

full of comfort. Forensic metaphors and ideas of propitiation began the

process which is to transform the mystery of love into an arithmetical

problem.

It was the teachers, too, not the laymen, who tried to explain the

death of Jesus by the Old Testament. They transferred the scheme of

prophecy and of fulfilment to the death of Jesus, and indeed to all the

events of the Gospel history, and so removed by this argument from

prophecy any rock of offence that still perchance remained. Such of

them as spoke Greek preferred to make use of the Septuagint in this

attempt, for this translation often served their ends better than the

original Hebrew. Who ever has bowed in reverence before the great and

original personability of Jesus must look upon this undertaking of the

ancient Christians as almost an insult. What concern in all the world

have prophecies of past centuries with our Jesus? Is it conceivable

that all that was new and free that He brought into the world should be

merely the mechanical result of causes that had existed long ago? The

thing could not be done at all without a forced and artificial system

of interpretation. And even the best analogies would seem to have come

down to us from late times. So we come to the formulae:

Died according to the Scriptures.

Rose on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Born at Bethlehem according to the Scriptures.

But, after all, a great undertaking is connected with what had else

been merely an insupportable extravagance, viz., the conquest of the

Old Testament by Christian ideas. Apparently the interpreters proved

their thesis from the Old Testament. What they really did was to put

their meaning into it. And so it became possible to preserve the

endless treasures of this sacred book.

To laymen, who had not the same intimate acquaintance with the Old

Testament, the whole earthly life of Jesus, forming as it did but the

ante chamber to His reign in heaven, appeared less in the light of

prophecy than in that of the miraculous and supernatural. Did not the

greatest miracle of all, the Resurrection, reflect a halo upon the

Master's earthly life, removing Him from the rest of mankind and

causing the miraculous to appear to be the element of His being?

Miracles were to prove Jesus to be the Messiah; the more miracles and

the greater they are, the more likely that God has destined Him for the

highest honour. One craves for something a little more substantial than

hope in the uncertain future. The miracles of Jesus are the sure pledge

that through Him the kingdom of heaven shall come, and that "He it is

that shall come." Thus the foundation is laid for the strange and

fantastic picture presented to us in the Gospels. St Mark gives us the

first outlines, and even he often approaches very near to the limits of

docetism, and afterwards this tendency knew no bounds. One specially

noticeable feature in the picture is the story of the Transfiguration.

Jesus' most intimate apostles are represented as once in His life

beholding the Master in His Messianic glory and as hearing the divine

confirmation of His claims, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him." We are

expressly told that this story only became known after the

resurrection.

Thus, then, one was at the same time brought to the ultimate question,

What is the foundation for this element of mystery and miracle in the

personality of Jesus? The answers to this question are exceedingly

instructive, although their date is entirely a matter of conjecture.

One thing is evident. Jesus was man and as man Messiah. This firm

conviction could never be abandoned amid Jewish surroundings. With this

presupposition the answer that appealed most convincingly to the early

Church and its enthusiasm was the story of the reception of the Spirit.

Thereby Jesus completely came into line with the Christian prophets,

and, generally speaking, with inspired men. Dating from one certain

moment, the Spirit of God descended upon Him, to dwell in Him and to be

the source of all His miracles. This particular moment was connected

with Jesus baptism, the earliest event known in His life. The Spirit

works in Jesus just as He does in all Christians, only Jesus is the

leader of all inspired men, for He is the Son. Just because of this

connection of ideas this theory seems to be the oldest.

But was not the Messiah David's son? Curiously enough the very passage

of Scripture accepted by the Scribes but rejected by Jesus, is quoted

in confirmation of the Messiahship. St Paul is already familiar with it

as something that needs no proof. The genealogies of our first and

third Gospels must be ascribed to the earliest community. One is almost

inclined to believe that it flattered the family of Jesus to be raised

thus suddenly to the rank of a Davidic and Messianic dynasty. They

certainly did not refuse the honour, as we can see from their

confession to the Emperor Domitian. For us there is something that

almost provokes a smile in this attempt to found the majesty of Jesus

upon a royal genealogy.

The next attempt to explain the mystery of Jesus--the story of the

conception by the Holy Ghost which later won its way to general

acceptation--no longer belongs to the earliest brotherhood. Many of the

Jewish Christians themselves rejected it. But, on the other hand,

Jewish teachers began from very early times to bring the idea of

pre-existence into connection with Jesus. Strictly speaking, the Jewish

theory was contained only in the affirmation that the name of Messiah

lay hidden with God before the creation of the world. Now this name was

Jesus. The new thought was very naturally inferred that Jesus Himself

lay hidden with God from of old. The same goal was reached as soon as

Jesus' words about His being sent by God were taken literally, and the

conclusion was drawn that if God sent Him Jesus must have been with God

before. Although the first three Gospels as yet nowhere give expression

to the pre-existence and the heavenly origin in Jesus own words, these

theories are for all that to be ascribed to a much earlier date than

theirs. The course of history is by no means such that that which is

logically posterior should likewise always appear last in point of

time. There was then a ferment in men's thoughts, a crop unparalleled

for its richness, and one consequence of this was that dissimilar and

even contradictory explanations appeared simultaneously.

Speaking generally, all this theological activity betrays a certain

dilettantism. There is a want of creative power in these early

Christians. They have experienced something altogether abnormal in

Jesus, but in order to express it their own words fail them. So they

turn to the Jewish categories nearest at hand and attempt to confine

the indefinable within these definitions. After all, how very petty are

these first Christian thoughts about Jesus compared with the deeds of

Jesus Himself and His own inner life. The real superiority of the new

religion over the old is rather concealed than expressed by the

earliest Christology.

No one will -blame these early Christians because of their transference

of Jewish ideas to Jesus. The same hero-worship, the same faith which

moved them to speak with tongues and enabled them to face the martyr's

death, likewise impelled them thus to formulate their creed. The great

picture presented by this first Jewish Christology, quaint and

extravagant as it is, is inspired by pure love and enthusiasm.

The theology of the early Christian Church has, however, yet one other

fruit to show--and therein consists its true greatness. It was the

collection and the arrangement of the most important sayings of Jesus,

the handing down of the Gospel itself. It is a mistaken view to look

upon this work as one that was merely receptive. The power to recognize

the essential and to adapt it to the needs of the brethren was also

requisite. The first in the field was the author of the Collection of

Logia, perhaps the Apostle Matthew, who grouped the most important

words of the Master under different headings from a practical point of

view for catechetical purposes. Above all, he brought together the

principal sayings in which God's will is clearly taught to all men by

Jesus--these formed the nucleus of the later Sermon on the Mount. It

began with the gracious promises of the Beatitudes, and ended with the

judgment upon all those who know God's will but do it not. Still to

this day the passage relating to the true standard of judgment

expresses the clear consciousness that the kernel of the Gospel is

contained in this sermon. All depends upon the fruits: and what they

are is just what the whole sermon tells us. Then a second address

brings together the duties of the missionaries. Controversial

collections of Logia are attached to this; the relation of the

Christians to John's disciples, to slanderous fellow-countrymen seeking

for a sign, to Scribes and Pharisees--all this is made clear by words

of Jesus. Finally, light is in like manner thrown upon various aspects

of the Christian life-prayer, the question of riches and of anxious

poverty, the forgiving spirit, hope, and confession of sins. The man

who made this collection had a wonderful grasp of the essential

elements in the message of Jesus. At the same time he gives us the best

picture of the early Church in its greatness. From his writings we can

see what the hope of heaven and expectation of the judgment to come

meant for the life of these Christians. The advent of the kingdom and

of the Lord Himself in the immediate future is the presupposition of

the whole of this Christianity. Then he leads us into the midst of the

actual battle, he shows us the pride of the Christians towards the

disciples of John, their fierce anger against the Pharisees, the

official patterns of piety, their fidelity to their Master even unto

death, stronger even than family affection and the fear of man. But

above all he understands the awful seriousness for the individual of

the claim which Jesus makes. He knows that the sum of the Gospel is

something absolutely simple and practical, but for that very reason

that which decides for heaven or for hell. For all that, however, he

climbs the heights of joy and of childlike confidence. And so he

achieved this result. With out any additions of his own, merely by

selecting the words of everlasting life, he has bequeathed to us a

picture of all that is essential in Christianity which is striking in

its grandeur.

St Mark, the exponent possibly of a Petrine tradition, gives us another

collection of Logia, arranged some what differently, not in the shape

of long addresses, but by way of a narrative. He shows us how this

tradition first attached importance to the occasion and the situation

of each saying, how it inquired into the persons concerned, and then

how groups of related anecdotes came to be formed. St Mark's groups,

too, contain a portion of the theology of the early Christians.

The first of his groups collects words of Jesus in which His power to

forgive sins, His intercourse with publicans, His opposition to

fasting, His lordship over the Sabbath, are all illustrated in contrast

to the Scribes and Pharisees and the disciples of John. The same

heading, "Jesus and the parties," may be placed over the controversies

in Jerusalem with the priests, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the

Scribes, which illustrate Jesus' attitude to the people, to the Roman

government, to the resurrection, to the law and the prophets. A third

controversy sets forth Jesus' attitude to the tradition of the elders.

The enemies, it will seen, are the same as those against whom St

Matthew's Collection of Logia fights. And the same subjects meet us

here as well as there, the kingdom of God, the second advent, the

confession of sins, love of the brethren, and prayer. An especial group

brings together the principal sayings about marriage, children, riches,

self-denial and the duty of serving. It is true that the chief

commandments in which God's will consists are nowhere set forth in

order. The reason for this will be that the Logia Collection had

already obtained so firm a footing. What St Mark's tradition does for

us is partly to complete St Matthew's Logia, partly to bring them home

to us with greater vividness. And yet the picture of the Gospel thus

presented to us is an independent one and has peculiar features of its

own. We see the opponents better before us, we share in the rejoicings

when Jesus answers, concise, full of irony and the confidence of

victory, ever hit their mark full in the centre; we live through the

education to independence and freedom under the guidance of Jesus. St

Mark's authority, the man who handed down to him the groups of stories,

was without doubt a layman who saw in the Scribes the deadly enemies of

Jesus and His cause. It was just his hostile feelings against the

theologians which enabled him to grasp in so masterly a fashion the new

and revolutionary elements in Jesus.

But the treasury of the early Christian brother hood was not yet

exhausted. The first and the third evangelists drew still further

riches from this marvellous store; above all, the numerous parables

which partly in all probability lay before them in written collections.

St Luke especially must have been acquainted with a wonderful tradition

of parables. It is a pity that those who took up arms in defence of the

position that Jesus was the Messiah were but seldom clear as to the

real sources of their strength. They did not perceive that the simple

setting forth of the words of Jesus without any addition or explanation

constitutes the best defence of Christianity, because better than all

titles and legends it sets forth Jesus the man.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE PARTIES AND THE ISSUE OF THE STRUGGLE.

IN one respect the development of the whole of the early Christian

community was from the first reactionary--that is to say, in its far

more positive relation to the Jewish nation. The belief in its in

capacity and rejection by God with which Jesus left the world gave way

to renewed patriotic hopes and renewed loving efforts. For Jesus there

was finally no further doubt as to the certain separation between the

kingdom of God and Israel, but His disciples clung to the old

connection with a desperate tenacity, nor could all the persecution

they had to suffer at the hands of the Jews cool the ardour of this

religious patriotism. Here on this ground, Paul, with his ardent love

for his native land, with his readiness to be banished from God's sight

for His people's sake, stands shoulder to shoulder with the twelve

apostles and with James the brother of the Lord, of whom Hegesippus

relates that he was once found on his knees in the temple praying for

the forgiveness of the sins of his people. Even at the beginning of the

Jewish war, when the apocalyptic leaflet (contained in St Mark xiii.)

was circulated amongst the Christians, they did not believe in the

destruction of the temple, but only that it would be sore oppressed by

Antichrist. It was only the catastrophe of the year 70 that opened the

eyes of the Christians and led to a new judgment as to the Jewish

people. Before the Jewish war this relation of the Christians to the

Jews had no where been felt as a cause of the formation of parties.

Parties had, however, arisen through the relation to the law--though

not at first. Both for Himself and His disciples Jesus had to the very

last clung to the faith that they had the law on their side against the

Pharisees. Nor was this faith in anywise diminished at first in spite

of the self-deception on which it rested. They disputed with the Jews

about questions of Christology, not about the law.

Amongst the brethren the word of Jesus was the ultimate

authority--hence a free and natural life such as Jesus had brought into

the world. There was no return to the ideal of the Pharisees, or to the

asceticism of John the Baptist. All the emphasis was laid upon

conscientiousness, love, the longing for God and trust in Him; but it

was in these very points that they believed they were but faithful to

the law. God's will as it was written in the law was declared in the

words of Jesus. As soon as God's will was grasped in its inner meaning,

becoming the deepest motive of the heart instead of an external

ordinance, every contradiction seemed to be removed. This oldest Jewish

Christianity is therefore to be conceived as entirely anti-Pharisaic,

nay, more, as at bottom not Jewish at all--for how could it otherwise

have bequeathed to us the picture of Jesus such as we have it? Yet at

the same time it was a Christianity filled with the deepest reverence

for the authority of the law.

Here was an inherent contradiction, for the same law was also the

authority for the Pharisaic Scribes. Now, as soon as it was recognized,

the contradiction was bound to lead to the formation of parties

according to the answer which men gave to the question: Should Jesus'

word and the law remain connected or not?

The first missionary journey to the Gentiles afforded the occasion.

Nowhere could any other feeling than that of joy prevail at the thought

that Gentiles were to be admitted into the Church. But what was to be

the condition of this admission? Was it to be Jesus' word or the

ceremonial law? For the Jewish Christians, circumcision, the Sabbath,

the regulations as to food, etc., were such old customs that they were

scarcely any longer felt as burdens, but all the more unendurable were

they for the Gentiles.

Barnabas and Paul simply set aside the law altogether for the Gentiles

who sought admission--the sole condition then demanded being faith in

Jesus. News of the great invitation only reached Jerusalem when it had

already become an accomplished fact. It came through a hostile channel,

being reported by narrow-hearted brethren who were Pharisees in all but

the name. What was now to be done?

Thus early in the history of the young community do we come to the

parting of the ways. True, at first the leaders, James, Peter, and

John, united with Paul and Barnabas and declared the Gentiles to be

free. But it was only now that the difficult question arose: What was

to be the consequence for the Jewish Christians? They themselves were

to remain faithful to the law. Such was the decision given at

Jerusalem. But was mutual intercourse henceforward possible? Could a

Jewish Christianity that remained true to the law, and a Gentile

Christianity that was free from the law, continue side by side in a

brotherly relationship?

The extremes quickly fell asunder. Paul placed Christianity in

opposition to the law, and proclaimed the freedom of the Jewish

Christians in Gentile countries. James and his party completely

identified Christ and the law, and claimed the right to force the

Gentiles to observe the law. In between these two extremes, the

apostles remained in the old position of doubt and uncertainty which

they had taken up at Jerusalem, without any definite principles,

buffeted about by every storm and tempest, ill-fitted for leadership.

Such was the origin of Judaistic Christianity, a reversion to the

Judaistic type in the very heart of the early Christians, occasioned by

the progressive measures taken by St Paul. It was an altogether

reactionary movement. The law was set above Christ, the Jewish idea

maintained in its fanatical narrowness and intolerance. The majority of

these people were sincere enough, to be sure. One does not make a

burden of one's life in mere superficial lightheartedness. But for them

Jesus had come into the world in vain.

This tendency falsified the picture of Jesus by the insertion of many

foreign Judaistic features. To say the very least, it wrongly exalted

the utterances of a moment into the position of universally binding

principles. It was this party which set on foot the mission in

opposition to St Paul which sometimes questioned his authority for

taking up this work at all. In Galatia its emissaries tried to win over

the superstition of the heathen to the side of Jewish ceremonies,

guided by the right instinct that the two were closely related and

common foes of the Gospel. At Corinth they exploited a temporary wave

of ill-feeling on the part of the congregation against their apostle,

and attempted, first of all by mean denunciations, to rob him of the

confidence that was felt in him, and so to have free play for their

proselytizing efforts. The pious zeal of the narrow-minded, the

passions of partizans and the malice of the wicked, here made common

cause and did not shrink from employing even the worst means. But all

this counter-mission ended in an utter want of success, and that for

this reason, without going any further--the immense majority of the

Gentile Christians did not want to become Jews. Even in St Paul's

lifetime the Church, in so far as it spoke Greek, could boast of a

freedom that was securely assured.

It was only in Palestine and the neighbouring districts, where there

had always been a strong Jewish element at the foundation, that this

.Jewish Christianity tenaciously maintained itself, but it was without

any importance whatsoever for the fate of the Church at large. It

retained its sectarian character all the more readily as it had itself

split up into numerous subordinate sects. To these two main currents of

thought in the apostolic age--Judaism (the law for all Christians) and

apostolic Christianity (the law for the Jews)--numerous gnostic

variations akin to Essenism must soon be added. It is only in

connection with the evolution of Islam that they are of any importance

in the history of the world. It was just out of such a Jewish Christian

sect that the faith of Mahomet developed into a world religion. Neither

the political occurrences in the two Jewish wars nor Hadrian's edict

against circumcision inflicted so heavy a blow upon Jewish Christianity

as the circumstance that both Jews and Christians alike rejected this

compromise the former with curse and excommunication, the latter with

the charge of heresy. So it was just put on one side--a proof to the

world that compromises are to be saved by no sacred tradition, that

there is indeed no such thing in history as standing still, but only

progress or regression.

Such was the end of Jewish Christianity. The enthusiasm of the early

days was succeeded by stagnation, decay, and finally dissolution.

Its enthusiasm, as well as all its living fruitful germs, St Paul took

over into his Gentile Church. By his progressive tendencies he drove

the Church at Jerusalem into reactionary courses, and so sealed its

decay and ultimate ruin. He was the disturbing, the exciting element in

the earliest form of Christianity. He pulled down as much as he built

up. He destroyed the peace, the vagueness, the compromises of this

first age, and in so doing he under stood the mind of his Master and

the new mode of government of his Master's God.

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ST PAUL.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS CALL.

JOHN the Baptist came as "more than a prophet," as greatest "among them

that are born of a woman." He set himself against the existing order of

things and roused the whole people. But all that he left behind him was

the ascetic sect of the Baptists which vanished in the chaotic

confusion of different religions. Jesus followed. He grasped and

combined all that was sound, deep, and genuine in the Jewish religion

and rejected all that was morbid and artificial. He brought to His

disciples the redemption and freedom of the children of God. But the

immediate result of His activity--the early Christian

fellowship--remained a mere sect composed of communities of pious Jews

who longed for the Messiah and the kingdom, lived strictly according to

the commandments of Jesus, and loved their own people. Almost exactly

as they lived a few decades after the death of Jesus, Mahomet found

them living centuries later. This Jewish Christianity lived apart from

the main current of the world's history, in watchful expectation of the

last day, and occupied in devotional exercises. The introduction of

Christianity into the history of the world is entirely the work of St

Paul. He is not the founder of the new religion, and he did not wish to

be accounted such. When he called Jesus his Lord and Redeemer he merely

gave expression to actual facts. But it was he who brought Christianity

out of Pales tine and transplanted it among the Greeks and Romans,

chief of all civilized nations. It could no longer now remain a mere

Jewish sect. It had to measure its strength with the religions, the

civilization, and the philosophy of the leading nations in the world's

history. It had to enter into their needs, their language, and their

social intercourse, assuming now a friendly, now a hostile attitude. It

was bound to undergo a radical transformation, not merely of external

form but of innermost essence. For as a simple community of brethren,

believing in the Messiah and obeying the words of Jesus, there was no

hope of its enduring in the midst of the civilization of the world. The

new start is one of such importance that we must distinguish the

pre-Pauline from the post-Pauline Christianity, or, what amounts to the

same thing, the Palestinian sect and the world religion.

But in so doing we are realizing one of history's secrets. History

makes great leaps, reveals deep chasms and yawning abysses, never

advances in a straight line, and thus mocks all a priori theorizing.

Paul never knew Jesus during His lifetime, and nevertheless it was he

who best understood Him. He was one of those Scribes and Pharisees on

whom Jesus called woe, the cause of whose moral and spiritual malady

was just the theory "True religion is the law of the sacred nation that

and nothing else," and now this Scribe destroyed the whole of this

theory, took Jesus away from the sacred nation and brought Him to

mankind.

All this he did, not through calculation nor yet capriciously, but in

the full consciousness that he was called thereto by God. The

consciousness of this call is very evident in all his letters, most of

all in those to the Galatians and in the second to the Corinthians,

where he has to meet the attacks of his adversaries. What a proud and

defiant note is struck in the beginning of the letter to the Galatians:

"Paul, apostle, not by men nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ

and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead," upon which follows

the explanation: "When it pleased God, who separated me from my

mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me,

that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not

with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were

apostles before me, but I went into Arabia." The second epistle to the

Corinthians, the greatest apology of the apostle, would almost have to

be transcribed from beginning to end, so full is it of a divine self-

consciousness which reaches its height in such expressions as these:

2 Cor. iii. 4-6. "And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of

ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God: who also hath made us able

ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit."

2 Cor. iv. 6. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of

darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge

of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

2 Cor. v. 18-20. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to

Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of

reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world

unto Himself, . . . . and hath committed unto us the word of

reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God

did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, that ye be

reconciled to God."

Declarations which attain a similar high level are to be found in 1

Thess. ii., 1 Cor. iv. 9-15, Rom. i. 15, and also in the Epistles to

the Ephesians and Colossians. In all these passages St Paul draws no

distinctions between the general calling of an apostle and the special

calling of a missionary to the heathen, but shows himself prepared to

receive both at once at God's hands: and it was just missionary to the

heathen that God chose him to be.

The lofty expressions "Workers together with God," "Fellow-workers unto

the kingdom of God," come down to us from St Paul. He did not reserve

them for himself alone, but applied them to the other apostles as well;

to none other, however, than these. The same enthusiasm which we

noticed above in the sayings of Jesus concerning the beginning of the

kingdom, can be read in these words. Like Jesus, too, it is God's word

that he is going to declare: no one is to look upon it as man's. Just

as the power of God is contained in the Gospel unto the salvation of

all them that believe, so St Paul feels himself to be the man who

transmits this power to others. He is the necessary link between the

Cross and Resurrection of Jesus and the great mass of humanity.

Employing rather the language of the lawyer, he calls himself a debtor

to barbarians and to Greek, to wise and to foolish; or again, using the

expressions of ritual, a priest of Christ to the heathen in the sacred

service of the Gospel of God. All these high attributes amount to the

same thing in the end: his position as mediator between God, Christ and

man. The twelve apostles likewise looked upon themselves as mediators

between Jesus and the congregations of Christians--i.e. as bearers of

Jesus' word. St Paul, however, went further than this: he sacrificed

his life, devoted his whole being to this work of mediation. He even

went so far as to ascribe to all that he experienced--his sufferings,

as well as the consolation they brought him--a salutary purpose for the

congregations; nor did he shrink from the bold thought of vicarious

suffering. "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that

which is behind in the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for the

Church." He often gives a somewhat different expression to his faith,

saying that he must be offered up as a sacrifice for the congregations.

Thereby his lofty and proud claim to be mediator on God's side is

exchanged for the humble but rich calling of the ministry--servant to

the congregations for Jesus' sake.

The apostle's self-consciousness has in fact limits which it never

exceeds. Christ stands high above him. Indeed the distance between the

Master and His fellow-missionary has already been considerably

increased. Jesus is Lord--Paul is servant; Jesus sinless--Paul sinful

and pardoned. He believes in Jesus Christ and cries to God through His

mediatorship, prays at times to Him. Whereas there is no doubt that

Jesus is already to be counted entirely on God's side, Paul reckons

himself and all his fellow-Christians in the churches among the men in

need of salvation. Nor is he strictly subordinate to Jesus merely as

Christian, but also as apostle. Jesus is Lord over the faith--St Paul

is not. Jesus can lay down commandments. "The Lord says," so runs the

formula of the Christian law. St Paul can only give advice. His words

never have the legal authority of the Master's words. Even as apostle

he has ever to remember that he as well as all other Christians will

have to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ and there receive his

sentence--according to his deserts either praise or else blame and

punishment.

St Paul's likeness to Jesus strikes one at once, and at the same time

the dissimilarity between the two is no less obvious. In the case of

both there is a self-consciousness which goes far beyond all that one

usually meets with; there is the claim to have been chosen by God from

out of the mass of mankind for an especial purpose; in both, again,

there is nothing like fanaticism, but clear recognition of their

limitations, and there is a deep humility before God. And yet the word

mediator' cannot be applied in the same sense to both. Whereas Jesus

maintains that He knows God in an entirely new way--as the Son--Paul

boasts of this knowledge of the glory of God which is reflected in the

face of Jesus. He feels that he is not a creator; he merely transmits

historical facts. God--Christ--Paul, such is the order. He held this

conviction so firmly that he did not forget it for one single moment

during the whole of his life. That great word of his, "if only Christ

be preached," which the captive apostle uttered at Rome in the midst of

all manner of doubtful associates in his missionary labours, is

sufficient proof of this. That was the ground of his energetic

rejection of the thought of a Pauline party--it was something

altogether abhorrent to him. "Has Paul been crucified for you?" "Have

ye been baptized in the name of Paul?" "Whether it be Paul, or Kephas,

or Apollos, all is yours, but ye are Christ's and Christ God's." But if

the question is asked how it comes about that Paul felt the distinction

from Jesus so far more clearly than the apostles, then the answer is

easy to find. He had not eaten and drunk with Jesus, he had not lived

with Him for months. He knows only the risen Lord, that sitteth at the

right hand of God--the heavenly Being. On the other hand, it must not

be forgotten that this heavenly Jesus inspired him with greater courage

and confidence of victory. Thus faithfully serving his heavenly king he

can go forth out into the wide world more securely and under better

protection, overcoming his enemies by land and by sea and winning

victories. The greater the master, the greater the servant.

It was as apostle of this Jesus, sitting on the right hand of God, that

St Paul founded the Gentile congregations, safeguarded their liberties

at Jerusalem, withstood St Peter to the face at Antioch, drove the

Judaizing party from the field, even if they appealed to the authority

of one of the twelve, and dying as martyr left behind him the great

free Gentile Church which had not been before him. He achieved greater

results than all the other apostles, nor was he afraid of saying so

quite plainly. But this great work in its entirety rests upon his faith

in the divine calling which had been vouchsafed him. Without this faith

it is incredible that St Paul would have accomplished a tithe of what

he did. His apostolic self-consciousness is as closely bound up with

his work and his position in the world's history as the Messianic with

the message of Jesus.

Whence came the certainty of the apostolic calling? By far the most

beautiful answer is to be found in the First Epistle to the

Corinthians: "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me if I preach not

the gospel." The calling to go forth as missionary is an inner

compulsion which St Paul cannot at all withstand. As the lion roars, so

he must preach. Thus spake the old prophets. So Jesus might very well

have said. The question, however, as to the origin of this compulsion

must not be avoided. St Paul gives us a clear account. He became at

once Christian and apostle--such is his answer--to the question through

the vision on the road to Damascus. Unlike Jesus, he ever turns back to

this vision as to the call which he received. "Am I not an apostle?

Have I not seen the Lord?" The Lord "appeared to me," just as He

appeared after His death to the twelve. He can tell us the very day and

the hour. From that moment he dates the new life and the new calling.

All at once, without any break, the persecutor became the

missionary--he himself looked upon it with amazement, how his

conversion and his call came about without the slightest human

intervention. "I conferred not with men. I went not to the apostles."

The origin of his apostleship was not tradition but revelation, the one

being regarded as excluding the other.

A contradiction, however, is contained herein which was immediately

noticed by St Paul's contemporaries. The apostleship is the incarnation

of the tradition. The apostle is one who hands down the tradition: he

is one of a company who secure for the Christian community the

connection with the Jesus of history.

Revelation, on the other hand, is the prophet's privilege. He has not

to impart the old message of Jesus, but new words of God, just as they

flow from the fountain source. Either, therefore, St Paul is an apostle

and hands down the tradition, or he is a prophet and declares the

revelation. A combination between the two would only be conceivable if

St Paul had merely received the title of prophet by revelation, but had

been obliged to go to the apostolic tradition for the contents of his

message. Such a combination St Paul refused by not going up to

Jerusalem after his call, but by going forth to preach the Gospel on

his own account. By so doing he afforded his opponents the opportunity

of rightly contesting his title to the apostleship in the hitherto

legitimate sense of the word.

The apostleship that rests upon revelation--such is the great leap that

history takes. Interpret and explain the vision itself as you will, you

must admit the leap. It was not the apostles whom Jesus called while He

lived on earth, to whom He confided the whole of His message--it was

not they who really continued His work, but the great persecutor of the

Christians whom a revelation summons to the leadership. The leap, the

revelation, were necessary if the cause of Jesus was not to stand still

or even retrograde. The new way called for a new man bound by no

tradition. Only a prophet, no ordinary apostle, could utter the word

that should set the stagnant masses in motion. But then he must of

course be an apostle as well, in order to carry his work through to the

end. Such are the conclusions that we can draw, but the thing remains a

mystery after all. The step forward that was then taken in the world's

history rests upon the actual contradiction contained in the

combination of apostle and prophet in one person. And as a matter of

fact, what was there that was not new in this apostle by revelation? If

the beginning of his career was unparalleled, the continuation was

unusual. He avoids all intercourse with the apostles and goes forth

into distant countries. He leaves Israel to its fate and turns to the

Gentiles. He does not place the great provinces that he has just

conquered under the authority of the twelve and the Mother Church of

Jerusalem, but keeps them in full freedom under his own control. When

disputes arise he does not give way to his older companions in one

single point, nor does the former persecutor hesitate to administer an

open rebuke to the Lord's favourite, Peter. New, too, is the Gospel

that he proclaims. Instead of the story of the words and deeds of

Jesus, the message of the crucified and risen Lord alone. True, the

name of Jesus stands in the centre, but is it not another Jesus? And

new, too, is the apostle's mode of life. He foregoes the right of being

supported by his work as missionary and earns his daily bread by the

sweat of his brow. Finally, he can never quite rid himself of the

effects of his education as Rabbi they always cling to him. The apostle

is a prophet; he appeals to revelation and yet at the same time he is a

Scribe. He examines, proves, draws conclusions, and occasionally

silences his opponent with a whole host of startling and surprising

texts. In a word, Paul is the exact opposite of all that had till then

been under stood by the word apostle.'

Hence the necessity and likewise the difficulty of his apology. A very

great many Christians could not grasp the fact that one whose past

record was the worst imaginable, who did not know Jesus and possessed

no authority but that of a vision the invention of which was the

easiest matter conceivable dared place himself by the side of the

twelve whom all men revered, who already were almost accounted as

saints.

Fortunately Paul did not attempt the proof of the truth of his vision.

He needed none himself, and he would in no case have convinced his

adversaries. True, he appealed to it, yet never to it alone. On the

contrary, he marshals a whole row of other reasons of a somewhat varied

character.

First of all he adapts himself to his opponent's mode of thought, to

the high esteem in which they hold the original apostles. It is true he

is the least of the apostles not worthy to be called an apostle,

because he had persecuted the brethren. It was only God's grace that

enabled him to take his place by their side and even to work more than

they. But the twelve and he declare the same Gospel. Have they not

handed down to him the fundamental facts of the death and resurrection,

to be by him transmitted to the new congregations of believers? This

statement does not quite tally with that to the Galatians--"The gospel

which I preach I received not of man." The very same Paul who in the

heat of the argument maintains his entire independence and the

originality of his message, claims to be a bearer of the apostolic

tradition as soon as any one of the fundamental articles of the faith

held in common of all Christians is attacked. Notice the satisfaction

with which he emphasizes his reception by "the pillars" in his account

of the great dispute at Jerusalem: "James and Kephas and John, who

seemed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of

fellowship." In this passage he formally substantiates his claim that

he has been duly received by the twelve. But above all, the collection

for the poor in Jerusalem is intended to prove to everybody, and

especially to the disseminators of slanderous reports, that Paul is no

separatist or sectarian. On the contrary, he is a faithful servant of

the Mother Church of Jerusalem, and now discharges his own debt of

gratitude and that of all his Gentile converts by this readiness to

spend and be spent.

It is, however, to the success of his work that St Paul is able to

appeal still more frankly and proudly. The Churches that have been

founded by him are the seal of his apostleship, his letter of

recommendation known and read of all men. "From Jerusalem and round

about unto Illyricum"--so he writes to the Romans--"I have fully

preached the Gospel of Christ," and that, even where the ground had not

yet been broken, "not where Christ was named."

Such is his glorying as a Christian. There are no vain boasts, no

boundless conceits. On the contrary, he has remained constant, just

within the bounds which God has set him. Have not the twelve apostles,

too, been obliged to confess that God's grace has granted him so great

a measure of success--more than to themselves? As a part of this

outward success he twice reckoned his apostolic signs and wonders as a

proof that he was in nowise inferior to the other apostles. The Acts of

the Apostles give us examples of this activity, which, however

strangely it may strike us, in St Paul especially, just formed a

portion of a missionary's regular inventory. Many of these signs

consisted of cures of sick persons; a still greater number, probably,

were instances of mighty psychical convulsions finding vent in ecstatic

experiences. The Galatians "suffered many things" when God ministered

the Spirit to them and a power worked in their midst. At Corinth the

proof of the possession of the Spirit and of this power inflamed a

fanatic and undisciplined enthusiasm accompanied by the speaking with

tongues, prophesying and healing of the sick. But St Paul was not the

man to rejoice at the sight of such external signs alone. Where no

moral change followed upon them he might very well have been inclined

to see even something Satanic in them. New men--new moral

creatures--such the apostle ever puts forward as the surest proof of

his apostleship. To the Thessalonians he writes: "Ye received my

message not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God,

which effectually worketh also in you that believe." When his opponents

in Corinth asked for a sign as a proof that Christ really spoke in him,

he cries out to the congregation at once in anger and in joy: "Examine

yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves; know ye

not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" He stands firm in

the faith that these Corinthians, to whom so many crimes still cling,

and who are now at variance with their apostle, do still, in spite of

all, show forth the fruits of Christ and are redeemed to a better life

through the apostle, and Jesus that works in him. Here, then, the proof

by external results changes into the self-certainty of faith.

But now the Jews arrived with their whole host of accusations and

slanders. They were past masters as critics and as spies. "Paul," said

they, "was careless and changeable in his decisions; he hypocritically

hushed up the unpleasant consequences of his latitudinarian gospel; he

did not draw his support from the congregations, because he was afraid

to do so; his sufferings and attacks were proof enough that God had

smitten him," and many other statements of a like nature. In short, his

whole mode of life and all his methods were a clear refutation of his

claim to the apostleship. His self-defence is proud and of a grand

simplicity: "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our

conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly

wisdom but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the

world."

And again, in 1 Thess. ii. and 2 Cor. vi. he rises to those powerful,

but never vain descriptions of his activity in which the majesty of his

style reflects in every line the feeling that he is standing at the

height of his task. Such was his refutation of all these calumnies, and

no man before him ever spake thus. But even in these passages, where

the apostle is witness on his own behalf, the greatest emphasis is laid

upon his suffering and privations. Not one of his opponents can come

anywhere near him in this respect. And so, wishing to present all that

he has undergone at one view, St Paul composes the famous enumeration

of his hardships in 2 Cor. xi., where he assumes his mask of a jester

whose boasting the world "suffers gladly." And though he mounts up to

his vision, that other title on which his fame rests, and remains for a

moment in silent contemplation of these holiest mysteries of his life,

yet he descends immediately again to his sufferings: "Most gladly

therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities; for when I am weak

then am I strong." It is as though he himself felt that such visions

after all only form the culminating points of a life for the man that

has himself experienced them, but that all men, even including all his

enemies, must in the end bow down in acknowledgment of the incomparable

height of his suffering in the service of the brethren.

When on some other occasion his right to call himself a minister of

Christ was called in question--probably on account of his not having

known Jesus--he cries out at once in entreaty and as a challenge: "If

any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think

this again, that as he is Christ's so are we Christ's." The halting

sentence expresses the one thing to which he attaches the greatest

importance--respect and toleration for the faithful fellow-worker. He

himself acted in accordance with these opinions when the factions arose

at Corinth and also at Rome. He never wishes to drive others from the

field; he merely wishes to maintain the place for himself which belongs

to him by the side of the others. Even in the very heat of his

self-defence he proclaims the principle that he has been called to be

the servant, not the lord and master, of the congregation, and that he

has to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

And so he gains the victory over all the attacks of his adversaries,

the good and the bad alike, be cause his words and his life, the

visible success and the inner self-mastery, have ever been in the

completest harmony. Called to be an apostle by a revelation in an

apparently illegitimate manner, he brilliantly legitimized himself by

the services which he rendered. And in a fortunate moment the original

apostles, including St James, confirmed this by holding out the right

hand of fellowship, nor could any thing that was set in motion from

Jerusalem in later times affect this position.

We have in reality only reason to be thankful to the Jews. Had it not

been for their denunciations, we should have lost the apostle's proud

and frank apology. The man of God had no reason to fear the light,

since with "unveiled face he reflected, as in a mirror, the glory of

God," for a world that hailed the light with joy.

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CHAPTER XIII.

JESUS BROUGHT TO THE GENTILES.

ST PAUL knew that he was called to be a missionary to the Gentiles.

External circumstances favoured this conviction. He himself was a Jew

of the dispersion, a seasoned traveller accustomed from his earliest

years to the life of the Greek towns. The pride that he took in his

peculiar and independent position must have caused his work amongst the

distant Gentiles to appear especially desirable to him, unhindered as

it would be by the tradition of the early apostles. Next may be

mentioned the opposition of the Jews, which he knew only too well from

his own past. And besides it was advisable for the renegade--such he

appeared to his friends--to depart to a safe distance. Such

circumstances and such considerations no doubt contributed largely to

aid St Paul in forming his decision; but the really decisive cause was

the clearly-felt impulse that urged him to go forth from the very

moment of his call. He was under a necessity--he had to go to the

Gentiles.

A tremendous task was laid upon him, to announce Jesus as the Saviour

of the heathen. Yet the way had been paved--stepping-stones at least

were not entirely wanting. First of all, Paul had a companion,

Barnabas, who gave him the benefit of his riper knowledge and past

experience. In the next place, the separation between Jew and Gentile

was not absolutely complete. Little communities of Jews were scattered

far and wide in all the larger Mediterranean towns; their synagogues

attracted a number of Gentiles who became members of the community in a

variety of ways, or were at least on terms of friendship with it. The

first thing that St Paul did, therefore, was to visit the Jewish houses

and synagogues in order by this means to obtain access to the

proselytes and Gentiles. It was thus possible to take for granted that

many of the Gentiles would be acquainted with the Jewish

presuppositions of the Gospel--especially with the Old Testament. The

entirely Jewish character of St Paul's mission and theology is of

course sufficiently explained by his own Jewish education, but becomes

still more intelligible to us when we remember that the surroundings in

which he worked had already been interpenetrated by Jewish influences.

In spite, however, of this Jewish preparation the attempt to bring

Jesus to the Greeks was something entirely new. How was it to be done?

Several ways might be tried. One had already been attempted: the

preaching of the twelve. It consisted of two simple parts: the promise

and the threat, together with the demand. First the message: The

judgment and the kingdom are close at hand: the Messiah is coming,

Jesus the crucified and risen Lord; He is coming as judge of the world.

Thereby fear and hope are aroused; and then the exhortation: Do God's

will as Jesus taught it, and attach yourself to those who expect Jesus

as their Lord. Why should the Gentiles refuse to give ear to this

simple appeal?

St Paul rejected this method with the exception of the first part, the

announcement of the judgment. It is not that the presuppositions were

too Jewish for him. He never experienced any difficulty in explaining

the conception of the Messiah. But for himself this description of

Christianity as a scheme of a promise and a claim upon conduct was

altogether inadequate. Christianity was entirely a religion of

redemption for him. He knew what that meant--to wish to do God's will

and not to be able to do it. All the weakness, the powerlessness and

perversity of men when left to themselves, had become intelligible to

him through his own failures, and at the same time he had experienced

the rescue from this state, the uplifting power--God's grace. Now, with

such an experience the scheme of salvation put forward by the earlier

missionaries--it was that of Jesus Himself--could never satisfy him.

Jesus the Redeemer, not the lawgiver, that was his watchword. It was a

great piece of good fortune for Christianity. As a mere teacher of true

religion Jesus would only have taken His place in the ranks of the

Greek moral philosophers by the side of Socrates or Pythagoras. As such

He would doubtless have commanded respect and admiration, but never the

faith which gives birth to a religion. Paul saved Christianity from the

fate of stagnation as a school of ethics in the universal Greek

rationalism.

An entirely different method of bringing Jesus to the Greeks was

indicated by the great example of the Jewish-Alexandrine religious

philosophy. Jesus needed but to occupy the position of Moses, as indeed

He did later on. The Jews of Alexandria looked upon religion as a

philosophy, with all its branches--cosmology, psychology, ethics, etc.

But as distinguished from the Greek philosophy, they looked upon their

own as a revealed philosophy resting upon the oracles of the Old

Testament, to which all the wisdom of the Greeks was related either as

borrowed or as a preparatory stage. For they either ascribed to the

Spirit of God only the sacred writings of the Jews, in which case the

Greeks must have stolen from them, or they allowed a certain activity

of the divine reason in the Greek thinkers and poets, but proclaimed at

the same time the superiority of the absolute revelation which had been

granted to Moses.

It is quite possible that the Alexandrine Apollos gave utterance to

similar thoughts about Jesus in his teaching regarding the divine

wisdom,' as his countrymen did about Moses. But such a mixture of

religion and philosophy appeared to St Paul pure perversity. Once more

his own personal experience was the decisive factor in the judgment

which he formed. There had been a time when, as teacher of the law, he

had boasted of the wisdom of his religion, and looked proudly down upon

the blind heathen that were ignorant as children. But the collapse of

his zeal for the law implied at the same time the fall of his pride in

his wisdom. The foolishness of the Cross as opposed to all the wisdom

of the learned, be they Jews or Gentiles, that was his new motto. First

brought low in so wonderful a manner, and then exalted as he had been,

he seemed to see, at least when he began his work, the essence of all

religion in the paradoxical, and rejoiced in the thought that the world

had not recognized God through its wisdom, whilst the foolish and the

lowly had accepted Jesus as their Redeemer, when He had been presented

to them. This, too, was fortunate for early Christianity. Before it had

been drawn into the philosophical evolution of the succeeding age, it

was able to stand forth in all its sovereignty as a religion. All

religion is a paradox. Jesus is not to be counted on the side of the

philosophers. His religion can only be treated as an intellectual

system, to its own loss and damage. The sole reason that arrested its

entire decay was that, thanks to St Paul, it came to the Greeks at the

time of its growth as a power of life, and not as a system of

philosophy. Jesus no lawgiver, no teacher of philosophy--that is the

kernel of Paul's preaching, as it was in later times of the Reformers.

Hereby alone Paul proves himself to be the foremost interpreter of

Jesus, in spite of his deviations from the message of the twelve.

How does Paul preach Jesus the Redeemer to the Greek world?

As for Jesus and the twelve so also for St Paul, the eschatological

message stands in the forefront. The day of judgment is at hand, when

each single individual, whether living or dead, shall have to appear

before God's throne and give an account of all that he has done. Reward

and punishment are meted out by God with perfect justice--to the one

destruction and death: salvation, everlasting life in the kingdom of

God to the other. The expressions which St Paul uses are often

different to those which we meet with in the message of Jesus. The

Jewish conceptions--hell, Paradise, even the kingdom of God--recede

into the background. Instead of judgment Paul always uses the word

wrath'; instead of kingdom of God' he prefers salvation'; and instead

of hell,' death.'

The influence of Jesus is felt in the emphasis that is laid upon the

individual, and in the entire abolition of all the privileges of

Israel. It is individual men and women that appear before God, not

peoples; and moral character is the only issue at stake. As before, an

especially earnest appeal is founded upon the nearness of the

approaching end: it is still time; soon it may be "too late." "The

night is far spent, the day is at hand."

The question may be raised whether St Paul provided sanctions for his

eschatological message to the heathen. Prophecy has at no time been

greatly disturbed to seek for sanctions. Does it not rest upon God's

word, upon the foretelling of His messengers?

The approach of the final catastrophe was a certain fact both for the

apostle and for the Jews, proved out of the Old Testament; and Paul

might reasonably presuppose among all proselytes of the synagogues some

knowledge of the prophecies contained in the Scriptures. Nevertheless

he spared no trouble in trying to give reasons for the positions that

he advanced, and met the Greeks as well as he could on their own

ground. The conceptions of requital after death, of torments for the

wicked, and of rewards for the righteous in the divine blessedness,

were spread far and wide amongst the Greeks by means of Orphic sects

and philosophical schools. When Paul announced to each individual the

near approach of the day of the revelation of the just judgment of God,

and prophesied tribulation and sorrow for all evildoers, and honour,

glory and immortality to all the righteous, he was calling up long

familiar pictures in the minds of his hearers: the only new element was

contained in the message concerning the day on which all should appear

before the judgment-seat of God. The apostle, however, was not content

even with this. He proved how the beginning of the judgment was

revealed even here and now in the moral ruin of the servants of sin.

And in so doing he met the demand of those who required a visible

pledge for this message of a future hope.

Even though the announcement of the judgment thus appeared to the

Greeks as a message that could be grasped at once--in fact, as one with

which they were almost familiar--the preaching of the resurrection was,

it must be admitted, a stone of stumbling to them from the very first.

Many Corinthians looked upon his conception of the restoration of the

earthly body as an utter absurdity. Rather than believe such nonsense

they would abandon the thought of any resurrection whatever. St Paul

finds himself compelled to draw up an elaborate defence of the doctrine

of the resurrection of the dead, which does in fact so far meet the

objections of the Greeks that it removes the chief ground of offence,

the quickening of the old body. In this apology he makes use of the

conceptions of the new spiritual body, while at the same time he routs

his adversaries that deny the resurrection by means of popular

arguments. This is the most instructive point in the whole proceeding.

St Paul is fighting for the old Jewish dogma of the resurrection--which

differs entirely from the Greek hope in immortality; and while doing so

he deprives it of that which constitutes its essence, by surrendering

the belief in the quickening of the mortal body in order thereby to

gain over the Greeks. Whether these concessions met with any success

amongst the Greeks we do not know; at any rate it was only the old

Jewish dogma of the resurrection which gained a permanent footing in

the Churches founded by St Paul. We have, however, a striking instance

in this explanation of an eschatological doctrine of the way in which

the apostle showed his readiness to become a Greek unto the Greeks.

Immediately after delivering his eschatological message St Paul

proceeds to paint the corrupt state of his audience, the full extent of

which has only been realized by the near approach of the judgment day.

Their corruption consists in idolatry and in impurity. Insisting on the

degradation implied by these sins, he thus passes on at the same time

to preach the faith in the one God and to awaken their consciences.

It is especially over the worship of idols that St Paul waxes wroth. He

shows no understanding for any religion but his own. He is just a Jew

counting all Gentiles as fallen away from the true religion. The two

theories which underlie his criticism are both Jewish--the image theory

and the demon theory. Either the heathen are fools because they worship

mere images, things of nought, dumb idols, the works of men's hands

instead of the God that hath no form; or else they are the poor slaves

of demons, bewitched and under a spell, driven to this worship by some

wild and wicked impulse. Nowhere, however, do we find him criticising

any single one of these different rites from what he has himself

observed. He has judged idolatry en bloc before he knows what it is,

and he does not want to know what it is.

The explanation of the monotheistic faith which is to take the place of

this idolatrous worship is likewise based upon Jewish presuppositions,

nor could one have expected St Paul to do otherwise. He could have

found no suitable proof in the person of Jesus. At first the whole of

nature is interpreted as a revelation of God. In His works God has

manifested His power and His divinity to all men. But then St Paul

proceeds to utter that hard saying about the falling away of the

heathen from the original revelation and the uselessness of all that

philosophy attempts to do. The Jews alone have kept God's primary

revelation. It has been preserved and set forth in the sacred

Scriptures. And indeed the Old Testament was the indispensable handbook

to any monotheistic form of belief at a time when all higher knowledge

of the Greek thinkers and poets was precluded. "The wisdom of the

world" meant "foolishness unto God." And yet even a Paul who wishes to

set himself in uncompromising opposition against the whole of the

heathen world, even he cannot escape the influence of Hellenism

entirely. The doctrine of the nous' that can behold the invisible

essence of God in His works, the conception of truth, the definition of

God as the Being of whom, through whom, and in whom all things are,

prove that--albeit, of course, unconsciously--St Paul had submitted to

the purifying influence of Greek speculation upon Jewish thought.

Moral degradation, impurity, was closely connected with this

intellectual corruption--the worship of idols, heathen rites, magic

ceremonies, and sexual excesses were all mutually interdependent. Many

of those who listened to St Paul, especially at Corinth, were the scum

and offscouring of the depraved masses of the great cities where the

apostle taught. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers

of themselves with mankind, thieves, usurers, drunkards, revilers--all

these the apostle enumerates in order to continue "and such were some

of you." Even the blackest pessimism did not paint the situation in too

dark colours. We have more than sufficient documentary evidence for the

prevalence of unnatural vices in this period. St Paul therefore could

say to those to whom he preached that they were a "massa perditionis"

without meeting with much contradiction. But in order to gain a hearing

he appeals at the same time to reason and conscience, which he does not

believe to be quite extinct even in the most bestial of men. Even

without any knowledge of the Old Testament they have the law written in

their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts

the meanwhile excusing or else accusing one another. This recognition

of the divine in man, which goes so far as to acknowledge that there

are uncircumcized heathen that keep the law, is all the more surprising

by the side of the apostle's pessimistic estimate of the Gentile world

as a whole.

But after all, in thus appealing to the conscience St Paul is aiming

merely at the awakening of the feeling of sin, and his optimistic

utterances are made to serve his preaching of the judgment that is to

come. They are of importance for us, because St Paul is here again

clearly borrowing from Greek rationalism through intermediate Jewish

sources. The Jews had taken over from the Stoic popular philosophy the

use of the words "Reason, Conscience, Nature," and at the same time

that conception of men as beings normally endowed with moral faculties

and standards of conduct, of which these words are the expression. All

differences of time and place sink into comparative insignificance by

the side of this the common property of all normally developed moral

human beings in the civilized world. This rationalism is one of the

most important causes of the rapid spread of Christianity, and St Paul

is the first to make use of it.

The introductory stage of St Paul's missionary work was thus formed of

two parts--the eschatological message and the description of the

degradation of the heathen world. We are not yet in the temple of

Christianity itself, but only in the porch. The Jewish element still

almost entirely dominates the preaching of St Paul. His estimates are

still influenced by Jewish prophecy, by the Jewish Scriptures, and by

Jewish views of the Gentiles. But as a matter of fact lines of

communication already lead over to the Greek world, even though they

are mostly derived by St Paul directly from the Jews. His eschatology

reminds the Greeks of nearly related doctrines, and they have more that

is akin to the monotheistic faith than the apostle is ready to believe.

But he himself makes earnest appeals to their moral knowledge.

Christianity and Hellenism begin to amalgamate in the preaching of the

apostle who was in so many ways opposed to everything that was Greek.

St Paul's object in thus bringing the Gentile hearers face to face with

the near approaching judgment, utterly degraded and fallen away from

God as they were, was not to lead them to repentance in the earlier

sense of the word, but to faith. To repent meant, with Jesus, to turn

round and do God's will. Paul does not at all believe that his hearers

can do that. In spite of all the power that a man possesses of forming

moral judgments, it is perfectly useless to appeal to his reason as

long as it is held captive by his senses--by the law of sin in the

flesh. His own experience had shattered his faith in the victorious

power of the will; this, however, was not the only or even the decisive

reason for the new demand for faith. As the whole object of his

missionary labours is to win over the Gentiles for the Christian

Churches, Paul can never grant that any awakening of new moral power

would be possible through man's unaided efforts apart from the Church.

He must, on the contrary, be so entirely broken and powerless that no

other path of safety remains open to him in the whole world but

faith--i.e. entrance into the Christian fellowship. This is the point

where Jesus and His apostle are furthest apart from each other. With

Jesus, courage, joy, and feeling of strength and entire health; as He

Himself does God's will so He bids others do it, without attaching any

ecclesiastical limitation. In Paul's case we have the description of a

weak and heartbroken man who can only gain the victory within the

Church and by supernatural grace. Extreme pessimism and the dogma of

salvation by faith alone and in the Church--"extra ecclesiam nulla

salus"--are correlatives. Jesus knows neither the one nor the other.

Oppressed by the burden of his sin, and trembling at the thought of the

judgment, the convert is brought to Jesus his Redeemer--not the Jesus

of the Gospels who promised the kingdom of God, revealed God's will,

drove out demons and made God and man at one: this Jesus Paul himself

never knew. He would, accordingly, have been obliged to have preached

Him on the authority of the early apostles. But in their message He

appeared as a prophet and a lawgiver, and that did not suit Paul's

purpose. Jesus the crucified alone, or the crucified and risen Son of

God, such is the Redeemer in St Paul's preaching. He gives a short

title to the whole of his message--the "word of the Cross." Now the

Crucifixion and the Resurrection are not really deeds of Jesus, but

experiences in which He played a very passive part. From an external

point of view they are purely historical facts--paradoxes for the

understanding, miracles and mysteries. Paul grants all this. The

statement, Jesus the crucified is our Redeemer, is merely folly for the

understanding; it is only through faith, that makes its way through all

that is repulsive and paradoxical, that it becomes a power unto

salvation.

Christianity, says St Paul to the Corinthians, so clearly that there

can be no possibility of a mistake, Christianity is not a philosophy:

it is no rational system, but it is something historical, irrational

and paradoxical, in which faith either recognizes God's power or else

it does not. True, the facts have their meaning. The Cross implies

God's love, grace, and forgiveness; the Resurrection the beginning of

the life to come; but this meaning itself exists for faith alone. It

is, of course, in any case painful for us to observe how the rich

contents of the life of Christ and, above all, His message--though

this, to be sure, we do meet with later on in the apostle's

preaching--are entirely sacrificed to these two facts. But then what

does this loss signify when we balance it against the immense

simplification and concentration of this preaching of salvation?

Simplification is always the mark of great men. In the preaching of St

Peter and the other twelve all was presented side by side: the promise,

the commandments, the miracles, the cross and the resurrection. It

would have been difficult, especially for Greeks, to distinguish the

redemptive power of Jesus in all this mass of material, whereas Paul

brought them something which was simple and great that roused their

enthusiasm (in spite of all paradox). There must surely be something

divine when One that was crucified was made the object of such love and

such enthusiasm. And when, thereupon, he exclaimed at the end of his

address, "This is the way to salvation on the judgment day--faith in

the crucified Saviour; here is atonement, grace, peace and certain

salvation," then his words found their way home and faith cried Amen.'

Furthermore, this preaching, paradoxical as it was, contained elements

that were extremely congenial to the Greek mind. The crucified Lord is

the Son of God, who according to St Paul descended from heaven. However

incomprehensible the death of a heavenly being must have appeared to

the Greeks in this statement--for the ideas of divinity and of death

are incompatible--they were perfectly familiar with the title Son of

God' and with the idea of the descent of such an one from heaven. And

as in addition to this Jesus' resurrection follows on the third day

after His death and is then in turn succeeded by the Ascension to

heaven, the divine nature is restored to its rights and a portion at

least of the difficulty is removed. St Paul's christology appeared

therefore to the Greeks simply as the revelation of a new myth, like

those with which they were already familiar, only surpassing them all

in grandeur and power. In spite of the apostle's firm belief in the

parousia, the emphasis in his christology is laid so entirely on past

historical events, that for the hearers at any rate it is not the

expected Messiah but the Son of God who has already come down from

heaven, that becomes the centre of their faith. But the real

stumbling-block still remained--Christ's death. St Paul attempted to

familiarize the Greeks with the idea by means of the conception of

sacrifice. However Jewish his methods might be, his arguments after all

contained elements common to the universal religious experience of

mankind--sacrifice, vicarious atonement, and expiation. The greater

part of his hearers especially, belonging as they did to classes that

were morally degraded, were only too ready to accept the atoning death

of Jesus which promised them remission of their punishment. In spite of

all, however, there was paradox enough to cause amazement and surprise.

When once this first step had been taken, when faith had been aroused

and the enthusiastic confession had fallen from the convert's

lips--"Jesus is the Lord" (the apostle uses this title and not Messiah'

amongst the Greeks)--St Paul immediately proceeded to gather the

disciples together into an organzied community. No Christian could have

fought his way through the great dark night of idolatry and immorality

as an isolated unit: the community--St Paul calls it Church, using a

Jewish word--was here the necessary condition for all permanent life.

Here, again, many points of contact were presented by the Greek system

of guilds and confraternities, of which the Jews had already made some

use.

At the present day we are scarcely in a position to decide whether Paul

exclusively followed Jewish patterns, or whether in some points he

modelled his organizations directly upon the Greek type. As in addition

he was bound to take over the characteristic rites of the Jewish

Christian Church, and many of its forms and customs, he in any case

created something that was entirely new to the world in which he lived.

Through this amalgamation of Jewish, Greek, and Christian elements

arose the Christian Church of the Gentiles, which throughout its future

history remained ever open to receive new impressions, as a direct

consequence of its origin from different sources. Baptism in the name

of Jesus the Crucified was the form of entrance. Then followed very

numerous meetings, for meals partaken in common, for divine worship,

and also for the support of the poor brethren in the different

localities as well as at Jerusalem. They were true communities of

brethren, closely knit together for social, ceremonial and legal

purposes, which gave their individual members a sense of strength and

comfort, and often stood to them in the place of the family. St Paul

attached an almost exaggerated importance to the value of these

communities. They were to be nothing more or less than mediators of the

Spirit of God or of Jesus to the individual. Though the aim and object

of his preaching had been the conversion of the individual, he

conceived the power of the new life to be exclusively confined to the

Church. Here and here alone is the sphere of the Spirit's miraculous

operations--the speaking with tongues, the healing of the sick and

prophecy, and at the same time the renewal of the life, the power to

start afresh. Only he who is a member of Christ's body--that is, who

actually belongs to the Christian fellowship--experiences the

Redeemer's influence that absorbs all that is sinful and earthly and

implants that which is good and pure. St Paul was sober-minded enough

to recognize that these Christian communities were very far indeed from

being his ideal the body of Jesus the temple of God. If in spite of

this he clung fast hold to his belief in the power of the Church, he

relied upon the fact that in spite of everything, many in the community

shone like stars in the world in the midst of a wicked and perverse

generation. For it was the beautiful time of the early spring, when the

Church and the fellowship of them that believed entirely coincided, and

did not, as now, stand in opposition to each other; when the influence

of Jesus--that is, the Spirit--imparted itself so mightily to the whole

community through the apostle, his fellow workers, and the first

converts, that each individual was subject to it. This influence of

Jesus did at first of course often find expression in excited behaviour

and wildly enthusiastic actions, and it was only after repeated

humiliations of one kind and another that it assumed a quiet and

practically useful character. But without something of this enthusiasm,

there had been no courage to lay the new foundation, and to separate

from the world. The soul of Jesus, confined before within the secluded

Jewish sects, now created for itself a second time a body, and this

time one that was a great deal better suited to its power and glad joy.

And that cannot be done without some stormy experiences. But the

communities in which the Spirit finds a habitation are destined to

alter the current of the world's history.

Scarcely have the Gentiles become members of the Christian community

than Paul tries to discover something for them to do. His aim is now to

train these masses of men, who had hitherto been for the most part

without any kind of discipline, to work for the realization of the

Christian ideal. He who had up till now only given and promised, now

summons them to do the will of God in the strength of that which they

have received. Words of Jesus, texts of the Old Testament, claims of

the conscience, rules of Christian custom and discipline, reflections

prompted by consideration for the outside heathen world, are all to

become one combined motive for moral regeneration.

A very important question here arises: Did St Paul keep faithfully to

the ideal of Jesus, subordinating everything else to it?

Two preliminary observations are necessary to obviate any unfairness in

the comparison.

1. St Paul had to do with Gentiles, not with Jews. He cannot presuppose

the high average of morality which Jesus merely purified, simplified,

and set free from all impediments. A great part of his task consists in

bringing his converts to the point where Jesus found His disciples from

the very first. He cannot effect anything without lowering the standard

to a certain extent. He is obliged, e.g., to attach greater value to

outer deeds and respectability than to thoughts, even though he himself

has exactly the same opinion as Jesus about the inner motive. In the

next place, he is confronted with a whole mass of new ethical problems

with which Jesus was not acquainted. The whole domain of social ethics,

the state, the family, slavery, woman's position--all directly concern

him, for it must now be decided whether these forms and institutions

have any meaning for Christians. Whether St Paul's solution is the

right one may be doubted. At any rate he creates new values.

2. Jesus' claim concerned the individual simply and solely. St Paul has

the Christian Churches in view. There is a Christian form of worship,

Christian discipline, the beginnings of ecclesiastical law, all of them

things which did not exist in Jesus' time. Thus, whilst Jesus detached

the individual as far as possible from his surroundings and left him to

his own resources, St Paul looks upon the duties which a man owes to

the fellowship as the highest. This necessarily implies certain

ecclesiastical claims even though they be reduced to a minimum.

Hence the simple division which was obviously sufficient for Jesus'

demand is no longer quite suitable for St Paul's. Jesus placed men in

their right relation to the three realities: to themselves, their

neighbour, and God. Everything else either completely vanished or

receded into comparative insignificance by the side of these three

realities. Three other problems have come to be of primary importance

for St Paul: the position of the Christian to the world; his duty to

the Church; public worship. The same three realities, as in Jesus case,

lie at the basis of these problems, and yet there has been of necessity

a certain shifting of interest. The comparison with Jesus is

facilitated if from the very first we take this shifting of the

problems into account.

The position to the world is the first and most urgent problem. The

Christians come forth from this world where the demons bear sway and

idolatry and immorality prevail. What is to be avoided as heathenish

and sinful? What is necessary for the support of life? What is left to

the free decision of the individual conscience? Can laws for all be set

up? And what do they embrace?

St Paul's solution of these difficult problems cannot but excite our

highest admiration.

He starts from that which is obviously wicked, from downright vices,

which are not to be tolerated in the Church. Idolatry, immorality of

every kind, theft, drunkenness, are not to occur amongst Christians,

were it but for the reason that they would thereby compromise

themselves in the eyes of the world. Under the same category come,

furthermore, party divisions, strife and bickering. Thence he goes down

to the roots of these vices in the sins of thought and word. Impure

desires, low words, anger, envy and jealousy, blasphemy, lying, all

that proceeds from the flesh and not from the Spirit, is to be torn out

and put away. Thus far the law can be set up for all. But are the

limits thereby laid down beyond which lies the kingdom of the good, and

of that which is permitted?

No, it is only when we have reached the individual conscience that we

come to the decisive point. All that does not proceed from faith is

sin. Whatever the conscience does not forbid is good. The conscience is

individual, free, and only liable to give reckoning to God. But the

matter is not settled with this proclamation of the freedom of

conscience. Who can deny that the conscience of the masses of the

Gentile converts is anything but degraded and darkened? How indistinct,

in such cases, are the boundaries between conscience, bad habits, and

caprice! The aim is the transformation and education of this conscience

till it attains to Christian standards. The nous,' the practical reason

itself, must be changed step by step, that it may be entirely weaned

from its former worldly standards and may become capable of

understanding God's will, that which is good, pleasing and perfect.

This comes to pass through the influence of the Christian community,

and yet only on condition that the individual himself works at the

purifying and deepening of his moral sense. The Christian has therefore

never attained completeness in his relation to the world, but is always

in the midst of a process of growth and development. He knows that he

has always a number of problems set before him which only he, the

individual, can solve, and which no written laws can prescribe.

The man who reached the height of these principles--higher than these

there are none--did not only personally renounce the part of lawgiver

in favour of free development of the Churches, but he saved

Christianity itself from the fate of ever lasting immobility by setting

up a code of laws. A religion like that of Islam is stereotyped for all

time through its sacred book of laws, both from an ecclesiastical,

social, and political point of view. Thanks to the Apostle Paul,

Christianity is bound to no other law than that of the Christian

conscience. To attain to this point of view, and still more, to

maintain it, called for a courageous faith which perhaps no other man

possessed in that age.

But did St Paul himself remain quite true to his own principles in the

advice that he gave and in his exhortations? The step between the

setting up of a principle and its application in concrete instances is

difficult enough, especially in the early days of any movement. In

every case we have our highest authority in the principles which the

apostle himself has laid down, even if his exhortations in the concrete

case are opposed to them.

Great emphasis is laid in the epistles upon the duty of the

renunciation of this world, and that with good reason: "Be not

conformed to this world"; and "set your minds on the things that are

above, for your citizenship is in heaven"; "seek the things that are

above, not the things that are below"; "I am crucified unto the world

and the world to me." In expressions such as these the world is

entirely identified with the kingdom of wickedness. But the heathen

world, with which St Paul was most intimately acquainted, was just that

and exactly that. One need but think for a moment of cities such as

Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. To break with these heathen surroundings

with their manners and customs, their superstition, with their laxity

of public opinion, was a Christian's first and foremost duty. The very

first act of the new life was to become completely different even in

mere external matters to one's immediate surroundings. And as the power

of custom was for ever thwarting the new ideal, a constant struggle

with custom--i.e. the world--was inevitable. St Paul declares, too, in

so many words that denial of the world means for him the struggle

against sin. To die to sin, to be no longer the slave of sin, to

crucify the flesh with its lusts and its desires--that was what bidding

farewell to the world implied. Now, since the heathen religion and

immorality were the chief representatives of sin and exercised at the

same time the most powerful influence in public and private life was

the art of that age much else than a public exhibition of immorality?

It can easily be imagined that the domain into which the Christian was

prohibited from entering was a very wide one. And, besides, there was

the belief that it was the demons who were at work in all this wicked

world, in the religious ceremonies and in the crimes, whereby a secret

dread and horror were mingled with the purely moral hatred. No ultimate

victory, no mere continuance even of early Christianity, had been

possible without this great and powerful factor, fantastic though it

was at times--renunciation of the world and constant struggle against

it. The fiery winged words, especially the great battle-cry in the

letter to the Ephesians, prove the apostle to have grasped the real

position of affairs, and do him all honour. Wherever he could he

thoroughly swept out all the heathen filth and dirt without listening

to any terms, without even a thought of a compromise. It is to St Paul

that Christianity owes its aggressive courage, its boldness in the

destruction of all idols. And yet it was none other than St Paul

himself who prevented the exaggeration of this renunciation into

asceticism or into a dualistic speculation. "There is nothing secular

but what is sinful"--i.e. what the Christian conscience calls sin--that

is the limit: not a step further. In spite of all demons the old saying

remains true: "The earth is the Lord's and all the fulness thereof." St

Paul did not set up the statement that all is of God as a speculative

principle but as a practical maxim, and by it the things of this world

are to be judged. "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that

nothing is unclean of itself, save that to him who accounteth anything

to be unclean, to him it is unclean." And on this the apostle's great

sayings are founded: "All things are yours--even the world," and "All

things are lawful." When one reflects upon the situation of the first

Christians, they are indeed sufficient to excite one's amazement. In

every crisis of his missionary labours St Paul adhered firmly to these

principles. As against the Judaizing party he rescues the freedom with

which Christ has set us free. Against the ascetics at Rome, who

imagined themselves compelled by religious scruples to forgo meat and

wine, he takes up the defence of the strong' brethren. It is right to

use everything for which one can give God thanks. He rejects the

doctrines of the ascetics of Colossae--"Touch not, taste not, handle

not"--as commandments of men, and proclaims instead the principle of

liberty. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the

Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

The question concerning meats offered to idols presented the greatest

difficulty of all, since it entered more deeply than any other into the

every day life of the converts. Every invitation to a meal, every

purchase in the market, might bring the Christian into contact with

this meat. The argument that by eating such meat one entered into

communion with the demons to whom it was offered, made an impression

albeit a transitory one--even upon St Paul himself. But the real reason

for abstinence is love alone, regard for the conscience of the weak

brother. The individual is free even in this case to regulate his own

conduct. If he can thank God for his meat, no man can condemn him. On

one occasion a saying of the apostle's was misunderstood: he was

supposed to have meant that a Christian was not allowed to consort any

more with whoremongers, usurers, and idolaters. St Paul emphatically

protested against this misinterpretation of his words by the

characteristic statement, "other wise you would have to leave this

world." The Christian must take up his position in the world and remain

therein, for God has made it, and it belongs to God. So, then, in spite

of his call to renunciation, St Paul represents with reference to the

world the standpoint, not of the Pharisees but of Jesus, to which he

merely gave a fuller application and a clearer definition.

To describe the duties which a man owes towards himself, St Paul is

fond of using the word sanctification,' and, in fact, generally

speaking, words derived from the language of ritual. Here one can trace

the influence of St Paul's early training in the school of the Scribes.

Jesus makes no use whatever of the Pharisaic terminology of sacred and

profane. The opposite of holy' is not wicked, but unclean,

unconsecrated; and the application to the world without, instead of to

one's own heart, is only too easily made. It is not difficult to find

reminiscences in St Paul's writings of the earlier Jewish

phraseology--this, e.g., that it is especially the members, the body,

i.e., the external, that is to be sanctified rather than the heart

above all else. Sanctification is therefore, as in later Christian

literature, something that is strictly limited. It consists in avoiding

the sins of the flesh, and in repressing sensuality. If we recall the

few facts that we know as to the past history of the Christian

converts, e.g., at Corinth, and remember the difficult position in

which they were placed in the world in which they lived then, we can

easily realize that sanctification, in the narrow sense of the word,

was bound to constitute the first task of the Christian life. A higher

morality can only grow up where the individual has attained the mastery

over his lower, his animal impulses. Hence the following sentence

stands at the head of all the rest of the apostle's exhortations to the

Thessalonians: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that

ye should abstain from fornication." The first sign that one is to look

for in the newly baptized Christian is that he no longer follows his

lusts, but has nailed them for good to the Cross. So again in the great

exhortation in the Epistle to the Romans: the presenting of our bodies

as a sacrifice to God--i.e., their sanctification--is placed before

everything else. A passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians

shows us that this duty was by no means regarded as a matter of course.

The Christians at Corinth must have been heard reasoning somewhat as

follows: As complete liberty is granted in matters of food, seeing that

the belly perishes, so sexual intercourse, too, is one of the

adiaphora, for the whole body is doomed to corruption. The abhorrence

which this reasoning excited in St Paul, and the number of arguments

which he employed against it, prove to us how serious he considered the

danger to be. For the Greeks, religion was almost entirely a matter of

ceremonial. The apostle's main object, therefore, was to show them that

self-discipline in the ordinary everyday life--and especially

chastity--was a part of religion itself, and that without the

fulfilment of this preliminary condition they could have no share in

redemption or in communion with God. The immense emphasis that was thus

laid upon sanctification naturally led to a certain narrowing of the

Christian conception of duty as a whole. That which in the teaching of

Jesus appears merely as a part, and not even a very prominent part, of

the Christian ideal, seems to be the one thing needful in many passages

in St Paul's writings. But such concentration was an absolute

necessity. Here was the most dangerous enemy. The full impetus of the

attack must be directed against him, and he must be completely routed,

and then the way to the higher stages of Christian morality would be

rendered possible. In Jewish writings of a moral character we find

exactly the same emphasis laid upon the same duty. St Paul is here

working for the education of the masses. He has to raise them up out of

the mire and filth of the world to the level of the morality of the

Gospel. And by the side of these exhortations we read those beautiful

words to the Philippians: "Whatsoever things are true, what soever

things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things

are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good

report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on

these things." The man who sets up so exalted and comprehensive an

ideal is far from expending all his moral force in the struggle against

sensuality.

As we pass on to consider St Paul's relation to social institutions, it

is surprising to find in what favourable terms he speaks of the State,

and that, too, when Nero sat on the throne. The difference between

Jesus and His apostle is very striking in this point. For Jesus living

in Palestine, the State is naturally regarded as a foreign power

resting upon brute force and oppression. For Paul, the Roman citizen,

it is the great empire of peace, which enables him to exercise his

calling as missionary without let or hindrance, and more than once

protects him and his congregations from the Jews and the rabble. Thus

he calls the State the great minister of God for good. It receives all

its power from God Himself. It is none other than the State that will

for a season restrain Antichrist, and thereby render the undisturbed

expansion of Christianity possible. It is very probable that we have

here the after-effects of important doctrines of the Pharisees, dating

from a time when politics and religion were unfortunately intermingled.

Had it not been for his own fortunate experience, however, he would not

have given them the powerful expression which he did. But one must be

very careful not to confuse this optimistic religious view of the State

with anything like patriotic feeling. St Paul sought his own

fatherland, and that of all Christians, in heaven, and that not only

after his imprisonment at Home. Hence, too, the duties of the Christian

to the State are practically all included in the paying of taxes and

the rendering of the outer marks of obedience. The Lord of the

Christians is after all not the Caesar at Home, but Jesus in heaven,

whose speedy return shall put an end even to the Roman empire. If we

look at the 13th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans carefully, there

is no perceptible trace of political thinking, or even of political

interest. The only matter that is of importance from the point of view

of the world's history is that even before the great struggle between

Church and State broke out, Christians are forbidden under all

circumstances to engage in revolution. That is not much, but it saved

the Church.

St Paul regards the organization of human society, the relation of

master and slave, as something divinely ordained and admitting of no

reform. There is no thought of the abolition of slavery, or of equality

at least between Christian slaves and their masters. God calls the one

to be a slave and the other to be a master: hence one can serve Him in

either relation. The only result of any attempt to change this social

order would be a state of uncertainty and danger. Hence the slave, even

if liberated, had better make no use of his manumission. The real

reason for this indifference to the existing order is not only the hope

that the end of the world is near at hand--and with that, of course,

all else will end--but also the feeling that these social differences

neither directly further nor hinder one's development, but that they

are beneficial or injurious according to the use which the Christian

makes of them. And, besides, it must not be forgotten that modern

slavery is a very different thing from ancient. The modern feelings of

misery and wretchedness which we associate with slavery were then

unknown. And yet St Paul is not the man simply to leave things as he

found them. In the passages relating to the duties of domestic life

which are to be found in the later letters and in the Epistle to

Philemon we have the first brief but promising attempts to Christianize

the relationship of master and slave. If the Christian master and the

Christian slave will ever remember their responsibility to their

heavenly Master, then a new spirit is bound by degrees to find an

entrance. The Christian master is to look upon his former runaway slave

who now returns of his own free will as his "brother beloved." Instead

of severing the existing relation ships without substituting anything

better for them, simply in order to proclaim a merely negative

result--the freedom from bondage--the apostle endeavours to

Christianize the social order of his day.

How different, again, are the problems which Jesus. and His apostle

respectively had to solve with regard to marriage and the family. Apart

from the frivolous practice of divorce which He abolished, Jesus could

reckon upon a condition of affairs that was at bottom sound. St Paul,

on the contrary, finds himself compelled to start from the very

beginning, to lay the foundations on which later a healthy family life

could be built. That he did this is sufficient of itself to prove that

he was more than an ascetic. It would be well for us to read the

descriptions of the apostles in the later "Acts," how they travel among

the heathen populations making it their main object to separate man and

wife by setting up the standard of an absolute continence.

There was no more decided opponent of asceticism on this point than the

author of the first letter to the Corinthians, who enjoins their

marital duties upon husband and wife, and warns them against a

dangerous continence. He speaks of these matters in the down right way

of old times without any appearance of prudery, which is very different

from our fastidious treatment of these subjects. In a world full of

crime, uncleanness, and sordidness of every kind he recognized his

vocation in the education of the masses to the ideals of honourable

marriage and constant fidelity. Perhaps he demanded too little:

obedience of the women, love of the men--more the passages in the

letters do not contain: but then this little contained, after all, all

that was important, and on this foundation a new and healthy life could

be built up. He likewise commended in a few brief and wise words the

education of their children to Christian fathers and mothers, and to

the former the duty of obedience. Taking it all in all, we have in St

Paul an educator with a thoroughly healthy understanding for all that

was necessary and wholesome.

But, then, is there not the celebrated chapter in the First Epistle to

the Corinthians? Here, surely, we have the words of a monk and an

enthusiast.

First of all, "the present distress" and the "shortness of the time"

have to a certain extent shifted his point of view. He here strikes a

note which reminds one of the apocalypse in St Mark xiii.: "Woe to them

that are with child and that give suck in those days." But there are

also echoes of thoughts of Jesus Himself. Just as Jesus uplifts His

voice in warning against the light-heartedness with which as before, in

the days of Noah, so once more before the end of the world--they "were

marrying and giving in marriage," St Paul likewise fights against the

fettering of the soul in the presence of eternity: "they that have

wives . . . . as though they had none." That can be understood by

reference to the teaching of Jesus. But then, further: the unmarried

man can care for the Lord better than the married; marriage dulls a

man's sense to higher things. As though this aptitude for the higher

life were especially noticeable in bachelors and unmarried women! Paul

was not married. He had his calling as an apostle, which entirely

engrossed him. He forgot that when, while writing these words, he

fancied all unmarried men like himself. The principal reason, however,

is yet to come: there is something unclean in marriage; only the

unmarried woman can be holy both body and soul--i.e., marriage defiles.

Hence celibacy and virginity are higher and better than marriage. Hence

it is better to remain a widow than marry again. Marriage is a

compromise between entire chastity and the weakness of the flesh: it is

better than prostitution, and in comparison therewith not sinful but

good. Thus writes the Rabbi in Paul, to whom the natural no longer

appears clean. These sentences--the ideal in its entirety set up for

all alike--do not stand on the level of the Gospel.

This will occasion no surprise to anyone who knows how difficult it is

for a man to escape entirely from the influence of his past. On the

contrary, it is surprising how one with such ideals, and starting from

such premises, could write so exceedingly wisely, soberly, and with

such entire self-suppression as St Paul in 1 Cor. vii. It is in this

very chapter that he enjoins upon husband and wife their mutual duties,

that he approves of mixed marriages, and would allow divorce if the

heathen husband or wife so wish it. He allows marriage to virgins and

to widows. He recommends it, if it must be, to those that are

spiritually betrothed. The very man who has just presupposed that

marriage is in a sense polluting, even though he has not said so in so

many words, declares that the heathen husband is sanctified by

consorting with the Christian wife; for the children surely are holy.

And nowhere else but in this passage does St Paul subordinate his own

word, as advice or opinion, to the word of Jesus, which is a command.

It may, therefore, be maintained with perfect justice that St Paul

consistently and zealously fulfilled his task of educating the heathen

masses, sunken as they were in unnatural vice and frivolity, to a

healthy and faithful family life, and that in spite of his favourite

ideas, which smacked of the Rabbi and the ascetic. The spirit of Jesus

completely dominated, not indeed his thoughts, but his acts in his

missionary calling.

The apostle's prescription regarding the head-dress to be worn by women

during divine service belongs to the reform of manners properly so

called. The difference between St Paul and Jesus is here again

especially noticeable. In Jesus case we have only the three great

realities by the side of which all details disappear. His gaze is

directed upon eternity. St Paul regulates a special case--woman's

dress--insisting upon it with the greatest urgency, and marshals a

whole array of reasons in support of the position. But the rule which

the apostle lays down is intended to counteract woman's mistaken aim to

be man's equal in everything; and then, in the midst of the strangest

statements, we are surprised by the assertion of the essential equality

of the two sexes: "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman,

nor the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the woman is of the

man (in Paradise) even so is the man also by the woman (since then),

but all things of God." It was just the exaggerated emphasis which the

apostle had laid upon the inferiority and subordination of woman that

compelled him to reflect and make this correction.

In regulating the intercourse with the unbelievers, St Paul sets up the

simple principles of friendliness, peacefulness, and love, even towards

slanderers and persecutors, and so remains true to the example of

Jesus: "Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be

possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. As long

as we have time let us do good to all men." He often bids his converts

think of what their heathen neighbours will be likely to say.

Consideration for them should be a spur to every individual to press on

towards perfection. The only passage in which he issues a curt command

to be entirely separate from the servants of Beliar (quoting Old

Testament texts in support of what he says), is so entirely without

connection with its context that its genuineness has rightly been

called in question. All that we know else of the apostle is the very

opposite of anxious timidity. The Christian may associate fearlessly

with sinners as long as his conscience does not suffer hurt.

We have thus examined the Christian's position towards the world from

every point of view. On its progress from the little villages round

about the Sea of Galilee, out into the great world and into the great

cities, Christianity encountered a number of new tasks and problems,

the solution of which tested the power of Jesus spirit. St Paul was the

first great leader in this forward march. The new religion is indebted

to him for its boldness, for its undaunted faith, for its energy in

saving the good seed and in pulling out the weeds in every new ground

that was sown.

The second principal task which St Paul had to take in hand was the

regulation of the care of the community. Jesus had not founded .any

organized community, and had given His commandment of love of one's

neighbour the widest possible extension by especially including one's

enemies. The brotherhood of believers became the real sphere for the

exercise of this love of one's neighbour, both for the first Christian

society and for St Paul. Thereby, no doubt, the commandment of Christ

was narrowed. The aim of the Christian mission is, it is true, ever

more and more to include the whole world in the community. But, as a

matter of fact, there is a clearly defined boundary line between the

world and the community, and this is often only too plainly visible.

The love of one's brother no longer means the love for every human

being, who is my brother, but love for the Christian alone. The word

philadelphia is used amongst Christians since St Paul's time in this

narrower sense, but so it had already been used in the Jewish

congregations. There is indeed an approximation on the part of the

Christian to the Jewish communities, for in both alike, sanctification

and love of the brethren are accounted the highest virtues. But this

concentration was again necessary and beneficial for Christianity. If

words and feelings were to be turned into deeds, then this vague and

undefined love had to crystallize into love of the community--the love,

e.g., of a Corinthian convert for all his townsmen was in any case an

empty phrase, that for his fellow Christians might at least be genuine;

and, besides, St Paul was always careful to see that the duty of love

beyond the limits of the congregation was brought home to his

disciples.

Every single congregation was always to consider itself a member of the

whole body--the Church of the Christian brotherhood, and never as a

self-existent unit. Did not the apostles, the prophets, and the

teachers, belong to the whole Church? Jerusalem was the Mother Church

of all these congregations. The most palpable external sign of this

connection was the collection for the poor at Jerusalem, which St Paul

set on foot and carried through with a truly amazing energy, in spite

of his often strained relations with the heads of that Church. But this

was by no means all. Either the apostle himself or his fellow-workers

brought each congregation news of the other congregations as they

travelled about from place to place, thus awakening feelings of shame,

resentment, emulation, and ambition. Each congregation felt that it was

observed, and possibly also criticised, by all other congregations

throughout the whole world. Besides this, there was the link formed by

united prayer for the apostle and with him for congregations in

distress. And finally, the exercise of a generous hospitality was

regarded as a duty towards all missionaries and brethren on their

travels, and they in their turn again strengthened the feelings of

union between each and all. In this manner St Paul created an

organization so closely pieced together that no single link could fall

out of the chain, but that each felt that it was kept in its place by

the united efforts of all the rest; and in so doing he afforded

Christian love a wide and varied sphere wherein to realize itself.

But its chief domain was after all that which lay nearest home--the

individual congregation. Just like Jesus, St Paul esteemed that love

highest which did not go forth in search of distant and extraordinary

deeds, but proved its strength in the ordinary and everyday life. A man

might give all that he had to the poor and yet be without the right

kind of love. It is this prosaic, everyday love--no sentimental

enthusiasm--that St Paul commends to the Corinthians, in the celebrated

chapter, as the greatest thing in the world, as that which abideth for

ever when speaking with tongues, prophecy, and knowledge have passed

away; yea, which is even greater than faith and hope. There is indeed

nothing simpler than to exercise patience and goodness, and not to

boast or envy, not to offend against good manners nor seek one's own,

and not to bear a grudge; and therefore of course nothing harder. By

all that he did and said St Paul strove that the Christians should

pursue this simple ideal. And yet what difficulties were placed in his

path by this very system of separate congregations! Parties and

factions seemed for ever to be forming, and celebrated teachers to be

founding schools. The strong looked down with contempt upon the weak,

and these in their turn condemned the strong. There were lawsuits about

property which brought the brethren into evil repute amongst their

heathen neighbours. The apostle intervened in each case with a

peremptory yet friendly admonition to live in unity and practise mutual

concession, modesty and humility. He came in course of time to attach

the highest value to this congregational life as the most important

school for the training of the individual. Here frequent occasions

occur for the individual to forget himself, to become of no reputation,

to retain the self-mastery by concession and patient endurance, to

allow freedom of conscience to be ruled by love, and to further a

brother's best interests in all things. But then the consequence of

this is that each no longer has to fight his own battle, but feels

himself supported, comforted and strengthened by the whole community.

St Paul revives the old picture of the body and the members, where each

member is of importance for the body, and gives it a new and

magnificent application and meaning. When one member suffers all

suffer; when one is honoured all are glad; it is a duty to rejoice with

them that do rejoice and to weep with them that weep. Who can complain

any longer that love has been narrowed? Surely it is Jesus Himself who

imparts to this brotherhood this unexampled capacity for active love?

St Paul merely caught up this love that issued from Jesus, assigned to

it a narrower sphere, and then multiplied it in the congregations which

he founded.

St Paul's third and last task, the regulation of public worship, is

almost entirely a part of the second. For Jesus there was naturally no

such thing as a Christian public worship, for the simple reason that He

founded no Church. He taught His disciples to pray both by themselves

and together; and it is at least the beginning of such worship that one

liturgical prayer, the Lord's Prayer, is ascribed to Him. The necessity

of a special separate Christian form of worship made itself felt in the

first congregation, otherwise there had been no continuance of the

corporate life of the Church. Its two principal component

parts--Baptism and the Lord's Supper--are signs of this very corporate

life, intended to mark, the one the reception of the member into the

community, the other the public meetings of the brethren. We must be

careful to remember this when we come to examine St Paul's regulations.

In regard to both sacraments St Paul is no longer a creator. He simply

accepts the tradition. The public worship of the Church was likewise in

all probability modelled after the pattern of the Jewish synagogues.

This much we may safely infer from the use of Aramaic words; only the

enthusiasm of the congregations generate, at any rate at first, a far

greater freedom and variety of forms. When an exaggerated, and at the

same time selfish, form of pietism availed itself at Corinth of this

freedom, to the destruction of all decency and order, St Paul

introduced a liturgical form of worship, and thereby also checked the

desire of the women for emancipation. And for the same reason he was

compelled to turn his attention to the common meals, which at times

degenerated into pious drinking bouts, and to issue strict regulations

as to the right and wrong way of partaking of the Supper of the Lord.

In both cases we see how the good order of the life of the

congregation, the edification of all instead of merely a few, the

participation of the poorer brethren in the meals--all of them social

considerations--were really decisive. It is more important that all

should profit than that one or two should be caught up into the seventh

heaven for a few moments. His digression on love, while treating of

ceremonial regulations, is his grandest and completest statement of

this truth.

So far all is simple. The Church must have its out ward symbols and its

means of edification, and these things must be so regulated that they

really conduce to the Church's benefit. And though we have here much

that is new and that goes beyond what Jesus taught, yet the purely

moral character of His Gospel is left inviolate. But through St Paul a

new value comes to be attached to acts of worship which cannot be

harmonized with the teaching of Christ. At Corinth Christians suffered

themselves to be baptized a second time for their deceased relations,

and St Paul refers to this in his defence of the resurrection. That is

a heathen conception of baptism which turns it into an opus operatum,'

and as such a guarantee for blessedness. Whilst in this case St Paul

simply accepts the superstitious view without saying any thing, he is

himself actually the cause of it in the case of the Lord's Supper. To

please his Greek converts he compares it to the Greek and Jewish

sacrificial feasts. He is the first to contrast the holy food there

consecrated with all other that is profane, and bids us see in the

sickness and death of many Christians the judgment upon their profane

participation in the holy meal. Now, that was an accommodation to Greek

superstition which led to the establishment of a religion of a lower,

less spiritual, nature as a direct consequence. But the mere fact that

an extraordinary value is attached to ceremonial acts is in itself

fatal. The conception of what constitutes a Christian is here enlarged

in a very ominous fashion.

The apostle, however, knew full w^ell that besides participation in

acts of ritual there is an altogether different manner in which

Christians can have communion with God. Like Jesus, he exhorts his

hearers and readers to offer up prayer and thanks giving, to place

their trust in God, to commit all their cares to Him, to accept

everything, even affliction and suffering, as from His hand, to fear

Him and to long for Him. The prayer of thanksgiving is above all else

the sign of a genuine Christian for him: he that thus prays stands in a

right relation to God. And the true sacrifice that is well pleasing to

God is not any participation in worship, but the devotion of body and

soul to His service. All those superstitious statements to which

allusion has been made are in St Paul's hands means to an end: in the

one case, that of baptism, to prove the Christian hope; in the other,

that of the Lord's Supper, to secure decency and good order in the

congregation. It is not for St Paul himself, but for the future history

of his congregation, that the seeds of mischief have been sown.

Henceforth participation in divine worship takes its place side by side

with trust in God, and two kinds of religion, of communion with God,

begin to compete with each other.

Let us now review once more the whole of the Christian claim, as it is

presented by St Paul, and compare it with that made in the first

instance by Jesus, and we shall perceive that a great forward movement

has taken place, and on the whole, it has preserved the direction

imparted to it by Jesus. The Christian ideal has become richer, more

varied and comprehensive, but it has not essentially changed, and it

has not deteriorated. This we can best realize when we read all the

passages in which St Paul briefly summarizes the essentials of the new

religion. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but

the keeping of God's commandments is every thing. In Christ neither

circumcision nor uncircumcision avails aught, but faith working through

love. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,

goodness, faith, gentleness, purity. But now remaineth faith, love,

hope; but love is the greatest of these.

The man who formulates his claim under these main headings understood

Jesus better, grasped His meaning more fully, than any other that came

after him. And this sympathetic comprehension of that which was

essential in Christianity, enabled him to carry the teaching of Jesus

from the Jews to the Gentiles, retaining the human and the eternal,

while rejecting the merely national. This brilliant definition of the

ideal is at the same time the best criticism of all that is imperfect

in St Paul's work. A great man deserves to be measured by his aims

rather than by his achievements. He who would understand St Paul aright

should seek to find him at the height of his ideal, and then he will

discover that he is not very far distant from Jesus. But to present the

claim of Jesus to the Gentiles and to maintain it in its entirety was

indeed a very great achievement on the part of St Paul. His work was

assailed by two great enemies, which sought to compel him to descend

from the height of his ideal and adapt himself to the imperfections of

the uncultured masses: they were, on the one hand, the gross vices, on

the other the enthusiasm of his heathen converts. The sinful life that

was so often continued after conversion, the instances of incest and

fornication, the lawsuits, the factions all seemed to cry with one

accord: lower your standard, at least temporarily. On the other hand,

the ascetic aberrations of some, the spiritualistic follies of others,

the pride of the strong,' the striving to shake off all control and to

cease from all work, appeared to be so many indications of the

necessity of a law to check this want of discipline and sobriety. It is

amazing to notice with what firmness and clearness St Paul continues to

travel along the path indicated to him by Jesus. As a wise educator he

took circumstances into account and remembered that "le mieux est

souvent l'ennemi du bien." He insisted on the appointment of Christian

judges in order to put an end to the hateful spectacle of law suits

between Christians in heathen courts. He excommunicated the immoral

members of the Corinthian church and summoned them to repentance in

order to cleanse the congregations of the worst stains. When he

enumerates the different vices, he seems to say that certain deadly

sins exclude a man more than others from the kingdom of God. As a

preliminary measure against the enthusiasts he appoints a definite

order of service. These examples might be multi plied, but nowhere do

we find a single one which does not come under the category of purely

educational and provisional measures. As to what constitutes a

Christian, St Paul's answer is always that of Jesus. He recognizes no

subordinate form of Christianity for the masses. He ever reverts--often

immediately after making some concession--to Jesus' whole claim on

conduct and on character; the ideal ever remains above the real and yet

ever within reach. He that is in Christ Jesus is a new creature: the

old is passed away; all things have become new. And in spite of all the

danger presented by enthusiasm the Christian stands secure in the

freedom with which Christ has made him free.

St Paul had begun his missionary labours with the preaching of the

judgment. He ends as he began. The preaching of the ideal and the lofty

Christian claim both call for this conclusion. Whether a man is

pressing forward towards the ideal, or lagging behind, is by no means a

matter of indifference. It is a question of life and death. The return

of Jesus, which all Christians await, will bring with it the judgment,

when all, apostles and congregations alike, will have to render an

account of the result of their lives, and receive praise or blame in

equity and truth.

With a mighty loud voice, just as one of the old Christian prophets, St

Paul cries out to his converts, "Maranatha, the Lord is at hand. Redeem

the time. Your salvation is nearer than at first. The night is far

spent, the day is at hand. Be ye not, brethren, in the darkness, that

that day should overtake you as a thief in the night. Let us not sleep,

but let us be sober. Let us put away the works of darkness, and put on

the armour of light." That is the language of Jesus Himself. Just as in

the claim that he makes, so in this message of the judgment, St Paul

has suffered himself to be inspired by his Master. And this is yet one

other proof, that in spite of the ecclesiastical transformation which

he effected, he wished to bring to the Gentiles Jesus and His Gospel

alone.

For us, of course, he has left great and important questions without an

answer. What is the meaning of faith and grace and church, if in the

last resort it is the word of judgment that decides the faith even of

Christians? When St Paul invited the Gentiles to enter the Christian

community he promised them that the road to salvation should be simple

and easy. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and

shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead,

thou shalt be saved." When he disputed with the Judaizing party he

persistently maintained the position that the believer was sure of his

salvation and safe from the wrath that was to come. The Christian's joy

and glory consisted, he declared, in the absence of all fear, and the

assurance of God's everlasting love. That is why the Christian knows

himself to be called and elected from all eternity. But the preaching

of the judgment, with its alternating notes of fear and hope, and the

uncertainty of salvation which it causes to arise in every soul,

contradicts the high value attached by St Paul to the Church as well as

to the individual's faith in his election.

At times this idea of the value of the Church seems to dominate St Paul

to the exclusion of every other. Even in the extreme case of incest at

Corinth lie hopes that the man's soul will be saved in the day of the

Lord Jesus. If God punishes the thoughtless participation in the Lord's

Supper with sickness and with death, then this punishment is merely a

means of chastening lest we be condemned together with the world. He

that has built badly upon the foundation of Jesus Christ shall

nevertheless be saved "yet so as by fire." God's faithfulness is so

great that He must complete what He has begun. The meaning of

statements such as these appears to be none other than that all

Christians should be saved even though, it is true, under different

degrees of blessedness. And this is just where St Paul's extremely high

estimate of the external ecclesiastical organization finds its

expression. But passages which point in a contrary direction are not

wanting. If Israel be the type of the people of God, and if its fate

have any typical meaning, then it is clear that church membership does

not confer any certainty of salvation. Is it not written that God was

not well pleased with many of those that passed through the sea and

they were over thrown in the wilderness? The message of the judgment,

therefore, when it is addressed to Christians, always takes the

possibility of their failing to obtain salvation into account. Like the

preaching of Jesus itself, it is meant to be taken seriously.

The contradiction in which St Paul stands with himself is a necessary

one, and arises from his historical position. On the one hand he has to

gain converts for the Church, and must exalt it as the only road to

salvation, and therefore separates mankind into those within and those

without the Church, as the saved and the lost. On the other hand, as a

true disciple of Jesus, he is bound to destroy all confidence in the

Church--even the Christian Church--and place the individual in the

presence of eternity and God's judgment before everyone that does not

do the right. Hence this hesitation and contradiction. St Paul is an

ecclesiastic and a Christian with a living personal faith. All the

later teachers of the Church who were at once apologists of the

ecclesiastical institutions and disciples of the Gospel, have followed

in the apostle's contradictory footsteps.

Yet this yea' and nay' cannot be St Paul's last word. Salvation as he

understands it is only attained where the individual has reached the

certainty that he is God's child personally and that nothing can

separate him from God's love. This certainty is as far removed from

confidence in church membership, as it is from the alternating fear and

hope inspired by the thought of the day of judgment. It is something

purely personal, something that the individual must experience for

himself and that none other can give him, because it is only true for

himself.

It is experienced as he gazes upon the Cross, the revelation of God's

love; as he places his trust in God's faithfulness, of which he has

made trial in the course of his own life, and as he listens for the

voice of God's Spirit which testifies to our spirit that we are the

children of God. It was the final aim of all St Paul's missionary

labours that each convert won over by him should reach the goal to

which Jesus had brought the disciples in the Lord's Prayer, wherein

they receive all things as from God's hand and are safe for time and

for eternity in His fatherly love.

St Paul brought Jesus to the Gentiles as their Redeemer who uplifts

them to the new life with God. He attained that which Jesus Himself

desired, but in his own, even somewhat abnormal, manner.

In the first place, his aim is so to bring home to his hearers their

sinfulness and powerlessness and their liability to the judgment, that

every road to safety by their own efforts is cut off and only the way

of faith remains open to them. This may be called St Paul's methodistic

presentment of faith.

In the next place, he does not present Jesus the Redeemer in all His

life and suffering as the object of faith, but only the Cross and

Resurrection of the Son of God. This is St Paul's methodistic

presentment of the Cross.

The form which St Paul's missionary preaching took was the result, in

the first instance, of his own personal experience. He himself became a

Christian in an altogether abnormal fashion after having been a Rabbi

and a persecutor. But the really decisive factor was after all his

extraordinarily powerful ecclesiastical interest which impelled him so

to narrow the way to salvation that it led through the Church alone,

whose mark was faith in the crucified Son of God. But though the

methods were changed, the Gospel itself remained as yet the same. Nay,

rather, the new machinery proved really effective in bringing Jesus to

the heathen. In his representation of the promise, the ideal and the

aim of redemption, St Paul is simply Jesus' disciple, and indeed the

profoundest and most powerful of all.

But St Paul is likewise the first to have entered into the forms,

ideas, and conceptions of the Greeks at innumerable points of his

missionary labours. He did not merely bodily transplant the Gospel from

one place to another. He saw that the new plant took root and

acclimatized itself. There are far more points of contact between the

Greeks and St Paul's practice than between them and his theology, which

is embedded rather in Jewish ideas. But the great achievement is this,

that the same man took up that which was Greek and that which was

Jewish fused the two elements and then entirely subordinated them to a

third, the Christian, in Jesus as he understood Him. For it is not the

amalgamation of Hellenism and Judaism, but the conquest of both for

Jesus, that assigns St Paul his high place in the world's history.

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THE PAULINE THEOLOGY.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE PRESUPPOSITIONS.

THE Pauline theology is an entirely new phenomenon on the soil of

Christianity. In the early Church at Jerusalem, isolated theological

propositions had been set up which had arisen in the course of

reflection about Jesus and in controversy with the Jews. They spoke of

the Son of God and of the Messiah, of the wonderful call of Jesus and

of His vicarious death. But nowhere do we find even the feeling of the

necessity for any clear co-ordination of all these thoughts. The

Jews--even the learned Jews--never felt any desire to build up systems

of doctrine. There never existed any systematic theology of the

synagogue. The Rabbis taught the explanation of single passages, the

comparison with other passages, the formation of syllogisms, and also

the allegorical method of exegesis. The expositions of St Paul in Rom.

iv. and Gal. iii. are good instances of Jewish methods of exegesis. As

soon, however, as St Paul leaves the ground of Scripture his methods

are no longer rabbinical. He would not, however, really have been able

to learn anything even from the learned Jews of Alexandria. All his

knowledge of Greek philosophy did not make a philosopher of Philo after

all. His business is biblical exegesis after the manner of the Rabbis,

only from the point of view of the Greek teachers. At all events, St

Paul was so imperfectly acquainted with Greek philosophy itself, that

it had no influence over him, and that which he created in his theology

is no philosophy either.

St Paul's education at the feet of the Rabbis certainly proved to be of

great importance for him. Here he learned to know and understand the

Sacred Book, learned rabbinical methods of interpretation, and many

thoughts and conceptions of contemporary Jewish theology. Henceforward

he could command the resources of a trained jurist. His later doctrines

as to the annulling of the law and justification by faith are proof of

this. Here it is that he heard men speak of Adam, of the Fall, of the

death of all men. In fact, generally speaking, his interest in sin and

the avoidance of sin first awakens in the school of the Rabbis. It is

probably to the same source that he owes his initiation into

apocalyptic mysteries. One single circumstance, however, should warn us

against forming an exaggerated estimate of this rabbinical influence;

it is the use St Paul makes of the Septuagint. He takes no interest in

the Hebrew text. In his arguments he uses words of the Septuagint to

which nothing corresponds in the Hebrew. The influence of his masters

cannot therefore have extended very far.

The decisive factor in the genesis of St Paul's theology was his

personal experience, his conversion on the road to Damascus.

Henceforward his estimate of things was an entirely different one. All

that had before seemed to him great and important, was now of little

worth. He saw everything in a new light. His whole being was radically

changed. Rarely, indeed, has such an entire alteration taken place in

any man. Previous to his conversion, the law had been his chief

delight; he had been contented with himself and vainglorious; he had

found himself without fault, and trusted optimistically in his own

strength. Afterwards arose the consciousness that he had been Messiah's

enemy and persecutor of the cause of God. Hence mistrust and even

condemnation of the whole of his previous life. Then the crucified

Jesus had been a fanatic and a blasphemer, overtaken by a just

punishment; now this same sufferer on the cross was the Messiah, the

Redeemer, the Son of God. So decisive an experience, producing such an

entire reversal of all values, was bound to become an unparalleled

incentive to thought and inquiry. To think now meant to re-think. The

convert's first duty, the first point that he was bound to clear up for

himself, was that during the whole of his previous life he had been

pursuing a wrong course, and that now he was in the right one. Paul

changed his previous thoughts so entirely that it is lost labour

nowadays to attempt to trace his course back to the ideas which he

entertained before his conversion. In fact, we are completely ignorant

as to what ideas he exactly had at that time. One thing alone is

certain, that he abandoned those which he had and buried them out of

sight. The apostle had one theology and one alone, and that is a

Christian one. Each single word of his epistles flows from his

Christian consciousness. There is no natural theology for him

personally, no presupposition of sin, death, and the judgment which

preceded his knowledge of Jesus. It was the knowledge of Jesus, on the

contrary, which dictated to him the shape and fashion of all his

presuppositions. If, in spite of this, we appear to derive a contrary

impression from whole portions of his letters, then this is to be

traced to the second source of his theology--his apologetic interest.

For he that was converted in so violent a fashion is now missionary to

the Gentiles. The judgment is near at hand: his task is to save out of

heathenism as many as are predestined to salvation. The theology which

is presented to us in his letters is neither that of the Jewish Rabbi

nor yet that of the convert of Damascus reflecting on his previous and

his present state, but it is that of the missionary. What he did was

not merely to turn his thoughts to account for the practical aims of

his mission, but, as far as we know them, he formed them during and for

his mission. St Paul's line of thought may best be termed Christian

missionary theology from an eschatological point of view. Why else

should he have employed the Greek language and Greek forms and

conceptions, and thrust the really rabbinical train of thought so

completely into the background? Or why else, again, should he have

attached so great an importance to conversion, which divides, or ought

to divide, the life of every Christian into two halves? But if the

Pauline theology is a missionary theology, then it is the theology of

an apologist, the first great system of Christian apologetics--compared

with which all the apologetic thoughts of the early Church at Jerusalem

are but as modest preliminaries.

In the next place, the great twofold divisions of this system of

apologetics is the result of St Paul's peculiar position between

Gentiles, Jews, and Judaizing Christians. It is first a theology of

redemption the basis of his missionary preaching to the Greeks; and

secondly, anti-Jewish apologetics--the defence of that same preaching

against Judaizers and Jews. His theological work, however, is not

exhausted in his tireless efforts to seek and to save the lost and to

beat back the foes from without. He aims likewise at a theology for

mature Christians. He seeks to penetrate to the depths of the thoughts

about God contained in the Holy Scriptures and in the revelation of

Christ. It is a Christian gnosis which has penetrated even into the

world of spirits and into the divine mysteries. We must now attempt to

present these three great facts of his system of thought separately,

though they frequently, of course, intersect and blend with each other.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE PAULINE SOTERIOLOGY.

ST PAUL understood the word salvation' in a very wide and comprehensive

sense--not merely as liberation from evil or from sin, but as salvation

out of this present evil world into the good world which in a sense is

future but has now already begun. Hence the simplest division of our

subject will be:--This present evil world and its powers; the crisis;

Jesus the Saviour; the salvation of believers.

This Present Evil World and its Powers.

In his missionary preaching St Paul began with the message of the

judgment that is to come. Under the lurid light of the day of judgment

he revealed the entire destruction of his hearers. The theoretical

basis of this preaching is a radically pessimistic view of the whole

world, which takes no account of the difference between Jew and

Gentile, a pessimism which extends to the whole human race, and even

beyond it to nature and the supersensuous world itself.

In the first place, the whole human race, the whole of creation, is

doomed to death. Since Adam, death has seized upon the sovereignty and

reigns supreme. It has found its way everywhere. There are no

exceptions. That is not a matter of course, it is unnatural. Man's will

is to live. Hence he feels his mortality as a hard slavery which causes

him to sigh in deepest melancholy.

Whence comes this doom of death, mysterious and yet certain?

The Jew Paul answers, from sin. The wages of sin is death. Since Adam's

sin death goes in and out amongst men like a hereditary disease; but at

the same time it is the consequence of the sin of each individual. For

all men have sinned and therefore all die. The universality of sin

follows as a simple inference from the universality of death. St Paul

is here thinking, in the first place, of individuals. They are free

agents--freely have they sinned and so incurred the penalty of death.

Thus far St Paul has not diverged from the teaching of the Rabbis. But

he soon leaves that teaching behind him when he declares that it is not

in the power of the individual's free will to accept or to reject sin.

Sin has acquired a sovereign power over the human race since Adam.

There is a kingdom of sin, and that is humanity itself. We all, Jews

and Gentiles, are under sin. There is a law of sin in our members to

which we are subject. Hereby St Paul declares the necessity of sin for

all men, and not merely its actual universality. He gives expression to

this thought of the necessity of sin in opposition to the rabbinical

doctrine, led thereto perhaps by a deeper insight into the innermost

life of the soul and the play of motives, still more perhaps by his

apologetic. For this thought is a necessary postulate for the doctrine

of salvation through Christ, which might appear to be superfluous as

long as merely the universality of sin were maintained and exceptions

were conceivable.

But what is the origin of sin, with its all-compelling power?

St Paul gives two answers to this question, the difference between

which is not explained in his letters.

1. The whole of mankind is involved in the fall of the first man.

Through the first man, Adam, came sin, and as its consequence death,

unto all men. That is the Jewish theory built up by the Rabbis on the

foundation of Gen. iii. Its greatness consists in the fact that it is

an attempt to give expression to the thought of the solidarity of the

whole human race. The first man is made to appear before God as the

representative of the whole race, and his fall is therefore accounted

as the fall of the race. But the juridical and, as it were, historical

form of this theory is unsatisfactory. Sin enters from without by

chance, without any inner necessity, and obtains sovereign power by the

commission of one single and accidental fault. And this fault of the

single individual has then to be placed by the supreme judge to the

debit account of all his descendants, as though each one of them had

committed it himself. Such a juridical appreciation of facts harmonizes

with Jewish modes of thought, but with no deeper sentiment. It was more

for the sake of antithesis, too, that St Paul made use of this theory.

He wished by means of it to establish clearly the universal

significance of Christ.

2. Sin clings to man's bodily nature. All men are flesh, and sin dwells

in the flesh. Man is sold under sin because he is flesh. Nothing good

dwells in him, that is, in his flesh. So closely are the body and sin

connected that St Paul creates the expression "body of sin." This

theory is neither Jewish nor Greek, but an original creation of the

apostle's. The Jewish starting-point is, it is true, clear enough: the

opinion that the human body is weak, impotent and corruptible, keeping

men in entire separation from God. Jewish, too, is the opposition

between flesh and spirit, instead of between body and soul, as the

Greeks say. But the pessimism which we read in St Paul's sentences is

by no means Jewish. The conviction of the weakness of the flesh and of

the existence of evil motives or of the evil heart in man never

suffered the Jews to abandon their confidence in their own strength and

righteousness. Side by side with the feeling of sinfulness, the most

characteristic features of Jewish piety are self-satisfaction and

boasting on account of good works. Words such as "I know that in me,

i.e. in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" must have had an altogether

repulsive sound for Jewish ears; and Paul is very well aware how he

tramples the optimism and self-satisfaction of his fellow-countrymen

under foot when he uses them. And when he goes so far as to say "The

flesh lusteth against the spirit," he appears to take the flesh as the

principle of sin and sensuality, just as matter is the seat of evil for

the Greeks. Here he is ranging himself on the side of the dualism of

the later philosophy which is ultimately derived from Plato. He draws

nearer to the Greeks, just as Philo did before. But for all that St

Paul does not turn into a Greek. There is an effective barrier to this

conversion--the firm hold which he has, as a Jew, of the belief in the

creation, which surfers no second principle to exist by the side of

God, but derives the flesh as well as everything else from the Creator

of the universe. There is besides this a second barrier: his belief as

a Christian that the world and all that is in it--the flesh therefore

included--belong to God and those that are His, and that it is just the

flesh in which the Spirit is predestined to lodge. Sin does not

originate in the flesh--it takes up its abode therein as a visitor from

outside, just as the Spirit is likewise to come in from without and

dwell therein. It is evident, therefore, that this theory of St Paul's

upon which he bases the necessity of sin is his own work. Hard personal

struggles and sad experience of the power of the senses may very well

have supported the theory. The decisive factor was the destruction of

all his self-confidence, of all trust in his own natural powers through

faith in Jesus the Redeemer. Complete pessimism as regards the body is

the necessary converse of the optimistic trust in Christ and His

Spirit.

Did St Paul himself reconcile his two theories of the origin of sin?

Not in his letters--e.g. in 1 Cor. xv. death is derived from Adam's

fall and after wards from Adam's earthly nature, without any attempt at

reconciling the two statements. And the same applies therefore to sin.

But can we rest content with this conclusion? Surely we must choose

between the two. The connection between flesh and sin is either

antecedent or subsequent to the fall. In the first case it is cause; in

the latter, effect.

Here we stand face to face with the ultimate questions of theological

speculation. The gnostics soon afterwards occupied themselves with

these matters. In fact, we here enter upon the domain of the Pauline

gnosis and leave the field of thought covered by his missionary

preaching. St Paul did not shirk these ultimate questions, but he came

to no satisfactory conclusion, and contented himself with answers which

are contradictory.

One can distinguish the germs of three theories.

1. The theory of evolution.--This present earthly world is related to

the future spiritual world as the lower stage to the higher. First the

natural (psychical), then the spiritual (pneumatic), first Adam, that

is, of the earth, then He that is of heaven--Christ. St Paul develops

this theory in 1 Cor. xv. for a definite purpose. He wants to make it

perfectly plain to his Greek converts that the resurrection body will

not suffer from the defects of the present body. Hence he contrasts it

as the higher and the perfect with the lower and the imperfect. In so

doing he adopts the story of the creation of man in Gen. ii., and thus

obtains a theory which can easily be reconciled with the belief in the

divine creation. It is full of a magnificent optimism. Onwards and

upwards, step by step, leads the road. When the thought of the

education of the human race obtained a footing in the Church towards

the end of the second century, then men were glad to invoke the

authority of St Paul. But as sin and the flesh are outside of St Paul's

scope altogether in these passages in First Corinthians, they can be of

no real importance for the ultimate questions.

2. The theory of degeneration.--Not only man but all nature is fallen

from a state of glory into a state of corruption. The foundation is the

story of the fall in Gen. iii. combined with the opposition between the

spirit (before the fall) and the flesh (after the fall). Jewish legends

(the books of Adam) and gnostic and Catholic theologians anticipate and

continue this line of thought. In Paul himself we only find a few

scattered indications, which all, however, converge in this direction.

The present evil world cannot as such be ascribed to God. God created

it, and it was very good. Did not God, according to the Bible story,

create the world and mankind in glory as a world of free spirits? Adam

and the whole cosmos were confined within the bounds of matter (sa'rx)

as a punishment for the fall. True, the flesh was created by God, but

only as a means of chastisement, and that was death which according to

Gen. ii. 17 was to follow on the very day of man's disobedience (cf.

Rom. vii. 11: "Sin . . . slew me"). That, again, was nakedness (2 Cor.

v. 4), of which man became conscious immediately after the fall: he had

lost his former tabernacle, the body of his glory. It was the coming

short of the glory of God (Rom. iii. 23), that is, of that body of

glory created in God's image with which man had been clothed in

Paradise. Mortality is the punishment for the fall from the world of

spirits through the disobedience of the first man, and the groaning and

travailing of the whole creation betokens the longing for the lost

Paradise. It is only this theory that harmonizes with every step of St

Paul's argument and completely explains his position with regard to the

flesh which is God's creation and yet was not from the very first. But

these subjects did not enter into his preaching to his new Gentile

converts. And thus we can readily understand that this theory is only

incidentally mentioned in his letters.

3. The theory of evil spirits. St Paul once mentions incidentally (2

Cor. xi. 5) that the serpent beguiled Eve--according to the Jewish

tradition it was to commit adultery. This passage implies that the

devil should be regarded as the cause of the whole of the evil

condition of the world; nor is the absence of all mention of Satan in

the chief passages in the Epistle to the Romans any argument to the

contrary, for the place of Satan is there taken by a kind of

mythological figure, an abstraction, sin. St Paul's thoughts always

cross over to the spirit-world ultimately; proof of this can be found

in other Epistles besides those to the Colossians and Ephesians. Even

in the Epistles to the Romans and in First Corinthians we read of

principalities, authorities and powers in the upper regions which would

separate us from God, and which must be abolished as God's enemies

before the end of the world. Now, as everything proceeds from God, and

therefore likewise the angels, there must have been a rebellion in the

spirit world and a falling away of some. On one occasion--it is in the

passage relating to the head-dress of women during divine service--he

alludes to the fall of the angels mentioned in Gen. vi. when the sons

of God sought the daughters of men in marriage. On another, when

speaking of the lawsuits of Christians with each other, he reminds the

Corinthians that they, the saints, shall some day sit in judgment over

the angels. All this presupposes apocryphal Jewish traditions as to the

occurrences in the spirit world. Thus the fall has extended even to the

world above, and so the picture of the present evil world is completed.

All demons are of course counted amongst these fallen spirits, and as

the whole of the heathen world--its religion and its immorality--is

ascribed to their agency, this gnostic theory obtains an immediate

practical significance. Satan is the God of this world--i.e. of the

kingdom of sin--which is manifested, especially amongst the heathen, in

so lurid a light.

St Paul's pessimism culminates in this last sentence concerning the God

of this world. The view at which he finally arrives is that this

present evil world was not originally so created by God, but has only

become such through the fall, and that it is now governed by fallen

angels, powers hostile to God. Various reasons led the apostle to form

this awful opinion: contemporary Jewish thought and feeling, his own

bitter experience, his realization of the darkness of the heathen world

in which he worked, and of the lurid light cast by the approaching day

of judgment. The apocalypse of Ezra shows us how strong a tendency the

Jews had in times of national disaster to entertain such pessimistic

views of the world's future. And yet, what a difference there is! For

Ezra, there are still some righteous, few though they be in number,

whereas St Paul writes, "None is righteous; no, not one," and "in me

dwelleth no good thing." The reason for this difference is evident. St

Paul's pessimism is intended to serve his apologetic. It is because

Jesus alone is the Redeemer, that the world has to be presented as

irredeemably wicked, and every other road to salvation closed to men.

It is not the actual recognition of the greatness of sin and the

impotence of man which is at the root of this theory, but faith in

Christ necessitates these pessimistic postulates as presuppositions.

There is a convincing proof of this statement. The pessimistic view of

the world no longer holds good for the Christian, or at any rate only

in a modified form. The Christian lives in God's world, and he is lord

thereof. The theory of sin is an apologetic means for the awakening of

faith; when once this end has been attained, it gives way to other

conceptions.

It is evident that the apostle's apologetic is very far removed from

the preaching of Jesus. Jesus was no pessimist, and yet He surely knew

what was in man, and knew that no one was good. Children and birds and

flowers were His delight. He rejoiced in God's love and in the good men

whom He met. St Paul first violently extinguished every other light in

the world so that Jesus might then shine in it alone. This exaggeration

of the truth in the service of apologetics was the more fatal that the

Church soon began to turn this pessimism to good account.

The Crisis. Jesus the Saviour.

In the scheme of St Paul's missionary preaching the message of the

judgment and of death is followed by that of the crucified and risen

Son of God. Here we have the heart and centre of the Pauline theology.

Here we can see more clearly than in many other cases into the genesis

of his creed. It goes right back to the deep personal experience

connected with the vision of the risen Christ. And this experience

imparts its personal character to the theory, producing an impression

of strength and truth. But the necessity arises for presenting it in an

apologetic form--it is recast from a theological point of view, and it

is only now that it assumes the outer form with which we are familiar.

What did Paul learn of Jesus? For what was he indebted to Him?

He did not know Jesus upon earth, and only learnt some facts of His

life by hearsay. His personal acquaintance with Jesus was only brought

about by means of the vision on the road to Damascus. Here he saw the

heavenly Jesus, the risen Lord, the Spirit, and was called by Him to be

an apostle. Hence the Resurrection of Jesus comes to be a fact of very

far-reaching influence for him. Death's reign is at an end.

Eternity--the spirit world--enters in triumph into the world of sense.

The morrow of the new day has dawned. Now, as the call at Damascus is

the starting-point for the whole of St Paul's new life, the

resurrection has really become the foundation of his religion for him.

A new light is forthwith shed upon the crucifixion likewise. Before

this the Cross was the greatest stumbling-block, as it apparently

refuted the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah. But no sooner was He

accepted as the risen Lord than it came to appear as something divine.

It was the means of salvation. By the sacrifice on the Cross God's

message of love and grace was conveyed to man. These seem to us to be

theological reflections. But the sense of pardon and blessedness which

Paul derived from the Cross was a real personal experience. Henceforth

it is for him the fixed centre round which all history turns, the

source of all comfort, of all peace with God. St Paul sees the motto

"God for us" written in great letters over the Cross.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that this experience is the root of

St Paul's Christology. The articles of his creed, however, are a great

deal more than the expression of this experience. In them as they have

now come down to us we can hear the Christian apologist speaking. One

instance above all others will serve to make this point clear. As the

result of his experience St Paul might have said: "As for me, it was at

the foot of the cross that I first learnt what God's love meant." But

instead of this we read in the letters: "No man can attain to the

certainty of this atonement save in the cross alone." That is the

language of the apologist. Hence the extension to all men, the proof of

necessity, the exclusion of all other possibilities. This applies to

al] St Paul's statements about the crucifixion and resurrection: how

much more to the development of the doctrine concerning the Son of God,

where there is no personal experience to build upon.

The Cross, the Resurrection, the Son of God--these are three new great

starting-points in the Pauline Christology. In the Cross he proclaims

God's love, in the Resurrection the dawn of the world that is to come,

in the Son of God the pattern for all Christians. Since St Paul wrote,

these are the three subjects of all Christology.

The Proof of the Love of God.

The first portion of St Paul's apologetic had presented the Gentiles

before the judgment-seat of God in all their sin and moral degradation.

The wrath of God was all that they could expect. There was no means of

escaping from this wrath by their own power or by sacrifices of their

own. And then, when they were thus distressed and despairing, he brings

them this surprising proof of God's love. Even before St Paul, the

death of Jesus had become the object of theological thought. This had

been caused, above all, by the controversy with the Jews. As the Jews

interpreted the death of Jesus as a divine punishment, the Christians

opposed them with an explanation of that death by which the innocence

of Jesus was securely established. His death was, it is true, a

punishment--thus far they acknowledged their opponents to be in the

right--but not for His own sin, but for the guilt of the Jewish people.

It came to be a definite article of the Christian creed that Jesus died

for the sins of those that repent and set their hopes upon His death.

When once Paul became a Christian, he accepted this explanation. All

that he did was to add additional conceptions of sacrifice,

propitiation and redemption, employing the terms of the professional

theologians. The theory of sacrifice is repeated in countless

variations in his letters, now in a legal, now in a ceremonial form,

and again in both together. It was really through St Paul that the

thought of Jesus' death, of sin, and of the atonement for sin, first

came to be inseparably connected. St Paul's greatness is not, however,

constituted by this rationalism--for such we must term the arithmetical

manipulation of the death of Jesus--but by an entirely new appreciation

of the Crucifixion.

In the first place, he removed the death of Jesus from its narrow

Jewish setting and placed it in the centre of the world's history. He

attached so immense a significance to this propitiatory sacrifice that

all petty legal categories were felt to be comparatively unimportant.

Jesus did not die for the sins of a few Jews alone, but for all

mankind; nay, more, even for the world of spirits. The explanation of

this fact is that no ordinary righteous man died on the Cross, but the

Son of God, the highest object of the divine love. What need after this

for any other sacrifices, means of propitiation, acts of penitence--in

fact, of any human works? The propitiatory death of Jesus occupies the

place of all that was ever done to gain God's grace. There was nothing

left to be done by men, or even by angels, than just to accept this

propitiatory sacrifice. But in the next place St Paul's interpretation

of this sacrifice started from above and not from below. It is not that

a sacrifice is to be brought to God which is to change His wrath into

mercy. Such had been men's thoughts before, but God is the agent, the

sacrificer, the propitiator: and the motive of His action is love, and

nothing but love. That was an entire reversal of the usual point of

view, and we find it clearly and consciously employed by St Paul in all

the chief passages of his letters: God was in Christ reconciling the

world unto Himself. God gave His own Son for us, to show us that He

would give us all. God shows His love for us in that while we were yet

sinners Christ died for us. By thus proclaiming aloud the love of God

the apostle really does away with the necessity for all legal and

propitiatory thoughts. If the conception of sacrifice still remains, it

is transformed into a mere symbol. It is not God who loves us that

needs the sacrifice, but we men need the certainty that the act of

propitiation has taken place. At bottom, the death on the Cross is not

a means of propitiating God, but a symbol of His grace for men.

It is true, however, that the influence of Jewish modes of thought

again makes itself felt here in the exaggerated estimate of the single

historical fact. As before the whole process of man's moral degradation

was derived from Adam's fall, accompanied by sin and death, so now all

God's grace is gathered together from the whole course of history, and

concentrated in the death of Jesus. Paul actually denies that God ever

pardoned before the death of Jesus; at any rate, he maintains that it

was only now that His grace was made manifest. Had he not in his

apologetic zeal already extinguished every other light in the world?

This new light must now therefore illuminate the whole world and the

whole course of history both forwards and backwards. This exaltation of

the one historical fact was not so dangerous for Paul, who expected the

end of the world in the near future, as for later ages, which were

thereby nothing less than robbed of their faith in the living God. It

must, moreover, be remembered that the historical fact can never be

intelligible without the theological interpretation. One of two results

is bound to follow. Either rationalism gains the upper hand, and

defines the necessity of the death of Jesus, attaching a legal or

ceremonial value thereto; or the paradoxical and the miraculous

elements prevail, and then there remains nothing but faith in the

unintelligible mystery. Both results can be traced in St Paul's

writings. The same man boasts of the folly of the Cross, and defines

the ways of the wisdom of God.

Here the old and the new lie side by side. To the former belong the

theory of sacrifice and the rationalism, which attains to its position

of influence in the Church through none other than Paul himself, to the

latter the paradox that God's love is manifested in the Cross. Now this

statement, when properly understood, annuls the theory of sacrifice,

and approximates to the thought of Jesus that even death and suffering

come out of God's hand. But when St Paul narrows the statement,

maintaining that God's grace is visible only in the Cross, then he

departs from Jesus' teaching, who saw God's love poured out upon

mankind in all that He gave them both in trouble and in joy.

The reason of this is that St Paul, as an apologist, is obliged to

narrow the road that leads to God's love, so that it must perforce pass

through the Christian faith alone, and therein he sets no good example

to the Church.

The Dawn of the Coming World.

The Resurrection of Jesus was an unparalleled event; the sovereignty of

death was at an end; he that had ears could hear the first peal

sounding for the general resurrection to usher in the world that was to

come. From the invisible world Jesus stepped forth once more into the

world of phenomena, and so testified still more clearly to the fact

that the new world was close at hand.

St Paul, who was himself vouchsafed an appearance of the risen Christ,

grasped the meaning of the Resurrection of Jesus: the old world is

passing away, the new world is at hand. Thereby the Christian hope

received a mighty accession of strength. Again and again we have these

two statements coupled together. As surely as God awakened Jesus so

surely will He awaken us. But such were the thoughts of the earliest

Christians as well. What is new in St Paul's conception of the

resurrection is the meaning that he discovers in it for this present

life.

The positive and negative elements seemed to him to be necessarily

combined in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus. The Son of God had

come into this world only to die because of it, and to succumb to its

evil powers. But no sooner was He awakened from the dead than His life

began in the world beyond, the true world.

All this seemed to Paul to be typical and symbolical, and that in very

many ways. Did it not imply that man had bidden farewell to all the

former world, and that the new world had already dawned? Death, sin,

the flesh, the descent from Adam--their power was broken, their reign

was at an end, But the new sun was fast rising, and its rays were

already illuminating the Christian life.

To express this in theological language was, however, rather more

difficult. Again we have an historical fact--to be sure, it was a

miracle--to start with. Now, was this miracle to imply the transition

from the old world to the new? It was evident that death, sin, and the

flesh still continued in the world. The Resurrection of Jesus did not

put an end to all this. Nevertheless, St Paul persists in connecting

the crisis in the world's history with this one fact.

The end of death is, of course, one of the things to be awaited. But

flesh and sin are to be laid aside. How can that be done, seeing that

Paul himself still lives in the flesh, and very many Christians still

in sin? St Paul gives two explanations, and the one contradicts the

other.

On the one hand, as he looks at life as it really is, he takes refuge

in ethical theory, in the categorical imperative. Christ's death and

resurrection ought to imply for all Christians the death of their own

sin and selfishness, and the beginning of the new life. On all

occasions St Paul insisted clearly and impressively on this imperative.

On the other hand, his metaphysical pessimism impels him to accept a

theory which brings the powers of nature on the scene, and maintains

that flesh and sin have been overcome in the tragedy of Jesus' death.

Seeing that men have been described by him as under the dominion of

evil powers of nature, there is no room for a purely ethical solution.

Somehow or other these natural powers must be vanquished and rendered

innocuous by the death of Christ. This St Paul really did maintain, but

never in a very convincing fashion.

As a matter of fact these theories are concerned with the other-worldly

character of Christianity. That beautiful passage in Colossians: "Seek

the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of

God . . . . your life is hid with Christ in God," tells us what is St

Paul's object. The Christian is to have his gaze turned towards the

future with eager longing and zeal for righteousness; he is even now to

be a citizen of the heavenly country. Here St Paul quite coincides with

Jesus, only that Jesus points to the kingdom of heaven that lies in

front, while St Paul goes back to the resurrection of Jesus and bases

his argument upon that fact. In the apostle's insistence on the

beginning of the Christian's new life even here and now, we may find a

further parallel to the belief which Jesus entertained--it is true,

only for a time--in the actual commencement of the kingdom of heaven.

And yet, even here we can trace the prejudicial influence of St Paul's

apologetic interest. He is compelled to derive postulates from this one

fact to which nothing corresponds in reality. It is, to be sure,

nothing to be wondered at that he to whom the appearance was vouchsafed

should exaggerate the value of Jesus' resurrection. Nevertheless it was

a misfortune for the new religion, and in contradiction with the

progressive spirit of Jesus, that the one miracle in the past thereby

became the foundation for Christianity.

The Son of God who came down from Heaven.

St Paul was not acquainted with the historic Christ during His life

here on earth. He merely heard men speak of Him. He thus became

familiar with all manner of instances of His love, humility, and

kindness, and apparently he told his Greek converts of them. These,

however, did not form the basis of his theology. The most important

element in that are the titles. The knowledge of the titles and of

their value compensates for the lack of personal knowledge. How could

it be otherwise? If one knows Jesus oneself, all titles are inadequate;

if one does not, then one just extracts from the titles all that is

capable of extraction.

St Paul had three titles from which to choose--all three had been

commonly used of Jesus in the earliest Christian community: Messiah,

Son of Man, Son of God.

The title of Messiah--the Greeks said Christ--is naturally retained by

St Paul, were it but for the Jews' sake. He employs the word in the old

eschatological sense, as the Lord of the kingdom of heaven that is at

hand, and also, with but little of its original meaning, as a mere

title of Jesus. He nowhere attaches any new signification to it. He

himself awaits the advent of Messiah, earnestly looks forward to the

day of Messiah, and considers all Christians to be living in

expectation of Messiah's revelation. His idea of the Messiah is that of

the apocalypses. He conquers Antichrist and vanquishes Beliar;

doubtless He is surrounded by all the hosts of heaven just as He is

represented in the apocalyptic pictures. And he likewise expects the

judgment of Messiah when God shall grant Him to sit upon His

judgment-seat. But this Jesus that is yet to come is of almost less

importance for St Paul than the Jesus who has come already. Besides

thus looking forward into the future we find him--more and more

frequently--looking back upon the Cross and the Resurrection. Besides,

he feels that the word Christ has a strange sound for Greek ears, and

conveys no clear meaning. He therefore introduces two Greek titles in

its stead: Lord and Saviour. The word Lord is introduced as an

equivalent for Messiah into the official formulae used at baptism;

Jesus the Lord, no longer Jesus the Christ. Such is the shortest of

these formulas. The word Saviour, or helper, is intended to explain to

the Christians what they are to expect in the coming Messiah: the

eschatological sense still largely prevails. He is not yet the Saviour

upon earth. Now, as both Lord and Saviour were attributes universally

applied to gods and kings, both these titles introduced by St Paul came

to be the means, contrary to his intention, of separating Jesus

altogether from the Messianic picture and of bringing Him nearer to the

dignity of the Godhead.

The second title--Son of Man--St Paul abandoned, as it could only have

denoted Jesus' human descent for the Greeks--quite contrary to the

sense of the Hebrew word. But instead he calls Jesus the Man.' It is

possible that he intended this as the right Greek translation of the

oldest title. "The man from heaven" would then be the last reminiscence

of the passage in Daniel where the "Son of man is expected from

heaven."

Unfortunately we cannot determine with sufficient certainty whether St

Paul, in making use of his idea of the heavenly man or second man,

started from the title, Son of Man, that was used in the primitive

community. For in any case he created something new and original,

whatever the preliminary stages may have been. The abrupt break of

continuity with the national Christology and the conception of Jesus'

world-wide mission are both revealed in this title. Jesus appears to be

so great to St Paul that He can only be compared with the first man,

the father of the human race. Where Adam fell back He goes forward, and

He recovers what Adam lost. So Jesus is assigned His place in the

world's history, the division of which into the period before and the

period after Christ, dates from this magnificent conception of St

Paul's. Nowhere else is the universality and novelty of Christianity

expressed as simply as here. Only we must remember that it is ideas and

not facts with which we are now concerned. It is not the historical

Jesus who is compared with Adam, but the ideal man with the sinner.

Besides, St Paul himself frequently varied these thoughts. In one place

you will find the whole contrast is made to consist in the difference

of natures: Adam earthly, Jesus heavenly. In another, in the difference

of the act: Adam disobeyed, Jesus was obedient. The explanation is that

on each occasion he is pursuing a different aim. In order to bring out

clearly the sequence of the present and the future world, he contrasts

the lower and the higher nature of the two prototypes. But when he

wishes to guarantee the certainty of the life eternal to the

Christians, he demonstrates that equally important consequences for

their descendants have resulted from the deeds of these two

progenitors.

But how are we the descendants of Christ? There is no answer. Neither

does the comparison of the consequences hold good. Adam's descendants

died; Christ's followers die also. At bottom, then, no very great

service is rendered by this comparison. It dazzles one at first, but

cannot be carried out. It is a brilliant idea entertained by St Paul

for a time but afterwards abandoned. The meaning of Jesus cannot be

clearly expressed by changing and playing with such antitheses.

There remains yet one title--the Son of God as the centre of Pauline

theology. The word Son of God' had already been used by the earliest

community, but in a very harmless sense. It denoted Jesus as the

favourite of God, His confidant, knowing His ways better than anyone

else. In the 2nd Psalm, too, the words "This day have I begotten thee

"denote the divine election and nothing more. St Paul gives the words

Son of God an altogether new and mythical sense; for the Greeks alas it

was only too intelligible. The Son of God is a heavenly being who has

been with God from before the ages. He is more than man, for He became

man. It is not impossible that rabbinical doctrines as to intermediate

beings supported St Paul in this thesis. It is, at any rate, very much

like the Rabbis, when from the passage in Scripture, "God created man

after His own image," St Paul drew the conclusion that a separate

being, "the image of God," must therefore already have been in

existence in heaven, and that this "image of God" was none other than

the Son. But St Paul's experience, the vision of Christ, was the

decisive factor. As he here saw Jesus as a heavenly being in glory, so

he had to picture Him to himself as existing from the beginning of

time. The faith in this Son of God that descended from heaven is a

consequence of the vision of the Son of God in heaven. By means of his

vision St Paul became the creator of the new Christology, which drew

its inspiration, not from history, but from something above it--from a

mythical being, and which won over the heathen for this very reason.

But what is the relation of the Jesus of history tothis Son of God? St

Paul's thesis is an exceedingly surprising one, but it bears the stamp

of a man of genius. "The Son of God became a man such as we are, that

we men might become sons of God as He is." Thus the leading theme had

been furnished for the whole long history of Christology.

St Paul used the words "man such as we are" in a very strict sense

indeed. Jesus had been born of a woman. He had taken upon Himself our

physical nature. He died on the Cross and was buried. He even died of

weakness and to pay the debt of sin. Had the Docetae then existed they

would have found no more determined opponent than the apostle himself.

For the death on the Cross, which was their chief rock of offence, was

the apostle's glory. If he occasionally uses the equivocal expression,

homoioma,' picture or likeness, then he would merely say that the Son

of God, who is originally of a different nature, now became such as we

are. Neither, however, does the later doctrine of the twofold

nature--the opinion that in Christ Jesus a heavenly being was united to

a human find any support in St Paul. Jesus, while upon earth, was for

him a man, not a man and Son of God, first flesh then spirit, not both

together. One thing only separates Jesus from all other men, His

sinlessness, which has of necessity to be postulated for the theory of

sacrifice. With this one exception nothing separates Him from

ourselves. However often He may be set up as our pattern, nothing is

ever said of a special spiritual organization, or of a second nature.

Doubtless this whole point of view is a myth from beginning to end, and

cannot be termed anything else. It was as a myth, as a story of a God

who had descended from heaven, that the Greeks immediately accepted it.

And yet the form of the myth is, it must be granted, Jewish. God is in

no wise drawn down into the world of sensible human phenomena; the

thought of an incarnation of the Deity would be pure blasphemy for St

Paul. It is not God but the Son of God alone who thus descends into

this world. But the personal life of the historical Jesus does not

exist for this theory.

The way in which St Paul, however, imparts an ethical meaning to his

myth is very admirable. The coming down of the Son of man to a life of

service and obedience forms the pattern of our humility and sacrifice.

The whole of the great Christological passage in the letters to the

Philippians has an ethical and practical purpose. But how much more

simply did Jesus teach His disciples the lesson of humility by the

example of His life upon earth without any mythological background! As

everywhere, St Paul finally reaches the thought of Jesus, but here in

so dangerous and roundabout a fashion that the Jesus of history is

completely smothered up by the myth of the heavenly Son of God.

Paul and Jesus.

The Cross, the Resurrection, the Son of God who descended from

heaven--these are the three great innovations of the Pauline

Christology. In the Gospel of Jesus they are almost entirely wanting,

yet St Paul's object is to express evangelical thoughts by means of

them. The comparison between the Master and the disciple is especially

instructive:--

1. Jesus.--God is our Father, and has been always and everywhere. He

showers down His love upon us by the gifts of food and raiment, by

abundant pardon, by deliverance from the evil, by the promise of the

kingdom that is to come. All that Jesus does and says is meant to

confirm man's faith in the love of God the Father.

Paul.--In the Cross of Jesus God gives the whole world a proof of His

pardon and His love. Without that there is no certainty of the

atonement. Only he that believes in the Cross has the true God.

So speaks the ecclesiastical apologist according to the principle that

outside of the Church--that is, the community of those that believe in

the Cross--there is no salvation.

2. Jesus.--The kingdom of God is at hand. It is to be the aim of the

disciples' longing, and is to give them strength for a new life in

righteousness. Jesus leads His disciples onwards till they can walk in

the light of eternity.

Paul.--The Resurrection of Jesus is the proof that the world to come is

already beginning. Even now the Christian is risen with Jesus and has

entered into life eternal.

So speaks the apologist, who is bound to give palpable proofs for the

promised realities, and thereby confuses facts and postulates.

3. Jesus.--Through His teaching and His example He redeems men, so that

they become the children of God, and lifts them up to a life of love

and humility.

Paul.--The Son of man came down from heaven upon earth so that we might

have a pattern in His self-humiliation, and through Him become the

children of God.

So speaks the apologist, who himself knew not Jesus, for whom therefore

the mythical picture had to effect that which the impression made by

Jesus wrought in the earlier disciples.

The consequences of the great innovation were boundless. Jesus was

presented to the Greeks in the shape of a mythical drama. Once again

they had a new myth, and that, too, derived from the immediate present.

And this conquered the world. The simple teaching of Jesus of Nazareth

had never been able thus to win its way to victory, for the world was

not yet ripe to receive the impression of a great personality by

itself. That which was great and redemptive in Jesus had to suffer

itself to be wrapped up in the heavy coverings of dogma; even in St

Paul it lives and works mightily therein. In spite of all, it must be

deemed fortunate that Jesus was preached to the world by St Paul. After

all, side by side with the thoughts about Him came the Master Himself.

The Salvation of the Faithful.

After preaching the crucified and risen Son of God, St Paul's next step

in the course of his missionary labours was to gather the faithful into

communities, to purify their life in common, and so to regulate it that

it might become a haven for the individual and the means of his

salvation. Passing now to theory, we find the doctrine of the salvation

of the faithful built up upon these facts. Here, too, the foundation is

formed by St Paul's experience both of his own nature, and especially

of his missionary communities; but it is only after revision in the

interests of Church defence that the theory is completed as we now have

it.

St Paul had himself been converted by the appearance of the risen Lord.

He had felt an entire breach of continuity with the past, the death of

his former life, a changed estimate of all values, of all frames of

mind. But at the same time he felt the growth of a new life within

himself since that meeting with Christ. Powers burst forth into being,

of the existence of which he had had no previous knowledge. He himself

began to speak with tongues, to behold visions, to catch glimpses of

the world beyond. So powerfully did he feel the nearness of God that he

was compelled to fall upon his knees and to cry out "Abba, Father."

Peace and joy, blessedness, freedom from all anxious care, took up

their abode within him. The contest against all the powers of evil

seemed no longer so terrible. Victory was at hand. He felt himself to

be more than human--a giant, a hero: "I can do all things through Him

that strengtheneth me." All this called for an explanation, and Paul,

in accordance with the whole of his psychology, could only find it in

the Spirit' which had miraculously been imparted to him.

The experience he had gathered in the course of his missionary work

seemed to him to point in the same direction. Here he saw the servants

of sin, the scum and offscouring of mankind, carried away by a passion

ate religious enthusiasm from the very moment that he began to preach,

and often even strengthened so as to overcome their sins. Many were the

miracles that he witnessed among his converts--manifestations of power,

such as the healing of diseases, the speaking with tongues, prophecies,

but also miracles of conversion. All this could proceed from nothing

but the Spirit, especially because of the frequent ecstatic

accompaniments. But here the value of the communities was far more

evident than in St Paul's own case, who had become a Christian without

any ecclesiastical instrumentality. Permanent converts were to be found

only within the communities. Like stars in the world, so these

Christian congregations shone along the shores of the Mediterranean.

Here was a visible and palpable proof that the coming world was very

near at hand.

Both these factors, the personal experience as well as the results of

the missionary journeys, must be remembered if one would understand the

doctrine of redemption. But the third factor--the apologetic motive is

not long in making its influence felt. The results of experience are

universalized and completed. The ecclesiastical interest acquires clear

expression for the first time in a theory concerning the value of the

Church as an organized body. The word ekklesia' is of course but little

mentioned as yet, but all the more is said of Faith, of the Spirit, of

Baptism, which together constitute the Church. But at the same time

even the most determined apologist cannot shut his eyes to the

imperfection of the communities and of the redemption by means of them.

The patch work character of the whole of this earnest of the world to

come is only too evident. Hence the theory concerning the postulates

for the future world succeeds the theory concerning the experiences in

the present; the doctrine of salvation by the Church is followed by

eschatology.

The Theory of the Experiences.

St Paul recognizes as the root of the Christian's new life a single

definite force: the Spirit of God or of Christ. This force does not

work directly, but only through the means of grace. The inner means is

faith; the outer are the Word, the Church and the Sacraments. Now,

though the Spirit works upon men through these media an entire change

of the inner and outer man is seldom effected: there are. obstacles in

the way. Such obstacles are the flesh, the sin that still remains,

suffering and death. The Christian's duty is to endeavour to overcome

these obstacles. He actually does this partly through faith and moral

effort, partly through hope in the coming perfection. Thus the theory

of the experiences leads on quite naturally to the theory of the

postulates for the future world. Such, then, is the arrangement of the

following section.

i.

The power that effects the believer's salvation is the Spirit. Although

St Paul occasionally speaks of the Spirit as though it were

matter--e.g. the outpouring of the Spirit--yet he regards it usually as

distinctly a force. As such it is included under the strict law of

natural causation, only that it is a cause of a higher order. Like all

forces, it can only be described by its effects.

The effects of the Spirit are exceedingly manifold, and range from the

extraordinary to the normal, from the miracle to ordinary virtue.

First of all come the physical effects--the forces' in the general

sense of the word. According to the popular conception there is not

merely one Spirit, but as many Spirits as there are manifestations of

force. One Spirit causes the speaking with tongues, another the

interpretation thereof, another prophecy, another healing. St Paul

himself writes of the Spirits in three passages of the first letter to

the Corinthians. He there speaks of the Corinthians as "eagerly seeking

for spirits," each desiring to gain as many as possible for himself. We

should to-day speak of these phenomena as the elementary effects of the

religious impulse in the psychical and physical domain. St Paul himself

was a master in glossolaly, more than all the Corinthians. No wonder

that many caught fire at his enthusiasm. Such experiences are

contagious. But little was wanting to make the whole of the Christian

Church resemble a company of madmen. The apostle now, however,

proceeded to allay the excitement, and that by summary measures. First

of all he gathered all these different spirits under one heading: they

are the various manifestations of the one Spirit of God. His object in

so doing was to put an end to all jealousy and envy. The same Spirit

gives to each one severally as He will. In the next place he sternly

represses the wildest and least intelligible expression of this

enthusiasm--the speaking with tongues--compares it with prophecy, and

assigns a higher place to the latter because the understanding has a

share in it and the whole Church is thereby benefited. That was a

reversion of the order of precedence in the community. The undue

exaltation of an egoistic mysticism was thereby effectually prevented.

But finally, he places even prophecy itself far beneath love, "the more

excellent way," which is alone eternal: the doing of the simplest

Christian duties is of greater value, in his sight, than the most

exceptional gifts of insight and foresight. For all that, he allows a

certain value to all those manifestations of the Spirit--they, too, are

divine. At Thessalonica he went so far as to take up arms in defence of

prophecy against mockers and doubters. His object is just this, that

the Christians should learn to find their way out of enthusiasm and the

extraordinary into plain and sober everyday life. And this object is

best served by his insertion of 1 Cor. xiii. in the midst of his

dissertation on spiritual gifts.

To quench this exaggerated spiritual exaltation St Paul places the

exact opposite of speaking with tongues at the head of the gifts of the

Spirit, viz., the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. As he is

speaking of nothing but extraordinary things, he must, in the first

place, mean a speaking of God and the Divine which appears suddenly and

unexpectedly, like a revelation, and surprises all that listen. The

lightning thought of wisdom reveals the presence of the Spirit. But

that is not all. St Paul teaches that the whole body of Christian

knowledge, all those thoughts the possession of which constitutes the

preeminence of Christians over Jews and Gentiles, can be traced to the

Spirit. Every Christian teacher may boldly step forth with the claim

that he is bringing an inspired message, and every layman who calls

Jesus Lord speaks under the impulse of the Spirit. This is the point

from which the representation of the Pauline gnosis will have to start.

Two things are especially important in this derivation of knowledge

from the Spirit. In the first place, the chasm between the supernatural

and the natural has been bridged. Not only the welling forth of

revelation, but the permanent spiritual outfit which should belong to

every Christian, are to be ascribed to the working of the Spirit. At

the same time, however, Christian is contrasted with all non- Christian

knowledge as some thing wonderful and higher. Here we have the origin

of the sharp division in later times between the knowledge of the

natural man and the faith of the Church. The same man who rejects

miracles in the popular sense of the word proclaims the miraculous

character of the new theology all the more loudly.

St Paul sounds the deepest depths when he brings the life of prayer

into connection with the Spirit. Prayer as he describes it in Rom.

viii. is still very closely related to the talking with tongues. The

understanding can go no further. We know not how we ought to pray all

the more does the Spirit work. He comes to our aid, with sighings that

cannot be uttered. But God, that reads the hearts of men, knows what

the Spirit means. St Paul is here thinking of no ordinary prayer--no

Lord's Prayer even. He is thinking of moments of deepest emotion, such

as came over him and others, prostrating them and casting them into a

state of blessedness either of silence or finding utterance in sighs.

Those are the moments when the immediate contact of the soul's inmost

being with the ultimate source of all things is experienced. That which

he here calls Spirit is the mysterious background of our personality,

inaccessible to all our science, working beyond our consciousness. But

St Paul does not confine the Spirit's activity to these rare moments of

exaltation. Every prayer that a Christian utters beginning with the

name of Father proceeds from the Spirit. In every real prayer there is

a communion of the human soul with God. Then the Spirit of God

testifies to our spirit that we are the children of God. Then the love

of God is poured forth in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Then are

we driven,' that is, we feel a higher power coming over us, and then we

experience a feeling of joyful gladness, surest token of God's

presence. All these sentences have an enthusiastic ring about them;

they betray their origin in a great time of storm and stress. Yet some

of this enthusiasm every Christian in every age is bound to carry with

him into his every-day life. Without that certainty which the Spirit

gives us that we are God's children, it is impossible to ascend the

steep and rugged road that leads from this world to the next.

The most important sphere, however, of the Spirit's operations has yet

to be mentioned. St Paul conquered the whole of life for the Spirit and

thence derived all moral action and every virtue in our possession. The

extraordinary is once more the starting-point. A charism--a gift of

grace--is in reality the altogether exceptional privilege of quite

extraordinary persons. Just as there are only certain people who can

prophesy or teach, so there are others who alone understand the

difficult task of serving, of presiding, of ministering to the poor,

because they have been specially endowed by the Spirit with these

gifts. This or that individual Christian can be joyful, or patient, or

chaste in especially difficult circumstances where perhaps every other

would have given up the struggle. The reason of that must be that the

Spirit gave him the power and the endurance. Originally, as in the

previous instance, it was the different spirits of joy, patience, etc.

In every case heroic and extraordinary states of thought and feeling

are originally conceived to be the surest signs of the Spirit's

presence. But from this somewhat narrow starting-point St Paul draws

wider and wider circles which gradually extend over the whole of life:

1 Cor. xiii., Rom. xii., Gal. v., are proofs of this. At first only

heroic manifestations of love were conceived of as the workings of the

Spirit. St Paul leads his Corinthian converts to look upon love as that

power in life which is intended to dominate and transform all that is

common and every-day. At first gifts were only ascribed to abnormal

persons. St Paul leads the Romans to conceive of all Christian feelings

and acts, be they great or small, as the effects of grace. It is not

the excitation of this or that feeling which is to originate from the

Spirit, but the inspiration of the whole life. So radical and complete

is the change that owing to St Paul the words in the Spirit' or through

the Spirit,' which originally denoted an ecstatic condition, came to

mean the same thing as the Christian life. Here the Spirit is naturally

no longer conceived of as a force that comes and goes, but as a

Christian's permanent and abiding possession. And yet how we are

reminded again all at once of the previous popular stages of the

conception! St Paul's gifts' are simply a theological word for the

spirits of the earlier age, only they are no longer external beings,

but faculties and talents immanent in the soul. The strictly causal

conception of the Spirit, leading to determinism, is likewise retained

from the earlier form of the belief. When the Spirit works there is no

room for the free agency of man. St Paul never suffered this

determinism to have any practical consequences, though there was no

escape from the logical results of the whole theory.

But who can fail to recognize that the entire theory of the effects of

the Spirit, which, starting from miraculous forces, derives from one

and the same source all knowledge, the life of prayer and moral action,

is nothing but the description of the Christian ideal drawn by an

enthusiastic apostle? The actual state of things, the condition of the

congregations, corresponded here and there with this ideal, but

contradicted it in the vast majority of cases. A theory of the

Christian life as it should be universally is here built up upon

isolated great experiences. So Paul spoke to the Gentiles that he might

sing the praises of Christianity, and to the Christians in order that

they might be urged on to the attainment of the ideal by the

description thereof. This apologetic character of the doctrine of the

Spirit is rendered still plainer by all that follows.

St Paul terms the Spirit, Spirit of God or Spirit of Christ, and both

phrases mean the same thing. The identification is by no means a matter

of course. It is the apostle's doing, and his object is the

subordination of mysticism, under the influence of the Jesus of

history.

The phrase Spirit of God' is certainly a very obscure expression; its

meaning depends entirely upon the conception of God held by the man

that uses it. He who represents God to himself as the impersonal first

cause of the world, or as the negation of the world, will conceive the

Spirit of God as the mysterious forces of nature which proceed from

this first cause. This conception of God and His Spirit is the cradle

of all the later history of mysticism. The phrase Spirit of Christ,' on

the other hand, is perfectly intelligible, and derives its meaning from

the Jesus of history. Rightly understood, it is bound to render the

evanescence of religion into mysticism utterly impossible.

St Paul's universal experience in founding his congregations was that

they became the scenes of a wild enthusiasm which was certainly

connected with faith in Jesus, but had in reality nothing whatever to

do with Jesus Himself. The breach with their former heathen life, the

concentration of their thoughts on the after world that was so near at

hand, their renunciation of this world, the feeling that they were safe

in port, all combined to drive many Christians into a whirlpool of

religious sensations. The religious life had been aroused, and

dominated them exclusively. Plain civic duties and ordinary everyday

work were neglected. Idleness, ascetic tours de force, selfish

fanaticism, an exaggerated zeal for certain spiritual gifts, were on

the increase. St Paul cut off all that was unhealthy and dangerous. Yet

he still allowed enough and to spare of that enthusiasm to continue,

which originated, not from the influence of Jesus, but from the

untrammelled religious impulse. It is very significant that in speaking

about these gifts of the Spirit--e.g. talking with tongues, healing,

etc.--St Paul never uses the words Spirit of Christ;' just as,

conversely, when he does use them, he never has such manifestations in

view. Without denying the divine element in them, he suggests

indirectly that these phenomena are in no wise specifically Christian.

Indeed, they almost belong more to the universal history of religion

than to the history of the religion of Jesus.

On the other hand, St Paul spares no effort in his endeavour to bring

the Spirit under the influence of Jesus. This he does, firstly, by

forming the expressions Spirit of Christ,' Spirit of the Son of God,'

and next, and in a still higher degree, by placing Christ and the

Spirit side by side with each other, and even identifying them with

regard to their influence upon Christians. This last he effects by a

threefold series of propositions: Christ lives in the believer; the

believer lives in Christ; the believer died and rose again with Christ.

In stating the second of these propositions, even the grammatical

expression which St Paul employed--in Christ'--is exactly parallel to

the words in the Spirit,' which were used in other cases. Now by this

means the whole doctrine of redemption is apparently doubled. We have a

theory of the Spirit and a theory of Christ, the aim of which is, after

all, exactly the same--the renewal of life. Therefore the Spirit and

Christ must be identical, as indeed we should infer from the very

expression Spirit of Christ,' which connects the two conceptions. What,

then, is the meaning of this identity? It is by no means a dilution of

the idea of Christ into any thing impersonal or abstract: this is the

last thing of which the man who had seen Christ would think. On the

contrary, it is the Christianization of the Spirit, who is thereby

transformed from an impersonal force of nature into the historical

influence of the person of Jesus. This is St Paul's great reform. He

firmly established the connection between the Redeemer and the

redemption of believers. These were two separate things for the earlier

Christians. On the one hand was the picture of Jesus, such as it passed

over into the Gospels, and on the other were wonderful phenomena,

tongues, etc., as effects of the Spirit. Between the two there is no

connection, nor can there possibly be any as long as the sphere of the

Spirit's operation is merely the abnormal. St Paul teaches Christians

to recognize the working of the Spirit above all else in the renewal of

their lives, but this is the effect of the teaching of Jesus; Christ

and the Spirit are therefore immediately seen to be one--or, to express

the same thing more concisely, Paul will acknowledge no other power in

the lives of Christians, by the side of the influence of Jesus. The

logical consequence of his reasoning would have been to abandon the

conception of Spirit' altogether in favour of the personal influence of

the historic Christ. It would have been better so for all future time,

for under the title Spirit of God,' all that was alien to the Spirit of

Jesus crept into the new religion. That which hindered St Paul from

drawing this conclusion was at bottom merely the general atmosphere of

thought of the ancient world. Like all the rest of his contemporaries,

the apostle was bound to recognize an immediate divine influence in

these wonders and manifestations of power.

But it was Paul the apologist who completed this subordination of the

Spirit to Christ. The Jews spoke of the Spirit of God, and the Greeks

might also have used the same words. But the Spirit of Christ is

naturally the peculiar possession of Christians. For what purpose

should Christ have come into the world, if it turned out later that

there was another road to salvation apart from Him? On one single

occasion (in Gal. iv.) St Paul speaks of the sending of the Spirit as

of something separate by the side of the sending of the Son; but no, it

is the Spirit of the Son of God Himself. The salvation of believers can

only be effected by the Saviour. St Paul cannot admit any other way.

Without this nexus of conceptions the whole edifice of his apologetic

would be undermined. The doctrine, however, was. it must be admitted,

attended by a peculiar difficulty. We, to day, can speak of the Spirit

of Jesus because we know Jesus from the Gospels. Now St Paul does not

know Him; he only saw the heavenly Jesus, and that for a moment. Where

was the guarantee that he understood the Spirit of Jesus? It is just

here that the continuity with the Jesus of history seems to be broken.

But facts prove that St Paul knew Jesus in spite of all--yes, knew Him

better than all his predecessors. What he brought to the Greeks was no

mere product of his imagination, but the real Jesus with His promise,

His claim and His redemption. When Paul writes, "He that hath not the

Spirit of Christ is none of His," "He that is in Christ Jesus is a new

creature," he is filled with a profound and genuine impression of the

person of Christ, and though it was only as apologist that he gave the

final form to his doctrines, yet in this point he was right. Whatever

of genuine Christian life was lived in the times to come, has its

source exclusively in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, or as St Paul

writes, in the Spirit of Christ.

The means of grace.

The Spirit of Christ does not enter when and where it will. It is bound

to certain outer and inner media. The most important of the latter is

faith. St Paul became a Christian without the help of any

ecclesiastical organization, but not without faith in Christ. He had to

bring that to the vision of Christ which the others had to bring to the

preaching of Jesus. The parallel with the miracles of Jesus here

strikes one's attention. Just as want of faith prevented Jesus from

performing miracles, so the Spirit, in spite of all the forces at its

command, cannot take up its abode with any unbeliever. In neither case

is faith the final cause but solely the condition.

What is faith in this connection? Not primarily that which it came to

be later--the acceptation of a number of formula? as true; just as

little as this was the faith which Jesus demanded. Faith can best here

be defined as readiness and receptivity for the work of redemption.

When Paul begins his preaching of death and judgment, of the Cross and

Resurrection, as God's great acts of redemption, these all depend upon

whether or no his hearer recognizes something divine therein, something

that has to do with his own redemption. He needs not to understand the

connection of the propositions. As soon as it dawns upon him, "this

Jesus concerns me and my salvation," then faith has been awakened in

him. Consciousness of a divine power unto salvation in the mighty drama

of Jesus that, and nothing but that, is faith. Forthwith, peace with

God, the love of God, and the certainty of atonement, make their entry

into the hearts of men. This St Paul himself experienced and perceived

in countless other instances.

If we ask in the next place whether this faith is a free act on the

part of man, or whether it is God working in him, then it is very hard

to say what answer St Paul would have given. The different parts of his

doctrine of salvation are as a matter of fact so closely connected

together that there is very little room for the exercise of man's free

will; in man there dwells no good thing--but yet there is the longing

for salvation. The doctrines of grace and of predestination appear to

exclude any co-operation on the part of man in the work of redemption.

If God determines who is to belong to the saved and to the lost, then

faith as a condition of salvation must be reckoned as a part of that

which God decrees.

But for another reason determinism cannot be said to be St Paul's final

answer. St Paul is a missionary and an apologist. As such, he is bound

to count upon the freedom of his hearers. He would lose his missionary

zeal, the fire of his eloquence and the ardour of his love, if he did

not hope to attain his end thereby amongst men free to choose. He must

often have exclaimed--like a Methodist preacher--"Now is the acceptable

time, now is the day of salvation; be ye reconciled with God. Let not

God's grace be offered you in vain." He who thus appeals to the

feelings of his hearers does not believe that the season of grace for

each individual amongst them has passed long ago. And so we find St

Paul in the Epistle to the Romans counting it a fault in the Jews that

they shut up their hearts against the faith in their false zeal for

righteousness. Even thus it is as yet not active co-operation that is

called for, but something purely passive--readiness to receive God's

gift. Afterwards, it is true, St Paul leaves this, his first position,

far behind him, when he makes salvation depend upon the acceptance of

certain definite formulae; on the faith that Jesus is the Lord and that

God raised Him from the dead, or on faith in His death. Consciously or

unconsciously the ecclesiastical creed has here been forced upon the

apologist, in the place of the mere receptivity of former times. And

the creed at anyrate is a human piece of work. Nay, more, for

apologetic purposes this conception of faith is the only one that is

practical. The preaching of the Church necessitates the ecclesiastical

creed. The way of salvation is through the Church. Since then, this

great word faith' has been used many thousand times to describe the

entrance into the Church for those that stand without and to exhort

them thereto.

Of the external means through which the Spirit of God works upon them

that draw nigh, the word of God is the most essential. Faith is

awakened when the word is preached. In St Paul's own case, of course,

this does not apply. But not every one is called by a vision from

heaven. St Paul's opinion of the importance and power of the word or

Gospel was exceedingly high. In it God's power unto salvation is

brought near to men. Therefore it is God's word and not man's. Here

indeed the apostle is in entire agreement with his Master, whose

employment of parables is a testimony to the importance He attached to

the word. The flood-tides of every religion have always coincided with

the supremacy of the free word and with its exaltation high above all

liturgies, sacraments, and the like. For it is only in the clear word

that both the spiritual and the intelligible elements in a religion

find expression, and behind the word stands the personality of the

apostles. It is just owing to the high estimate which he had of the

word that St Paul looked upon himself and the apostles as means of

salvation. God's message of atonement is only completed through the

apostles, who carry it forth and publish it abroad. It is only where

apostles have been bringing the word of God with them, that faith can

arise and the Spirit enter.

We pass next to that which is really the most important of all the

means of salvation, the Church, i.e. the whole Christian organism. The

demand for faith--i.e. for entrance into the Church--proves that the

Spirit is bound to the Church, and this is further indirectly proved by

the fact that the Spirit nowhere has an abiding place outside of

Christianity. But St Paul also adopted the most appropriate metaphor to

express this theory, the Church as the body of Christ. Therefore Christ

is the Spirit of the Church. There by he unites Christ and the Church

so firmly to each other as only the Catholic system has done besides.

For as yet no need had arisen for the division of the Church into

visible and invisible. This need only arose when it became evident that

the sad experience which even St Paul had had, was not transitory but

belonged to the essence of the Church here on earth. St Paul did not as

yet believe this. He looked at the good and bright sides in his

congregations, and trusted that the bad, however often it appeared,

would meet with a determined resistance and be bound to disappear. The

high esteem in which he did, as a matter of fact, hold his

congregations, here combined with his apologetic thesis that the Spirit

could work upon Christians within the Church alone. The power and the

truth of his apologetic depends upon the former, the actual fact.

Later, when Church and community diverged, it appeared to be a mockery

that the Church should be a mediator of the Spirit of Jesus. Had it not

become the home of all these elements which had gradually grown up in

opposition to the real Jesus? How entirely different was the situation

which St Paul partly already found and partly himself created. There

was a rivalry of love in the Churches, a readiness of sacrifice,

fearless renunciation of the world, a strict morality, mutual

co-operation, a glowing hope for the future, an enthusiastic eagerness

to suffer for Jesus. In spite of much that was disappointing, it must

have been a delight then to strike a blow in defence of the Church.

There was a great element of truth in the proposition, "The Church is

the channel of the Spirit of Christ."

St Paul made a very free use of the metaphors in tended to express the

relationship between Christ and the Church. Now it is body and spirit,

now body and head, and again man and wife. At times he pursues the

image into minute details without much taste, after the manner of

contemporary allegories. But the very change of metaphor proves the

indissolubility of the quantities compared. Christ and the Church form

a unity for St Paul which nothing can put asunder. Now, however new

this relation may be, the value attached to the Church in itself is old

and Jewish. Paul destroyed the Jewish Church for Christians, opposing

the community of believers to the legal organization. These are great

reforms. But the conception of Church itself remained, and to a certain

extent even the way of looking at religion as a constitution. The

thesis, "extra ecclesiam nulla salus," had hitherto only been

maintained by the Jewish theology. Through St Paul it obtained a firm

footing in the Christian communities. Here the apostle of liberty paves

the way for the Catholicism of later times.

The same remark applies to the remaining means of salvation, baptism

and the Lord's Supper. Hitherto they had been valued as signs of

membership, baptism as a condition of redemption besides. But it was

Paul who first created the conception of a sacrament. Any external

acts--here bathing, eating, and drinking--are turned into sacraments as

soon as they are esteemed to be means of salvation. They are thereby

stamped as something different from what they really are: the element

of mystery and the miraculous takes possession of them, they come to be

the instruments of divine power. This result St Paul achieved in the

case of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism was not of supreme

importance for himself personally. It conferred no new gift upon the

man who had been vouchsafed the vision of Christ. As missionary, too,

he had not regarded baptizing as his office. God had not sent him forth

for that. Even the great idea of dying and rising again with Christ

appears in the Epistle to the Galatians without any mention of baptism.

It is only in the Epistle to the Romans that St Paul makes use of it to

elucidate this idea. But here, it is true, he employs altogether

sacramental language of baptism, and parallel passages can be found in

other letters. He would have baptism regarded as a miracle and a

mystery. The baptized convert should believe that he steps forth from

the water a different person to what he was when he entered it. In like

manner he taught of the Lord's Supper, that it was a meal at which one

eats no ordinary bread and drinks no ordinary wine, but partakes of the

body and blood of Christ. It was a spiritual food and a spiritual

drink--i.e. a channel for the conveyance of the powers of salvation. It

is hard to understand how St Paul, who elsewhere always connects

redemption with the Spirit of Christ, here all at once attaches a value

to the body and blood, i.e. to that which was after all perishable in

Jesus. The reason probably is that he found here an institution already

existing which could only obtain a place in his spiritual doctrine of

salvation with extreme difficulty. But he did find a place for it, and

thereby made it a sacrament. He had to educate his heathen converts,

and with this end in view it appeared to him to be important that they

should clearly realize their redemption in certain ceremonial actions.

As a matter of fact he only confused them thereby, dragging them down

from the spiritual sphere into that of natural magic. It appears to us

at the present day exceedingly strange that the hero of the Word should

at the same time have become the creator of the sacrament. He

himself--every one who knows anything about St Paul knows that--needed

no ceremonial magic, as the Spirit within him testified to him of God's

love, and Jesus had set him free from the ceremonies of the law. But

through the reception of the sacraments into his doctrine of

redemption, he has himself a share in the origin of that Catholicism

which made him a saint while at the same time it stamped out his

spirit.

Obstacles to Salvation, and the way to overcome them.

Salvation as St Paul conceives of it, is in its essence the imparting

of a divine power. Men cannot save themselves--they are sick,

powerless, and prisoners. Then there comes to their help the power that

has its origin in the world beyond, the Spirit. He takes over the

guidance into his hands as effective cause. We ourselves are passive

instruments driven by the Spirit. The aim of salvation is that the

power from beyond should permeate everywhere and dominate all,

absorbing entirely everything that is fleshly and sinful. Then shall

the next world, the new heaven and the new earth, have come unto us.

But do we even attain to a complete salvation here in this world--when

everything that is old hath passed away and all things have become new?

No; salvation by the Spirit is thwarted by certain obstacles which stop

its progress. Death is still with us, and announces its approach by

sufferings which ever remind us of our perishable nature and drag us

down from the heights of enthusiasm. The flesh is by no means dead or

absorbed. The Christian feels his lusts and passions only too keenly.

And sin? St Paul met with it at every step among his converts. At

Corinth alone incest, fornication, lawsuits about property, party

strife. And had it really departed even out of his own life? "Not that

I have already obtained or am already made perfect." The apostle had by

nature a passionate and irritable temperament, temptations from within

and from without, and at the same time a keen and highly sensitive

conscience. It is inconceivable that he imagined himself free from sin.

Paul was no fanatic to shut his eyes to any unpleasant facts. Whenever

he came across a sin he called it by its name. To hush things up or

decently to throw a veil over them was never his way. He remained

unaffected by the flowers of Greek rhetoric. It would be truer to say

that he occasionally formed too gloomy a picture of the state of the

whole community because of the sins or failings of a few. But he never

lost courage. He clings firmly to his. apologetic theory of the ideal

of redemption without admitting any limitations, and he sets to work to

look the obstacles that lie in the way straight in the face and to

overcome them.

First comes the summons to fight against the flesh, sin and the devil,

to fight with all the power of one's will. For it has been proved that

the Spirit alone cannot do it. Man--i.e. his will--is to help the

Spirit to victory by taming the lusts and passions, by hard work and

strict self-discipline. Now here the categorical imperative and the

thought of the end to be achieved reinforce the Spirit working

according to laws of natural causation. Whether this is theoretically

conceivable or not is a matter of indifference. Whenever St Paul

expounds the theory of salvation he ends by this call to duty. And

thereby he rendered experience her due. If we live in the Spirit let us

also walk in the Spirit. We are debtors not to the flesh, but should

through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body. "Mortify, therefore,

the members that are upon earth." The apostle's deep earnestness is

well brought out by the severely ascetic form of these exhortations. He

was able, at any rate, to say of himself that he mortified his own body

and brought it into subjection, lest while he preached to others he

himself should become a castaway. When he actually saw any sin in the

course of his labours he forthwith exclaimed "away with it." For this,

in his opinion, was to constitute the difference between the redeemed

and the unredeemed: that the former should at all times be able to

fight a victorious fight. Through the Spirit he has been raised from

his state of impotence and has become strong and bold. He should have

no lack of courage and faith in victory; the ardent exhortations of the

apostle will furnish him with an ever fresh supply breathing the same

confidence in the power of the good as did the summons of Jesus.

If, however, in spite of all, the believer should have stumbled, then

faith raises itself up again by the Cross of Jesus. For surely God's

love does not cease at our baptism. Why, that is when it really begins

for us. As Christians we are under grace, and have the certainty of

salvation from the wrath that is to come. It is not, of course, from

ourselves that we derive any absolute guarantee of the abiding love of

God. Even though the Spirit may impart to us in our hearts the

certainty of the Sonship, who shall tell us exactly where the Spirit

ceases and one's own wish begins? The moments of ecstatic communion

with God are succeeded, alas, often so swiftly, by hellish states of

depression. The Christian only stands immovably fast in the love of God

when he is not thrown upon his own resources, but can lay hold of what

God Himself has done. It is only when he gazes upon God's love as shown

in the Cross that that comfort is vouchsafed him which is proof against

every trial. Nowhere do we penetrate further into the depths of St

Paul's thoughts, nowhere recognize more clearly his sober sanity, his

distrust of his own feelings, his need of an objective proof besides.

Clearest of all is the following passage in the Galatians: first the

triumphant exclamation:--"It is. no longer I that live, but Christ

liveth in me: . . . ." there is all the joy of the new redeemed life.

This, however, is immediately succeeded by the chastening reflection:

"And that life which I now live in the flesh"; the old is after all not

laid aside, I feel its presence only too often'; but then follows the

brave consolation: "I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of

God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." It is not the Christ

within us but solely the Christ without us, who leads us through all

our anxiety to peace at the last. And from this fact every Christian

may derive the certainty of forgiveness. Accordingly, St Paul

everywhere recommends forgiveness, and himself forgives. As far as we

know, he may have received even the incestuous person into communion

again, when he saw that distress and sorrow were driving him to

despair. Paul was no Tertullian whose rigid sense of justice placed

insuperable obstacles in the path of pardoning love. So he leads his

converts on to the glad faith, that in spite of the sin that doth yet

beset him, the Christian can still remain a child of God, and can look

forward joyfully to the day of judgment.

Our self-discipline and faith in God's love do not, however, fully

remove the obstacles in the way of salvation. Again and again the

Christian finds himself entangled in this present evil world. Only one

thing helps him in every difficulty, and that is hope. Hope alone

permits the Christian to look at the world as it is, and to escape

depression without wrapping himself up in any fictitious optimism. We

walk by faith, not by sight. We are, it is true, saved, yet by hope.

Here we see in a mirror darkly, and all our knowledge is fragmentary.

We ourselves, though we have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan

within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of

the body. The Spirit is an earnest of our future state, and not that

state itself. Never did any man realize the imperfection of our present

state more sincerely or truly. That is why no one can call him an idle

enthusiast. This recognition, however, of the defects of our present

state is but the necessary negative condition attaching to the positive

hope in which St Paul's message centres. This present world passeth

away, and the salvation which has here been begun will soon be

completed.

This leads us on of itself to the theory of the postulates for the

future. The decisive factor here, however, is not the picture of his

fancy, but the power of the yearning which draws its comfort thence.

For this yearning Paul found words--think of the song of creation's

earnest expectation--which still to-day fill us, "ripae ulterioris

amore"! For the details of eschatology are always more or less the

product of this or that particular age, and therefore negligible for

later ages. But the yearning itself, with all its consequences for the

life of the apostle, courage, consolation, joy and patience, is that

which speaks to men in all ages. The concluding verses of the 8th

chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which trust in God is

expressed as nowhere else in the New Testament, follow immediately

after the song of the earnest expectation; and were it not for this

confident hope in the future, they would lack all sound foundation.

By thus striving to overcome the obstacles on the road to redemption

through work, faith, and hope, the Christian at length attains to the

certainty of salvation, so that he can stand on the everlasting

foundations even now, in the midst of tribulation and distress. The

assurance of salvation is explained by the theory of election--Paul

starts from the following proposition: That which is eternal cannot

have arisen in time. If the Christian, therefore, is certain of his

eternal salvation, then this must have been determined upon by God

before all time. God chose certain individual men and women before the

creation of the world, even those who possess this certainty, and

foreordained that they should become brothers of Christ and children of

God. In consequence of this election by God, all that happens to them

for their salvation follows in an inevitable succession. Every

imaginable evil may befall such chosen children of God--it matters not,

their lives are marked out for them, they must reach the goal. All

works for their good and brings them nearer to the goal. Even were a

devil to get possession of them, he would have to work God's will and

bring them forward on the road to salvation. So St Paul thought of

himself: God separated me from my mother's womb: so each true Christian

may think, and from this standpoint count his whole past with all its

guilt as a part of God's plan.

St Paul thought that all Christians should attain to this consciousness

of election. He did not, however, transmit his belief to the Church.

Experience showed only too plainly that being baptized and being saved

are too different things. The individual is to attain to salvation in

the Church but not through the Church. St Paul prescribed no particular

method for the acquisition of the assurance of salvation. As tokens he

mentions now the love felt for God, now the faith in the Cross, and now

the voice of the Spirit. In the end it is found to be a personal

experience. No man can tell his brother what it is; he must discover it

himself. God is faithful, and He will complete the good work which He

has begun; so St Paul would reassure those of a wavering and doubting

temperament. Here, however, there is a gap in the apostle's apologetic

system. Strict consistency demanded that entrance into the Church

should guarantee salvation. St Paul meets this demand half-way when he

connects salvation with faith. But he does not pursue this line of

reasoning to its ultimate conclusion. In the end salvation is a matter

which the individual has to settle with his God. Hereby we see that St

Paul was more than an apologist for the Church: he was a disciple of

Jesus.

The Theory of the Postulates for the Future.

Here, too, the needs of the apostle's apologetic system unite with his

personal hopes. The vast edifice of the doctrine of salvation is as yet

unfinished. To complete the structure St Paul will have to look beyond

this present world, so experience teaches him. But the Christian does

not grope about in an uncertain and imaginary future which can be

depicted according to individual fancy. The nature of the future world

can, on the contrary, be safely predicted from our knowledge of the

present. There are two facts which cast a bright light on this future

world: the Resurrection of Christ and the possession of the Spirit.

From the resurrection of Christ we may infer that our own resurrection

will exalt us into a higher state. We shall be transformed, and our

bodies will be like that of Christ. From the possession of the Spirit,

it follows that we shall have a spiritual body, one in which the Spirit

shall no longer dwell as a strange guest. But besides this--here St

Paul is employing the methods of Jewish apologetics--we may learn a

great deal as to the nature of the end of human history from the

description of its beginning in the first chapters of Genesis, for all

things revert to their origin.

From these data we can derive a clear picture of the Pauline

eschatology in its principal features, distinguishing its negative from

its positive elements. All that is hostile to God throughout the whole

sphere of salvation must be conquered, destroyed, or at least subdued.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. They are taken up

into something higher. All the hostile angelic powers are cast down and

subjected to the dominion of Christ. Finally, the last enemy, death, is

vanquished. And, on the other hand, the dead rise up, they enter into

everlasting life, into the spiritual world, as it was in the beginning

of all things. All Nature lays aside once more its garments of

corruption and stands, instead, clothed in glory in the presence of

God. And Christians now have spiritual and heavenly bodies, they are

clothed in the bright robes of Paradise, they are fashioned like unto

the image of Christ and stand around Him like brothers round the first

born. Now all creation is once more good, and God is all in all, as He

was before the creation of the world.

These are the principal features of the eschatology;. they are

perfectly clear and in this form peculiar to St Paul. There are several

features of the Jewish apologetic which point in the same

direction--e.g. the idea of a transformation of the body, but nowhere

so simple and consistent a system. St Paul, it is true, completes this

system by the addition of many traditional details derived from Jewish

apologetics. To the principal features he added: the Antichrist, the

arrival of Messiah, the restoration of Israel, the day of judgment, the

millennium, Paradise and others. The process of transformation is also

conceived in a thoroughly Jewish fashion with many wonders and

catastrophes, and as of old, this earth is to be the scene of the

kingdom of God. But all this is relatively of little importance

compared with that which alone really matters--the immense progress in

the spiritualization of the eschatology. We enter into a new world, a

spiritual kingdom. The earthly joys of Jesus' promise, the glad eating

and drinking at His table, have gone. Paul retains, however, what Jesus

desired above all else--communion with God in a higher, an eternal

state of existence. Taking this, therefore, as the essential, he leaves

all the phenomenal apparatus on one side and so completes the spiritual

process which Jesus had begun. God and eternity--that is the real issue

at stake. The Christian is to strike out of his hope all that is of the

earth, phenomenal and individual; it belongs to flesh and blood, not to

the Spirit.

With these brief indications he has left us a number of unsolved

problems. (1) Is the resurrection and transformation of the body one

event, or are they two separate occurrences which succeed each other

rapidly? On one occasion, St Paul says plainly, the dead shall rise

incorruptible; on another he speaks of the awakening of the mortal

body, when he explains to the Corinthians that the body belongs to the

Lord and not to fornication; and founds his explanation on the message

of the resurrection. He appears to presuppose that this mortal body

will in the first instance rise again. Is it not contained in the very

conception of resurrection and transformation that the old body will

first of all arise from the grave and only after wards be changed? (2)

Does Paul expect a resurrection of all men, or only of Christians? In

the most important chapter he only mentions the resurrection of

Christians, but in the course of his missionary preaching he brings all

the just and the unjust before the judgment throne of God. But even if

the unbelievers participate in the resurrection, the spiritual body

cannot surely be granted them. We do not find any definite mention of

hell--the word itself does not even occur. Is it possible that he

conceived of ordinary death as a final punishment? (3) When does the

judgment take place? Does it coincide with the second coming of the

Messiah? or is it postponed till the end of Messiah's reign, or does it

take place progressively in the gradual victory over the enemies of

God? The conception of the single day of judgment seems to be the

prevailing one. But then can the new body in this case be said to exist

before the final judgment has been pronounced? All these are questions

which admit of no clear answer--for us, but not for St Paul. Probably

St Paul pictured the occurrences in the after-world somewhat after the

manner of the Apocalypse of Baruch. First, all men arise with their

mortal bodies, and thus appear on the day of judgment immediately after

the parousia. Not till then does God deliver His judgment, allotting

death to one man, and to another the transfiguration of the body and

everlasting life. If these suppositions are correct, then St Paul's

position is much more nearly that of the popular hope of the

resurrection than certain phrases in 1 Cor. xv. allowed us to suppose;

in this chapter, however, he is trying to meet the Greeks as far as

possible.

But is it true that all men are condemned either to life or to death?

Isolated texts in St Paul's Epistles appear to give expression to the

bold thought that all men shall be saved. "As in Adam all die, so also

in Christ shall all be made alive." "As through one trespass the

judgment came unto all men to condemnation, even so through one act of

righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of

life." "God hath shut up all unto disobedience that He might have mercy

upon all." On these passages later theologians have based their hope of

a universal restoration. But on insufficient grounds. As soon as the

texts are read in connection with the context it is evident that St

Paul is only thinking of Christians. In his enthusiasm his expressions

are somewhat rhetorical. Surely the great apologist of the Church did

not build up his whole doctrine of salvation, closely connecting each

part with the other, in order finally to cast it on one side. And if in

the whole course of his missionary preaching he starts from the

presupposition that there are lost and saved, two sharply divided

classes, then he does not think of rendering his presuppositions on

which the whole of his work rests illusory in the end. For

clear-thinking ethical natures such of those of Jesus and St Paul, it

is a downright necessity to separate heaven and hell as distinctly as

possible. It is only ethically worthless speculations that have always

tried to minimize this distinction. Carlyle is an instance in our own

times of how men even to-day once more enthusiastically welcome the

conception of hell as soon as the distinction between good and bad

becomes all-important to them.

Other passages in the letters have given rise to the opinion that in

the course of his life St Paul gradually receded more and more from the

Jewish hope of the resurrection and approximated to the Greek hope of

immortality in the after-world. We hear of the apostle's wish to enter

into the eternal house of God in heaven as soon as his earthly

tabernacle is dissolved, or of his longing to depart and be with

Christ. That appears to point to something different to the old hope of

the resurrection. But it is only appearance. The man who composed the

great chapter on the resurrection in First Corinthians had not yet

acquired the chameleon-like qualities of a modern theologian. The hope

which he there expresses is certain truth for which he will live and

die. Even from the imprisonment in Rome he writes: "If by any means I

may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." The resurrection, the

transformation of the body, and the judgment--those are the absolutely

fixed points in the Pauline eschatology, and it is at our peril that we

try to meddle with them. The longing to die and be with Christ is for

him identical with the hope in the resurrection. This longing spans the

chasm that lies between death and the resurrection, and proceeds

straight to the desired goal, to the meeting with Jesus. So likewise

the martyr Ignatius hopes by death to come straight into the presence

of God, passing across the abyss between death and the resurrection, of

which he often makes mention. For the religious hope, death,

resurrection, and the coming into the presence of God are one and the

same thing, always and everywhere, not in St Paul's case alone. And in

like manner the passage as to the dissolution of the earthly tabernacle

and the being clothed upon with the heavenly habitation, refers to the

change at the time of the resurrection and to nothing else. The apostle

would not then be found naked before God--i.e. in his mortal

body--which appears to him to be nakedness (Gen. iii.) compared with

the heavenly body, but he would be clothed immediately in the robes of

glory. At bottom it is a matter of complete indifference to him what

happens to his body before the resurrection. For he has found abiding

comfort in this thought: "Whether we live we live unto the Lord, and

whether we die we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die

we are the Lord's." A man possessing this sure comfort need invent no

new hope for the after-world, but can content himself completely with

the traditional Jewish representations. Beyond the dark passage which

he shall have to traverse he knows that he shall be with Jesus, and

that he shall enjoy the vision of God--that is the goal.

The Pauline eschatology was too exalted for the later Christians, too

poor in the concrete pictures of the imagination. It was not the

letters of St Paul but the Apocalypse that became the handbook for the

doctrine of the last things. Since, however, they drew the longing for

eternity from these letters and suffered his courage, his consolation

and his joy to influence their lives, St Paul's labours in their midst

were not altogether fruitless.

St Paul was the first to build up a great theory of salvation. Before

him salvation had been a matter of experience. No one had described it.

Jesus made children of God of His disciples without uttering one word

about salvation. Through Him they had become established in hope, and

victorious in the pursuit of the good; the anguish of sin no longer

beset them, the cares of this world no longer troubled them; death

itself had lost its terrors. They were God's children, living together

with God as with their father. Upon the basis of this experience--his

own as well as that of others--St Paul built up his soteriology. He

called the power which produced all these single effects the Spirit of

God, and united it with the historic Christ and the Gospel. The Spirit

is nothing but the influence of the personality of Jesus in history.

But St Paul likewise built up this whole theory of redemption as an

apologist in the service of the Church. The Spirit was attached to the

Church and its institutions. He made out all men outside of the Church

to be as bad as possible, he set up the Christ of the Church as the

only Saviour, and praised the Christian ideal, as it is possessed by

the Church, as the greatest thing in the world. Thereby his soteriology

obtained that definite ecclesiastical character with which it shortly

afterwards passed over into Catholicism.

By constructing this theory of redemption St Paul united the Gospel of

Jesus with a cosmology and a theology which in spite of many Jewish

conceptions was bound to be welcomed by the decaying ancient world on

account of its pessimism, its new myths, its ideal, its doctrine of

hope. Jesus, His influence and His Church, were here introduced into

the drama of the great world. All that was merely Jewish and national

was weeded out; there remained the story of the fall and of the

redemption of creation. And conversely, all the hopes and longings, the

thoughts and imaginations of the ancient world came to crystallize

round the person of Jesus, and so acquired consistency and the sense of

reality. Thus, then, the background had been found for Jesus, and the

centre for the philosophy of the world and of salvation. That was the

work of St Paul.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE ANTI-JEWISH APOLOGETIC.

THE contrasts between this world and the next, between Adam and Christ,

the flesh and the Spirit, death and life, are the subjects of the great

theology of salvation. No mention is made of Israel, of its law, of its

peculiar position. These matters do not concern the Greeks. But the

struggle against Jews and Judaizers compelled St Paul to undertake a

learned exposition of his teaching as compared with Judaism. This

struggle had of course to be fought out in the first instance in the

sphere of actual fact. The connection with the synagogue had to be cut

off in all places where St Paul preached, and the Old Testament had to

be brought to the Gentile Christians without the official Jewish

explanation. Then St Paul had stubbornly to defy the whole congregation

at Jerusalem, and at Antioch to withstand St Peter to the

face--fighting, in the first instance, for the freedom of the Gentile

Christians, and in the second for their equality of rights with the

Jewish Christians. More important here than all his learning was the

resolute attitude of his personality. Finally he had to beat back the

attacks of the Judaistic emissaries upon the newly founded Churches,

and to see to it (in spite of all abuse and denunciation) that none of

the newly acquired territory should be lost again. In this struggle

against the Judaizers--it was at the same time the struggle for his

apostleship--St Paul stands revealed to us under his sternest and most

rugged aspect. It is there that he breaks forth into abuse of the false

apostles and messengers of Satan; it is there that he utters the curse

against every one that should preach another gospel, even were it an

angel from heaven. The fact is, that he knows that the very existence

of Christianity is at stake. When finally the most impetuous attack had

been repulsed, there was still no rest for him. For in the meantime,

his other great enemy the Jews remained as powerful as ever. They

denounced him as an apostate and a blasphemer to the Christians at

Rome; they imprisoned him, and all but killed him at Jerusalem; during

his captivity they stirred up all the strife they could in his

churches--e.g. at Philippi. He had to ward off the attacks of these

Jews till the time of his death. Now this struggle against Jews and

Judaizers in actual life naturally led him to engage in a theoretical

campaign, both of attack and defence. His aim and object is ever the

same: the justification of the mission to the Gentiles free from the

bondage of the law. In the explanation of his doctrine, three points

come up for consideration: the criticism and setting aside of the law,

the defence of the reception of the Gentiles on the basis of faith, and

the problem of the prerogatives of Israel. St Paul of course speaks

everywhere from the standpoint of a Christian apologist.

The Law Annulled.

It was a memorable hour when St Paul met St Peter at Antioch, and

fairly placed the alternative before him: Christ or the law. Either the

one or the other. A little while before, at the council at Jerusalem,

he had only proclaimed the freedom of his Gentile converts without

criticising the observance of the law by the Jewish Christians. But now

the law and Christ stood opposed to each other. Paul put the following

question to Peter: Where have we ourselves found our salvation, and

where not? No sooner was the question put in this antithetical form

than the law was annulled. It now took its place amongst those hostile

powers from which Christ has set us free. Henceforth St Paul's motto

was: to die unto the law, in order to be able to live unto God.

Thereby St Paul destroyed the idea that true religion was the legal

system of the Jewish race. His object now was to establish this on a

theoretical basis.

There were many ways in which he might achieve this result. The divine

origin of the law might be questioned. Or secondly, the eternal and the

temporal elements in the law might be separated by means of internal

criticism. There was a third road, which led to freedom from the

law--allegorical interpretation. Finally it could be pointed out that

the law was not the way of salvation, and had been annulled by a new

divine dispensation.

The first method--the denial of the divine origin--was that, e.g.,

pursued later by Marcion, the apostle's zealous follower, but St Paul

himself resisted the temptation. A temptation it was for him in the

heat of the fray with the Judaists, when he wrote the letter to the

Galatians and the second to the Corinthians. At that time he laid great

weight upon the fact that the law had been ordained through angels, by

the hand of a mediator; it did not, therefore, originate immediately

from the hand of God. Nor did he shrink from counting it among the weak

and beggarly elements which, as heathens, they served in times gone by.

Or else he spoke of the teaching of the law as of a "ministration of

death," and said of the letter that it killeth, words which surely

would only be applied otherwise to powers hostile to God. Nevertheless

he clings firmly to the fact that God gave the law. The law is not sin,

but holy; the commandment is holy, righteous and good--and herein lay

the real source of the difficulty of the problem. Had it not been for

his tenacious belief in the divine inspiration of every word in the law

he would never have needed to take all this trouble to prove that it

would have to be annulled.

The second method was pursued by Catholic and gnostic teachers of the

second century, who distinguished the eternal law of nature from the

transitory law of ritual. Even the conversation of Jesus with the

Scribe as to the supreme commandment seemed to point in this direction.

But for St Paul the nomos' admits of no such division--it is something

whole and entire. It is possible indeed to be uncertain of which part

of the law he is thinking on this or that particular occasion: e.g. in

Rom. ii. and Rom. vii. he has the moral law in his mind; in Gal. iv.

the law of ritual. But he has never expressed this distinction in so

many words, nor does he anywhere treat of one part of the law more

favourably than another. The essence of the law is for him the

categorical imperative, and all its constituent portions bear this

character in like manner.

The allegorical interpretation had been a means even for the

Alexandrian Jews (Philo and others) of liberating themselves, at least

theoretically, from the literal meaning of the law. It was practised in

Palestine also, and Paul knew of it. He made use occasionally of Old

Testament stories in an allegorical fashion: e.g. of the story of Isaac

and Ishmael. And in like manner he interpreted isolated commandments

which seemed to him unsuitable to God if taken literally; as, e.g., the

prohibition to muzzle the mouth of the oxen when the corn is trodden

out. Could not the whole of the ritual law be thus interpreted? Would

not this turn out to be the road to freedom?

There are indeed certain indications which appear to point in this

direction. The circumcision of the heart in the spirit is contrasted

with the circumcision of the flesh as that which alone has value in the

sight of God. Or we hear of the circumcision not made with hands--i.e.

the putting off of the body of the flesh at baptism. If the law is

spiritual, does it not then rightly need a spiritual--i.e.

allegorical--interpretation of those portions which are of less value?

Does not the celebrated antithesis of letter and spirit (2 Cor. iii. 6)

lead us to the same conclusion? St Paul's opinion is the exact opposite

of this. By the letter and the spirit he sets up in opposition to each

other two covenants of different contexts--the one demands as a right,

the other grants freely. The difference between Paul and Philo strikes

one more forcibly from this passage than from any other. For reasons of

his own St Paul could not find freedom in allegory: the law even when

interpreted allegorically represented a demand for him.

St Paul's theology pursues an entirely independent course of its own.

His criticism establishes two propositions hitherto unheard of: the law

cannot be the way of salvation; Christ by His death has freed us from

the law.

1. The law cannot be the way of salvation, because it only demands, it

does not give. It presupposes God as lawgiver and judge: man has to

perform a task, God rewards or punishes. St Paul never wearies of

describing this relationship of wages without toning down any of the

difficulties. "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as

of grace but as of debt." Thereby, however, the result of the law is

merely a negative one. The law brings the full knowledge of sin: by its

continual injunctions and prohibitions it actually stimulates

transgression and drives a man to sin. So it works wrath and has death

as its doom. Despair is the result of the service of the law.

The picture which St Paul thereby presents to us of later Judaism is a

very strange one. He characterizes it as a religion of wage service and

of fear, a slave's religion suitable for bondsmen only. To be a sincere

adherent of Judaism is tantamount to despairing of one's salvation. For

God is the stern Judge before whom even the most pious Jew cannot

stand. In the Epistle to the Romans St Paul proves this point from

Scripture, quoting passages from the Psalms and the prophets. "None is

righteous; no, not one." In the Epistle to the Galatians he argues from

the law itself: "Cursed is every one which continueth not in all things

that are written in the book of the law," and hence he draws the

conclusion that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God.

Now, is St Paul's criticism of later Judaism just? What would a Jewish

Rabbi think of this representation of his faith? He would say: this is

a caricature of our religion. The Jewish Church is law and grace. The

law presupposes grace. To be a Jew, a child of Abraham and a member of

the chosen people, is already a mark of grace. Circumcision is a symbol

of God's covenant grace. The whole Jewish Church is an organization for

the attainment of salvation. It has sacrifices, repentance, the great

day of atonement, the good works of the fathers, personal merits, the

forgiveness of God in answer to prayer. He who has fear in the presence

of the law may take refuge in the grace of God. For Israel has a God

who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, a faithful God.

How was it that St Paul thus entirely ignored the grace that was in the

Jewish Church and the justification that was already within reach?

There is a double reason--one personal, one apologetic.

St Paul saw to the bottom of contemporary Judaism. It was really in the

main a service for wages and a slavish form of piety. A man could not

breathe freely in God's love, could not feel himself free as a child of

God. Jesus could retain complete personal freedom because the law did

not stand between God and Himself. But wherever legalism thus formed a

wall of separation, it fostered an artificial and slavish form of

piety. The Church and the Sacraments do not give the one thing that is

needful: the trust of the individual soul in the grace of God and the

certainty of His love. The question as to the personal assurance of

salvation still remained unanswered: it was only the day of judgment

that was to clear up all that was now doubtful. An unbiassed

examination must allow St Paul to have been justified in his criticism.

But now, of course, St Paul's apologetic and ecclesiastical interests

came into play. Besides the grace in Christ he could not possibly allow

any Jewish means of grace to have any efficacy. The despair which the

law produced in pious souls was welcome to him, because it was the only

way to get them to accept Jesus as their Redeemer. The whole of St

Paul's criticism of the law, instead of being based on Jewish premises,

always presupposes the Christian salvation that has already been won.

As a Christian St Paul had become so entirely estranged from the law

and the Jewish Church that he could never again judge it objectively.

He was obliged, therefore, in writing Rom. vii. to learn to understand

it again. Hence a Jew could never have written as St Paul did. Christ

and His Church stand everywhere between the apostle and the law.

2. The despair to which legalism leads has been clearly set forth. The

law is not the way of salvation, but as it is nevertheless divine, how

can we escape our obligation to it? Christ was sent by God to set men

free from the law. Christ is the end of the law.

Christ sets us free from the law in a twofold manner, in both instances

by suffering vicariously for us. In the first place, Christ's whole

life upon earth was a free and vicarious service of the law. He was

made under law to them that are under law. For the Son of God who

descended from heaven was, as such, free from the law. If He subjected

Himself to the law He did it for our sakes that we might become the

free children of God.

But above all the death of Christ was a vicarious suffering endured to

set us free. St Paul's line of argument is a masterpiece after the true

rabbinical fashion. One passage in the law pronounces every

transgressor to be accursed; another says that every one that is hanged

is accursed of God. Therefore he that is hanged is accounted a

transgressor in the eyes of the law. Now, Christ hung upon the tree,

but naturally without being a transgressor or accursed. Therefore, He

became a curse for us, and our transgression has received its due

punishment in His death. Thereby we have been set free from the law.

The passage in which he employs the argument from the marriage law

describes exactly the same thing. From a legal point of view death puts

an end to marriage and sets the surviving partner free. In a similar

manner our obligation to the law would be ended by our death. Christ

died in our stead; that is as much as to say that the connection

between us and the law had been severed. We are dead to the law. That

is to say, we are free men.

It is clear of course that all these arguments deal with legal

abstractions and have nothing whatever to do with the Jesus of history.

The question, does Jesus set us free from the law or not, could surely

only be answered from the point of view of His position in history.

This St Paul, however, absolutely refuses to take. The Jesus of history

is for him a servant of the law just like every other Jew, but as Son

of God voluntarily and vicariously. Now, without going any further, St

Paul is at fault in his premises, and so the whole of this theory is an

ingenious conjuring with ideas and nothing more. All this strikes us as

so unnatural that many have found it hard before now to take St Paul

seriously here. But for all that he was in serious earnest, and the

idea that he had in his mind was a great one. He rightly understood

Jesus when he conceived of Him as our Redeemer from the law. He

revealed the contradiction between the respect which Jesus paid to the

law and His actual relation to legalism. He drew that inference from

the Gospel of Jesus, which His disciples neither had the courage nor

the perspicacity to draw for themselves. Jesus was in very deed the end

of the law; with Him began a new mediatorship and a new religious

relation. The struggle against Scribes and Pharisees reached its

rightful conclusion only when their legalism--the system which stood

behind their persons--was annulled. That St Paul based this true under

standing of Jesus on a very lame theory which disregarded facts, we

have to take into the bar gain. And, besides, St Paul's mistake must be

put down to the account of those who had been acquainted with Jesus,

but had not recognized Him as free.

Of course, if we confine ourselves to the Jewish point of view we can

easily understand the wrath and the indignation of St Paul's

adversaries when he came forward with proofs such as these. For there

was no single word in his theory that carried conviction with it. The

very method, the attempt to prove the annulling of the law from the law

itself, implied reasoning in a circle. There was, to be sure, a good

dose of the characteristic cleverness of the Jewish Rabbi in it: and

that made it seem all the more obnoxious to them. This kind of

apologetic was bound to repel every thinking Jew. Christ was the end of

the law for the believer--i.e. for the man who had from the very first

embraced the Christian point of view.

Justification by Faith and Freedom in the Spirit.

The positive converse to the negative criticism of the law is the proof

of the superiority of the Christian religion over Judaism. St Paul's

object is to show that Christians who have abandoned the law but who

believe in Christ as their liberator from the law. far from losing,

have been greatly the gainers by the exchange. Once again these

theories are based upon experiences quite peculiar to St Paul, out of

which, however, he constructs the defence of his practice as missionary

and of the gospel which he preaches.

By the vision of Christ on the road to Damascus the religious

relationship had been reversed for St Paul. Before, it was he who

performed and God who rewarded. Now, God comes to meet him with the

free gift of love. He is the giver, St Paul the child, the recipient of

the gift. That is what St Paul means by the word grace. It is the

return to true religion from an imaginary faith of one's own

fabrication. God first--man last: that alone is the true religious

relation. Thence rest and peace and thankfulness enter into the heart.

And faith is nothing else than receptivity for God's love, the

suffering oneself to receive the gift, the being seized by God.

Grace--God is the Father; faith--I am His child: these two belong

together. St Paul has expressed this more clearly than anywhere else in

Rom. iv. Once more we hear the music of the 103rd Psalm, and there is

added to it a note which no Jew could possibly strike, a strain of

personal assurance. For in the death of Christ God's love has spoken to

him.

By this same miracle of his conversion St Paul became a new man

morally. When he found God and experienced His love, the good became

the untrammelled motive power of his life, proceeding from his inmost

being. He felt himself free, and the good conquered, without any kind

of external compulsion, without either threats or prohibitions, without

the taskmaster: nay, rather, from pure delight and love. That, in St

Paul's language, is the Spirit. When the storms in his inmost being had

subsided, external attractions lost their hold upon him. Instead of

being something foreign to him, the good became his true home. He felt

light-hearted and glad in the midst of all his labours.

By means of these experiences St Paul was able to look into the depths

of religion as no previous thinker had done. In so far as his

propositions merely reproduce this experience, they are the foundation

stones of every theory of religion. Once again St Paul has reached

Jesus, and once again he has gone a long way round to do it. For no man

possessed in like manner as Jesus the power of living the life of a

child of God or of acting from the inner motive. That which St Paul

only learnt through the shipwreck of his old life, Jesus possessed from

the very first as an original endowment. Hence Jesus had no need of St

Paul's antithesis.

When it was therefore necessary to defend the reception of the Gentiles

against the attacks of Jews and Judaizers, without exacting the

observance of the law, and simply on the ground of their faith, then

naturally St Paul found his personal experience very valuable. All that

is genuine and profound in the doctrines of justification and of

Christian liberty can be traced back to the experiences of St Paul. But

his apologetic interests have here injured the expression of his

thoughts to an even greater extent than in other points of his

theology. They compelled him to accommodate himself to the difficulties

and to the conceptions of his opponents, and to the employment of like

conceptions in setting up antitheses against their theses. A great

subject of a distinctly non-Jewish nature was thereby pressed into a

perverted Jewish form. This remark applies to the doctrine of

justification, which defends the entrance of the Gentiles on the ground

of faith, even more than to the doctrine of Christian liberty. Jews and

Judaizers alike declared that without circumcision and the fulfilment

of the law no one could prepare for the judgment, or hope for

justification on the day of judgment. In opposition to this St Paul set

up his doctrine of justification by faith.

What, then, is the meaning of justification? What is the position of

God, what is the position of man?

The word justify,' like its opposite, to declare guilty,' is a forensic

term and is thence applied to the act of the Supreme Judge--God. In

later Judaism men pictured God to themselves as keeping account in

heaven of the deeds of men upon earth. Every man had his own particular

page in the heavenly book, in which the good deeds were written on one

side and the bad on the other. Now the Judge passes sentence in every

moment when He decides to write the deed on the good or the bad side.

But He can only pass the final sentence when He sums up the total of

the good and the bad deeds. There is accordingly a two fold act both of

justification and of condemnation--one that is going on continuously as

each deed is done, and a final one on the day of judgment. Under the

first head would be included, e.g., the justification of the publican

on the strength of his prayer in the temple, or of Abraham because of

his faith in God's promise. Under the second St Paul himself includes

the justification of the doers of the law on the day of judgment, of

which he holds out the prospect in Rom. ii. Naturally the ground

covered by these two kinds of sentence differs considerably. In the

first instance it is the praise of a good deed; in the second, entrance

into the everlasting blessedness, salvation.

The question now arises, which kind of sentence St Paul had in view in

his doctrine of justification: for he was acquainted with both from the

very first, just as his teachers the Rabbis were acquainted with them.

Under the justification for which he contends he understands the single

final sentence of God, the sentence which decides upon life and death.

But now comes the innovation which he introduced. In the first place,

instead of awaiting God's final verdict on a future day of judgment, he

transfers it to the very beginning, to the entrance of the convert into

the Christian community, so that every Christian, being already

justified, can go forward in confident joy; secondly, he attaches a new

meaning to justification, inasmuch as not the righteous but sinners are

justified; henceforth it is simply equivalent to

forgiveness--forgiveness for time and for eternity. Whereas the Jew

anxiously awaits the uncertain award of God in the hope that he will

stand the test of the day of the Lord because of his good works, the

Christian has the full assurance, from the very day of his entrance

into the community, of having received a full pardon in spite of all

his sins. Both innovations--participation in salvation here and now and

the reception of grace instead of one's just due--completely transform

the idea of justification. All that is left are the juridical terms and

the forensic appearance. "I am justified," no longer means, now I have

acted rightly in the sight of God, but I have received forgiveness and

am assured of His grace.

What, then, is the position of God in justification? Here we clearly

realize the contradiction between the new meaning and the old form. God

must be conceived of as judge in accordance with the forensic

expressions. As such He gives His award on the ground of the deeds of

men that are brought before Him for judgment. So it appears to be, as

long as we look merely at the form. But the meaning points in a

contrary direction. The God who declares sinners to be righteous,

ceases to be a judge. He is the God of grace, and not of justice. Would

that the old order, first man, then God, had not been retained even

when the old doctrine received its new setting!

In the Jewish doctrine of justification God is the judge who punishes

or rewards. St Paul, revising this doctrine, substitutes the God of

mercy who forgives sinners on the ground of their faith. But St Paul's

ultimate object was to establish the new order: first God, then man.

This he does in the Epistle to the Galatians by emphasizing the

promise, and by uniting promise and faith in one conception. The God

that promises is the God that prevents'; man's faith only comes second.

In the Epistle to the Romans the doctrine of the revelation of the

"righteousness of God" in the death of Jesus is intended to express the

same thought. In the doctrine of justification as a connected whole,

righteousness' must be the substantive to the verb to set forth as

righteous,' i.e. to justify, and means justification.' The only reason

why St Paul did not employ the ordinary Greek word for justification is

that the Old Testament provided him with an expression established by

long usage, "The righteousness of God" (cp. Isa. li. 5, 6, 8; Ps.

xcvii. 2). St Paul, as we have seen, altered the signification of the

idea! it now means simply forgiveness, grace, love. This grace of God

has been manifested, he says, in the death of Jesus: here is the

objective fact to which the sinner seeking for forgiveness can cling.

God's love, therefore, according to St Paul, does not follow the act of

faith but anticipates it. That is the great reversal in the religious

relationship which Paul himself experienced. But he did not succeed in

giving clear expression to his new thoughts. The old form of the

doctrine of justification was still too powerful. In his controversy

with the Jews St Paul did not manage to find the simple words "God is

our Father."

But the old forensic system exercises its most baneful effect upon the

position of man in the doctrine of justification. Faith in Jesus Christ

comes to be the condition for justification. Now for Paul himself this

faith was nothing but the feeling of God's love in the death of Jesus,

the passive reception of God's gift, the exact opposite of any kind of

performance of works. But in the course of his controversy with the

Judaizers, he sets up, in opposition to their thesis, justification by

the works of the law, his antithesis, justification by faith; thus

putting faith instead of the ceremonies of the law as the work of man

that is acceptable to God. That is, of course, not his intention: he

emphatically declares faith and works to be opposites, but the power of

his adversaries' formula is stronger than his will. And what is the

faith after all which secures justification? It is the faith in Jesus

as the Messiah, in His death and resurrection--in a word, it is the

creed of the Church. And thus in fact a new work--the Church's

creed--has stepped into the place of circumcision, ordinances as to

food, the Sabbath, etc., and even now the apologist is not afraid of

uttering the fatal proposition: "The creed of the Church will save a

man in the day of judgment, and will secure eternal blessedness for

him." The subject of controversy with Jews and Judaizers was the

question whether entrance into the Christian fellowship might be

considered a substitute for the Jewish ceremonies or not. But how

widely removed is this question from St Paul's deep personal

experiences.

One further argument, however, was indispensable. If St Paul wished to

refute Judaism, he must prove "justification by faith" from the Old

Testament. It was a critical undertaking. How could he expect to find

again in the Old Testament the great new creation which he had

experienced in Jesus? But apologetic methods smooth away most

difficulties by taking merely words into account. By chance the

decisive words faith' and righteousness' were found in the Old

Testament (Gen. xv.) "Abraham believed . . . . and it was reckoned unto

him for righteousness" (Hab. ii.). "The righteous shall live by faith."

So the proof was furnished both from the law and the prophets. By Gen.

xv. St Paul even secured Abraham, the ancestor of the Jewish people,

for his doctrine. This was an immense advantage, for now he had the

start of the law by 450 years. Clearly, then, it was proved to be

altogether secondary. Even circumcision was now proved to have come in

after faith. The institution of the rite is described two chapters

after Gen. xv. It was therefore likewise something secondary and not

the main condition. The appeal to antiquity had resulted in St Paul's

favour; he had vanquished his opponents, for the old, according to the

belief of that age, was everywhere the more venerable and holy. With

what one must almost call a refinement of cleverness, St Paul managed

to extract a proof of justification by faith even from a passage which

actually praised the law. It was the passage Deut. xxx. 11 seq., "This

commandment which I command thee this day, it is not concealed from

thee, neither is it far off . . . . for it is the word that is very

nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart that thou mayest do it."

The clever man simply omitted the first words "The commandment," etc.,

and the conclusion "That thou mayest do it," and lo and behold he had

interpreted the word as his gospel, and mouth' and heart' as faith' and

confession.' To a Rabbi this exegesis could appear as nothing else than

deceitful. And doubtless St Paul heard the epithet applied to his

procedure. Thereupon he answered that when the Old Testament was read

the "veil of Moses" was over the hearts of the Jews, so that the true

meaning of the law remained concealed from them; or, in a more succinct

and emphatic form, that the devil had blinded them. This, then, was the

conclusion of the controversy concerning the proof from Scripture

between St Paul and his opponents.

But for us there is still another point in this matter which is very

instructive. Through the use that St Paul makes of Abraham in his

apologetic he renders the theory of salvation vulnerable. Before this

we always used to hear that the whole of mankind was a massa

perditionis,' that the light of salvation only began to shine in the

world when Christ came on earth. And now, all at once, long before

Christ's advent, there is the golden age of Abraham in the midst of

this wicked world. The contradiction is due to the fact that two

separate systems of apologetic, the one for Greeks and the other for

Jews, intersect at this point. The consequence of this is that the Old

Testament and its God are saved; the God of Jesus Christ is also the

God of Abraham. In a later age the whole assault of the gnostics beat

in vain against this rock of apologetics. And thus, even this

artificial proof from Scripture turned out to be a piece of good

fortune for the Church.

Whoever examines St Paul's doctrine of justification, laying aside all

Protestant prejudices, is bound to reckon it one of his most disastrous

creations. The word justify,' with the new meaning attached to it, is

ambiguous; the position of God who as judge declares the sinner to be

righteous, is confusing; the value attached to the creed of the Church

as the decisive factor in the judgment is fraught with evil

consequences, and the proof from the Old Testament is arbitrary and

artificial. St Paul fought for the universalism of Christianity and the

substitution of the religion of love for that of legalism: what he

really attained was the establishment of the Christian Church with the

new legalism of faith and the creed, with the return of all the Jewish

sins of narrowness, fanaticism, and the restricted conception of God. A

great and profound thought, however, lies hidden, in spite of all,

beneath the defective outer form. God is our Father, who freely gives

to us whether we deserve it or not, and we men, just as we are, His

children, living by His love. This thought is at once strengthened and

realized by the fact of the historical manifestation of Christ. To the

kernel though not to the husk we Protestants certainly owe the deepest

reverence.

The second reproach, however, which his Jewish adversaries cast in his

teeth still remained unanswered. The annulling of the law was

equivalent, they said, to an invitation to unchecked sin. The reception

of the Gentiles without the law merely paved the way for the entrance

of immorality into the Christian Churches. St Paul's answer to this was

the doctrine of Christian freedom.

He attaches a sharply defined meaning to the word freedom': it is

freedom from the Jewish law, which, like a giant, holds men in bondage.

The children of the house are free, therefore freedom from the law

means at the same time the sonship of God. And that, according to St

Paul, was Christ's great achievement, that out of the slaves of

legalism He made us to be the free children of God.

But there is no danger in this freedom from the law, because the

Christian's new life proceeds from within. In the Spirit which God has

given him, the Christian has a complete substitute for the law. Whilst

the law, as a foreign and extraneous power, demanded of us that which

was incapable of fulfilment, and was unable to break the inner law of

sin in our members, the Spirit grants the Christian the power for a new

life from within, and all that proceeds from the Spirit is not contrary

to the law but fulfils it. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,

patience, chastity; and along with the gift of love is given the

fulfilment of the whole law, for the command of love to one's neighbour

is the sum of the whole law. So, then, the freedom of the Christian

from the law is no freedom to commit sin, for from the Spirit there

proceeds only the victory over sin and obedience to the will of God.

It is as though one stepped out of the dark night into the bright light

of day, when one comes to these marvellous and simple sentences after

leaving the laboured arguments of the doctrine of justification. They

are eloquent with the glad rejoicing of a man who has become a child

again after having been an aged pedant, and at the same time with an

enthusiasm for the victory of the good in all his friends which is

peculiar to the period of creative activity. Nowhere else has the

superiority of the new religion over the old found so brilliant an

expression. But on a closer examination we observe that it is not a

picture of things as they really are, but a coloured apologetic

representation that we have here before us. St Paul himself was the

first to be aware that the Spirit produced very various effects, e.g.

at Corinth, and amongst them some which threatened to implant in the

lives of the converts the tendency to an unbridled and morally

dangerous enthusiasm. One need but compare the fruits of the Spirit

which the apologist enumerates in the Epistle to the Galatians with

those which are noted in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. And

apart from this St Paul knew very well that the work of the Spirit

cannot be compared to natural causation, so that the moral life could

be deduced from it by purely logical methods. That which he describes

as apologist was the ideal and not the real in his congregation. Read,

e.g., the statement: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh,

with the passions and the lusts thereof." Taken literally it would not

be true to fact: but St Paul is setting up the ideal, the aim and goal

of effort. The same remark applies to the idea of the new birth--St

Paul prefers the word resurrection--which he sets forth in the Epistle

to the Romans as a parallel to the theory of the Spirit. He had once

more been reproached with the taunt that his doctrine of free grace led

to immorality. St Paul answers, referring to baptism, that sin for

Christians is an impossibility, because they had died to it once and

for all at their conversion, and through dying to it with Christ had

been freed from all relation to it. It has rightly been pointed out

that great moral changes sometimes take place from the very moment of

conversion in the missionary field. But to generalize from such cases

is surely only the work of the apologist who takes the ideal for the

real.

St Paul felt that himself, and therefore added in the Epistles to the

Galatians and Romans the command in the imperative mood to the

description in the indicative. We may perhaps even go still further and

say that the description of the ideal was written by him in the shape

of a command to his readers to attain to it. Both in the doctrine of

the Spirit and in the doctrine of the new birth the Christian is to

read his obligation to understand his Christian freedom as obedience to

God's will. His freedom is to consist in becoming the servant of

righteousness, in the rendering of services to the brethren, and in a

freedom from sin. To this St Paul firmly adheres. There is no word

about the law. Christians are not under the law but under grace. But

the place of the external law is taken by the inner sense of

obligation, the simple content of which is love to God and the

brethren. This inner obligation is to rule their hearts and minds in

the place of the law. His controversy with the Jews, the impossibility

of understanding anything but the Jewish law under the word nomos,'

prevented St Paul from using the phrase, the inner law of duty. And

finally, his doctrine of the Spirit presented an obstacle, for he

always conceives of the spirit as of some strange power entering in

from without. It never comes to be equivalent to the conception of a

will which has become good. But under this husk--Antinomianism and the

theory of supernatural spirit--the kernel--the idea of duty and of a

good-will--gradually emerge an earnest for the future. Only thus can we

explain the fact that the man who annulled the law had at the same time

the most profound conception of the ethical character of Christianity.

In St Paul's controversies with Jews and Judaizers the great ideas of

moral liberty and of Son ship to God are striving for a clear

utterance. They fail to find an outer form such as to ensure their

victory; nevertheless it was fortunate for the whole future history of

Christianity that they were connected so closely with its origin.

The net result of all these theories as to law, justification, freedom,

is the annulling of the mistaken Jewish idea. True religion is not the

Torah of the holy people, just as God is not a mere tribal Jewish God.

He that would become God's child must first escape from the purely

national Jewish customs. Thus St Paul takes up that stand point which

alone corresponds to the Gospel of Jesus. He draws his conclusion from

Jesus message and consciously raises Christianity into the position of

a world-religion. This or that theory which he employed in so doing may

not meet with our approval, but they all served to make a deed possible

which has a world-historic significance.

There is a reverse side, however, to the apostle's undertaking. The

destruction of Jewish legalism furthered the development of the

Christian Church. But the Church has also its legal system--first of

all spiritually expressed in faith and the confession of Jesus, and

soon afterwards in the new ceremonies which find a footing in the

Sacraments. However strange it may sound, the man that destroyed the

Jewish idea of the Church is in reality the theoretical creator of the

new ecclesiastical system. It is indebted to no one more than to him

who said, "He that believes will be saved."

But St Paul's standpoint, which was on the whole still purely

spiritual, was far too high for the succeeding age. It could not remain

content with the mere annulling of the Jewish law. Even the education

of the Gentiles called for a new Christian law. This was formed, as the

Torah had been before, by the gradual collection of ecclesiastical

customs, legal forms, regulations for public worship, dogmas, etc.,

which were ultimately sanctioned officially. The origin of Catholicism

is the gradual transformation of the Church built upon faith into an

institution of dogmas, laws, and ceremonies. That is of course a very

great decline from St Paul's high ideal, but it is a decline in the

direction of that idea of the Church which St Paul himself had created.

The fate of the Jewish people.

The results of St Paul's missionary labours were immense. Christianity

became the religion of the Greeks and Romans, of the Mediterranean

peoples as a whole, instead of being as before the religion of the

Jews. It was quite evident that God had abandoned His ancient people

and had entered upon a new course.

The whole people of Israel seemed all at once to have no lot or part in

the divine plan of salvation.

This was of course likewise a result of the message of Jesus. Jesus had

found greater faith in the centurion of Capernaum and in the woman of

Canaan than in Israel. In unmistakable language He had set aside the

privileges of Israel. The men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba should

fare better on the day of judgment than this people. St Paul merely

completes the great process of levelling which Jesus had begun. The

second and third chapters of the Epistle to the Romans are our chief

evidence in support of this statement. There the apostle proclaims the

equality of Jews and Gentiles before God--God is no respecter of

persons. The mere possession of the written law is of no value, for the

Gentiles have the law written in their hearts. It is the working of

good that decides on the day of judgment. Nor does literal circumcision

carry any privilege with it. The uncircumcised that do God's will shall

judge the circumcised that transgress the law. Indeed, both Jews and

Gentiles alike are under the dominion of sin, only the Jews with the

greater responsibility. Let them lay aside, therefore, all national

pride and all boasting on the ground of their belonging to the holy

people. The very words of their own Scriptures stop the mouth of the

Jews and prove all men without distinction to be worthy of punishment

in God's sight. Only a disciple of Jesus could speak thus.

The answer to such rebukes was naturally that of apostasy. The report

must have been spread, especially at Rome--even among Christians--that

Paul had denied his nationality and blasphemed his people, his God and

the law. The reproach was comprehensible enough, but it was not just.

St Paul could in all truth call God to witness that he would rather

himself be anathema from Christ for the sake of his brethren, his

kinsmen according to the flesh. Their salvation was the fervent wish of

his heart and the object of his supplications to God. But it was just

in the presence of accusations such as these that the problems almost

drove him to distraction. How can the present unbelief of the Jews be

reconciled with God's promise to them, with the glorious part of God's

chosen people? Can the people of God be lost? The answer to this

question is the last great chapter of the apologetic. And on this

occasion it concerns his own heart as well as his kinsmen.

First of all, the privileges of Israel over all other peoples are

solemnly set forth, in striking opposition to other passages in the

same epistle. Theirs is the adoption and the glory and the covenants

and the giving of the law and the service of God and the promises, and

the fathers and Christ as concerning the flesh. So speaks the Jew in St

Paul, who suddenly bethinks himself of his origin. But then there

begins a mighty wrestling to attain to clearness as to God's purposes

with this highly privileged people. There are three separate stages.

1. Has God's word become of none effect? No; the Bible itself speaks of

election amongst the children of Abraham, and of God's free choice

everywhere. If God blesses only one portion of Israel and rejects

another, and saves the Gentiles in its place, then all this is in

accordance with Scripture. The God of the Bible has revealed Himself as

the God of arbitrary power. All that He does is right. Man, a weak

thing of nought, should bow down in all humility before the sovereign

decrees of God that have been revealed to him in the Old Testament, the

God that blesses one and pours out His wrath upon another.

2. But how is the salvation of the Gentiles, that seek not after

righteousness, consonant with the rejection of Israel, that is jealous

for the law? It is just Israel's religiousness and perverted zeal for

works that are the cause of their having hardened their hearts against

God's new ways. The Gentiles are ready to receive the new message and

to behold the works of God, whereas Israel's pious zeal renders them

unreceptive. God gives Himself to such as are willing to receive the

gift.

8. But is the election of Israel set aside for ever? No. A part of

Israel hardened their hearts, but the purpose of this was simply to

draw the Gentiles on to their salvation. But when the fulness of the

Gentiles has entered in, then Israel's heart shall no longer be

hardened and all Israel shall be saved. This must come to pass, because

of the promises to the fathers. For the mercies and the election of God

are sure.

These three stages are not directly contradictory. They are rather to

be regarded as so many steps up which the apostle's thought had to

ascend in due order. The sequence of these stages affords us an insight

into the very centre of the apostle's method of investigation. The

first command resulting from the enquiry is: submit thyself to the

inscrutable but supreme will of God; reverence God's ways whether thou

understandest them or not. So speaks the Semite, who sinks before Allah

in the dust even if He tread him underfoot as a worm. It is only when

due submission has thus been paid to God by us that we may humbly

enquire as to the sin of man that perchance moved God to this action.

Indeed, in view of man's littleness there is but one main sin:

self-reliance, resistance to God's new ways. Here St Paul writes as a

Christian and from the deepest experience. It is the fault of every

orthodoxy to apply its own system cut and dried to God's free thoughts

about the future. But our examination must go beyond the human

relationship: God last as well as first. The enquiry as to the purpose

of God alone leads us to the complete answer--the aim of God's purpose

must be the realization of His promises. It is by looking into the

future that the darkness of the present is chased away. Here, finally,

the Jew speaks yet once more: at the end of all things, God and Israel

belong indissolubly together. The examination begins, therefore, with

the awful mystery, then seeks for illumination in reflection as to the

possible motives of God, and finally finds comfort and peace in the

comprehension of His purposes for the future.

And yet what a fluctuating medley of thought about God! First, the God

of mere arbitrary power; then the ethical God who accepts those who

turn their hearts to Him; and finally the God of the nation, who keeps

His faith with His favourites. And this last God is the mightiest for

St Paul, with the one proviso that the breadth and freedom of the

Gospel are untouched.

Jesus had passed a clear and definite sentence of condemnation upon

Israel, because He had come to recognize in the course of His activity

that God's ways were about to turn aside from Israel, and be cause He

submitted to this result of His experience. St Paul did not submit,

though God had definitely entered upon new paths--the fact was

accomplished, but the apostle set the authority of the old scripture

still higher. The contrast is a characteristic one--both for Jesus and

for St Paul--here reverence for facts, there for the Bible. At the same

time, we observe once more how the Jesus of history is simply non

existent for St Paul when he treats apologetic problems of this nature.

No mention whatever is made of Him in the three chapters of the Romans

which treat of Israel's fate. The literal text of the Septuagint seems

to be the only decisive authority, and that is so sacred and so

almighty, that whenever it comes into collision with the human

conscience, the latter is silenced when the voice of revelation speaks.

This is, of course, only apparent--we have had sufficient reason to

know that St Paul could on other occasions manipulate the Old Testament

text as he liked. The really decisive factor was after all his

patriotism, which he did not get rid of even as a Christian.

But notwithstanding its reverence for the apostle, the Christian Church

soon laid aside the Jewish patriotism of St Paul, who rested upon God's

promises in the Old Testament in spite of facts. In the year 70 A.D.

came the awful end of the Jewish state and sanctuary. That was looked

upon as a divine judgment. Henceforth there could be no doubt as to

God's new ways.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE PAULINE GNOSIS.

ST PAUL developed his soteriology as well as his anti-Jewish apologetic

in the midst of his missionary labours and for purely practical

purposes. In order to win over the Gentiles, Jesus had to be presented

to them in a wider, more comprehensive, and intelligible system; and

furthermore, this system had to be defended against the attack of the

Jews and Jewish Christians. It may even be safely maintained that St

Paul scarcely ever speculated in the interests of pure knowledge and

abstract truth. All his propositions--even the most abstruse--served

the practical purposes of missionary life, and were never put forward

without reference to them. But for all that it is a fact that through

St Paul speculative thought and knowledge became a power in

Christianity. The relation of Jesus to the problem of knowledge was a

totally different one. The whole of His teaching is marked by the

entire absence of every kind of speculation and an emphasis on the

all-importance of action. If He boasts of the knowledge of God He means

the understanding of the divine will in opposition to the science of

the Rabbis, and this is so simple that it is within the reach of every

child and unlearned person. The first step in the development of a

Christian theology is marked by the appearance of teachers in the

Church at Jerusalem. But it was St Paul who first really created the

science of the Church. Through him a very high degree of importance

comes to be assigned to knowledge and science in Christianity. Great

systems, albeit at first of an apologetic nature, are built up. We have

lines of argument often of the most complex form. It comes to be an

integral portion of the Christian ideal that a Christian should be rich

in the word of God and in knowledge of every kind. Thereby the way is

paved for an immense change in the nature of Christianity. It takes its

first timid and tentative steps on the bridge that leads over to

philosophy--i.e. ecclesiastical philosophy, of course. The reason for

this change is certainly to be found in great measure in the previous

theological training of St Paul, but we cannot forget either the great

alteration that has taken place in the historical position. As soon as

Christianity is definitely separated from Judaism and faces Judaism and

heathenism alike in an independent position, an entirely new task is

incumbent upon it, viz. the enlightenment of Jews and Gentiles. In St

Paul we are still in that stage where Greek philosophy is almost

totally ignored, that is, as a power of culture which might be a

possible rival. The science that is developed by him is still

essentially Jewish Old Testament science.

What is the meaning of gnosis' in St Paul's case? It has three

characteristic features. (1) It is something higher than pistis,'

faith, which is always presupposed as a necessary first step to

knowledge, but is surpassed by it. The clearest statement of this fact

is to be found in the opening chapters of the First Epistle to the

Corinthians. First the folly of the Cross, the preaching of faith, then

the divine wisdom of gnosis, which teaches us to understand folly

itself as wisdom. (2) It is the possession of a few and not of all. The

"word of wisdom" and the "word of knowledge" are counted by St Paul as

especial gifts of the Spirit which are granted to single individuals.

"Not all men have knowledge." True, the ultimate goal is that all

Christians should come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of

the Son of God, but now for the present the difference between them

that have knowledge and the ignorant exists. (3) It proceeds from the

Spirit. St Paul sets this forth especially in 1 Cor. ii. Through the

Spirit God has revealed wisdom to us. We have received the Spirit which

is of God in order therewith to under stand what God has granted to us.

The last of these three characteristic features is the most important.

It sets up a sharp dividing line between human science and knowledge in

the sense which St Paul attaches to the word. The origin of the two is

entirely distinct. The source of the one is to be sought in the reason;

it is a result of human activity; it is therefore weak and faulty. The

latter is the result of divine revelation, and is therefore stamped as

true from the very first. The very forms of expression of the two

sciences--the human and the divine--are different. The one speaks in

the words of human wisdom current in the schools, the other in

spiritual words as of spiritual things. But not only do they differ in

the manner of communication; difference of origin implies, furthermore,

that the earthly philosophy does not--nay, cannot--understand the

spiritual wisdom; for this gnosis' is unfathomable save by the Spirit;

while, on the other hand, he that is spiritually-wise is able to

understand everything, although he himself is not understood by anyone.

In these sentences, pregnant with such important consequences, the

difference between ecclesiastical and non-ecclesiastical science is for

the first time definitely established. They are related as reason to

revelation, as the human to the divine. But what is the Spirit of which

St Paul speaks? It is simply the Spirit of the Church or the sect, the

sum of the impressions, words, feelings, impulses and thoughts which

are produced in the Church, and which prevail in it as being both holy

and necessary. In a word, it is the Christian consciousness as it grew

up from the seed sown by Jesus, and as it was further transmitted in

His sect. That which would be counted divine must pass muster before it

as the final court of appeal. Whatever in anywise contradicted it would

not be counted as revealed truth. But the Christian consciousness

itself is placed beyond the bounds of discussion: it is perfectly sure

of itself; it is ultimate and supreme. A proud and even justifiable

Christian self-esteem developed this theory, but created therein a kind

of supernatural coat-of-mail for itself which was at last bound to

exercise a chilling and be numbing reflex action. This theory preserves

the peculiarity and sovereignty of the Christian religion--that is its

everlasting merit--but it does this by passing a fanatical verdict of

condemnation upon the whole remaining world of thought and feeling. It

would appear that St Paul formed it in controversy with the Jews about

the Old Testament, or, rather, that he indirectly borrowed it from the

Jews. But even in this controversy the disastrous consequences are

revealed which have since been indissolubly attached to this theory.

Now what is the object of the Pauline gnosis?

It is itself again the Spirit--i.e. the revelation of God. Gnosis is

the revealed understanding of the divine revelation, the re-discovery,

by means of the Spirit, of the Spirit that is hidden from all other

men.

All the oracles of the Christian prophets would be included under the

conception of revelation, especially the revelation by means of Jesus.

There is, in fact, an especial art of interpreting the words of the

prophets, which is inspired by the Spirit, the judging or discerning of

spirits. But this is not called gnosis by St Paul. Nor, again, is

Christ the revealer of God's word for him, as it is the Cross and

Resurrection, and not His sayings, that are the divine acts of

salvation in St Paul's meaning of the word. So, then, there remains

finally only one great object for the Pauline gnosis--the Sacred

Scriptures of the Jews.

St Paul introduced the Old Testament in all his Churches as the sacred

canon, the only divinely inspired book. This was an event of the very

greatest importance in the history of Christianity. The Jewish national

literature is declared to be divine, and is to become the sacred book

of the Greek and Roman converts to Christianity, whilst at the same

time it is the sacred book of the Jews, the bitter opponents of the new

religion. How is this possible? The Pauline gnosis furnishes the

answer. Great portions of the Old Testament were, to be sure,

accessible to the heathen Christians, and inestimably precious to them

as it was. Here was a text-book of monotheism, of morality, of hope,

which excelled almost every other. Now, by means of the gnosis, even

the national Jewish portions can be read as Christian, and, generally

speaking, Christianity can be discovered everywhere in the old book. It

becomes the means, partly even before St Paul, of the Christianization

of the Old Testament.

The divinely inspired character of the Old Testament in every one of

its parts is a firmly established fact. There is no dispute between

Jews and Christians as to this point. St Paul accepts the teaching of

the Rabbis, that the whole of the Old Testament is a collection of

divine oracles, and that every text, even apart from its context, is a

word of God. He personifies Scripture, speaking of it as of a divine

being: "the scripture foresaw," "the scripture hath shut up all

things." He does not indeed speak of the Spirit that inspired the Old

Testament, perhaps because he considered the Spirit to be a gift of the

last days. On the other hand, he appears in certain passages to have

arrived at the conclusion that Christ is the inspirer and revealer in

the Old Testament. Here he abandons his Jewish standpoint altogether,

and his action is attended with important consequences. If Christ spoke

in the Old Testament, then it is certainly a Christian book.

But the inspired book demands an inspired exegesis. For this purpose

the Jews had the order of the Rabbis, who were especially endowed by

God with gifts of the Spirit, in order to interpret the Scriptures.

Here is the source of the Pauline theory of know ledge. He denies the

spiritual endowment of the Rabbis, and proclaims himself and the

Christian teachers to be inspired. It is evident that one of the two

parties must be in the wrong: the former prove from the Old Testament

that Jesus was a criminal, the other that He is the Messiah. The

Christians must be in the right, because, generally speaking, the

Spirit is poured out amongst them in richest measure. For the endowment

with the gnosis is only one amongst many gifts of the Spirit. The

Christian interpretation therefore of the Old Testament is the only one

that has any authority. Yes, the Old Testament must be interpreted

according to the spirit of the Christians. The Jews--even the

Rabbis--understand nothing about it. The veil of Moses is upon their

hearts when they read it. They are natural,' not spiritual.' Satan hath

blinded their minds.

It is therefore proved that the canon of the Old Testament is to be

interpreted by the canon of the Christian conscience. And so the task

set to the interpreters of Scripture is endless. By reason of its

divine origin, every word in the Bible is written for all eternity. In

each a divine meaning is contained, often more than one. Being intended

for all time, each word has likewise an application for the age of the

interpreter. Here, in this present age, it has to accomplish its direct

purpose. Thus, e.g., the chastisements of the patriarchs in the

wilderness were written for our warning, upon whom the ends of the ages

are come. In fact, everything that was written aforetime was written

for our learning. St Paul's exegetical methods are naturally simply

those of the Jews as Philo and the Rabbis employed them. This applies

to the proof by prophecy, the use of types and allegory, and the

practical application. The only new feature is the use of the Christian

consciousness, the Spirit, as the canon of all exegesis. But the very

circumstance that Jews and Christians alike used the same methods,

combined with the fact that St Paul stands under the influence of the

tradition of the Rabbis for his matter, as well as for his style,

contradicts the apostle's artificial separation between the Spirit and

human knowledge.

The exegesis of the passage concerning the oxen whose mouth is not to

be muzzled is the best example of the Pauline gnosis made to serve the

practical needs of the missionary. The canon of exegesis, which the

Rabbis likewise accepted, runs: Nothing unworthy is to be ascribed to

God. The Christian spirit forthwith discovers that the passage can be

applied suitably to the missionaries. But for the most part the

apostle's gnosis serves the purposes of his anti-Jewish apologetic. It

was only necessity that caused the Christians to invent the proof from

prophecy properly so-called. As the patriotic prophecies of a Messiah

applied to Jesus in a very small number of instances, the Christian

gnosis had now to discover in the Old Testament new proofs for the

Messiahship of Jesus. Few excelled St Paul in the art of finding such

passages. He did not hesitate to undertake the proof that all the

promises of God were yea' in Jesus--i.e. had been fulfilled in Him. How

great a skill in exegesis that presupposes! It is a trifle indeed for

such an interpreter to prove from the use of the singular instead of

the plural in the passage, "To thee (Abraham) and thy seed" that the

words are intended to apply to Christ. We have already pointed out how

the annulling of the law, justification by faith, and the rejection of

Israel, were proved out of the Old Testament. At bottom, the whole of

this apologetic gnosis is of course a mere theological fabrication

whereby we are transplanted into an artificial kind of world. If

anywhere it would be in Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah that a real

starting-point for the Gospel would have been found. But it was just

the great prophecy of the earliest age that was entirely unknown to the

Rabbis. However, St Paul as well as the other Christian teachers had

one valid excuse. They acted under the compulsion of necessity and from

genuine conviction. And the lucky find which St Paul made, while

conducting this enquiry, is, after all, the mark of a man of

genius:--the law is a later addition: the great age of the religion of

Israel preceded the origin of the law. In like manner he successfully

brings to light again many passages in the Old Testament of a

universalist tendency which had been hidden away by the Rabbis.

Of greater importance, however, than either of these results was the

fact that, thanks to this Old Testament gnosis, the Christian and the

Jewish Church were continually placed side by side. The history of

Israel is interpreted in a Christian spirit. Even the Christian

Sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, are discovered in the

pillar of cloud, in the Red Sea, in the water from the rock, in the

manna. And on the other hand, the Christian Church is conceived of in a

Jewish fashion as the Israel of God unto whom are all the promises. The

effect of the gnosis in thus strengthening the Jewish idea of the

Church came to be of the greatest importance. In this case it was the

attributes that were transferred from the old Israel to the new; later

it was the forms and institutions.

The apologetic exposition of the Old Testament for the purpose of

confuting the Jews by no means, however, exhausted the Pauline gnosis.

It produced, besides, bold speculations of its own, which only clearly

come to light in the letters of the captivity, but date from a much

earlier time: the chief subjects were the angel world and Christ.

In the 110th Psalm mention is made of the enemies whom God will subject

to the Messianic King, the reference being to the neighbouring peoples,

the Moabites and others. Paul applies the passage to the dominions,

principalities, and powers of the spirit world. In Isa. xlv. 23 we read

that every knee shall bow unto God--the heathen of course being meant;

but Paul adds--of things in heaven and things on earth and things under

the earth. In Dan. vii. 22 it is prophesied that judgment will be given

to the saints, i.e. Israel, and we naturally infer that it is the great

empires upon earth that will be judged: but Paul concludes that

therefore the saints (or Christians) shall judge the angels. We may

gather from these passages that St Paul generally applied Old Testament

words which referred to states upon earth to the angel hierarchies. It

is merely an application of this principle to the political

circumstances of his own time when he considers not the Romans but the

princes of this world, i.e. the demons, to be the murderers of Christ.

By means of this equation, "the heathen kingdoms = angels," a huge

fabric of angelology could be constructed out of the Old Testament.

Assyria and Babylon and Egypt were intended to mean all the thrones,

dominions, principalities and powers, the world-rulers of this

darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness; and the perpetual wars of

Israel with its neighbours were but the type of the invisible battles

fought in the spirit world. Anticipations of this conception are to be

met with in later Judaism also, when angel princes appear as the

leaders of the neighbouring peoples. But the systematic transformation

of earthly politics into heavenly is St Paul's work.

The gnostic speculations as to Christ were of much greater importance.

Jesus is the Lord' (= Kyrios). The subject of the whole of the Old

Testament is the Lord (= name of God). Consequently St Paul can set

down the equation Jesus = the Lord in the Old Testament. Proofs for

this abound. Expressions like "the understanding of the Lord," "the

Table of the Lord," "the Glory of the Lord," "the name of the Lord,"

"to tempt the Lord," "to return to the Lord," are all applied to Jesus.

Jesus, e.g., was the God of revelation in the wilderness; there He

baptized (the water from the rock), and celebrated the Eucharist (the

manna). True, the letter to the Philippians says that it was only after

the resurrection that the name above all other names was given Him

(i.e. the sacred tetragrammaton equivalent to the Greek Kyrios, Lord),

but other passages contradict this statement, and nothing therefore can

be concluded from it. And besides the word Lord, the name of God is but

one of the designations of Jesus in the Old Testament. He is also the

image of God after which God created man, and as such mediator at the

creation. All things were created through Him, and He is the head of

every man.

Now when once this gnostic Christology reached such giddy heights as

these, then the most extravagant speculations of the later letters can

no longer strike us as strange. When once Jesus has become the God of

Revelation of the Old Testament, and the mediator in the creation, then

He is also the head and the centre of the world of angels. And if His

propitiatory death has power for all men without distinction, why

should not the rebellious angels like wise experience His power? In all

this reasoning there is no missing link between the possible and the

impossible. The humanity' of Christ has been laid aside a long time ago

by the earlier speculations. Can we be astonished if the fulness of the

Godhead now dwells in Him bodily? If there is anything that surprises

us, the reason is that we do not know the Old Testament passages which

St Paul uses as the basis for his gnosis in the letter to the

Colossians. The occasion for his treating of this subject was the rise

of false teachers at Colossae who appealed to the authority of angels.

To meet this heresy St Paul considers it advisable to remind his

readers that all angels derive their being from Christ alone, and

through Him alone they continue to exist.

The Pauline gnosis claimed to be a revealed exegesis of the Old

Testament. But this Christology cannot possibly have been obtained by

exegesis of the Old Testament, seeing that it had been wrongly inserted

into every text. Whence, then, did St Paul derive it? It cannot

originate from the Jewish doctrine of the Messiah, since Christ always

appears in this as a definite eschatological quantity. Philo's doctrine

of the Logos is too remote to come under consideration. But there were

angelological speculations amongst the Jews, doctrines of divine

intermediate beings regarded as instruments in the creation and

government of the people of God. The archangel Michael was assigned a

prominent position above all others in the history of salvation; he was

almost a subordinate god, to whom God had committed the care of His

people in His own stead. Besides this, the distinction between the two

divine names, Jahve and Adonai, had struck, not only Philo, but the

Palestinian Rabbis, and had led them to set up distinctions in the

divine being. St Paul may well have heard of such speculations; they

facilitated the discovery of Christ in the whole compass of the Old

Testament for him, as all that he needed to do was to identify Christ

with the highest of these intermediate beings.

This adaptation of previous isolated speculations cannot, however, be

considered to be an explanation of the Pauline Christology. Its real

origin is to be sought elsewhere. St Paul's object was to make Christ

the centre of his cosmology. However strange its outer form may appear

to us, the whole of this gnosis is after all the first great Christian

interpretation of the universe. It is not without reason that it is

just in the Epistle to the Colossians that the words occur, "Christ is

all and in all." No sphere of the world, neither of the natural nor of

the spiritual, is henceforth to be accounted profane and under its own

government. Christ is the Sun of all worlds. What remains if this

theory be set on one side? Angelological speculations, myths, etc., and

side by side with these, the person of Jesus as of equal value with the

others. The practical consequence was that at Colossae they sought for

communion with God of a supra-Christian character. But now the apostle

declares Christ to be the head of all things, and there is therefore no

other means of mediation, save through Him alone. Thereby, too, a step

forward has been taken in comparison with the doctrine of salvation.

The significance of Christ was limited in that doctrine to His helping

us out of this present evil world. Here in the gnosis He is the

mediator of the whole world. A positive relation to the cosmos has

taken the place of one that was negative. Hence follows the practical

conclusion, which we find already in the hortatory portion of the

Epistle to the Colossians, with its Christian regulations of marriage,

of education, of the relations of master and servant, and the command

that what ever is done must be done in the name of the Lord. Thereby

Christ is secularized and the world is Christianized. It is only the

Pauline gnosis that completely explains to us the firm stand thus taken

with Jesus on the vantage ground of this world--of His world.

But what a circuitous route he travels. How simple and untheological is

the gospel faith in Providence by the side of this. Compare the reasons

given for the "be not anxious" in St Matt. vi. with the first chapter

of the Epistle to the Colossians. The Pauline gnosis here starts from a

very living feeling of that which is Christian and at the same time

from an entirely dead conception of God. Even in its origin the dogma

of the divinity of Christ is a proof of the weakness of the faith in

God. Jesus would not j have answered the false teachers at Colossae:

"The angels, whose intercourse you are seeking, only exist through Me

and have even been reconciled to God by Me." He would simply have said:

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him alone shalt thou serve."

But St Paul knows another gnosis of a completely different nature

besides this of which we have been speaking. It is theocentric, and it

belongs to the close of his system. It is a bold undertaking to

penetrate with the Spirit into the deep things of God and to explain

the whole of the world and history from the standpoint of God as the

realization of divine purposes. The starting-point of this gnosis is

his own experience, his own certainty of salvation. As the Christian

regards the whole of his former life in spite of all its sin and all

its evil fortune as the divinely appointed path for his own redemption,

so he may with equal right look upon the whole course of the world's

history, of which his own life forms an infinitesimal portion, as the

necessary way of the Lord unto salvation. Only then the goal is so

infinitely greater. The simplest formula of this philosophy of history

is: All things are from God, through God, and to God. God is the first

cause of the whole world and of all history. He has created them. Now

even though the world should fall away from God and sink down step by

step into even deeper sin and corruption, then that is but an apparent

infraction of the divine plan and government.

"Deep in unfathomable mines

Of never failing skill

He treasures up His bright designs

And works His sovereign will."

God Himself willed the Fall and sin. He has given over to sin and

disobedience all alike, that to all alike He may at last show mercy.

Yes, the law was only given to man in order to make the offence

greater. But the greater the sin the wider God's mercy. No statement is

too bold for St Paul to make, for the thought never occurs to him that

sin could thereby lose the character of guilt on the part of man. Sin

is guilt in any case, but then God is God even over sin. And then the

world is gradually led back to obedience to God by the incarnation and

sacrifice of the Son of God. Now that is the manifestation of God's

grace which is so inexpressibly great, so much greater than sin. Step

by step the process of redemption proceeds. Christ, the Church, the

Gentiles, Israel, the angel world, are one after another embraced by

the love of God and return to Him from whom they took their origin. In

the end God will be all in all. All things have reverted--not to

physical absorption in God, but to worship and subjection to the honour

of God the Father. The fall and sin had one great and important

consequence. The story of the parable was lived in real life--the story

of the children who only learned to love their home when they were in a

strange country.

The end of this gnosis in a man like St Paul could only be a prayer of

glad thanksgiving. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and

the knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways

past tracing out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath

been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him and it shall be

recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him,

are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen." The passage is

especially beautiful because of the modesty of this gnostic, who in

spite of his great presentiments ever reminds himself that God is too

high for him. However far he may penetrate, there remains in God an

element of mystery. But for all that, his prevailing mood is one of

thanksgiving and of joy. From his own stand point, in the bright light

of certain conviction, he can confidently scan the dark riddles and

unsolved problems of existence. He knows that all is light for God and

will one day be light for him. And he knows the love of God as the end

and goal of all that happens in the world. That is Christian gnosis

which interprets the world from the experience of faith or of Jesus. In

fact, whether he formulates it with Christ or with God as the centre,

the whole of his knowledge is one of the great effects which his

experience on the road to Damascus produced in him.

We have arrived at the end of St Paul's theology. It has been shown

that its roots are to be found in the experience of the vision of

Christ and in his apologetic as missionary. In the building of the

edifice Jewish material has been used to a very large extent, nor has

the Greek been entirely rejected. But the final result is something

entirely new and independent compared with all that has gone before. It

is an original Christian creation. St Paul's great achievement is that

from these two starting-points, Jesus and His Church, everything has

been thought out entirely anew, so that scarcely in one single point

does the earlier knowledge remain the same, or in the same connection.

If the Jesus of the Christians is the Redeemer, then (1) All men must

be miserable, lost sinners for whom there is no other atonement but in

Christ's death, and no salvation but that through the Spirit of Christ

in the Church, with the hope of the glory that is to come, the earnest

of which we have in Christ's Resurrection--such are the postulates of

the doctrine of salvation; and (2) the law can be no road to

salvation--it has been annulled by Christ, whilst faith and the Spirit

are a complete substitute for the law in the Church of Christ. Such are

the demands of the anti-Jewish apologetic; and (3) the whole of the Old

Testament must be a Christian book, and the whole world must be

interpreted from the standpoint of Jesus. Such is the postulate of the

Christian gnosis. Even the preaching of monotheism receives a Christian

content, for the one God is the God and Father of Jesus Christ. It is

only the doctrine of the final salvation of the whole of Israel that

stands outside of this Christocentric system.

Now it is of course true that the Jesus of St Paul is no longer merely

the Jesus of the Church of Jerusalem. The Son of God, the Cross and the

Resurrection, are here so explained that, as distinguished from the

earlier hope in a coming Messiah, the foundation is laid for the later

Christological dogma. For the subject of this dogma is not the coming

Messiah, but the Son of God who has already come. Moreover, St Paul

himself has removed the Son of God very far from humanity, and brought

Him very near to God as mediator of the creation and revelation. It is

perfectly incredible within how short a time the Jesus of history had

to undergo this radical transformation. In spite of this, however, it

is just the Jesus of history that St Paul grasped with a deep and clear

insight, as the Redeemer who leads us away from the false Jewish idea

to the Fatherhood of God and to moral freedom, and who, besides setting

the high ideal before us, inspires us at the same time with strength

and courage for its realization. It is for this living and loving Jesus

that the apostle's high Christology paves a way into the world.

In the next place, the Church, which dominates the Pauline theology

second to Christ alone, is for him still identical with the communities

which in spite of all imperfections were real instruments of salvation

and channels for the influence of Jesus. Hence the practical value of

St Paul's ecclesiastical apologetic. Nevertheless it was he who

likewise created the Christian idea of the Church in its fanatical

narrowness, by pronouncing as he did all who were outside the fold, as

a sinful mass of corruption doomed to death, and in many passages at

anyrate, attaching everlasting blessedness to belief in the

ecclesiastical creed. Thereby the same man who led Jesus out into the

free world confined Him within a narrow form which does not harmonize

with the freedom and the seriousness of the sayings and parables of

Jesus.

But in spite of all this, Christianity only became a great spiritual

power in the world through the theology of St Paul. For through him it

obtained a cosmology as a foundation, which enabled it to compete with

Greek philosophies and Oriental myths. Through him the Jewish idea was

annulled and so Christianity was set free to enter the world. Yes, and

at the same time its spiritual character is assured for all eternity.

Ceremonies have no value as means of salvation. St Paul grasped the

world-historic greatness of Jesus, and compared Him with the first man.

The Messianic element is forced into the background; with Jesus a new

humanity begins. Paul placed the two great ideas of the Fatherhood of

God and the freedom of the Spirit in the centre, as the Christian ideal

in religion, and has thereby laid down the safest canon of criticism

for every form of religion.

Finally he placed love and practical results higher than enthusiasm and

theology, and thereby found the eternal in the transitory. As one

surveys the whole of what he achieved, one stands in silent amazement

at his greatness as a thinker.

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RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE CHURCHES.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

ST PAUL'S PERSONAL RELIGION.

WE can recognize the effect of Jesus upon His disciples directly from

the Gospels. Here we see all that was great and new in Jesus that

seemed worth recording. It was this at the same time that struck root

and further developed. The effect of St Paul, on the other hand, we can

only discern quite indirectly. We can gather what it was, partly from

his letters, and partly from those documents of the succeeding age

which were clearly influenced by him. Even though these conclusions are

mostly hypothetical, we cannot entirely disregard them. Our present

object, then, is to discover the characteristics of the earliest

Christianity in heathen countries.

Wherever the Christians are gathered together in fully organized

communities, there they feel that they are sharply divided not only

from the popular religion of their heathen neighbours, but also from

the Jewish synagogue. Both constitute for them that world to which they

have bidden farewell. Indeed it is contrast with the world that

determines the signification of the term Christian. In the first place

comes the difference of faith and hope. As compared with the heathen,

the Christian confesses the unity of God the Creator, and denies that

the gods of the heathens are such to whom worship is due. The great

text-book of monotheism is the Old Testament. As compared with the

Jews, the Christian confesses that Jesus is the Lord; nay, more, the

Son of God who came down from heaven in order to die for our sins, and

to guarantee our hope through His Resurrection. This same Jesus shall

come again in the near future, as the Saviour of those that believe on

Him. Of Him, too, the whole of the Old Testament prophesies. He is now

sitting on the right hand of God, and nearest to God, greater than all

angels. Besides this, the Christian believes that the Spirit of God or

of Christ, called also the Holy Spirit, is given to all believers in

the Christian Church. These are the dogmatic propositions which St Paul

securely established in all his Churches. He often summarized them as

the essence of the faith upon which all depends. As yet the Spirit

occupies the least prominent position in the creed, which is natural

while he is still an object of experience. There is no need as yet to

believe in him first. St Paul himself, however, employs expressions

from time to time, in which the threefold formula Father, Son, and Holy

Spirit already occurs.

The important point to notice here is the theoretical character of the

faith, which is guaranteed by the contents. Neither mystical nor

ethical elements are contained therein. It consists in assent to the

propositions of the preaching. In this assent a certain amount of trust

is contained as well. But the question already arises, whether this act

of trust was considered as important by the Greeks as it is by us. They

believed in the facts of the Gospel, in the fulfilment of the

prophecies, in the unity of God, all purely, theoretical objects of

belief in the first place. "The devils also believe, and tremble," we

read in a later document. We may much rather add in our thoughts hope

to the word faith, for faith in Jesus for the purpose of salvation is

as much as hope. Thereby it receives a very great accession of value.

He that believes may hope to be saved in the approaching day of

judgment. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou and thy house shall be

saved," says the Paul of the Acts. Faith saves, justifies,

blesses,--expressions such as these obtained currency wherever St Paul

had been. Often they were turned into harmful party cries, against the

use of which later leaders had emphatically to protest. They went so

far as to consider all that were without--the unbelievers--as such, for

lost, whatever their works and their character might be.

Other characteristics of the Christian in opposition to the world may

be noticed in addition to this the first; e.g. participation in the

holy rites of the Church. This would appeal especially to the Greeks,

to whom the Christians were, above all else, the saints, i.e. the

congregation participating in the true worship. The later Sacraments,'

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, were in very early times valued by the

Greeks as mysterious rites connected with the world beyond. In baptism,

the new birth is symbolized by a dying and a rising again. An

implanting in Christ takes place whilst the convert passes through the

water. The baptized convert is now a citizen of the world that is

above: he has a certain claim upon that which is to come. The Lord's

Supper then leads him to an even closer and more intimate communion

with Christ. But the Spirit of God descends even in the ordinary

meetings for divine service, and testifies to His presence by

mysterious and miraculous manifestations. St Paul never failed to

subject these workings of the Spirit to ethical principles, but his

Churches did not always follow his example. The Spirit and the

miraculous continued to be interchangeable conceptions for them; only

the theological mysteries were counted to be just as certain

revelations of the Spirit as ecstasy. Thus the apostle's rich

inheritance was at once considerably impoverished. Of all the manifold

manifestations of the Spirit two only were in reality preserved, and

those the most opposed to each other--ecstasy and theology--both

unpractical and morally indifferent.

The way is paved for a radical transformation from this point onwards.

The greatness of the earliest form of Christianity was essentially

constituted by two historical realities--Jesus and the community which

attached itself to Him. All that deserves the name of salvation is the

effect of these two realities. They were also the two main factors in

St Paul's missionary work--the incarnation of the grace of God. But in

the Pauline Churches the place of the person of Jesus is occupied by

statements concerning the Son of God, the Cross and the Resurrection,

which are accepted in faith. Where Jesus stood before, there now stands

the dogma of Christ. The social element finds its expression in the

Sacraments in which it is believed the present activity of Jesus is

experienced. Dogmas and sacraments therefore have ousted Jesus and His

community. Now the dogmatic statements were from the first

incomprehensible for the most part; the interpretation, the gnosis, was

only a later addition. As for religious ceremonies, incomprehensibility

is of their very essence. Hence forth, almost immediately after St

Paul's death, salvation is experienced in the acceptation of mysterious

propositions and in participation in mysterious rites. It was only

after the laying of this foundation that the second step was

reached--the Christianity of those that have the full know ledge. It

might then be said: Christianity exists either as a superstition or as

a philosophy. But we are as yet a long way from having reached this

stage. The early and marked prominence, however, attached to dogma and

sacrament instead of to the actual and historical realities--Jesus and

the community--was the beginning of Catholic Christianity. This was far

indeed from ever having been St Paul's object, but he did not check the

tendency. The Christianity of the earliest Church had been guarded

against this perversion.

There was, however, yet one other characteristic which distinguished

the Christian from the world, and this constitutes the splendour of the

early days of the faith: it was the earnest endeavour to develop the

new life of the individual. Conversion was no empty word for great

numbers of Christians, but an actual breach with an earlier life which

had frequently been stained by vice. The watchful care of the brethren,

the compulsion exercised by ecclesiastical discipline, the preaching of

the ideal, the expectation of the day of judgment, were all means to

perfect that which had been begun. The standard was furnished by some

few sayings of Jesus, rather more numerous texts from the Old

Testament, and the preaching and the letters of the apostle. And so the

brethren began to reorganize the social life of the community in every

direction. The worship of idols and immorality were laid aside,

marriage was sanctified, attention was paid to the education of

children, honesty and truthfulness were encouraged, temperance

advocated, vengeance and strife suppressed. There was an increasing

eagerness to serve, a growing joy in making sacrifices, in forgiveness

and patient endurance, and a striving to yield wherever possible and to

give a good example to their heathen neighbours. In a word, the

foundation was laid for the regeneration of a society that was for the

most part diseased and degenerate. Some Churches--that at Philippi,

e.g.--must have been especially bright and shining lights in the midst

of their dark surroundings. Paul was a stern judge, but he distributed

praise liberally and frequently. And now add to all that has been said

the courage and the glad joyfulness of these Churches in supporting

petty vexations and trials of every kind, the fervour of their life of

prayer, the constancy of their hope--Christians are men that hope,

whereas heathen have no hope--and we shall still have but a very weak

and imperfect idea of the bright side of this first missionary life

which filled the apostle with the fulness of joy.

The dark side to this picture was, of course, not wanting. Even in this

first age the forerunners of future decadence can be noticed. We may

call them extra Christianity' and average Christianity.' Either

separation from the world is exaggerated till it becomes fanaticism and

asceticism, or the old world is carried over into the new Church. The

very certainty of the hope in the approaching end of the world often

disturbed the quiet course of a normal development of character. Still

more often the disgust which a man felt when he thought of his own

filthy past, drove him into an opposite extreme. One of the strangest

features of the age are those Christian betrothals which the First

Epistle to the Corinthians mentions without blame when a maiden

entrusted herself to the protection of an older man. Thus far

everything had gone on well, but it was a dangerous precipice whereon

to walk. There are other instances of ascetic tendencies at Corinth. St

Paul was officially asked whether a Christian was bound to practise

complete continence in marriage. In Rome, on the contrary, total

abstinence and vegetarianism were the favourite practices, only, it is

true, amongst the weaker brethren. St Paul had to write more than one

letter to Thessalonica in order to urge the people not to abandon their

daily work. Generally speaking, it will be found that he treated these

ascetic tendencies too leniently, out of sympathy with these

Christians, who at least had the merit of entire sincerity in their

striving after perfection. Later on, the ascetic ideal of chastity was

set up in certain churches, not as a commandment but as an

extraordinary virtue. The enthusiasm of those who sought for spiritual

gifts at Corinth was surely a great deal less dangerous. It quickly

evaporated. At Thessalonica there were even some who despised

prophesyings. But for all that the opinion remained firmly rooted that

the Spirit of God was to be recognized by abnormal manifestations, and

that such belong to the Christian perfection.

St Paul's attitude to average Christianity was one of uncompromising

hostility. He still hoped that it would be rooted out. But in vain. It

had been present from the very first in the life of the Christian

congregations, in the lives of those members who believed that they

themselves were converted because of the conversion of others. It had

not crept in, therefore, as a consequence of decay. Each congregation

had no doubt a heavy task in combating the most formidable vice of the

great cities, sexual excesses; and in the East, resistance was doubly

difficult. Then came the specially Greek sins, dishonesty and trickery

in the lower classes, litigiousness and wrangling in the upper. And

then finally all that the Christian calls superstition, participation

in secret, mostly immoral rites, magic books, amulets, incantations.

All this existed from the very first in the Christian congregations

themselves. The establishment of ecclesiastical discipline always

involved a certain amount of loss alongside of the indubitable gain. By

the suppression of the coarser elements, room was secured for the

development of the finer. But the benefit thus secured was speedily

counter balanced by the substitution of fixed rules and rigid customs

for the free exercise of the apostle's judgment.

This imperfect state of affairs was not without influence upon the

feelings of those individuals who had conceived of the task of the new

life in the meaning which St Paul had attached to it.

Was there any certainty of salvation, and upon what did it depend? Paul

urged his converts to place all their trust in the doctrine of

election. Whoever did that placed his reliance upon Christ and upon

faith. This could be done either with or without moral earnestness. And

there were instances of both these courses, just as there are to-day.

Whoever, on the contrary, was more impressed by the fact that

Christians fell into sin and were lost, practically abandoned the

certainty of salvation, and of such there were very soon a great

number. Contrary conclusions were, however, in turn drawn from this

fact again. Some would work out their salvation with fear and

trembling, and ensure salvation through entire consecration of life.

Others suffered things to take their course, and thought it would be

time enough in the last hour. Even the Pauline Epistles themselves

refer to all these different possibilities, and we also meet with them

later on in close connection. A clear distinction between St Paul and

Jesus now manifests itself as regards the effects of their labours:

both bound up indissolubly--religion, the life as God's child in God's

love--and the claims of morality; but the emphasis was a very different

one. Jesus gives prominence to the moral claim, to the true will of God

instead of the false. Hence the danger which threatened His community

was legalism. Whereas St Paul, building upon grace and the atonement,

had almost from the first to guard against the danger of moral

corruption. True he struggles against it with all his might and main,

especially in Rom. vi., but that is just a proof of the reality of the

presence of the danger. Whereas in the earliest Church at Jerusalem one

looked down upon the corrupt righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees

from the vantage ground of that righteousness which exceeded theirs, in

the Pauline communities they who were now reconciled with God as His

children regarded the lost heathen with a patronising compassion

although they were no better than their neighbours in many points. It

must be admitted, however, that St Paul himself gave no excuse for such

an attitude. Through his letters he did all that he possibly could to

remove every misunderstanding, and to sweep away this idle faith.

We can, after all, best arrive at a correct standard of judgment by

contrasting the later with the earlier condition of these Pauline

communities. Regarded from this point of view, they always appear again

in a favourable light. It was a great step to take, and one attended by

no little risk, to find a home for the Gospel, the child of Judaism, in

the new world, which was in reality so ill-prepared for it. There was

scarcely anyone less able to understand Jesus than these Greeks, whose

sole surviving art was that of long-winded disputation. And to attempt

to bring Jesus actually to such a city as Corinth, was simply an

immense undertaking. But it succeeded. The result of the labours of St

Paul and his companions, was that round about the �gean sea the

Christian colonies grew up and developed a new, sound, and healthy

life. Demons of vice were turned into respectable citizens, thieves and

brawlers became useful workmen, and anxious and distressed souls found

peace in the love of God. There was a thorough weeding out of all that

was foul and corrupt, while the germs of love, patience, chastity, and

humility were planted in the soil. True, the clearance was seldom

thorough enough; the old roots remained, and were destined soon to put

forth new shoots.

Yet we will never forget that our own Christianity was a consequence of

St Paul's missionary labours. Perfection is not to be found in this

world. The question was put to the Greeks: Will you have Jesus, or will

you not? They answered: We will have His teaching if we may have it as

Greeks. And so they obtained it as Greeks, and corrupted it to the best

of their ability. We, no doubt, would have done exactly the same. But

the great result was, that Jesus held His ground, never suffered

Himself to be utterly degraded, and ever again uplifted humanity.

No obscurity rests upon St Paul's own personal religion, because he

possessed that highest of all gifts, the art of speaking about himself

and his own inner life. He understood how to describe the unutterable

and indefinable moods of his own soul in such a way that they continued

to work on in others. It was just the tenderness of his temperament,

that often almost morbidly sensitive basis of his soul with its

tendency to the ecstatic, that made of him one of the greatest

revealers of the inmost recesses of personal religion. There it lies

open for all to behold in his letters, and we can speak of a personal

impression that St Paul makes upon us, and even of his redemptive work,

as though of Jesus Himself.

The change at his conversion was all-decisive. It imparted to his

personal religion the character of strong contrasts which have to be

reconciled, and these merely form the transition to new contrasts. The

contrasts of sin and grace, of strength and weakness, are placed by St

Paul in the very core and centre of religion.

Although Paul could boast before his conversion of a blameless life as

touching the righteousness concerning the law, he had some bitter

experiences even then. He must have sounded the misery of sin, and the

torture of a divided mind, down to the very depths. The recollection of

it still quivers almost convulsively in the concluding verses of Rom.

vii.: "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of

this sin?" All the greater is the feeling of pardon in the present, of

peace with God combined with the consciousness of deliverance from

torture, and the confirmation of the good within him. St Paul, as well

as every other Christian who was converted, could indicate the hour of

the change, and the recollection of this sudden regeneration gave his

religion strength and weight. The old is past; lo! it became new! Being

justified through faith we have peace with God. God's love is poured

into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Through St Paul that personal

religion was for the first time firmly established amongst Christians,

which starts from the basis of the contrast between sin and grace. But

this contrast extends far beyond the feelings to the will. Consolation

for sin, and at the same time deliverance from the power of sin, are

its chief aim. For sin and grace are to succeed each other, and not to

co-exist side by side.

But is this contrast absolute? Is the breach with the past at Damascus

so complete that no consequences of his previous condition can be

traced in the present? Even as a Christian St Paul had moments of

depression. How could it be otherwise? New temptations perpetually

arose from his own nature and from his surroundings. The reconciliation

between these moments of depression and the feeling of grace is brought

about by faith--i.e. the constant abiding in the love of God which has

once for all been manifested in Christ. "That life which I now live in

the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God who loved me."

"Because Christ hath loved us, no power on earth shall be able to

separate us from God." Thus St Paul was enabled to perpetuate his

single experience through faith. It is all repetition, says

Kierkegaard. It is no new experience, but constant trust in the old

one. Here, too, St Paul is the forerunner of many who lived in later

ages.

The other contrast is between strength and weakness. It is of no less

importance for him than the former. Through his conversion St Paul was

caught up and swept away by the enthusiasm of the earliest Christian

Church and learnt to taste of the powers of the great Beyond--a

wonderful experience. He fell into ecstasies and saw visions. He was

vouchsafed revelations. He saw the Lord. He was caught up into

Paradise. He heard heavenly words. Then he was so strong that he felt

himself more than man--he was already a spirit. We are not in the

flesh--"the life eternal hath begun." But then, on the other hand, came

moments of terrible depression, when an angel of the adversary was sent

to smite him, when he passed through the "valley of the shadow of

death," when he was filled with fear and trembling, and felt powerless

to cope with the tasks of the moment. Hence the alternations of

communion with God and the sense of abandonment by God in the apostle's

personal religion--Paul becomes the type of the mystics.

To attain the mastery over these fits of depression is above all the

task of that longing and yearning which is nothing but the expression

of a heightened feeling of contrast. Out of this longing expectancy St

Paul extracts the most wonderful notes in all his letters. The Spirit

itself is in bondage to the weakness of creation, so that he prays

unconsciously in groanings that cannot be uttered, which God, however,

hears. That is the prayer of longing, the groaning and the crying for

the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Imprisoned in our

earthly tabernacle, in a strange country, we long for our home which is

with God. "I have the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that

were far better." Once again it is St Paul who was the first to

proclaim this feeling of man's deep, wild longing for his eternal home.

But longing is the constant reminder of one's necessities, and

perpetually awakens one's consciousness of them. Then St Paul finds the

highest comfort of all in a moment of prayer. "My grace is sufficient

for thee, for strength is made perfect in weakness. When I am weak then

I am strong." He has found peace in perfect trust in God; that, too, is

faith. Thereby he can do all things, and boasts even of his

necessities. Ecstasy, longing, faith: these are the steps in this

religion.

The personal religion which has been sketched thus far is essentially

one of moods and feelings. For the alternation as well as the

harmonizing of contrasts falls under the sphere of the emotional life.

This is one of the reasons why St Paul's place in the history of

religion is so important. He transferred the real life of religion to

the feelings, discovered it in the feelings. Religion, according to St

Paul, is fear and hope, possessing and seeking, rejoicing and longing,

joy in communion with God, and yearning for God; and by surrendering

ourselves to the divine influence which comes over us, we are

saved--i.e. uplifted out of this world into God's presence. Hence an

unbroken apostolic succession through St Augustine and St Bernard to

Schleiermacher. Paul was the first clearly to experience and express

for all time the two sets of feelings: sin and grace, strength and

weakness; and thereby the inner meaning and depth of religion were

immensely increased. The holy of holies is no longer placed in outer

effects and consequences, but transferred to communion with God in the

innermost heart. For this emotional life the significance of historical

events is exceedingly limited. They are simply considered as means to

create moods and to excite feelings. This is just what the Cross and

Resurrection of Jesus were for St Paul. By this means the historical

tradition and the unbroken continuity with the past are indeed

preserved, but the true life of religion is in the present; it is the

soul's communion with the living God. Knowledge of the historical fact

is but the kindling spark.

The peculiar danger of this emotional form of religion has always

consisted in its tendency to allow the field of the active life to lie

fallow. Paul escaped this danger, thanks to his calling. As the

consciousness of his apostolic calling was fully developed in him, and

never for one moment forsook him, it imparted a zeal and a restless

energy to him, which made every kind of luxuriating in dreams and

visions and every form of idleness a physical impossibility. In this

respect Paul became a hero of ethical self-discipline, and of entirely

unselfish service to the brethren. He conceived of his especial calling

as being at the same time typical. Hence the servile labour to which he

compelled his hands, hence the bodily discipline carried to the verge

of asceticism, hence his strict temperance and entire sincerity. Paul

overcame all obstacles, especially those originating in his own

temperament, in a wonderful manner, or used them as stepping-stones. He

withstood, too, every temptation to pride, and every tendency to a

domineering bearing. But above all he perfected love and self-sacrifice

in his calling. He could endure and forgive; he sympathised in every

man's afflictions, he collected money for his enemies. In certain cases

he sacrificed the freedom of his conscience to his love. For the Jews'

sake he was ready to be severed from the Christ. In his old age he took

an unselfish delight in the progress of the Gospel in spite of the envy

and the wrangling of his associates. Notwithstanding his longing for

heaven, he preferred to remain on earth, so as to work and to suffer

for the brethren. Each one of his letters to them is a proof of his

love. Thus he strove with all his might so that in his own life the

panegyric of love passed from words into deeds; this he likewise

demanded of every Christian as the visible proof of his belonging to

Christ.

The peculiarity of St Paul's personal religion becomes still more

manifest when it is contrasted with the essentially different form of

Jesus religion. This is the exact opposite of a religion of emotion. It

may be objected that the relative insignificance of the subjective

element in the case of Jesus, is due to the impossibility of extracting

the true Jesus from His reporters. But to this we may reply: Had Jesus

been a mystic, or in any other way pre-eminently a man of feeling, then

this would have found expression in His words in spite of all additions

or omissions of these reporters. But it is just a peculiarity of His

that the inner life of His soul is rarely, or never, reflected in what

He says, and that no value of its own is attached to the emotional

life. His personal religion is altogether practical. He went about

doing good, helping others, struggling for the right--a life

concentrated in present tasks and aims, a religion that looked forward

to ideals that were to be realized. All Jesus' actions are indeed

prompted by feelings--i.e. by the childlike certainty of the love of

God and by the deep seriousness with which the great future inspires

Him. But these feelings do not constitute separate domains of their

own, from which the road to action has subsequently to be discovered.

On the contrary, whether consciously or unconsciously, they are the

ever present substratum of all that He does. There is an entire absence

here of the alternation between the sense of sin and of grace, as well

as of that between strength and weakness, at any rate in that degree

with which St Paul is acquainted. True there are days in Jesus' life

when He ascends to the mountain-heights of enthusiasm, and also there

are others when He walks in the valley of disappointment and failure.

But how entirely this change of mood recedes into the background behind

the total impression left us by a life of constant and conscious

progress! We can notice this even in the great moderation with which He

judges men. He never considers them as either entirely beyond the reach

of sin or as inextricably involved therein. Besides, the style of the

sayings of Jesus is the expression of an altogether practical and

temperate nature.

Both forms of personal religion are justifiable if they have but really

been experienced. It is a consequence of the predominance of St Paul's

theology, that his personal religion has likewise come to be regarded

as the normal type, though, it is true, only after the excision of the

really mystical element. But the deterioration of morality has been the

regular and inevitable consequence of an exclusive emphasis of the

emotional life. Our task to-day is again to bring into the foreground

Jesus' own personal religion, and to hold this up as a word of warning

to our age.

Paul has left a deeper impression upon history than any other of Jesus'

disciples. He transplanted the young religion into the great world of

civilization, created its first profound system of thought, and

developed a new form of personal religion. In so doing he was the first

to introduce Christianity into the world's history. The whole future

development of the Gospel is determined by the form imparted to it by

St Paul. The measure of his worth lies in the fact that he came to be

the greatest minister of the Gospel, and as such has often occupied its

place. In more than one instance his work was of a transitory nature:

but he himself, the man Paul, is one of the most inspiring and

comforting characters in all history, one of those who are an unfailing

source of courage and of joy to us a smaller breed of men.

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THE APOCALYPSE.

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE PROPHET.

THE Apocalypse of St John no longer belongs to the first period of

early Christianity, that is, if we consider the exact date of its

composition. The book cannot have been written earlier than the reign

of Domitian; the destruction of Jerusalem has taken place long ago, and

the outbreak of the great persecutions on the part of the State is

anticipated. But as the solitary surviving memorial of early Christian

prophecy, and as the product of enthusiasm, it still represents the

hopes and thoughts of the earliest age before the development of the

ecclesiastical constitution. No living prophet, it is true, here speaks

to us: it is a book; but the book is one which claims with its very

first words to be prophetic inspiration. Whatever its ultimate origin

from Christian and Jewish sources, the book itself emphatically claims

to be considered as a whole, and as the expression of Christian

prophecy.

The author at once expresses the profoundest consciousness of his call

in his opening sentences. God wanted to make known to His servants the

prophets a revelation of the things which must shortly come to pass.

For this purpose the angel was sent to the servant of God, John, in

order that he might hand on the message to others. His words are the

words of the prophecy. Happy he that reads, and he that lays them to

heart. God Himself speaks through the book.

Thereupon the heavenly calling of the prophet is related to us in the

vision. When he was upon the island of Patmos, to deliver the message

of God and the testimony about Jesus, he found himself in a trance on

the Lord's day and was charged by Jesus Himself to write to the seven

Churches of Asia Minor what he saw, that which is and that which shall

be hereafter.

The seven Epistles which are now dictated to him may be regarded from a

twofold point of view. They are messages of the heavenly Messiah to the

heavenly leaders of the seven Churches made known to men upon earth by

the prophet John. But at the same time they are the oracles of the

Spirit; so the close of every letter reminds us, the Spirit is speaking

to the Churches. The prophet wishes therefore to be regarded purely as

a medium, both in what he promises and threatens as well as in his

revelations and exhortations. The difference between St Paul and the

author of this book is very striking. St Paul, too, censured various

evil practices after a similar manner--e.g. in First

Corinthians--employing both promises and threats. But he always speaks

as a human being and never as the interpreter of the Spirit.

Next follows the long series of apocalyptic visions, which continues to

the end of the book. However constantly the scene changes, the author

never forgets to play the part of the prophet. He sees and hears all

that goes on in heaven. He is removed from one place to another; he is

so intensely affected by what he sees that he bursts into tears. When

he has swallowed the little book, at the angel's command, he describes

its effect: "It was bitter to my stomach." He speaks with one of the

twenty-four elders in heaven. The conversations with angels are of

especially frequent occurrence. From time to time the description of

the visions is interrupted by short utterances of the Spirit, which

then produce an impression of immediate inspiration in contrast with

their context: under this category falls the impressive blessing

pronounced upon the future martyrs. But then, on the other hand, one is

struck by the threefold asseveration of the truth of the inspiration.

"These words are faithful and true." Is that the true prophet's

language? The conclusion of the book consists of nothing but

attestations concerning the divine authorship. First the angel speaks,

then Jesus, finally the seer himself. His inspired book, which now

possesses divine and legal authority, ends with terrible threats and

extravagant promises.

A comparison with some of the products of the Jewish apocalyptic

literature, which bear a very striking similarity, e.g., the books of

Baruch and Ezra, which were written about the same time, reveals to us

the fact that the prophetic consciousness is a great deal more

prominent in the case of John. In the former case the pseudonymous

author speaks for the most part in his own person, and clearly

distinguishes his human words from the divine communications. But in

this case everything claims to be revelation from beginning to end. The

faithfulness and truth of the divine word is thrice emphasized, and

finally the angel, Jesus, and the seer, testify to the divinity of the

revelation. The human element and the author's independent position

recede entirely into the background.

But is the whole book to be really ascribed to prophetic revelation? On

the contrary, every page of the book confirms our belief that we are

here dealing with fiction. The mythological contents of the visions,

the form of revelation by means of angels, the conscious employment of

literary art in the construction of the book, the similarity of the

style with that of all Jewish apocalypses, are all proofs against the

genuineness of the prophecy. Very probably, too, the name of John is

intended to denote the celebrated disciple of Jesus, and then the book

is pseudonymous, like all similar compositions. It is a literary

production from beginning to end. Even the seven Epistles are not real

letters which were ever despatched; one does not write to angels.

How are we then to explain the contradiction between the prophetic

claims and the employment of fiction in the composition of the book?

The author possessed prophetic gifts and powers. The seven letters and

many short oracles of the Spirit scattered here and there throughout

the book, can be traced back to a state of inspired enthusiasm as their

original source. He may even have had visions, at least one vision

which impelled him to write. Above all, he feels himself called to be a

prophet because of the terribly critical nature of the times in which

he is living. It is an inner compulsion that causes him to sound the

battle-cry for the last struggle of the people of God against Rome. He

himself has been aroused from his sleep by the storm and stress of the

times. Now his office is to act as watchman over the Churches of Asia

Minor, to threaten, to exhort, to comfort, that everyone may be ready

for the last battle. Thus the Christian prophets of old conceived of

their task. The inner moral constraint which bade them speak, whether

they would or no, appeared to them then as the Spirit or word of God.

But side by side with this the same man is also a writer of

apocalypses, a literary prophet. He lives on the learned results of

past ages, he has studied books and digested books. He has drawn his

great eschatological system from them. He does not hesitate to

incorporate fragments of older writers in his own work as though they

were his own revelations. This very human wisdom, which is not even his

own, he produces as though it were God's word, and he tries to conceal

from himself his own insight into the real origin of the book by making

as loud assertions of its divine origin as possible.

Thereby his work becomes a memorial of the decay of prophecy. We can

learn from him that there were once Christian prophets who possessed

God's word and claimed the highest authority. Their enthusiasm, their

courage, their holy zeal, speak from every good word in this book. But

its author is scarcely himself to be accounted any longer one of them.

He would cover his Jewish scholasticism with the mantle of their

authority. And in so doing he finally takes refuge in asseverations and

attestations, whereby his fiction loses its harmlessness. It is

therefore often a hard matter to take pleasure in much that is

undoubtedly magnificent in his work.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE PROMISE.

As the prophet that he claims to be, the author of the Apocalypse has

above all to foretell the future. Indeed, his whole book consists of

such prediction. The vast agglomeration of his promises admit, after

all, of a very simple division into three parts: (1) The Christian hope

in the parousia; (2) political prophecy; (3) conceptions borrowed from

the storehouse of Jewish apocalyptical tradition.

The coming of Jesus, the Son of man, down from heaven, stands in the

front of the prophecy, that is its Christian element. The old

expectation of the earliest Church continues in undiminished strength.

The nearness of His coming is, as before, the chief point in connection

with it. As the book begins, "For the time is at hand; behold He

cometh"--so it ends: "Yea, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" He

will come suddenly as a thief, as a judge, as a Saviour of them that

are His. The last great tribulation precedes His coming. There will be

a sifting of the saints, then it will be decided who shall stand and

who shall fall. Such had ever been the hopes of the early Christians,

and lapse of time has not effected any change in them. Even the

language is almost that of the earliest Church. Since Jesus departure

His second advent has come to be the main factor in the kingdom of God,

to such an extent that it has usurped its place in ordinary

conversation.

And yet this hope has experienced a great transformation through the

changes wrought by the course of contemporary history. It comes to be

political, because the Roman State has assumed an attitude of hostility

to the Christians. One persecution has already taken place in which the

blood of martyrs has been shed, and now the last great persecution is

close at hand. The thirteenth and seventeenth to nineteenth chapters

deal with this especially. The enemy is Rome, the great city Babylon,

which has the dominion over the kings of the earth. Already it is

drunken with the blood of the saints, and of the witnesses of Jesus. It

is the great harlot, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations

of the earth. The demoniac power appears in chap. xiii. under the

picture of the two beasts, who come up, the first out of the sea, and

the second out of the earth. The dragon has equipped the first with his

own authority, so that he wars against the saints, and is able to

vanquish them: that is the Roman Empire. The second beast is subject to

the first. It is the false prophet who deceives men so that they

worship the image of the first beast and bear its mark: that is, the

priesthood of the Roman emperor-worship. The demand that was made to

worship the emperor, and the persecution of those who refused to obey,

is the occasion for the publication of our apocalypse. It was the

measures taken by Domitian and Trajan which compelled the Christian

eschatology to take this political turn. The same position had occurred

long ago for the Jews, when Caligula ordered his image to be erected in

the temple. The author of our apocalypse takes over these old Jewish

feelings of irritability and resentment against the imperial cultus

into the Christian Church, and builds up his eschatology on this basis.

For him the mark of the times is the struggle between God and the

Caesar whom Satan has set upon the throne. Now it is just this struggle

which at present ends in the defeat of the Christians that the future

is to decide by bringing about the defeat of Rome. And this

decision--the victory of the Christians in the contest which is at once

political and demoniac--is brought about by the coming of the Messiah.

It is here treated as an entirely political occurrence. The Messiah

descends from heaven upon a white horse, in the full equipment of

battle, surrounded by the heavenly hosts. The beast, the kings of the

earth, and their enemies are gathered together to make war against Him.

The result is, of course, their entire annihilation. The beast and the

false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, whilst their followers

perish by the sword. Hereupon begins the reign of Messiah and of His

martyrs, the heroes that fell in battle. This future victory of Christ

over Rome is the core and centre of the promise of our book.

In the midst of the political chaos which the prophet predicts, the

Emperor Nero appears upon the scene. The belief in Nero's return from

the grave had already assumed different shapes. An older form, that he

would wage war against Rome in league with the Parthian kings, has now

been susperseded by a later, that he was to fight against the Lamb, and

be overcome by Him. The celebrated number 666 is supposed to refer to

the Emperor Nero. One can scarcely conceive of anything more fantastic

than these politics which deal with men and spirits, with devils and

angels.

No small danger arose for Christianity from this political coloring of

its hope. St Paul had declared that every power in the State, even the

Emperor Nero, had been appointed by God and was to be regarded as the

servant of God. And now in consequence of the entirely new position of

affairs the emperor has come to be for the Christians the servant of

Satan, and it is from him that he draws all his power. Is the

Christian, then, bound to render him obedience any longer? Is rebellion

not his duty? But nothing lies further from our author's intentions

than any idea of rebellion. His one demand is patience. He would never

allow any other form of resistance but that of passive endurance. God

alone brings us the victory, not men. On the other hand, the prophet's

visions in chaps. xviii. xix. are nothing less than orgies of

vengeance. To revel in these affords some little comfort for the misery

of the present. The malignant joy, the song of triumph, at the fall of

the great harlot, and the description of the destruction of the enemy:

"Gather together, ye birds, and come to the great feast of God, to eat

the flesh of kings, the flesh of commanders, the flesh of mighty men,

the flesh of horses and their riders, the flesh alike of free men and

of slaves, and of high and low"--all this confers no distinction upon

Christianity. Along with the changed political situation it has

forthwith taken over all the thoughts of vengeance, hatred and

fanaticism, which were the marks of Judaism. This fact is certain: it

matters not whether Jewish or Christian materials are the ultimate

source. He that takes delight in such fancies is no whit better than he

that first invented them. It is the thirst for vengeance of tortured

slaves, who imagine still worse tortures for their masters.

But the Christian hope in the parousia and the political prediction

against Rome, after all, only occupy a small portion of the big book.

The main body of the prophecies is nothing but old material taken from

the storehouse of Jewish apocalytic traditions. If the prophet' wished

to write an apocalypse, then he had above all else to be careful that

the old tradition as to the mysteries at the end of the world should

not be lost in his hands. Rather take too much of it than too little.

Contradictions do not matter. Put into your book all that you can lay

hold of: do not bother about probabilities. As a matter of fact this

writer has tied together a whole bundle of eschatologies, often without

any mutual connection.

The greatest space is occupied by the description of the preliminary

signs and the tribulation. The seven seals, the seven trumpets, the

seven bowls, are only variations of similar signs of the last days

which occur in all apocalypses. Of these the seven bowls and the seven

trumpets are so nearly related, that they are best explained as a

twofold copy of the same original. First of all, in each case the earth

is smitten--then the sea, then the rivers, then the stars, then the air

(true, in a very different manner), then come the Parthians, finally

hail, thunder, and lightning. In his descriptions of the preliminary

signs and plagues, our author relies mostly on Old Testament

material--the vision of the steeds in Zechariah, the conjunction of

sword, plague and hunger in Jeremiah, above all, the Egyptian plagues,

a regular mine for the apocalyptic; and besides this, on later Jewish

uncanonical material. The whole of Nature is introduced into the final

drama, and at the same time the political position (the Parthians and

Nero redivivus) furnishes favourable subjects. In the fifth seal a

Jewish idea, that the number of the righteous must be completed before

the end, is changed into a Christian, the martyrs taking the place of

the righteous.

But the prophet is very far from exhausting all his store of

preliminary signs of the end in this threefold use of the number seven

(seals, trumpets and bowls). He has to find room for the rest in the

insertions which he introduces between the three sevens. To these

belong: The sealing of the 144,000 out of the twelve tribes of Israel

(without Dan, the tribe of the Antichrist), to whom afterwards the

great multitude which no man could number out of all nations and

peoples is added. Here the writer has almost certainly introduced an

original Jewish fragment into his book.

The desolation of the holy city by the Gentiles. This section dates

from some time previous to 70 A.D., and originally predicted the

exemption of the temple from desecration.

The sending of the two witnesses--according to an old tradition, Elijah

and Enoch--as preachers of repentance to the holy city. They are killed

by the beast, but are immediately raised from the dead and ascend up

into heaven. All these three insertions are based not merely upon

Jewish traditions, but upon written fragments.

The supernatural commencement of salvation is really only described

when we reach chap. xii.: the birth of the Messiah from the woman whose

robe was the sun, the effort of the dragon to destroy him, his

translation to God. Thereupon follows the assault of heaven by the

dragon, which ends with his defeat by Michael and his being cast down

from heaven. Then the dragon persecutes the other seed of the

woman--i.e. here the Church of Jesus. For this purpose he hands over

his power to the beast, i.e. Rome, until at length the child that has

been snatched up to God descends as king from heaven and destroys him.

All this material is of mythological origin, and is no invention of the

Christian author's. It can even be traced back right through Hebrew

literature to Babylonian myths, but it has been transmitted by Jewish

writers. Our author was the first to impress upon it a Christian

interpretation. The all-important element in it for him is this: the

victory of the Christian has already been decided in heaven, the dragon

has been cast out. Hence the certainty of the approaching deliverance.

The final act of the drama is described by him in two stages, and

offers a combination of different eschatologies. First of all, after

the battle of the Messiah, there is the thousand years' reign of Christ

and of the martyrs (the first resurrection), whilst the dragon in the

meanwhile is bound in the abyss. This state of things comes to an end

with the liberation of the dragon and his renewed assault with Gog and

Magog upon the holy city. In the decisive moment fire falls from heaven

and consumes the enemies of God. Satan is cast for ever into the lake

of fire. Hereupon follows the general resurrection of the dead, and the

judgment of the world according to each man's works: all sinners fall

into hell, the second death. Now comes the transformation of the world

into the new heaven and the new earth (where there is no sea). The new

Jerusalem descends from heaven. God dwells among men. There will be no

more grief. The old order has passed away.

This is, indeed, the official Jewish eschatology, but it is presented

in such a form that every Christian can easily adopt it. The case is

different with the great final picture. Here we are transported, not

into the new heaven and the new earth, but into that which is entirely

of this earth, into the coarsely phenomenal and Jewish from a narrow

national point of view. Our author has again incorporated a Jewish

fragment. The new Jerusalem is brought before us in the form of a cube

with golden streets, high walls, and twelve gates made of precious

stones. There is no temple in it, neither does it need sun or moon. God

Himself is there and illuminates the city. The Gentiles are still in

their position of subjection; they may bring their treasures as tribute

into the holy city, and be healed by the fruit of the tree of life. The

main thing is, of course, the presence of God in person--and, adds the

Christian, of the Lamb. Now here we have the most entire reversion

conceivable to the old familiar national Jewish language. The Christian

people takes the place of the Jewish, and takes over its contempt for

the Gentiles. The new Israel at the head of the nations, in the holy

land and in the holy city--that is the Christian battle-cry. For such

Christians the whole transformation which Jesus effected of the

conception of the kingdom of God has been in vain.

Throughout the whole of the Apocalypse, however, the picture of the

Christian hope is set before us with many beautiful features of great

poetic worth and emotional effect. The Christian joy and blessedness

are expressed in many sayings, just as simply as in the beatitudes of

Jesus. And then again by the side of these, the creations of the

wildest fancy, even in the best portions of the book, the letters to

the seven Churches: "To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the

hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon his stone a

new name written which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." "And

he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my words unto the end, to him

will I give authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a

rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers, as I

also have received of my Father: and I will give him the morning star."

It is Jesus who utters such abstruse, essentially unchristian words in

these letters. In fact, taking the prophecy of the book as a whole, the

name of Jesus has been applied in a manner altogether unsuitable to the

Jesus of history. The very role He did not want to play--that of Jewish

Messiah in a Jewish kingdom of God--has here been allotted to Him.

What then, after all , is there that is Christian in this prophecy? Set

it for a moment side by side with the apocalypse of Ezra, and the

answer is not far to seek. There is resignation often akin to despair;

here the exultant confidence of victory. With the glad exultant longing

and splendid certainty of victory, the little handful of Christians

faced their long and arduous struggle against almighty Rome. "The

kingdom will still be ours." That was the power which Jesus gave.

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE CLAIM.

HE is a prophet who can say what God will do and what men are to do.

The claim which our author makes is determined by the great outer and

inner dangers of his Churches. Persecutions threaten from without, an

increasing worldliness from within. The Jews stir up persecutions

against the Christians, and bring false charges against them; the

Romans, as judges, do the will of the Jews. In such a time, patience,

endurance and fidelity are the most needed virtues. Above all else, the

test of a man's Christianity is to be found in his refusal to

participate in the imperial cultus. Only he who refuses to worship the

beast and to bear his mark is a Christian. There must be no

revolutionary resistance. Whosoever shall kill with the sword shall

with the sword inevitably be killed. Here the patience and faithfulness

of the saints can alone be of any avail.

Be thou faithful unto death! Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord

from henceforth. Every Christian is to be prepared for martyrdom; i.e.

here the "keeping of the testimony of Jesus." The prophet has clearly

recognized that the great struggle with Rome is now about to begin, and

that this struggle presents a temptation for Christians, which all

cowardly and weak souls cannot withstand. Hence the powerful glowing

language of his call to be up and doing. It is the call to be prepared

for death. No wonder that the Church of the martyrs highly esteemed

this book and accepted it as canonical. The prophet has only one

brother- combatant worthy of his mettle, the author of the concluding

verses of Romans viii. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" may

be taken as the motto of the book.

But if God is to be for us, things must first of all be changed in the

Churches themselves. Worldliness has already begun to creep in. Ephesus

has lost its first love. Sardis, decayed from its former estate, is

spiritually dead. Laodicea is neither cold nor warm, boasts, indeed, of

its riches, and is yet so miserable. Here we can see the condition of

the Pauline Churches not so very long after the death of their founder.

The worldliness is increased through heretical teachers, false apostles

and prophetesses, who declare fornication and the eating of meat

offered to idols to be allowed, deluding the Christians with the idea

that only then the depths of Satan's wiles can be sounded. It is

ordinary heathen libertinism which is disseminated by these

Nicolaitans, Christian messengers and prophets. Besides this, the

catalogue of crimes at the end of the book shows us what kind of people

called themselves Christian here and there.

The danger from within appears, according to the letters to the

Churches, to be almost greater than that from without. It is especially

to guard against it that the prophet cries: "Away with the false

teachers; back to the first love." The judgment of Christ will be

without pity even upon those that are His. It is works alone that save,

deeds of love, of fortitude, of fidelity. There is one thing that can

surely save Christians lost in sin and the world, and that is

martyrdom. For the first time a longing look is here cast back to the

golden age, to the first days of Christianity. "Back to the first

beginning" is the watchword.

Taking it all in all, it is an entirely untheological practical kind of

Christianity. Fidelity in persecution, resistance to worldliness,

clinging to the first love, such is the claim that the seer makes. He

is still animated by the genuine enthusiasm of the first great age. We

can trace this, even externally, by the fact that there is as yet no

set form for repentance, no ecclesiastical law; as long as the judgment

is yet to come, so long there is time for repentance. However strict

the separation which is demanded from the world, there is as yet no

legalism within, because the voice of the Spirit is still heard. But

now that the struggle with the Roman empire has begun we can scarcely

any longer speak of the Christians as a sect. The former sect takes its

place in the history of the world, resolved for the present just to

remain true to itself and to look upon world and devil as one.

There is no trace of any opposition to St Paul, however much his

formulae may be disregarded. We misconceive St Paul altogether as long

as we do not recognize that he would have made exactly the same demands

in this position.

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CHAPTER XXII.

A LAYMAN'S THEOLOGY.

BEYOND his promise and his claim the author of the Apocalypse pursues

no ulterior aim. He feels no need for theological thought and has no

time to spare for it. This does not preclude his possessing very

definite--though in no wise original--conceptions about God and the

things of God. Even though he is layman, he is, after all, a learned

layman, who has both read and heard a great deal. Like all laymen, he

accepts the most obvious contradictions and does not strive after any

inner harmony. His thoughts are never abstractions: they are all

fancies calculated for the eye and the ear. It will not be without

value to examine the conceptions of a man such as this. For he

represents the average Christian, both in his thoughts and in his

hopes.

We saw above how pessimistic was his estimate of the political position

of the age. Satan is the present ruler of this world. He has given the

beast power over all the kings of the earth. As in the letter to the

Ephesians, so here: we Christians fight not against flesh and blood,

but against the demoniac rulers of the world. One would expect as a

consequence of this a strictly dualistic system. The contrary is our

author's opinion. God is to him above all the Creator and Lord of this

present world. Jubilant psalms sing His praises for His acts of

creation: "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord our God, the

Almighty. Righteous and true are Thy ways, thou King of the nations."

It is one of the prophet's fundamental doctrines, as to which he never

for one moment entertains any doubt, that this world is God's world. He

insists upon this almost more than does St Paul. All alike, Nature and

history, have come forth from God. Such is his opinion, in agreement

with the prayer of the Jewish apocalypses of Baruch and Ezra. It will

be just in the signs of the last days that God will prove His power

over Nature; then every eye shall see that all these natural forces are

at His command to do His will. In heaven God's praises are sung without

ceasing, and in like manner the author of this book never wearies in

giving vent to his feelings of thanksgiving. No tribulation can cause

that stream to cease flowing. On this point his conviction is not to be

shaken.

"A safe stronghold our God is still,

A trusty shield and weapon;

He'll help us clear from all the ill

That in our days shall happen."

This fundamental faith in a present living God is the basis upon which

all the optimistic hope for the future rests.

But how, then, can the power of the dragon and of the Gentiles be

explained? The author gives no answer to this, because he has no

interest in untying knotty problems. He leaves that to Ezra and his

friends. He is content with the fact that the Gentiles are the enemies

of God's people and that Satan has given them their great power. But

the near future will see the end of this state of things, which is

hateful in God's eyes. He who knows that, knows quite enough. That is

just a layman's theology, quite unsystematic but full of strength and

energy.

God Himself is, it is true, a very distant mysterious Being. It is

significant that He is described for the most part in accordance with

Ezekiel's vision. In His immediate neighbourhood stand the elders of

Isa. xxiv., now twenty-four in number, the original twelve tribes

having been doubled since the entrance of the Gentiles into the Church.

Thunder and lightning proceed from God's throne without ceasing. Before

it are seven lamps which are the seven Spirits (archangels), and still

nearer Ezekiel's four living creatures. The picture which all this

leaves in our mind is neither very clear nor very consistent. Indeed

there is only one impression which we plainly derive from it, and that

is, that God is unapproachable. Nor do the concluding chapters of the

book enable us satisfactorily to unite in one picture the conception of

the unapproachable God surrounded by His court of angels and His

dwelling upon earth among men. Next, and as a consequence of this

inaccessibility, God is described as one to be feared. He is no being

in whom one can feel any confidence. He is never called by the name of

Father. It is fear and trembling that we feel in the main in the

presence of this God.

No wonder, then, that His behests are so exclusively carried out by

means of angels. God does nothing Himself. It is angels that bring all

the plagues and all the signs, that vanquish Satan in heaven and bind

him in the abyss. All God's revelations to men are likewise conveyed by

the mediation of angels and explained by angels. From this fact alone

one might infer that for many of our author's co-religionists living

religion consisted in communion with angels rather than with God. In

fact, he twice energetically protests against the worship of angels. It

is very significant that this is necessary. Things have already come to

such a pass that Christianity has to defend itself against the Jewish

and heathen worship of angels. The prophet is of course far removed

from anything like polytheism: the angels are no independent beings,

but the servants of God. His monotheism, however, would be lifeless

were it not for the assumption of these intermediate agencies.

Christ appears as the chief of this great host of intermediate beings,

and Christ is everything to our writer, therefore possessed of all

titles also, only not God. This distinct subordination beneath God is

maintained throughout the whole book. Twice in the letters to the

Churches Jesus Himself is made to speak of His God. The visions in

chaps. iv. and v. clearly distinguish Jesus and God. The Lamb there

appears by the side of God between the throne and the four living

creatures and the twenty-four elders. In the concluding chapters the

Lamb is never God. He only stands near Him. All our prophet's practical

interests are here centred upon this subordination, for only if Jesus

is not God can He be conceived of as a pattern for the struggling and

victorious Christians--the martyrs. And everything depends upon this

for him. "He that over cometh I will give to him to sit down with me in

my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father in His

throne." That is the Christology of adoption--Jesus has His merits, and

in consequence of that His dignity is assigned to Him.

But then, how very little our author feels himself bound by these, his

own words. All the divine predicates are again heaped upon Jesus almost

immediately afterwards, and He is placed high above the angels, and

that from the beginning, not only after His exaltation. He is the

beginning of the creation of God, the first and the last and the living

one, the A and the O, the beginning and the end. He is the Redeemer,

and will also be the judge over Christian and Gentile. It is especially

in the letters to the Churches that one can see that our author has

discovered in Christ, to his great comfort, a substitute for the dread

and inaccessible God. That, again, is a sign of the layman's theology.

God is too far distant, too high for him: one cannot hold intercourse

with Him after a friendly fashion. Christ, on the other hand, is known,

and can be brought quite near to one. The name for Christ which occurs

most frequently in the book is "The Lamb" (taken from Isa. liii.). As a

lamb that was slain Jesus has been one of us. If this Lamb sits at

God's right hand, then we have a trusty advocate in the highest court

of appeal. The want of taste in the figure which he here employs did

not trouble him in the least. And after all, "The Lamb" is merely a

name for Jesus, just as Babylon is for Rome. Such playing with secret

names is a mark of the apocalyptic literature.

What has Jesus done, then, upon earth? As answer to this we are merely

told He died and His blood has redeemed us. Thereby we have been

legally delivered from the bondage of the heathen and of the devil, and

have become members of the people of God. This does not preclude the

writer having many other thoughts besides as to Jews' work. But this is

practically the most important to him, because he always has to picture

the Christians to himself as a people.

He did not know Jesus, and so he cannot start from any personal

impression. But he is now in the midst of the struggle with the Roman

people, and then Jesus must be the king, the leader in this struggle,

who has redeemed us for His host. The victory is ours because our King

possesses such divine power high above all angels. The future will

bring us the terrible and bloody victory, and the reward for those that

have died the hero's death. Judaism--the Old Testament and Paul

too--have furnished their attributes of Jesus. The author has taken

these various heterogeneous elements, and has just placed them side by

side. They are only harmonized by his temperament.

It is interesting to see how this layman's book agrees with St Paul's

Epistle to the Colossians in the highest attributes of the Christology.

The Epistle to the Colossians is directed against heretical teachers

who preached the worship of angels. The Apocalypse likewise rejects

angelolatry. In both cases Jesus is exalted high above all angels.

First of all, Jesus was compared with the Scribes and the prophet John,

and set above them as Messiah. Now He is measured with the Spirits and

placed at their head. Soon afterwards follows the comparison with the

gods of the heathen, and contrasted with them Jesus appears as the

higher God. That is the beginning of the great apologetic of later

times. The development of the Church keeps pace therewith: the inner

Jewish sect, a religion competing with Judaism, a world religion by the

side of the heathen religions.

But what now is the origin of all this Christianity of the Apocalypse?

Can it be traced back to Jesus Himself, or to the first apostles, or to

Judaists, or to St Paul and his companions, or to what other source?

Every direct development from the primitive Palestinian form of the

Gospel is excluded. Nothing reminds us of Jesus and His disciples.

Scarcely ever do we meet with even a faint echo of any saying of Jesus,

the gospel faith in the Fatherhood of God is entirely wanting. There is

not even a single instance of the use of the phrase kingdom of God.

Whoever knew Jesus Himself or even only His words, could never have

suffered these wild fancies of vengeance to hold dominion over him.

On the other hand, Paulinism is certainly the presupposition of this

form of Christianity. St Paul's universalism, his entire annulling of

the law, his strict separation from the Jewish synagogue, are all taken

for granted in this book. The Christology, however, best shows the

dependence upon Pauline formulas: Jesus is the Son of God who has

descended from heaven. He is highly exalted above all angels, the

beginning of the creation of God. He only descended for our redemption

and afterwards ascended, and because of His obedience He was highly

exalted and shall come again as judge. Such is the unchanging outline

of the Pauline Christology. It cannot possibly have originated twice

over in different persons, unless indeed there were two appearances on

the road to Damascus.

The Christianity of the Apocalypse is a development of that form of

Christianity which St Paul presented to the Gentiles.

An entirely different element was, however, added to it, viz., Judaism

with its apocalyptic literature and all the belief in God, angels and

demons and the cosmology which this implies. It is still an open

question in what form the Christian prophet appropriated this Judaism,

whether he edited an already completed Jewish writing, just inserting a

few Christian additions, or whether he independently combined all

manner of literary and oral Jewish traditions from the standpoint of

his Christian faith. But this question is of secondary importance. In

any case he has completed digested Judaism and made it his own before

he has uttered his prophecies. It is not improbable that he was himself

of Jewish extraction; his style, and especially his knowledge of the

Hebrew Old Testament, almost seems to prove this. He then, according to

our supposition, would have entered one of the Pauline Churches, and

would have assimilated the new world of thought as far as it suited

him. Be that as it may, his Christianity presents a complete fusion of

the most heterogeneous materials (we cannot call them hostile: cf. 2

Thess.)--Pauline Christianity and Jewish apocalyptic theory.

But out of these materials he created something that was his own. He

saw the struggle between State and Church on the point of breaking out;

he saw it in the light of an illumination from above: it was the

struggle of spirits, and as a Christian he foresaw the victory of his

faith under all circumstances. This lifted him high up above his fellow

churchmen into the ranks of the prophets. From this prophetic height he

issued his instructions for the struggle that was about to begin, like

a practised general, who, above all, pays attention to the weak points

in his own troops. That which he thus places in the forefront is

neither Pauline nor Jewish, but simple Christian commands for the

period of persecution. This now succeeds to the missionary period

properly so-called, but this change involves a corresponding one in the

Christian line of defence and attack.

One evil legacy he did indeed bequeath to us: Christianity was drowned

in a sea of Jewish fancies and feelings. That was a misfortune from

which the new religion was destined to suffer grievously.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

Christianity is the result of the labours of men. John is the

forerunner as prophet. Jesus comes next, with a consciousness more than

human as Son of God. The apostles transmit His message. Prophets and

teachers join their fellowship. Paul--stamped as it were out of the

ground--brings about the great transition from the Jews to the Greeks

under the sense of a divine calling. Finally, on the outbreak of the

struggle with Rome, the Christian prophet writes his wild book as the

word of God. All of these men live in the firm conviction that God

imparts Himself through them, and acts through them. Jesus occupies the

first place as leader; His Spirit is to control all the others.

All have one and the same message--it is eschatology transformed into a

practical demand. It is the message of the judgment and the coming of

the kingdom of God in the immediate future. That is the aim of their

cry--"Repent ye"; "Watch ye." Be ye saved from the coming judgment.

Upon this earth there is nothing left that abideth for ever. The Jewish

Church is tottering to its fall. The Roman empire is doomed to decay.

There is no thought of any new great world-organization. Hence the

minimum of ecclesiastical forms.

And if, after all, there is even in this present world something new

and that endureth--then it is the life of the disciples of Jesus. Their

Church is but miserable to look at; their theology setting aside St

Paul's alone--is a wretched jumble of Jewish words and conceptions and

Christian insertions and additions. But the new life in these

communities is of surpassing greatness: to be a disciple of Jesus means

to be a redeemed man--one who exercises self-control, who loves the

brethren, and clings to God above all else. It was Jesus who gave them

this new life, and therefore they were ready to stand up for Jesus, and

if need be to die for Him. Paul alone speculated about the redemption.

But even with him possession is the really important matter. "He that

hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of His."

These three points, the presence of men of God, the longing to leave

this present world, the new life of the children of God, are the signs

of this first creative period. When they are present no emphasis is

laid upon the Church. Is not the spirit in the leaders, the spirit that

creates and destroys forms; and does not the longing for heaven imply

the longing to quit the Church on earth, and is not the new life of

more importance than church membership?

And what did this enthusiasm produce? It separated Christianity from

Judaism, and started it on its independent course. It began the

evangelization of the whole world. It took up the struggle with Rome's

world-power. And so within. It produced the first great theology,

formed a new kind of literature--the Gospels--created the Apocalpyse;

at bottom, all of them unfixed undogmatic creations. How often Paul

produces new formulas, and alters the outlines of the whole of his

theology.

But at the same time the first beginnings of the Church are developed

out of this same enthusiasm: there is the organization of the

communities, fixed forms of worship, discipline, church officers,

creed, moral regulations; more important than all, St Paul's great

theory: no salvation outside of the faith. But all is still

provisory--means to the great end. Every Christian wished from the

bottom of his heart that his Church might perish, and the kingdom of

God begin.

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Indexes

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Index of Scripture References

Genesis

[1]2:1-25 [2]2:17 [3]3:1-24 [4]3:1-24 [5]3:7-10 [6]6

[7]15 [8]15:6 [9]15:6

Deuteronomy

[10]30:11-14

Psalms

[11]2:5 [12]2:7 [13]97:2 [14]103:1-22 [15]110:1-7

Song of Solomon

[16]17:1

Isaiah

[17]24:1-23 [18]45:23 [19]51:5-6 [20]51:8 [21]53:1-12

[22]53:7

Daniel

[23]7:13 [24]7:22

Habakkuk

[25]2:1-20

Matthew

[26]6:1-34 [27]18:17

Mark

[28]13:1-37 [29]13:1-37 [30]13:17

Luke

[31]16:1-31 [32]17:20

John

[33]3:8

Acts

[34]15:1-41

Romans

[35]1:15 [36]2:1-29 [37]2:1-29 [38]3:23 [39]4:1-25

[40]4:1-25 [41]6:1-23 [42]7 [43]7:1-25 [44]7:1-25 [45]7:11

[46]8:1-39 [47]8:31 [48]11:1-36 [49]12:1-21 [50]13:1-14

1 Corinthians

[51]2:1-16 [52]4:9-15 [53]7:1-40 [54]12:1-11 [55]13:1-13

[56]13:1-13 [57]14:1-33 [58]15:1-58 [59]15:1-58 [60]15:1-58

[61]15:1-58

2 Corinthians

[62]3:4-6 [63]3:6 [64]4:6 [65]5:1-21 [66]5:4 [67]5:18-20

[68]6:1-18 [69]11:1-33 [70]11:5

Galatians

[71]2:1-21 [72]3:1-29 [73]4 [74]4:6 [75]5:1-26

Philippians

[76]2:1-30

1 Thessalonians

[77]2:1-20 [78]2:1-20 [79]4:1-18

2 Thessalonians

[80]2:1-17

Revelation

[81]4:1-11 [82]5:1-14 [83]13:1-18 [84]18:1-24 [85]19:1-21

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Index of Latin Words and Phrases

\* Benedictus: [86]1

\* Magnificat: [87]1

\* Qui vivra verra: [88]1

\* bona fide: [89]1

\* extra ecclesiam nulla salus: [90]1 [91]2

\* homo: [92]1

\* homo redivivus: [93]1

\* ipso facto: [94]1 [95]2

\* massa perditionis: [96]1 [97]2

\* opus operatum: [98]1

\* ripae ulterioris amore: [99]1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Index of Pages of the Print Edition

[100]iv [101]v [102]vi [103]vii [104]viii [105]ix [106]x

[107]xi [108]xii [109]xiii [110]2 [111]3 [112]4 [113]5 [114]6

[115]7 [116]8 [117]9 [118]10 [119]11 [120]12 [121]13 [122]14

[123]15 [124]16 [125]17 [126]18 [127]19 [128]20 [129]21 [130]22

[131]23 [132]24 [133]25 [134]26 [135]27 [136]28 [137]29 [138]30

[139]31 [140]32 [141]33 [142]34 [143]35 [144]36 [145]37 [146]38

[147]39 [148]40 [149]41 [150]42 [151]43 [152]44 [153]45 [154]46

[155]47 [156]48 [157]49 [158]50 [159]51 [160]52 [161]53 [162]54

[163]55 [164]56 [165]57 [166]58 [167]59 [168]60 [169]61 [170]62

[171]63 [172]64 [173]65 [174]66 [175]67 [176]68 [177]69 [178]70

[179]71 [180]72 [181]73 [182]74 [183]75 [184]76 [185]77 [186]78

[187]79 [188]80 [189]81 [190]82 [191]83 [192]84 [193]85 [194]86

[195]87 [196]88 [197]89 [198]90 [199]91 [200]92 [201]93 [202]94

[203]95 [204]96 [205]97 [206]98 [207]99 [208]100 [209]101

[210]102 [211]103 [212]104 [213]105 [214]106 [215]107 [216]108

[217]109 [218]110 [219]111 [220]112 [221]113 [222]114 [223]115

[224]116 [225]117 [226]118 [227]119 [228]120 [229]121 [230]122

[231]123 [232]124 [233]125 [234]126 [235]127 [236]128 [237]129

[238]130 [239]131 [240]132 [241]133 [242]134 [243]135 [244]136

[245]137 [246]138 [247]139 [248]140 [249]141 [250]142 [251]143

[252]144 [253]145 [254]146 [255]147 [256]148 [257]149 [258]150

[259]151 [260]152 [261]153 [262]154 [263]155 [264]156 [265]157

[266]158 [267]159 [268]160 [269]161 [270]162 [271]163 [272]164

[273]165 [274]166 [275]167 [276]168 [277]169 [278]170 [279]171

[280]172 [281]173 [282]174 [283]175 [284]176 [285]177 [286]178

[287]179 [288]180 [289]181 [290]182 [291]183 [292]184 [293]185

[294]186 [295]187 [296]188 [297]189 [298]190 [299]191 [300]192

[301]193 [302]194 [303]195 [304]196 [305]197 [306]198 [307]199

[308]200 [309]201 [310]202 [311]203 [312]204 [313]205 [314]206

[315]207 [316]208 [317]209 [318]210 [319]211 [320]212 [321]213

[322]214 [323]215 [324]216 [325]217 [326]219 [327]220 [328]221

[329]222 [330]223 [331]224 [332]225 [333]226 [334]227 [335]228

[336]229 [337]230 [338]231 [339]232 [340]233 [341]234 [342]235

[343]236 [344]237 [345]238 [346]239 [347]240 [348]241 [349]242

[350]243 [351]244 [352]245 [353]246 [354]247 [355]248 [356]249

[357]250 [358]251 [359]252 [360]253 [361]254 [362]255 [363]256

[364]257 [365]258 [366]259 [367]260 [368]261 [369]262 [370]263

[371]264 [372]265 [373]266 [374]267 [375]268 [376]269 [377]270

[378]271 [379]272 [380]273 [381]274 [382]275 [383]276 [384]277

[385]278 [386]279 [387]280 [388]281 [389]282 [390]283 [391]284

[392]285 [393]286 [394]287 [395]288 [396]289 [397]290 [398]291

[399]292 [400]293 [401]294 [402]295 [403]296 [404]297 [405]298

[406]299 [407]300 [408]301 [409]302 [410]303 [411]304 [412]305

[413]306 [414]307 [415]308 [416]309 [417]310 [418]311 [419]312

[420]313 [421]314 [422]315 [423]316 [424]317 [425]318 [426]319

[427]320 [428]321 [429]322 [430]323 [431]324 [432]325 [433]326

[434]327 [435]328 [436]329 [437]330 [438]331 [439]332 [440]333

[441]334 [442]335 [443]336 [444]337 [445]338 [446]339 [447]340

[448]341 [449]342 [450]343 [451]344 [452]345 [453]346 [454]347

[455]348 [456]349 [457]350 [458]351 [459]352 [460]353 [461]354

[462]355 [463]356 [464]357 [465]358 [466]359 [467]360 [468]361

[469]362 [470]363 [471]364 [472]365 [473]366 [474]367 [475]368

[476]369 [477]370 [478]371 [479]372 [480]373 [481]374 [482]375

[483]376 [484]377 [485]378 [486]379 [487]380 [488]381 [489]382

[490]383 [491]384 [492]385 [493]386 [494]387 [495]388 [496]389

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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References

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3. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gen&scrCh=3&scrV=1#iii.v.ii-p9.1

4. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gen&scrCh=3&scrV=1#iii.v.ii-p15.1

5. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gen&scrCh=3&scrV=7#iii.v.ii-p113.1

6. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gen&scrCh=6&scrV=0#iii.v.ii-p16.2

7. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gen&scrCh=15&scrV=0#iii.v.iii-p35.4

8. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gen&scrCh=15&scrV=6#iii.v.iii-p35.1

9. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gen&scrCh=15&scrV=6#iii.v.iii-p35.3

10. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=30&scrV=11#iii.v.iii-p35.5

11. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=2&scrV=5#iii.v.ii-p51.1

12. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=2&scrV=7#iii.ii.i-p30.1

13. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=97&scrV=2#iii.v.iii-p33.2

14. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=103&scrV=1#iii.v.iii-p25.2

15. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=110&scrV=1#iii.v.iv-p14.1

16. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Song&scrCh=17&scrV=1#iii.ii.i-p12.1

17. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=24&scrV=1#iii.vii.iv-p5.1

18. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=45&scrV=23#iii.v.iv-p14.2

19. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=51&scrV=5#iii.v.iii-p33.1

20. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=51&scrV=8#iii.v.iii-p33.1

21. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=53&scrV=1#iii.ii.i-p23.1

22. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=53&scrV=7#iii.vii.iv-p8.1

23. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=7&scrV=13#iii.ii.i-p32.1

24. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=7&scrV=22#iii.v.iv-p14.3

25. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Hab&scrCh=2&scrV=1#iii.v.iii-p35.2

26. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Matt&scrCh=6&scrV=1#iii.v.iv-p19.1

27. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Matt&scrCh=18&scrV=17#iii.ii.iv-p5.1

28. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Mark&scrCh=13&scrV=1#iii.i.ii-p22.1

29. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Mark&scrCh=13&scrV=1#iii.iii.iv-p1.1

30. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Mark&scrCh=13&scrV=17#iii.iv.ii-p45.1

31. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Luke&scrCh=16&scrV=1#iii.i.ii-p22.2

32. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Luke&scrCh=17&scrV=20#iii.ii.ii-p11.1

33. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=John&scrCh=3&scrV=8#iii.i.i-p5.1

34. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Acts&scrCh=15&scrV=1#iii.iii.ii-p7.1

35. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=1&scrV=15#iii.iv.i-p7.3

36. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=2&scrV=1#iii.v.iii-p7.1

37. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=2&scrV=1#iii.v.iii-p30.1

38. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=3&scrV=23#iii.v.ii-p15.6

39. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=4&scrV=1#iii.v.i-p1.1

40. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=4&scrV=1#iii.v.iii-p25.1

41. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=6&scrV=1#iii.vi.i-p10.1

42. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=7&scrV=0#iii.vi.i-p15.1

43. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=7&scrV=1#iii.v.iii-p7.2

44. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=7&scrV=1#iii.v.iii-p16.1

45. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=7&scrV=11#iii.v.ii-p15.4

46. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=8&scrV=1#iii.v.ii-p80.1

47. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=8&scrV=31#iii.vii.iii-p2.1

48. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=11&scrV=1#iii.i.ii-p22.7

49. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=12&scrV=1#iii.v.ii-p81.2

50. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=13&scrV=1#iii.iv.ii-p40.1

51. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=2&scrV=1#iii.v.iv-p2.1

52. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=4&scrV=9#iii.iv.i-p7.2

53. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=7&scrV=1#iii.iv.ii-p46.1

54. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=12&scrV=1#iii.i.i-p9.1

55. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=13&scrV=1#iii.v.ii-p78.1

56. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=13&scrV=1#iii.v.ii-p81.1

57. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=14&scrV=1#iii.i.i-p9.1

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61. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=15&scrV=1#iii.v.ii-p111.1

62. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=3&scrV=4#iii.iv.i-p4.1

63. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=3&scrV=6#iii.v.iii-p9.1

64. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=4&scrV=6#iii.iv.i-p5.1

65. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=5&scrV=1#iii.i.ii-p22.6

66. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=5&scrV=4#iii.v.ii-p15.5

67. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=5&scrV=18#iii.iv.i-p6.1

68. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=6&scrV=1#iii.iv.i-p22.2

69. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=11&scrV=1#iii.iv.i-p22.3

70. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=11&scrV=5#iii.v.ii-p16.1

71. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gal&scrCh=2&scrV=1#iii.iii.i-p10.1

72. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gal&scrCh=3&scrV=1#iii.v.i-p1.2

73. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gal&scrCh=4&scrV=0#iii.v.iii-p7.3

74. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=Gal&scrCh=4&scrV=6#iii.v.ii-p87.1

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78. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3?scrBook=1Thess&scrCh=2&scrV=1#iii.iv.i-p22.1

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435. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_328

436. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_329

437. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_330

438. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_331

439. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_332

440. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_333

441. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_334

442. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_335

443. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_336

444. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_337

445. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_338

446. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_339

447. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_340

448. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.v.iv-Page\_341

449. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.vi.i-Page\_342

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451. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.vi.i-Page\_344

452. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.vi.i-Page\_345

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454. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.vi.i-Page\_347

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456. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.vi.i-Page\_349

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478. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.vii.ii-Page\_371

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496. file://localhost/ccel/w/wernle\_paul/beginnings01/cache/beginnings01.html3#iii.vii.iv-Page\_389