

LECTURES
ON THE
NEW TESTAMENT



B. B. Warfield

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ON THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

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BY

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THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.



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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

PRELIMINARY to the examination of any one of the Gospels, two questions present themselves: What is the purpose of the Gospel history? and What relation do the narratives of the Evangelists sustain to one another? These four histories, with marked agreements and diversities, cover substantially one interval of time. Is there anything in their nature or design which requires that there should be more than one Gospel? Are their likenesses and divergencies, their insertions and omissions, their differences of arrangement and apparent discrepancies, accidental, or are they determined by a plastic and fundamental purpose? Is there "an ever-active law of exclusion and inclusion," and can that law be ascertained and formulated?

Various theories have been adopted to account for the number and character of the Gospels. One is, that they are memoirs of Jesus Christ intended as a model human life, and that their variations arise from the idiosyncrasies of the writers; another, that the Evangelists were but partially acquainted with the facts of our Lord's life, the

materials out of which they built their narratives being fragmentary and imperfect; a third, that Matthew addressed the Jew, Mark the Roman, Luke the Greek, John the church; that the three nations represent the three great, permanent classes of unspiritual men, and that the Synoptic Gospels were so shaped in order to convince these classes respectively of the truth of Christianity.

If the Gospels are memoirs of Jesus Christ, or are designed to present a model human life, why do they pass over in silence the thirty years in which our Lord most nearly touched the ordinary duties and positions of men, and record only his Messianic, official, miraculous deeds and words? Why do the Epistles know no "Christ after the flesh" (2 Cor. 5:16), never drawing motive, example, or sanction, from Christ's precrucifixion life, but always appealing to his resurrection as the grand source, and to his death as the grand model, of Christian action (Phil. 3:10; 1 Pet. 2:21-24)? Is it credible that the omissions of the Gospels arose from a lack of information on the part of the writers? Could Matthew by any possibility have been unacquainted with the resurrection of Lazarus? Was John ignorant of the transfiguration? Did Matthew know nothing of those events which constitute one-half of Luke's Gospel? Were Matthew and John, apostles both, unaware of Christ's ascension? The third hypothesis, that the Gospels were designed for different types of character, is inadequate to meet the facts of the case, leaves a large part of their phenomena unexplained, and is especially inadmissible when it claims that the first three Gospels were addressed to unbeliev-

ers. The New Testament is the Christian's book. It was written for those instructed in the ways of the Lord. It everywhere addresses persons who have received the truth. It presupposes a knowledge of the essential incidents in the Gospel history. The orderly arrangement of the primary facts of Christianity is for those who believe those facts, just as the Epistle to the Romans, the systematic discussion of justification, is not for the unjustified, but for the justified. You answer the question of the sinner, "How shall I be just with God?" not by giving him the Epistle to the Romans, but by bidding him believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He needs to know, not the processes of salvation, but Christ the Saviour. Paul's exposition of the method of justification was written for those who had experienced the doctrine and were prepared to retrace the ground and study the provisions and methods of salvation.

What, then, are the Gospels? They are histories of redemption as accomplished in the incarnation, life, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are in part what the Bible is in full; the Scripture does not give all of God's deeds on the one side, nor all the world's deeds on the other, but only those which pertain to the history of salvation; and the Gospels are neither memoirs nor chronicles, but *histories*: they record no facts except those which are embraced in their design and purpose. Each Gospel presents its own phase of the history of redemption—Christ's work in a special aspect.

Matthew is the opening book—the Genesis—of the

new covenant. The Old Testament closes with the Jewish nation looking for their promised King and Messiah. The Jews are the favored people of God. To them belong peculiar privileges, an economy established by Heaven, and a future prosperity sung by every prophet and longed for by every generation. In the Gospel age the Jewish nation is deserted by God. A church exists in which the dominant portion are Gentiles, to whom the practice of the Mosaic rites is forbidden. These astounding facts "required to be not demonstrated, but explained, and in some respects justified. How had the Church been founded? How had it become open to the Gentiles? How were the people of Israel, from the midst of whom it had gone forth, themselves excluded from it? How reconcile with these unexpected events God's faithfulness to his promises?" The Gospel according to Matthew answers these questions. It gives the causes and methods of this wonderful change. It relates the coming of Jesus to the Jews as their king, his rejection by them, the abrogation of the old covenant, and the prospective establishment of the church with its constitution and ordinances. It shows us that this was no afterthought or expedient, but had been foretold by the prophets, and that in the earliest dealings of God with the Abrahamic people, its basal principles are seen. The Gospel according to Matthew conducts us from the position of the Old Testament to that of the New. If we have rightly represented its design, it will be systematic, fundamental, official, and will embrace in its view the time from the calling of Abraham to the end of the age.

I. The systematic character of the Gospel governs its general structure and its details. Chronological sequence, the order of occurrence, is disregarded for the sake of the logical arrangement and regular development of ideas. Homogeneous events are grouped together, sometimes in succinct statements (4:23-25), sometimes more in detail (chaps. 8, 9). The indefinite *τότε*, used nearly one hundred times, marks the transitions in the narrative. Our Lord's instructions in Luke are in conversations, and in John what may be called conversational discourses; in Matthew they are discourses in the strictest sense—compact, elaborate, symmetrical—all marked with an organic and vital unity. The teleological consecutiveness of the Gospel is perfect; there is not a sentence but is in its logical place, not one that is not a link in the chain. The completeness of the great discourses of our Lord and the topical arrangement of the Gospel are shown by the phrase—peculiar to Matthew—“when Jesus had ended these sayings” (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). These discourses—of the kingdom in its nature and characteristics (chaps. 5-7), in its presentation (chap. 10), in its organic manifestation and development (chap. 13), in its internal spirit and relations (chap. 18), and in its consummation (chaps. 24, 25)—follow one another in regular progression, connected closely by the intervening narrative. The first words of Christ declare the object of his Messianic work, “to fulfil all righteousness”—to bring in and make actual perfect righteousness. The last words of Christ's instructions are, “the righteous into life eternal,” and between there

two—the announcement of his purposes and its accomplishment in the entrance of the righteous into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world—one theme is kept in view. The portrait in the sermon on the Mount of the perfectly righteous man—the ideal character to be produced—is followed by the details of Christ's work, through which the glorious result is attained. Into these we cannot now enter; all that is possible for us at this time, is to point out some of the more general and obvious divisions of the Gospel.

In the method of Christ's teaching, two stages are distinctly marked. In the first twelve chapters his statements are direct and explicit. In the thirteenth chapter, with the recognition of the judicial blindness of the Jews, our Lord introduces a new mode of teaching—by parables.

A like order and distinction are observed in the miracles. Before this important epoch, they are all exhibitions of authority—external miracles. Now begins a new class of miracles—revelations of Christ in his essential nature and relations.

The *topics* of Christ's teaching are equally distinct, divided by the sixteenth chapter. Previously to the recognition of his true character by his disciples in that chapter, his instruction has reference to his nature and person. "Who is Christ?" is the question in every miracle and controversy. When this is rightly answered, the *manner* of redemption, by death and resurrection, occupies the attention. In other words, the person and the work of Christ are taught in their order.

The twenty miracles recorded by Matthew follow a regular sequence, beginning with the cure of leprosy, the symbol of sin, and ending with the withering of the fig-tree, the type of judgment.

The arrangement of the fourteen parables is equally systematic, commencing with that of the sower scattering the seed of the kingdom, and closing with that of the talents, the adjudication of the last day.

As a history of Christ's presentation to the Jewish nation, the plan of the Gospel is readily seen.

1. His presentation as the royal heir, ending with his flight into Egypt and his secluded residence in Nazareth—chapters 1 and 2.

2. His presentation as the Son of God, resulting in his rejection by the nation, and in his recognition by the twelve disciples—chapters 3 to 20.

3. His formal and avowed presentation to the nation as their king, resulting in a like formal and avowed rejection, in his death, burial and resurrection, in a commission to his apostles to disciple all nations, and in the assurance of his continual presence with them until the end of the age—chapters 21 to 28.

II. It is the Fundamental Gospel—it narrates the rejection of the Jewish King and the foundation of the Christian church.

1. It is the Jewish Gospel. By this is not meant that it was written for the Jews, either Christian or unbelieving, any more than when we say it is the kingly Gospel, we mean that it was addressed to kings. It is the record of salvation offered to the Jews. The Mes-

siah comes to the covenant people. Here Christ is not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24). When the apostles are empowered to preach, their instructions begin: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not" (10:5). The Jews are the children of the kingdom (8:12), and Gentile is synonymous with heathen: "Let him be unto thee as the Gentile* and the publican" (18:17): "Use not vain repetitions as the Gentiles* do" (6:7). The point of departure, the phenomena, the divine appellations, the drapery, the symbolism, are all Jewish. Matthew explains no facts, no laws or customs, peculiar to the nation, nor does he describe the position of places in Judea, as do all the other evangelists (Mark 7:3, 4; Luke 22:1; John 4:9; 5:2). In this Gospel only is Jerusalem the holy city (4:5), the city of the great King (5:35), and the Jewish temple God's dwelling-place (23:21), the holy place (24:15), the temple of God (26:6). Here only does Christ assume the sacred and sanctifying power of the temple and altar (23:17-21), and draw from the altar service illustrations of obedience to the divine requirement (5:23, 24). The freedom of the nation from the unclean spirit of idolatry is distinctly recognized (12:43-45); authority over unclean spirits is given to the apostles (10:1), but in striking contrast to the other Synoptic Gospels there is no instance in Matthew of possession by a spirit designated as unclean. The authority of those who sit in Moses' seat is asserted, and obedience to their official commands enforced

* In the authorized Version, translated "heathen."

(23:1-3). Only in this Gospel are the disciples directed to pray that their flight be not on the Sabbath-day (24:20). In Christ's reply to those who accuse him of breaking the Sabbath, in addition to the arguments common to other gospels, he defends himself by the custom of the priests in the temple (12:15). Our Lord's genealogy is traced to Abraham, and marked by the great events in Hebrew history; for Christ is here Son of David, Son of Abraham, heir to the kingdom and covenants. In Luke it ascends to Adam, and the connecting eras are both civil and sacred; for there Christ is the Son of humanity, allied to the whole human race. When the amazed people seem on the point of recognizing the Messiah, they give expression to their conviction in the words, "Is not this the Son of David" (12:22)? Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, is addressed by the angel as Son of David (1:20). The blind men in the house cry, "Son of David, have mercy on us" (9:27); and the Syrophenician woman prays, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David" (15:22).

The symbolism is Jewish. Not to speak of other examples, the symbolism in number pervades the Gospel. Seven, ten, twelve, with their multiples, repeatedly appear. The genealogy is arranged in three fourteens. There are fourteen parables divided by place and purpose into two sevens. There are twenty miracles separated in like manner into two tens. The number seven generally divides itself into four and three, the human and the divine. In the sermon on the Mount, the Christian character is sketched in seven beatitudes (5:1-9).

Of these the first four are exclusively human—they are states which Christ cannot share; the last three express emotions and conduct which belong to God as well as man. In the thirteenth chapter seven parables present the kingdom of heaven in various relations. The first four are from the human side, accidental, temporary, varying—the kingdom in its historical development, as man beholds it; the last three are inherent, essential—the kingdom as seen by Christ, who joyfully sells all that he has, that he may buy the pearl of priceless value and the field in which the treasure is hidden. The Lord's prayer in Matthew has seven petitions: the first three relating to God, co-ordinate, co-equal; the last four relating to man, joined by particles of sequence (6:9-12).

2. It is the kingly gospel.

The genealogy is the royal succession, giving the heirs of the throne. David the king beget Solomon the king, Roboam the king, etc., while Luke gives either Joseph's natural lineage, or, what is more probable and more in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel, the maternal ancestry of Jesus. As Christ's regal descent was through his reputed father, the divine revelations in our Gospel are to Joseph; in Luke, the Gospel of humanity, Mary, through whom Christ took on himself human nature, receives the angelic announcement (Luke 1:27). The Magi inquire, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews" (2:2)? Of Bethlehem it is said: "Out of thee shall come a Governor who shall rule my people Israel" (2:6). It is a rival king that seeks to kill Christ (2:13). John the Baptist cries: "Repent ye, for the

kingdom of heaven is at hand" (3:2); in Mark and Luke he preaches the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). In Matthew angels minister to the King after his victory over the tempter (4:11); in Luke the sufferer receives an angel's strengthening help during the agony of Gethsemane's conflict (22:43). The authority of the Sermon on the Mount astonishes the multitudes (7:28, 29), as they recognize in the "But I say unto you" (5:22), the tones, not of the interpreter of law, but of the Lawgiver himself. The genuineness of the doxology in the Lord's prayer is very seriously questioned, but it is significant that in this Gospel we find the ascription, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory" (6:13). The parables are all of the kingdom of heaven. Luke, the evangelist of humanity, begins his parables: "A certain man—went down from Jerusalem to Jericho" (Luke 10:30); made a great supper (14:16); had two sons (15:11), etc. Matthew's parables, with three exceptions, begin: "The kingdom of heaven is like—unto leaven; unto treasure; unto a net" (13:33, 44, 47), etc. There are four miracles peculiar to Matthew; the opening the eyes of two blind men in the house (9:27-31); the cure of the blind demoniac (12:22); Peter's walk on the water (14:24-29); and the provision of the tribute-money (17:24-27). The first two are Jewish, the last two are regal; they show the kingly character of Christ and his followers. Only in this Gospel is it said: "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity"

(13:41); here only is the word preached the word of the kingdom (13:19); and that which in the other books of the New Testament is the gospel,* is in Matthew, with a single exception, the gospel of the kingdom (4:23; 9:35; 24:14). Here only does our Lord give Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven (16:19). Only in this Gospel, and here twice, does he speak of the Son of Man sitting on the throne of his glory (19:28; 25:31); here only does he gather all nations before his throne for judgment, and apply to himself those wonderful words, "Then shall the King say unto them," "And the King shall answer and say unto them" (25:34, 40). At the royal entry into Jerusalem the multitudes cry, and the children in the temple repeat the ascription, "Hosanna to the Son of David," a title which recognizing him as the Jewish king sorely displeased the chief priests and scribes, and drew from them a strong remonstrance (21:9-16). Matthew alone tells us that in the closing hours of Christ's life, more than ten legions of angels awaited his word (26:53); that at his death the earth was shaken, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened (27:51-53)—heaven, earth, and hades all acknowledging their king; and the Gospel closes with the assurance that in heaven and in earth Christ has exclusive authority (28:19).

The kingly character of Christ in this Gospel differs from that in Luke and John. Here he is born King of the Jews (2:2); in Luke his kingship is in the future, appointed to him by his Father (22:29); in John he

* Of the kingdom, Mark 1:14, is probably an interpolation.

reigns now, but his domain is different from that of either of the preceding Gospels (John 18:36, 37): on his head are many crowns (Rev. 19:12). And because in Matthew and John alone does he now occupy, in the one his innate, and in the other his essential, office, in those Gospels only is the prophecy of Zechariah quoted: "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee sitting on an ass's colt" (Matt. 21:5; John 12:15). Luke says, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" (1:32), a promise yet to be accomplished; and in the parable of the talents, he represents the nobleman as going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return (19:12). In Matthew our Lord is worshipped from his birth (2:2, 8, 11); in Luke not until his ascension (24:52).

3. It is the Gospel of Rejection. Compare the introduction of this Gospel with that of Luke, the Gospel of Acceptance. In the one the advent of Christ is hailed with joy by all. Zacharias, Elisabeth, Mary, Simeon, Anna, the angels, the shepherds, pour forth their exulting praise in canticles sung by the church in all ages. When a boy of twelve years he sits in the temple, the centre of an admiring circle, astonishing them by his understanding and his answers; and the second chapter closes: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." In the other, before Christ is born he exposes his mother to the danger of repudiation by her husband, from which she is saved only by divine interposition; at his birth Jerusalem is troubled, and Herod seeks to kill the young child; on the plains of

Bethlehem, in place of the chorus sweeping through the midnight sky, the wail of mothers for their slaughtered babes is heard; instead of a multitude of the heavenly host, a solitary spectre is seen—Rachel from her tomb looks in vain for her children, and bewails their loss; Christ returns from Egypt, and for thirty years his life is covered by a single sentence, with which *this* second chapter closes: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

In this Gospel he withdraws from Judea, in consequence of the imprisonment of his forerunner, John the Baptist (4:12), and begins an itinerant ministry in Galilee. In Luke no such reason is assigned: “He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee” (4:14). In both Gospels great multitudes follow him (4:25); they see the proofs of his power (9:8); they are astonished at his doctrine (7:28; 22:23); they marvel and are amazed (9:33; 22:23); but Luke adds what is not found in Matthew: He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all; they wondered at the words of grace which proceed out of his mouth (4:22); the people gladly received him, for they were all waiting for him (8:40); they stayed him that he should not depart from them (4:42). Even in the embittered hostility which marked the last days of Christ’s intercourse with the Jewish people, Luke tells us that from certain of the scribes came commendation of Christ’s replies: “Master, thou hast well said” (20:39). Matthew’s Gospel is the record of the national opposition to Christ, and of Christ’s withdrawal from that opposition. The word *ἀναχωρέω* is characteristic of this Evangelist; found once in Mark (3:7), and once in John,

(6:15), and not at all in Luke, it occurs ten times in Matthew. At the beginning of our Lord's work in this Gospel, we read those sad words recorded near the close by Luke, in which Christ declares the inveterate rancor of his foes, and the result of their determined pursuit as foreseen by him: "The foxes have holes where they may escape from their pursuers, the birds of the air have shelters where they are safe, but the Son of man hath no place where he may lay his head; he will be hunted to the death (8:20). In this Gospel Christ's life begins with withdrawal from his enemies; to escape the murderous rage of Herod he withdraws into Egypt (2:14); on his return he withdraws into Galilee for fear of Archelaus (2:22). His public ministry commences and continues in the same way: Now when Jesus had heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee (4:12). The Pharisees follow him, and hold a council against him how they may destroy him: "But when Jesus knew it he withdrew himself thence" (12:15). John the Baptist is put to death: When Jesus heard of it he withdrew by ship into a desert place apart (14:13). Still pursued by the Pharisees he withdraws from Judea into the borders of Tyre and Sidon (15:21); he returns and evades his pursuers by crossing and recrossing the lake of Gennesaret (15:39); until finally, the purpose of his earthly life accomplished, he ascends to Jerusalem to die (19:1). And because Matthew's Gospel is a history of withdrawals, he does not record the journeys through Perea in which Christ goes to meet his enemies; in Luke that journey occupies nearly one-half of the Gospel. For in Luke Jesus con-

fronts and defies hostility: "Go ye and tell that fox, he replies to those who would drive him from Galilee by a threat of Herod, I cast out devils and do cures to-day and to-morrow and the third day I shall be perfected" (13:32). In Luke he bids his disciples prepare for resistance: "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" (22:36); in Matthew the injunction is, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another" (10:23).

The characteristic of rejection governs the death as well as the life of Christ. Matthew records but one cry on the cross; it is that desolate wail: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (27:46). In another Gospel there follow him to Calvary a great company of people and of women, who bewail and lament him (Luke 23:27); and when the sad deed is consummated, all the people that came together to that sight smite their breasts and return (23:48); but in Matthew no penitent thief prays, Lord, remember me; no word of sympathy from any human voice is heard; on the contrary, those that pass by revile him (27:39); and the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, cry: "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he will have him" (27:43). Only in this Gospel do the enemies of Christ carry their malice beyond the crucifixion, and set a seal and guard to prevent his resurrection (27:62, 65).

This Gospel necessarily excludes the idea of success. Christ is rejected, and the disciple must be as his master (10:24, 25). Hence there is a remarkable absence of motive or encouragement founded on what will be accomplished. In Luke, when Peter is called to follow Christ,

a miraculous draught of fishes foretells success in catching men ; but this incident is omitted by Matthew (Luke 5 : 4-10 ; Matt. 4 : 18-20). In the commission to the apostles in the tenth chapter—a commission covering successively the three eras, to Christ's death (5-15), to the destruction of Jerusalem (16-23), to the end of the age (24-42)—the one thought is, you will share the treatment your Master receives, but your Heavenly Father sees all, knows all, and will at the end reward all ; just as Christ's only assurance to his disciples, when he sends them to all nations is : " Lo, I am with you " (28 : 20). Of Christ himself no success in this age is asserted. Matthew has no prediction like that in John : " I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me " (12 : 23) ; it is simply stated : " This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come " (24 : 14). Of the forerunner, Matthew says : " The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight " (3 : 3) ; but he does not add what is found in Luke : " Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain shall be brought low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God " (3 : 5, 6).

This feature of the rejection of Christ by the nation gives tone to all our Lord's teaching in the Gospel. Here only do we find the declaration, " Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it " (7 : 14). In Luke the injunction, " Strive to enter in," is enforced on the ground that now

the gate can be entered, and the time comes when it will be shut (Luke 13:24); in Matthew the reason for the exhortation is a truth which finds expression only here: "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (7:13). Only in this Gospel are we told that many are called, but few chosen (22:14); that in the closing period of the age the love of the majority (*τῶν πολλῶν*) shall wax cold (24:12); that many will claim in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" to whom Christ will say, "I never knew you" (7:22, 23); here only do we read of the tares that are to be gathered out of the wheat field in the time of harvest and burned (13:30); of the net that gathered of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and gathered the good into vessels, and cast the bad away (13:47, 48); of the foolish virgins (25:2); of the man without the wedding garment; and of the outer darkness into which they shall be cast (22:12, 13). Matthew and Luke both record Christ's saying: "He that is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23); but Matthew does not give, as do Mark and Luke, the other saying of our Lord: "He that is not against you is on your part" (Mark 9:39; Luke 9:50).

The statement sometimes made that Matthew's Gospel was written to convince the Jew of the truth of Christianity, conveys a very erroneous impression of its structure and contents. Our Lord and his disciples are not here shown in close and pleasing conformity to the Mo-

saic ritual. Matthew, the writer of the Gospel, was himself one of a rejected and despised class, with whom no reputable Jew would so much as eat (9:11). It is a later Gospel that begins and ends with the temple; that records the priestly descent of the forerunner of Christ (1:5); the circumcision of both John and Jesus (1:59; 2:21); the presentation of the infant Redeemer to the Lord (2:22); the performance of all things according to the law (2:39), and his appearance in the temple at the age of twelve years in obedience to the Jewish custom (2:42). It is Luke, not Matthew, who brings before us at the commencement an aged pair walking in all the Jewish ordinances, and at the close the disciples resting on the Sabbath-day, according to the commandment (23:56); who gives Christ's parting injunction, "Begin at Jerusalem" (24:47); whose Gospel ends with the disciples in the temple praising and blessing God (24:53). Matthew records no appearance of the risen Lord in Judea, but leaves the disciples in Galilee (28:16). Books which present Christianity in Jewish forms, like the first Epistle of Peter, which show the Mosaic types fulfilled in Christ, like the Epistle to the Hebrews, must come after this Gospel. Christ must be accepted as a *spiritual* King before the Messianic blessings can be actualized. Hence the scrupulous care with which this purely spiritual work is kept unmingled with any other element. In Matthew the first characterization of the coming Messiah is, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (1:21); and the first miracle is in accordance with its statement of the mission of Christ—

the cure of leprosy, the symbol of sin (8: 2-4). The first miracle in Luke is in sympathy with its opening songs—deliverance from enemies (1: 71); Christ rescues a man from the power of an unclean demon (4: 33-36). Throughout Matthew the true nature of Christ's kingship is carefully and clearly set forth. All the other writers of the New Testament speak of the kingdom which John and Christ preached as the kingdom of God. Matthew, with five exceptions, always says "kingdom of heaven," a term which he alone employs. "Kingdom of God," to Jewish ears, might mean a civil polity like the original constitution of the Hebrew commonwealth, in which no earthly ruler was acknowledged and God was recognized as the immediate Head of the state; in that case the new kingdom could be the old one renovated, defecated, ennobled, and clothed with universal dominion. The phrase, "kingdom of heaven," was subject to no such ambiguity. It set forth a dispensation radically unlike any earthly dynasty. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ expounds his kingdom; in it he fulfils the law and the prophets, not by obeying their precepts, which is never fulfilling a law; not by enforcing obedience to them, which again is never fulfilling law, but by making actual that righteousness which they had in view. He presents a system, not of preparation, but of perfection; not of laws, but of principles. The Mosaic code was a collection of rules to be obeyed; the precepts in the Gospel of Matthew "are positively mischievous to those who try to obey them as rules, instead of using them as aids to the apprehension of that perfection, in which every man is a

law to himself." It is not enough to say that Christ brushes away from the Mosaic law unauthorized Jewish accretions. This is only incidental. He does far more. He contrasts what was commanded to their fathers with what he commands.* He repeals laws of Moses which entered into the whole civil and social policy of the Jews. He declares that the new garment is not the old one patched, and that for the new wine there must be new vessels (9: 16, 17). There were three national distinctions that the Jews in Christ's time specially valued: the temple, the Sabbath, and the ceremonial prohibition of certain kinds of food. Around these raged the warfare between Christ and the Jewish leaders. In our Gospel he asserts that he is greater than the temple (12: 6), that he is Lord of the Sabbath (12: 8), and he pronounces all food clean (15: 11). He annuls the laws of divorce (5: 32; 19: 9). He denounces the authorities of the nation (23: 1-5); he accuses them of making God's commandments of none effect on the one hand (15: 6), and on the other of perverting the whole purpose of the Levitical dispensation. God meant it as an instrument of redemption; they made it a system of ritual observance. God sought to provide a way in which he could show mercy to sinners; they made him intent on receiving sacrifices (12: 7). He charges that as soon as the kingdom of heaven was preached by John the Baptist, they laid violent hands on it, and continually endeavored to wrest it from its purpose and pervert its character (11: 12); that

* *ἔρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις* (5: 21) is not, It has been said *by* them of old time, but, *to* them of old time.

when John would not dance to their piping nor Christ mourn to their wailing, they stigmatized the one as possessed by a demon, and the other as a friend of publicans and sinners (11 : 16-19) ; that by their acknowledged inability to decide the position of John the Baptist, they voluntarily abdicated their place as the religious guides of the nation, and thus convicted by their own confession (21 : 27), convicted by the conduct of abandoned sinners (21 : 31), convicted by the law (21 : 33-41), and convicted by the Gospel (22 : 1-8), nothing remained for them but to fill up the measure of their fathers by putting Christ to death (23 : 32).

In the trial and condemnation of our Lord, as recorded by Matthew, the nature of the Messiahship and the fulness of the national rejection are clearly seen. The trial is mainly that before the Sanhedrim, as Luke is occupied with that before Pilate. The charge relates to his divine Sonship and his alleged purpose to destroy the temple (26 : 59, 66) ; we hear nothing of the social accusation, found elsewhere, of perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar. (Luke 23 : 2.) Only in this Gospel, and here twice, does Pilate formally put the solemn question, "Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" Twice they decide to take Barabbas, and, Matthew significantly adds, destroy Jesus (27 : 17, 22). After the disclaimer of Pilate, we find only in Matthew those fearful words by which the nation assumed the whole guilt of the crime : "Then answered all the people, His blood be on us and on our children" (27 : 25).

This Gospel of rejection is necessarily Christ's rejection of the nation. Only here do we read: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (21:43). Here only does Christ, portraying the return of the unclean spirit to his former habitation, making the last state of the man worse than the first, say, "Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (12:45). Here only does he declare that the horrible assertion, He doth not cast out demons but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons (12:24), was the exponent and proof of a depravity so thorough and complete, that when God and the devil stood before them they could not tell one from the other; they had lost the power of discriminating between heaven and hell, between infinite compassion and demonic hate; and that this terrible moral condition of heart and tongue was on the very verge of remediless ruin (12:33-37). Here only does he quote the prophecy of Isaiah: "By hearing, ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see and not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (13:14, 15). Here only does he say of the religious teachers of the Jews: "Every plant that my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up" (15:13). All the parables spoken in public after the thirteenth chapter—of the two sons (21:28), of the householder (21:33), and of the marriage of the

king's son (22:2)—set forth the national sin and destruction. The closing miracle is the blasting of the fig-tree, the emblem of the fate of the nation—covered with green leaves, the promise of fertility, but bearing no fruit (21:19). The last public discourse is an arraignment of the heads of the nation; with burning indignation he portrays their character and history, bids them, in words found only in Matthew, "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers" (23:32); and with the terrible inquiry, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell" (23:33)? pronounces their doom, and departs for ever from the temple (21:1). Compare all this with the last sentence in Luke's account of the public ministry of Christ: "And in the day time he was teaching in the temple, and at night he went out and abode in the Mount of Olives; and all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple for to hear him" (21:37, 38).

4. The refusal of the nation to receive their Messiah results in "a new covenant, a new election, a new legislation, a new community." When the world in former times had rejected God, he raised up a nation of which he should be Head and Lawgiver. When this nation rejects Christ, he calls a people to whom he shall stand in still closer relation as Head and sole Lawgiver. He gathers a small company of disciples who attend him constantly (4:18-22; 5:1; 10:1), and who finally recognize his divine character (16:16). When this is accomplished he is ready for the cross. In his address to the Father, in the seventeenth chapter of John, he says:

“I have finished the work thou gavest me to do. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. As thou hast sent me into the world, even also have I sent them into the world. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.” The persons thus qualified and endowed are to be Christ’s representatives, the salt of the earth, the light of the world (5 : 13, 14). When they have rightly apprehended his nature and mission, he makes known to them his intention to constitute a church—an ecclesia, a selection of individuals—comprising those persons to whom Christ is revealed by the Father: “I will build my church upon this rock”—the divinely imparted knowledge of Christ (16 : 17-19). This is the nation to which the kingdom of God shall be given, for it will bring forth the fruits thereof. (1 Peter 2 : 9.) The church differs from the old dispensation not only in membership, but in duration. That was founded on natural relationship, and its ties cannot outlast the grave. This is of spiritual origin; earth and time do not bound it; death does not sunder its connection; the gates of hades shall not prevail against it :

“The saints on earth, and all the dead
But one communion make.”

No Evangelist but Matthew mentions the church, and he announces its constitution, membership, duties,

discipline and ordinances. The commands to administer and observe the rites of baptism (28:19) and the communion (26:26, 27), are given only in this Gospel.* Here only is found the sacred formula used at the initiating ordinance of the Christian church: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (28:19).

III. The Gospel according to Matthew is thus, by its very nature, official and organic, having primarily to do with these two nations—that from which the kingdom of God is taken (21:43), and that to which it is given (1 Pet. 2:9); the one outward, carnal, Jewish, the other spiritual, holy, Christian; the one rejected, the other founded and proleptically organized. Christ comes to the nation. He deals, as God dealt throughout the Old Testament, with an organic body acting through lawfully constituted and acknowledged representatives. The persons connected with the infancy of Christ all hold official stations; the parables are all organic or official; the duties inculcated are all organic; the final scene is the judgment of the nations; and the commission at the close of the Gospel is the official one: “Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (28:19, 20). The official relation of John the Baptist is constantly noticed, the great stages of Christ’s work being preceded by a statement of the position of John (4:14; 11:2; 14:12; 17:11-13). In

* In Mark 14:22 *φάγετε*, eat is an interpolation.

Luke this is passed over in some cases with no mention, and in others with brief allusion, but the same Evangelist gives in detail Herod's scornful treatment of our Lord just before his crucifixion (23:7-11), to which, as it is merely individual, like Christ's personal friendships, Matthew does not refer. He records the formal request of the sons of Zebedee for official position (20:20-23); Luke omits this incident, but narrates the personal strife of the disciples on another occasion as to who should be the the greatest (23:24). The denunciations in this Gospel are of the national authorities, as elsewhere they are of character and conditions (Matt. 23; Luke 6:24-26). Here the woes are pronounced against the representatives and guides of the people. No Gospel but this tells us that in the last days many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many (24:1); none but this warns us against false teachers, ravening wolves in sheep's clothing (7:15), blind guides straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel (23:24), shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men (23:13).

The impersonal character of Matthew's narratives is one of his most marked characteristics. Of our Lord's unofficial relations to individuals our Gospel makes no mention until the rejection has been consummated by the death on the cross (27:56, 57).* Before that time there is no account of those personal friendships and affections which appear in Luke so abundantly and in John almost exclusively. Here there is no reference to the family in Bethany (Luke 12:38; John 12:2); no loving catalogue

* The change in this respect, beginning at verse 55, is very striking.

of the names of the women who followed with the twelve, and ministered to him of their substance (Luke 8:2, 3); no commendation, as in other Gospels, of the poor widow who threw her two mites into the treasury (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4). The anointing by Mary is inserted to explain the conduct of the Sanhedrim in seizing Christ at the Passover contrary to their previous intention, but the name of Mary is not given (26:1-16).

There is a marked difference between the position of Satan in this Gospel and that which he holds in Luke and John. Here he is the official head of a kingdom in conflict with the kingdom of Christ; there his individual dealings with individuals are essential elements in the history. (Luke 23:3, 32; 13:16; John 13:27). In the narrative part of his Gospel, Matthew never calls Peter by his personal name Simon, as do the Evangelists, but always by his official name Peter (Luke 5:3, 10); in like manner he himself is styled Levi by Mark and Luke, but here is found only his apostolic name, Matthew. The genealogy of Christ is given in the order of descent, the form of the official records, while Luke gives the roll of our Lord's ancestors in the ascending series—the way most natural in the narrative of an individual life. If Matthew, in the narratives common to the Synoptic Gospels, departs from the arrangement of the other Evangelists, the reason can always be found in the distinctive character of his Gospel. In the account of the temptation, for example, he presents, first the temptation in the wilderness, then that in the temple, then that on the mountain. In Luke, the arrangement of the last two is reversed. The

reason for the divergence is obvious. In Matthew the temptations are official and follow the official order: Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah—undo the Incarnation, violate the Divine relation, abdicate the Messiahship; Luke, the individual Gospel, adopts the sequence of an individual experience—the temptation to spiritual pride and presumption coming naturally after other forms of solicitation to evil have been successfully resisted.

In God's arrangement, the national, official offer and rejection must precede the seeking for individuals—those for whom the supper was prepared must refuse the invitation before the command is given, Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage (22:9). The time for the free, indiscriminate offer of salvation to all and by all is not yet come, and hence in this Gospel, none but the apostles preach the glad tidings, and they are restricted to their own nation (10:5, 6). In the latter Gospels, the man out of whom the legion of demons had been cast entreats permission to remain with Christ, but Jesus sends him away, saying, "Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee" (Mark 5:18, 19; Luke 8:38, 39); in Matthew there is no such direction (8:28-33). In Luke, to the man who begs leave to go and bury his father, Christ says, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (9:60); this latter clause is omitted by Matthew (8:23). No Samaritan woman here tells the story of her conversion, and brings a whole village to Christ (John 4:28-40); no one, as in the other Gospels, casts out demons in Christ's name who

does not follow with the disciples (Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49).

In this Gospel the evidence which accompanies the Messianic claims is fundamental, official, and complete. Here only is the will of God revealed in dreams, the method adapted to the lowest stage of spiritual development (1:20; 2:12, 13, 19, 22; 27:19); earthquakes attend the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord (27:51; 28:2); the graves are opened and the dead arise (27:52); the angel who rolls back the stone from the door of the tomb appears to the keepers, who, terrified at the sight, become as dead men (28:2, 4); Judas, his betrayer, brings again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, and casting them down in the temple, says: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" (27:3, 5); Pilate, his judge, washes his hands in testimony of the groundlessness of the accusation against Christ (27:24); the Roman guard at the cross declare their belief in Christ's divinity (27:54); his persecutors give public declaration of our Lord's prediction of his resurrection (27:62, 63); and the official watch testify to the futility of all their efforts to detain Christ in the tomb (28:11, 14). Compare this with the Gospel of John, and note there the absence of all external testimony, whether from man or nature, and the presence of that only which inheres in Christ.

IV. One of the main objects of this Gospel is, to show that the great facts of the Christian age have not thwarted the Divine purposes, nor compelled the adoption of principles previously unknown. God's dealings

with the called are throughout consistent and coherent. Christianity is ideal as well as historic and actual. In the kingdom of heaven the law and the prophets are fulfilled. The uniformity of God's work in the past, the present, and the future, is shown throughout the Gospel. The genealogy of our Lord contains the names of four Gentile women, three of them stained by heinous crime, who by faith and grace obtained a place in the royal line, and whose blood flowed in the veins of all the Jewish kings (1:3, 5, 6). In the first chapter of this Gospel, the fact is thus set forth, that God interwove the two great principles of the New Dispensation—grace and faith—into the very warp and woof of the Abrahamic people. By these, strangers and foreigners sought and secured a place in the household. In the second chapter, the Magi, the Gentiles, recognize and honor Christ (2:11), while the rulers and theocratic guides of the nation pass him by in contempt. A refuge is provided in Egypt from Jewish malevolence (2:14, 15). It is a Roman centurion whose faith was such as he had not found in Israel (8:10). It is one of the accursed race of the Canaanites who draws from our Lord the exclamation: "O woman, great is thy faith" (15:28). It is the mixed multitudes fed by Christ—the four thousand—who glorify the God of Israel (15:31).* It is Pilate's Gentile wife who sends the warning: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man" (27:14); and the only recognition of Christ's innocence by those who stand

* The Gentile character of this multitude will be apparent on a study of the words of the Evangelist.

around the cross in this Gospel, is on the part of the Roman guards (27:54).

The coherence of the work of redemption and its vital connection with the past may be seen also in the fact that in this Gospel we have no beginnings of spiritual life. All the disciples are believers at their first appearance in the narrative. The Gentiles—the Magi and the Syrophœnician woman—present a developed faith of marvellous strength and persistence. There are no awakenings from the dead, like that of the penitent thief in Luke (23:40), or of the Samaritan woman in John (4:1-28). The same principle governs in miraculous restoration to life. In Matthew the miracle of this class is that of the daughter of Jairus, who is at the point of death when the stricken father goes in search of the Saviour (9:18). In Luke, in addition to this miracle, the son of the widow of Nain is restored to his mother (7:11-15); but in this case the dead man is being carried to the grave, while in John, who begins his Gospel where Matthew ends, with the recognized rejection of Christ, Lazarus is raised from the tomb in which he has lain so long that decay is doing its work. (John 11:1-43.) For the same reason there are no miracles of healing in the Gospel of Matthew unless they are sought or expected by the recipient or his friends, no unanticipated miracles springing from Christ's unprompted mercy. In Luke are many such, in John, with perhaps one exception, they are all such. But Matthew records no miracle of spontaneity like the healing of the ear of Malchus,

(Luke 22 : 51); none like the cure of the man at the pool of Bethesda. (John 5 : 9).*

* Those who impugn the credibility or information of the Evangelists, because they omit important events or incidental details, will find on examination, that the omission arises from the fact that each historian narrates only the incidents belonging to that aspect of the history of redemption which it is the design of his Gospel to present. The second miracle recorded by Matthew (8 : 5, 13) may illustrate this remark. Luke (7 : 1-10) tells us that the centurion sent elders of the Jews to intercede on his behalf. Of this Matthew makes no mention, but adds the words of our Lord which Luke omits: "The children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness." Alford, to whom be all honor for his fairness and candor, says in his comment on this passage, "Here Matthew simply states the fact of the healing, not knowing of those that were sent." Why is this a necessary inference? And why is it not equally clear that Luke did not know what Christ said? Each Evangelist relates what belongs to his Gospel. Matthew is the historian of the nation's rejection of the Messiah. In the case of the centurion he simply adheres to a principle which leads him to pass over the appreciative answer of the scribe not far from the kingdom of God (Mark 12 : 32-34); the commendation of Christ by the scribes as he silenced for ever his questioners—a commendation very remarkable in its place and time (Luke 20 : 39); the tribute of that ruler in Jerusalem to whom Christ in response so wonderfully revealed the heavenly truths that constitute the very marrow of the Gospel. (John 3 : 1-21.) Luke, whose history is not one of official hostility, but of individual acceptance, does not here record the prophesied rejection of the children of the kingdom.

I may be allowed to mention another passage which Westcott says is attended with serious difficulty. (Luke 9 : 57 compared with Matt. 8 : 18-22.) The object of Luke in this short section is to give the requisites for discipleship; of Matthew to show the character of the nation. Hence he omits all reference to the third statement in Luke, "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." In the later Gospel the passage is found near the close of our Lord's life; in Matthew near the commencement, one of the many intimations that at the very beginning of his work, Christ anticipated his death, and recognized the character and doom of the Jewish people. They would pursue him to the cross, and the dead nation would be abandoned to its fate. The interpretation that makes "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head" a declaration of poverty cannot be reconciled with the facts of the Gospels. The meaning is far deeper.

Thus does this Gospel, which has in its first sentence the call of Abraham, and in its last the end of the age, grasp the whole covenant period and set forth the continuity of God's dealings, and the accomplishment of his designs. The phrases "that it might be fulfilled," and "to the end of the age," are among its prominent and constantly recurring peculiarities. The references to the Old Testament, and the verbal citations from it in Matthew, far exceed in number those found in any other Evangelist; but, with a single exception, they are not such as would be employed to prove to an unbeliever, by the fulfilment of prophecy, the Messiahship of Jesus. Many commentators deny that in the great majority of these predictions there is any direct reference to the Messiah. They are addressed to believers in Christ; they vindicate by reference to Old Testament facts and principles, his lowly condition, his apparent powerlessness, his reception by inferior and despised classes. The one exception is the prophecy of Micah cited by the Sanhedrim in answer to Herod's inquiry as to the birth-place of Christ. This is given by Matthew, not to prove the Messiahship, but to condemn the Sanhedrim out of their own mouth (2:4-6); they pointed the Gentiles to a Christ whom they themselves neglected, and threw the clear light of Scripture on the path in which they refused to walk. The uniform character of the other quotations will be obvious as you recall them: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (2:15): "He shall be called a Nazarene" (2:23): "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of

death, light is sprung up" (4:16): "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets: A bruised reed shall he not break,* and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory" (12:19, 20): "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (13:15): "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (13:35): "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass" (21:5): "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" (21:16): "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner" (21:42).

God's word does not return unto him void. His promises have a far wider, better, more glorious fulfilment than ever man imagined. The first book of the Old Testament records the calling out of a nation from which the Messiah should come; this first book of the New Testament records the calling out of a nation in which the Messiah shall dwell. The tabernacle and temple are destroyed, but the Divine Presence which they promised, and represented in shadow, is here in blessed

* A bruised reed is not an emblem of a penitent and heart-broken sinner, but of an enemy of God. (2 Kings 18:21.) Christ did not retreat from his enemies for fear of them—they were weakness itself—but in pursuance of his plans for the world.

reality: Lo, I am with you alway, unto the end of the age. On the Galilean mountain are uttered the words of which the voice out of heaven which John heard in the isle of Patmos (Rev. 21 : 3) is only the echo: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." There is in our Gospel no account of the ascension—that belongs to another point of view. Here the final and abiding thought, as the church commences her world-wide mission, is the fulfilment of the Old Testament promise, the name with which this Gospel begins and ends—JESUS, EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US.

THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO MARK.



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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

THE first question that presents itself in a discussion of the second gospel concerns its authorship. It is called the gospel according to St. Mark, and the universal doctrine of the Christian church ascribes it to the hand of that evangelist.

The gospel itself contains no statement as to its author. Like the other memoirs of our Lord, it is anonymous ; but the tradition of the ancient church is, without exception, to the effect that it bears the name of its writer. With him has been associated the apostle Peter, whose amanuensis Mark was said to have been. It was apparently thought by the earlier writers of the church that Peter dictated the gospel to Mark, but this has not been the accepted view of modern critics.

The first statement in the church in respect to the authorship of the second gospel is that of Papias, whose words are quoted by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History (III., 39). Papias was bishop of Hieropolis somewhere during the first half of the second century, and although he appears to have been a man of small judg-

ment, easily led into wild, wayward fancies, his testimony as to a matter of fact, in relation to an opinion prevalent at the time concerning a work then extant, and its alleged author, would not be at all affected by the weakness of his judgment or the trifling character of his views. He says, as quoted by Eusebius, that "Mark, being Peter's interpreter, wrote carefully what things he (Peter) narrated, though he recorded not in order, as it was spoken or done by the Lord, for he neither heard nor followed our Lord, but, as before said, he was the companion of Peter, who arranged his instructions as was necessary, but did not give a history of our Lord's discourses. Wherefore Mark has not erred in any way by writing some things as he remembered them ; for he was careful of one thing, not to omit anything of what he had heard, or to falsify anything in these accounts."

Now we may not set any great store by these opinions of Papias as to the form in which Mark composed the gospel, but beyond a doubt the following facts are established: that in the time of this minister at Hierapolis there was extant some work upon the life of Jesus; that it was said to be written by Mark; and that the view which the church accepted was, that in the composition of it, Mark was intimately associated with the apostle Peter.

A second early reference to the authorship of Mark is that of Irenæus, also quoted by Eusebius in his *History* (V., 8): "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, has himself also handed down to us in writing what was announced by Peter."

The historian (II., 15), on the authority of Clement (Hypotyposes VI.), declares that many of those who listened to the preaching of Peter in Rome requested Mark, who had followed the apostle for some time, to write out what Peter had spoken. Peter, hearing of this, was pleased at the interest shown by his hearers, and authorized the work to be read in the churches. We may observe here that this is inconsistent with a statement which Eusebius adds to the second reference which we have quoted, to the effect that Mark's writing was after the decease of Peter and Paul.

In another passage Eusebius (Hist. Eccl., VI., 14) cites the already quoted words of Clement, but adds to the account, that Peter, knowing of Mark's work when completed and given to the public, "encouragingly neither hindered nor advanced it;" which may be understood to mean, that while he gave the gospel a general approval, he took no active part in either correction or addition to its contents. Without further quotation, we may just call attention to the fact that Tertullian and Jerome also refer to Mark's gospel as receiving the confirmation of Peter, as indeed he was only an interpreter and amanuensis of the apostle's declaration concerning Jesus Christ. (Tertull. contra Marcion, IV., 5; Jerome, ad Helvidium, Quest. XI.)

Added to these evidences from early Christian writers of the genuineness of Mark's gospel, we may mention Justin Martyr and Tatian as proving the existence, in the second century of the church, of a gospel such as the second in our canon, which was held to be the work of

the evangelist Mark. Some modern critics have questioned the evidence upon which the authorship of Mark has been accepted, but the grounds of doubt are certainly not as valid as the reasons for belief, and in one case at least a leading antagonist of the authorship of Mark (Credner) has seen reasons for changing his views.

Some of the internal reasons for believing that the authorship of Mark is well founded may be noticed below.

There is no reason, then, why we should not accept the tradition of the church that Mark was the author of the gospel, and we therefore now inquire, Who was this Mark? and, What do we know concerning him?

Simply to attach the gospel to some person of the name of Mark would have been a dry and sterile fact in the history of the New Testament. And we are fortunately not left to a mere statement so isolated and uninteresting. Mark is said to have been the person mentioned in Acts 12:12, 25. The former passage relates that Peter, after his liberation from prison, found his way "to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark;" and in the other passage, occurring in the same chapter, and without any change of expression, so that we are justified in referring it to the same person, we are told that "Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John whose surname was Mark." In the following chapter the course of the two apostles is marked out, upon the first missionary journey, on which they were sent by the Holy Spirit, and in the fifth verse it is rela-

ted that they had "also John to their minister." Clearly this is the same person who in the preceding chapter is said to have possessed the surname Mark. In the thirteenth verse we learn that John at Perga left them and returned from his ministry to Jerusalem. In the well-known passage, 15 : 37-39, Paul refuses to take with him upon the second journey "John who was surnamed Mark," because he had departed from them in Pamphylia; and the discussion between the apostles became sufficiently severe to cause a separation between them, Barnabas taking Mark, and Paul choosing Silas, apparently receiving the sanction of the brethren in his new determination. Mark does not appear to be again mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, but some references to him occurring in the Epistles must not be overlooked. In Col. 4 : 10, Paul mentions him with accompanying words of commendation : "Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments : if he come unto you receive him);" and the writer adds, "These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me." In 2 Tim. 4 : 11, Paul again speaks of Mark in kindly terms. "Take Mark," he says, "and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry;" and in the closing words of the letter to Philemon Mark is numbered by Paul among his fellow-prisoners. In the first Epistle of Peter, 5 : 13, Mark is mentioned as "my son," apparently referring to the probable fact that he owed his Christian faith to the teaching of the writer. These are the only passages of Scripture

where the name occurs. Three in which a supposed reference is made to him will be noticed by us in the short sketch of a life of Mark which we now would present, gathered from these Scriptural references and such remains of tradition as may seem not worthy of rejection.

The original name of the evangelist was most probably John, Mark being a Roman name which he adopted at some time in his life, in accordance with that custom of which we have an illustration in the name which the Jewish Saul adopted, and by which he has been altogether known. That this may have arisen from some connection with a Roman family of that name has been suggested by his familiarity with Latin, which has been gathered from the fact that he became the interpreter of Peter. His father may have been a proselyte of Rome, although reference is made only to his mother, who was Barnabas' sister. The later tradition of the church has sometimes separated between the two names, and in this way converted what was probably one minister of Jesus Christ into two or three saints of the ecclesiastical calendar. Some modern critics have endeavored to establish the separateness between the companion of Paul and the "son" of Peter; but this is rather to be set down to one of those skilful acrobatisms of New Testament criticism which absorbs all our attention to the skill of the act, so that we forget the absolute nothingness of the result. Mark was evidently of a somewhat excitable and mobile disposition, and that he who once accompanied Peter should have also been the companion

of Paul is not such an extraordinary circumstance as to warrant the necessity of finding different individuals to supply the respective places.

Mark was the son of Mary the sister of Barnabas, and evidently belonged to a family of deep emotional characteristics, and whose worldly position enabled them to render considerable service to the early church. Barnabas was a man of property, belonging to Cyprus, and his sister seems to have lived in such state at Jerusalem that she could entertain a considerable number of the church at an assembly for prayer (Acts 12 : 12), testifying not only to the extent of her property, but also to the boldness and confidence of her faith. James, the brother of John, had been killed by Herod. Peter was in prison, and the church felt that nothing was left to it but to implore the help of God. One at least of their number, a woman, is brave enough to throw open her house and invite the community there to seek the Divine aid. It was no private meeting. It apparently was a recognized centre of Christian hospitality and influence. Thither went Peter straightway, needing no angel to guide him to a place which was well known to the apostle as a place of Christian resort. It was the house of Mary, Barnabas' sister, the mother of Mark.

It is not very difficult to picture to ourselves the young man who was the son of this Mary, the nephew of the son of consolation. Noble-hearted, frank, and generous, we may well suppose him, sometimes, too much swayed by impulse, quick to go forth upon the great errands of the cross, too easily, however, impelled to lay

down his arms and retire from the conflict. His uncle is a fervent man, feeling the enthusiasm of the hour, and ready to consecrate his property for the common service of the church, in that mistaken, though generous, community of goods, which marked the early history of the ecclesiastical brotherhood at Jerusalem. With a mother of similar spirit, we may well picture to ourselves the warm, impulsive temperament of the young John Mark. This consideration lends some probability, or perhaps possibility, to the supposition that Mark was the young man to whom he alone of the evangelists refers (14: 51), who when all the disciples forsook their Master and fled, "followed him," "having a linen coat cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked."

It has been supposed that Mary, being a wealthy proprietress, may have possessed a residence at the foot of Olivet, just outside the city. It may have been her garden into which Christ entered for prayer and retirement—Gethsemane, earth's solemn scene of agony and tears and blood. Did the youth know it? It would be very natural. Were his slumbers broken by the company that entered the garden, with torches and riot, to seize the Lord? Would it be strange that this lad, impetuous and heart-driven, should rise from his bed, throw around him hastily a linen sheet, and go forth among the crowd? He sees the Lord a prisoner, abandoned. He rushes forward to rescue, grasps Him to free Him from His guards. A soldier advances, seizes the youth, whose courage vanishes as suddenly as it arose. The young

man flies, and leaves behind his garment, amid the rude laughter and mocking taunt of the guard. It is a picture which imagination draws, but it is not impossible, and is not inconsistent with what we know of the evangelist, who alone narrates the event in his graphic story.

Peter was probably the first Christian teacher of this youth, and if the expression, "My son," is thus to be interpreted, it is significant that this disciple of the first apostle should not have been unwilling to join Paul and Barnabas in their evangelistic tour. His relations to Peter also may have led Mark more easily to separate himself from Paul, who as yet was too generous and liberal for him, in his interpretation of the Lord's command to preach the gospel to every nation.

We do not know the exact merits of the dispute between Paul and Barnabas, when it was proposed by the latter to take Mark with them, which was so strenuously opposed by his friend and companion. Paul's relations to Barnabas were very intimate. Apparently old friends, Barnabas had been the first to extend to Paul the friendly assurances of the Jerusalem church, and even united the new convert with himself in his labors at Antioch. Their fellowship in the gospel was therefore most close; but, notwithstanding this, Paul, who was by no means an ungenerous or forgetful man, was willing to sacrifice his fellow-apostle's companionship rather than pass over the delinquency of Mark. We cannot think that it was any personal feeling which led Paul to so severe a step; but if, as we have suggested, Mark had gained any narrow sentiments from his relation to Peter in regard to the

scope and mode of the progress of the gospel, we may well understand how Paul would refuse, even at the cost of personal friendship, to allow anything to hinder that work to which he had given himself with peculiar consecration. Barnabas, on the other hand, was tender-hearted, a true son of consolation. Moreover, it was his nephew, the son of Mary, that sister who may well be ranked among the other famous women of the gospel; and he yields to the claims of kinship and tenderness of heart, what Paul would not sacrifice—the interests of the church, and the unhindered progress of the gospel among the Gentiles.

But a later period of the history shows us that Mark became reinstated in the good opinion of the great apostle, and, as we have seen, was found by him of much service and fidelity in the gospel. Indeed, Paul seems to reiterate his assurances of confidence in his old friend's nephew. The story of their estrangement had got abroad. The church knew it, and Mark had lost caste and character among the faithful, certainly among those who were the disciples of Paul. But for these, and for the after ages, for all time, Paul takes care that it shall be well known that the fault was forgotten, that he had received Mark back again to confidence; nay, more, that he had made him a companion, and found him most faithful. Mere harmony will not be sufficient. Again and again, in different directions, does the apostle send forth his commendation of the helper Mark; and the Spirit Who directed this record of His choicest workings has left it for us, as an example of the way in which the erring are

to be treated, and Christian charity and forgiveness and brotherliness to be rendered triumphant in all our relations of life.

The letters in which Paul refers to the presence of Mark with him were written from Rome at the time of the apostle's first imprisonment (62 A. D.). Afterwards he is found with Peter at Babylon, and it has been thought that the evangelist passed from the one apostle to the other as their means of communication, at a time of peculiar peril to the Christian church, fraught with the outworking of those forces which were soon to overthrow Judaism in its seat and centre at Jerusalem.

In the later epistle of Paul, Timothy is commanded to bring Mark with him, and if, in accordance with this request, the evangelist accompanied Timothy, or at a later time came with Peter, either of which suppositions is possible, this fact would supply a basis for the opinion held so widely in the early church, that Mark was with Peter in Rome, and there discharged the duties of an interpreter. All these points, however, are mere surmises, and need only to be mentioned to complete what is possible for us of the life of Mark.

It may not be uninteresting to observe how the tradition of the church has completed the life of the evangelist. It is said that, after the death of Peter and Paul, he went to Egypt, and preached in Lybia and Thebais for twelve years. He founded the church of Alexandria, and became its first bishop. His miracles roused the anger of the heathen. They declared that he was a magician, and during a feast of Serapis an attack was

made upon the bishop of the Christian church while he was worshipping. He was fastened by cords, dragged along the road, especially over stony places, till he died, while a terrible tempest of lightning and hail scattered and destroyed his murderous assailants. The body of the martyred evangelist was buried by the church, and his tomb became an object of peculiar veneration until the year 815, when some traders from Venice stole the relics and conveyed them over the sea to their native city, where the noble cathedral which bears his name was erected above the spot, in which they were deposited. I need scarcely add that Mark then became the guardian saint of the great republic, as the winged lion by which he is symbolized in sacred art evidences, from the stately pillar upon which it stands in front of the Doge's palace on the Piazzetta.

Some of the legends connected with the history of St. Mark are quaint and interesting. That of the healing of Arianus, the cobbler, who had wounded his hand with the awl, and was afterwards converted and succeeded Mark as bishop of Alexandria; and the delivery from torture at the hands of his master of the Christian slave by the descent from heaven of the saint at whose shrine the slave was praying, are legendary stories told in honor of our evangelist; while the story of the fisherman, which I will venture to extract at length from the version of the Venetian chronicle given by Mrs. Jamieson in her *Sacred and Legendary Art*, has furnished material for some of the grandest achievements of the artist's skill:

“On the 25th of February, 1340, there fell out a won-

derful thing in this land, for during three days the waters rose continually, and in the night there was fearful rain and tempest, such as had never been heard of. So great was the storm that the waters rose three cubits higher than had ever been known in Venice; and an old fisherman, being in his little boat on the canal of St. Mark, reached with difficulty the Riva di San Marco, and there he fastened his boat and waited the ceasing of the storm. And it is related, that at the time this storm was at the highest, there came an unknown man and besought him that he would row him over to San Giorgio Maggiore, promising to pay him well. And the fisherman replied, 'How is it possible to go to San Giorgio? We shall sink by the way.' But the man only besought him the more that he should set forth. So, seeing that it was the will of God, he arose and rowed over to San Giorgio Maggiore, and the man landed there, and desired the boatman to wait. In a short while he returned with a young man, and they said, 'Now row towards San Nicolo di Lido.' And the fisherman said, 'How can one possibly go so far with one oar?' And they said, 'Row boldly, for it shall be possible to thee, and thou shalt be well paid.' And he went, and it appeared to him as if the waters were smooth. Being arrived at San Nicolo di Lido, the two men landed, and returned with a third, and having entered into the boat, they commanded the fisherman that he should row beyond the two castles. And the tempest raged continually. Being come to the open sea, they beheld approaching, with such terrific speed that it appeared to fly over the waters, an enormous

galley, full of demons (as it is written in the Chronicles, and Marco Sabellino also makes mention of this miracle): the said bark approached the castles to overwhelm Venice, and to destroy it utterly; anon the sea, which had hitherto been tumultuous, became calm; and these three men, having made the sign of the cross, exorcised the demons, and commanded them to depart, and immediately the galley, or the ship, vanished; then these three men commanded the fisherman to land them, the one at San Nicolo di Lido, the other at San Giorgio Maggiore, and the third at San Marco. And when he had landed the third, the fisherman, notwithstanding the miracle he had witnessed, desired that he would pay him, and he replied, 'Thou art right; go now to the doge and to the procuratore of St. Mark, and tell them what thou hast seen, for Venice would have been overwhelmed, had it not been for us three. I am St. Mark, the evangelist, the protector of this city; the other is the brave knight St. George; and he whom thou didst take up at the Lido is the holy bishop of St. Nicholas. Say to the doge and to the procuratore that they are to pay you; and tell them, likewise, that this tempest arose because of a certain schoolmaster dwelling at San Felice, who did sell his soul to the devil, and afterwards hanged himself.' And the fisherman replied, 'If I should tell them this, they will not believe me.' Then St. Mark took off a ring which was on his finger, which ring was worth five ducats; and he said, 'Show them this, and tell them, when they look in the sanctuary, they will not find it;' and thereupon he disappeared. The next morning the said fisherman pre-

sented himself before the doge, and related all he had seen the night before, and showed him the ring for a sign. And the procuratore having sent for the ring, and sought in the usual place, found it not; by reason of which miracle the fisherman was paid, and a solemn procession was ordained, giving thanks to God and to the relics of the three holy saints who rest in our land, and who delivered us from this great danger. The ring was given to Signor Marco Loredano and to Signor Andrea Dandolo, the procuratore, who placed it in the sanctuary; and, moreover, a perpetual provision was made for the aged fisherman above-mentioned."

This story, by no means to be classed among the most absurd of ecclesiastical legends, we give thus at length, in order that the reader may see the deep gulf which divides the narratives of miracles contained in the Scripture from those which have been multiplied by the superstitions of the church.

We now turn from the author of the gospel to the gospel itself, and inquire concerning its structure and most characteristic features. We shall find that the nature of the man is repeated in the nature of the work. For while we ever remember that the Bible is the word of God, it must not be forgotten that it is the word of God spoken through men, and that we fail to note one of the most distinctive values of the Sacred Scriptures when we lose sight of the human side. The Bible has thus suffered greatly by being regarded as only a divine word. But all its parts bear unmistakably the image of those through whom it was delivered unto us. That man is a

poor observer of the human race who cannot see the individual traits that lie upon the general base of a common humanity, and he fails utterly to comprehend the books of the Bible who cannot distinguish in each the peculiar feature which its human authorship has supplied.

We have, then, four gospels, lives of Jesus Christ. They are pictures of our Lord taken from different stand-points. Luke and John have a common universalness of application, which hardly belongs to the other two—Matthew's and Mark's gospels being rather concerned with the presentation of the relation which the life of Christ bore to the kingdom of God, the former viewing the life as the fulfilment of the types and foreshadowings which were found in the former dispensation, while the gospel under special review presents our Lord as the manifestation of Deity, in an independent form, but specially engaged in antagonism with the world-forces which opposed God in the person of his Son. It is a gospel of conflict and victory. The cries of battle ring through all its passages, but they are the cries of battle which change into the shout of triumph, for it is the life of Him who has gloriously vanquished his foes, and ascended up on high amid the glory of his Father, and leading captivity captive. This gospel presents our Lord breaking up the old rather than fulfilling it, and establishing a new kingdom of glory and freedom. Hence, the symbol of the lion has been attached in the legendary art of the church to the second evangelist. He has told the story of Judah's lion—majestic, kingly, overwhelming, and on the vivid

page of his narrative we see the strength and courage, the all-mastering power of the Son of God.

With such a distinctive purpose and character we need hardly say that we reject altogether the theory that Mark's gospel is in any sense an abridgment or abstract of the other gospels. Indeed, we may almost certainly conclude that he had never seen the writings of his fellow-historians. That there should be correspondencies is very natural. In proportion as they are truthful narrations, that correspondence will be most pronounced. I see no reason for rejecting the supposition, that the written gospels are more or less a repetition of what was told in living speech, by the apostles and immediate followers of the Lord. That such repetitions would make current a Christian phraseology, and especially conserve the form of our Lord's words must be granted, and that this would be distinctly reflected in the writings of the evangelists, seems clear enough ; but that there need be on this account any relation between the writers, does not seem to me to follow. And certainly, the supposition that Mark abridged another gospel can only have arisen in an age, either ignorant of the true character of the gospels, or wholly uncritical. Mark's narrative is graphic, picturesque, vivid. It may omit some events told by the others, but in those which it relates it is fuller of detail, many of the points noted by Mark having escaped the attention of the other synoptists.

In answer to the opinion that Mark was an abreviator of Matthew or Luke, or both, observe the number of points which Mark alone notes. It is Mark alone

who, in 3:20, 21, observes that the crowd was so great that they could not eat bread, and that the friends of Jesus were so opposed to his work, or at least in such little sympathy with him, that they declared him to be beside himself. The simile of the kingdom of God to the seed planted, which grew without the knowledge of him who planted—a profound criticism upon the progress of the church of Jesus Christ—is told us only by Mark, 4:26-30. The graphic points in the narrative of the healing of the deaf and dumb man—one of the most beautiful pictures in the life of our Lord, where he “took aside the deaf and dumb, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue, and looking up to heaven, he sighed and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened”—are all supplied by Mark alone, as also is the touching doxology of the people, who cry, “He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak,” 7. 31-37. In 8:22-26, the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, whose returning sight came only slowly back, is related by this evangelist alone. Mark only, refers to the young man who came out to the crowd of guards when our Lord was taken prisoner, as we have already noticed. Besides these passages, peculiar to Mark, there are certain forms of expression and single words which he adds to the narratives, as they stand in the other writers, which render his style peculiarly individual and marked. In 1:13, Mark adds that, while in the wilderness at the temptation, our Lord was among the wild animals. In 1:42, Mark intensifies the speedy healing of the leper: “As soon as he had spoken,

immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." In describing the demoniac who dwelt among the tombs of Gadara, 5:4, 5, Mark makes the picture most graphic: "The man had often been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." Compare this with Matthew's "two men possessed with devils coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way;" and Luke's, "A certain man which had devils long time, and wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs," and the notion of Mark's being a copyist or abbreviator falls to the ground—the baseless fabric of a wayward fancy. Those who are interested in this matter will find further illustrations in 7:3, 4; 9:21–26; 10:24, 34, 49; and 12:32, 34.

But there is no feature so characteristic of Mark as the mode in which he commences and closes his narrative. Matthew has two chapters upon the genealogy, birth, and childhood of our Lord. Luke in a similar manner and at greater length recounts the circumstances of the early life of Jesus. John introduces his gospel by the wonderful revelation of the preëxistence and incarnation of the divine Logos; but Mark leaps at once to the story of Christ's public ministry with an account of the office of John the Baptist, and the baptism of Jesus. This introductory passage may seem to be an abridgment of the histories in the other evangelists, but the movement

of the style is abrupt, the touches are graphic and life-like. None of the gospels contain so forcible an account of these and earlier scenes in the Lord's public and official ministry.

We can only briefly notice in passing some other theories concerning the relation of the gospels to each other.

The great German critic Herder propounded the theory that the gospel of Mark was really the original record, and that the other histories were derived from it. But this again may be met, as was the already-noticed theory, which is really the reverse of this, by an appeal to the evident independence of the narratives. The modes of presentation, and especially the order of narration, are so entirely distinct, that even supposing Mark's gospel were the primitive work, and had been in the hands of Matthew and Luke, we are compelled to conclude that they made no use of it, but furnished the church with their own independent records.

The hypothesis of a still more original gospel, from which all are alike derived, is nothing but a fancy, and though it is quite possible that such a gospel may have existed, it is strange that no record of it should be left, and not the vaguest reference to it can be found in all the writings of the ancient church. The existence of the sea-serpent is more certain than the existence of this original Christian evangel. That wonderful creature has at least been recorded as seen. We all know people who have heard that it has been said that somebody somewhere saw a sea-serpent. But even such evidence can-

not be found for this primitive gospel. Some critics have said that there may have been such a gospel. Even they do not venture to suggest that somebody ever hinted that there had been such a document.

A modification of the theory is that there was a general tradition, orally preserved from apostles and apostolical men, and that our gospels are only later reductions of this general apostolic tradition to a written form. We may quite believe that the story of the life of Jesus was told by the apostles and early preachers of the word, as they went from city to city in the great work of world-evangelization, and we know from Luke's testimony that these orally-delivered histories were reduced into written form, by many in the churches; but these writings were probably only fragmentary, and of the character of notes. The gospels which we now possess bear too markedly the sign of the authorship of eye-witnesses, to be referred to any such process as the reduction of oral tradition into a written form, at a late period of the church's history. The style of these writings is so different from anything else in the early period of the church; they are so simple, direct, and vivid, that the generally-received doctrine of the church concerning them is less open to objection than any other explanation which we can give of their origin, and is therefore to be accepted by us.

At the same time we need not deny that Mark, for example, recorded in his narrative much of the testimony borne by Peter. The very ancient tradition of the church seems to point to some such relation, and it may very well be allowed, that he also incorporated something of

that general evangelical knowledge, which had very soon become a portion of the church's possession, and upon the proclamation of which the foundation of the Christian communities had first of all been laid.

We may now sum up the sources of the gospel as found in apostolic testimony, generally accepted church teaching, personal knowledge, and these, moulded and fashioned in the gospel story by the individual characteristics of the evangelist, and finally, the Holy Spirit's grace and power, directing, overruling, and inspiring all.

If we take a general view of the gospel, we shall easily perceive those characteristics which would naturally be found in the work of Mark. He was enthusiastic, active, driven by impulse, little given probably to leisurely thought and contemplation. And this is the character of his narrative. It rushes everywhere headlong, like a leaping stream. There is no quiet contemplation, little tendency to wait and ask what such events mean, what such words imply. Instead of this, you have picturesque descriptions, brief touches that illumine a scene in vivid brightness. Events are related rather than words. There are no discourses, sermons, conversations. The words of Jesus are brief, pregnant. They are generally controversial or denunciatory. They blaze with wrath against the false, the hypocritical; they ring with the tones of conscious victory.

The narrative of events is also characteristic. Mark has rapid transitions, and abrupt breakings off from one event to another. It has been well said "that the word

straightway (*εὐθεὺς*) may be designated as the appropriate watchword of our gospel." Matthew gradually unfolds each page in the record of His life who fulfilled the prophets and the law. Luke in a few general words introduces each section of the story of the Man of Nazareth, the Friend and Brother of His race. Mark, with a "forthwith," "straightway," summons a scene before us with vivid imagery and graphic words. He constantly drops the past tense and speaks as of a present event, while his reports are but little in the third person, but introduced with the very words of the interlocutor in each conversation. We must not forget here also the minuteness of detail, the recollection of names, and a certain tenderness and gentleness of nature which is seen in the constant use of diminutives and words of affectionate significance.

The antagonisms and victories of the Son of God are told by Mark in a series of glowing sections. Christ comes forth, the expression of the Divine power, and the destroyer of the power of the devil. His appearance is the signal for popular enthusiasms, and the crowds that gather about him press to hear, but chiefly to feel the force of that Divine healing, which puts diseases to flight, exorcises the demons, sheds light upon the blinded eye, and opens the sealed ear. Wherever he comes, a holy joy, an overwhelming awe seize the people. If not received, he is rejected with a hatred that seems devil-born. He appears in Galilee, and wins disciples, conquers devils, attracts the people, rouses the hatred of the Pharisees and scribes. He battles against the unbelief

of his people, encounters the hostility of the king. The final scenes approach. Everywhere are conflicts and victories. Into Jerusalem he rides in triumph, cleanses the temple, asserts himself not only Lord to save, but also to destroy. Then come agony and shame and death. The only articulate cry which Mark records is well named the "Lion's cry of pain," "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" but even when he died, he impressed the centurion with his glory, and was declared by the Roman to be truly the Son of God. How brief is the picture of the risen Lord, but how vivid! and if the concluding passages of the gospel (16:9-20) be accepted as genuinely the work of Mark, is it not still in perfect consistency that, having abruptly closed at the eighth verse, he should have added another section, swift and brief and expressive, in which our Lord's final victory over his disciples' doubt is recorded, and the triumphant progress of his gospel declared, with the accompanying victory of the Lord, and the confirming signs which followed the preaching of his word?

If we ask the question, "For whom was this gospel specially prepared?" the answer would seem to be ready, For Gentile Christians. And the proofs of this have been thus summarized: First, the omission of all genealogical notices of our Lord's descent. Had Mark intended his gospel for the Jews, he would have been careful to define the place of our Lord's family in relation to the Jewish kingdom and religion.

In the second place, when we compare Mark especially with Matthew, we are struck with the absence in

our gospel of Old Testament citations. There are only two, 1 : 2, 3, and 15 : 28, and the latter is rejected by the critics as having no authority. Some of the Hebrew and Aramæan terms are accompanied by a translation. "Talitha cumi" of 5 : 41 is interpreted, as are also "Corban, a gift," of 7 : 11, and "Ephphatha, Be opened," of the 34th verse of the same chapter. In 7 : 3, 4 the writer explains the customs of the Jews in respect of washing of hands before meals; while some additions and some omissions are found in narratives common to Mark and the other gospels, which may suggest that the evangelist had a particular class before his eye when he composed his history. In 11 : 17, Mark inserts the words, "for all the nations," where our Lord speaks of the house of God being called a house of prayer. There is no mention of the Jewish law in this gospel, and the limitations of the mission of the disciples, which Matthew relates—that they are not to go into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans they were not to enter—are omitted by Mark, which omission is also to be observed in the third gospel—perhaps the most humane and cosmopolitan of all.

As to the questions of place, and time, and language, in which the gospel was composed, we have only the conjectures of the critics. Irenæus (III., 1) says that it was after the deaths of Peter and Paul. This would be probably later than the year 63. It is not likely that the gospel was composed after the destruction of Jerusalem, for we can hardly think that such an event would be unnoticed in its pages. This may therefore supply us with

a term beyond which we cannot affix a date for its composition.

Most ancient writers, such as Clement, Eusebius, Jerome, and Epiphanes, state that the place of composition was the scene of the martyrdom of the apostle at whose inspiration the gospel was supposed to have been written. Chrysostom says Alexandria, and a modern critic fixes on Antioch, from a comparison (on too slender grounds) of Acts 11 : 20 with chap. 15 : 21 of the gospel. This is perhaps a good example of the narrow foundation upon which modern criticism is able to build its splendid erections of conjecture, hypothesis, belief, or infidelity.

The language of the gospel was presumably Greek. Here also there is nothing upon which any definite conclusions can be reached. The language which Mark used was most likely to have been Greek; and the argument in favor of Latin, which Romish writers have urged, seems not to be well founded.

Little remains for us now to say, but in conclusion, to present a brief abstract or general view of the contents of the gospel.

Lange suggests that the words of Peter, in Acts 10 : 38, may be taken as its motto : " Jesus of Nazareth, anointed by God with the Holy Ghost and with power : who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with him."

It were indeed a vain thing for us to endeavor to present the aspect of our Lord and his life as seen by the evangelist Mark. How poor and feeble are all the words

of uninspired historians, after the rich fulness of the word of God! And yet our sketch of the evangelist and his gospel will be incomplete unless, as we close, we endeavor to draw the picture of our Lord which Mark sets before us, though it can be, at best, only an imperfect sketch.

He stands forth, in the very first words, a full-grown man. We see him before the Baptist. And there, having had the consecration which gathers all the past of law and prophets upon his head, he is filled with the Holy Ghost, and announced to the world, by the voice of God, as the Beloved Son in whom the Eternal is well pleased. Thence he passes to the conflict with the devil in the temptation of the wilderness, whence, all victorious, he returns with angels as his ministers. When he comes forth to preach the kingdom, he calls disciples, and they obey. The people are astonished at his doctrine, and the ills which afflict humanity fly at his word and touch. Demons, fevers, palsies, leprosies—every form of human misery he meets and conquers. His fame goes abroad throughout all the region, and vast crowds gather to hear his words and see his wondrous works.

And this ministry, so strange, so powerful, is not for the privileged few, the recognized respectabilities of the time. It is for humanity. A publican hears his call and follows, leaving the receipt of custom and all he possessed. He takes his place among the publicans and sinners, relaxes the code of traditionary religion, and defends his followers from the charges of sacrilege and want of reverence which are brought against them.

Further manifestations of power are given, and the

signs of conflict multiply. He is charged with possessing a devil, and the very grace by which he conquers Satan is referred to Beelzebub. Now he comes forth as the friend and brother of mankind, and declares that obedience to his will and the fulfilment of his word will bind a man more closely to him than the most sacred ties of sister, brother, mother.

But Jesus is not only a miracle worker. He speaks the word of wisdom, and binds his truth and the significance of his growing word upon the ear of corn, the mustard grains, the bursting seeds. He sleeps in weariness upon a pillow in the hinder portion of the rocking boat. The tempest beats, and threatens to overwhelm. They wake him. He rises, speaks to the sea, and all is calm. Verily, it is the Son of God, who worketh thus, so mightily upon earth.

A legion of devils is conquered—death itself compelled to give up its victim. At home, abroad, in Galilee or Gadara, he is everywhere, alike, the very power of the mighty God.

But now comes opposition. His fellow-countrymen condemn him, and deprive themselves of his gracious workings by their want of faith. But this does not lessen the power of Christ. Indeed, he endows his disciples with the same all-conquering force. He walks the sea, and its waves are adamant. He breaks the bread, and with a harvest-fulness, feeds five thousand with the food of five.

“’T was springtime when he blessed the bread,
’T was harvest when he broke.”

The signs of opposition are not only among the people. The scribes feel the terrible force of his words of purity, and the king hears of him, and would fain see more of his mighty works. Now he advances to attack the hypocrite and unmask the false pretender to religious sanctity. The common people hear him gladly, rejoice at his power, and lift up the voice of praise and glory.

The miracle of feeding, repeated, gives occasion for further onslaught upon the leaven of Pharisees and Herod. He confesses himself to be the Christ, and utters the prediction to his disciples of his coming passion, with a promise of future victory.

His transfiguration displays the indwelling Godhead. His works of power, repeated among the people, show how he has the faith which is ever victorious; and with lessons to his disciples upon humility and catholicity of heart, the first part of the gospel closes with his retirement from Galilee into the deserts of Peræa.

Here he prepares his disciples for the journey that lies before them, combating the carnal doctrines of Pharisees and scribes, schooling the ambitions of his followers, and making ready for the wonderful scenes which are to crowd upon him in his last days.

Now he moves onward to Jerusalem; at Jericho, heals Bartimeus, the blind man; sends for the colt upon which he shall ride, and enters the sacred city with a triumphal procession. The fig-tree is cursed, the temple is purged. He asserts his right to perform these deeds of a divine authority, and refuses the challenge of his enemies. Words of solemn import, warning the careless, the un-

faithful, are spoken in parables. The quibbles of rabbis and the questions of lawyers are answered, with a wisdom none can gainsay. He closes the mouth of adversaries, and gives occasion for the praise of the people; he tenderly observes and commends the poor widow, whose mites are richer gifts in God's treasury than all the lavish bounty of the wealthy.

Then he foretells the destruction of the temple, promises judgment and deliverance, and paints the awful pictures of the last days.

But conspiracy and plot are thickening. Having eaten the passover and instituted the Christian feast, he passes to Gethsemane, to the council, to Pilate's bar, to the cross, to the grave. Now it seems as if the strong One were indeed overcome, as if the very Elect of God must yield to the great wickedness of the destroyer. But no, the grave is empty! The Lord has risen, appears to his disciples, and ascends into glory!

Thus, in rapid outline have we sketched the picture which the evangelist has given us. "Who is this that comes from Edom," we ask, "with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

"Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?"

"I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me."

See how the mighty Lord appears. The heavens open and proclaim him the Son of God. He speaks, and

the people hear with awe and wonder. He moves among them, and stills the madness of the fever's pulse, pours light upon the darkened eye, says, "Be opened," to the deaf, rolls upon the astonished ear the music of this joyous world, while the lips are loosed to sing the praises of our God. Devils quake and tremble, and fly before his holy gaze. The leprous stand with skins as pure as the infant's, when *He* touches or speaks the healing word. And death, itself, acknowledges Him, as Lord, and lays down its spoils, already vanquished and destroyed. See how He stills the sea, controls the storm, and bends all nature's forces to his will !

Yet men oppose him. Faithlessness robs him of his triumph, but chiefly itself of his grace. Hypocrisy hates, and plots against, and kills him. Royal wickedness and priestly blindness, with injustice seated on the throne of equity, combine to destroy the Son of God. And they triumph; but it is only a seeming triumph, for he who in his ministry often retires for rest and communion with God, that he might come forth to mightier working, lies down in the silent tomb only that he might return to life, death all vanquished, sins all smitten, hell crushed, heaven opened; that he might be for ever the Lord and Saviour of those who put their trust in him.

Here, then, is the Jesus whom Mark presents to us—the Son of God, the Lord and Master of men, great agonizer, mighty conqueror, destroyer of all evil, founder, king for ever of all good. And yet the Lion of the tribe of Judah is gentle as the Lamb of God. Does he not sigh o'er human suffering and want? Does he not gently and ten-

derly remember all men in their deep needs of sinfulness and sorrow? If not as sublime as the Jesus of John; if not as human as the Christ of the good physician's portraiture; if he does not gather up the lines of all the past, and show himself the issue and the glory of all that has gone before as the fulfiller of the publican's narrative—Mark's Christ is still a Christ we need—a Lord to save, strong to conquer for us, wise to rule. Thus is completed the glorious square of the evangelic history, and won by the love of the God-man whom the prophets predicted and the types foreshadowed, we rest confidently in the hands of Him who is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, the Lord God omnipotent, who reigneth and triumpheth for evermore.

THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO LUKE.



BY REV. WILLIAM LLOYD,

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THE
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

ABOUT six hundred years before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, a Jewish exile sat upon the banks of the river Chebar. He was one of many captives who had been carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. As he sat sadly musing, the heavens were opened and he saw visions of God which are thus recorded: "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; and they four had also the face of an eagle."

More than six centuries after this vision had been accorded to the captive Ezekiel, another Jewish exile was

walking upon the wave-washed shore of the isle of Patmos whither he had been banished for the truth's sake. Unto him also was given a vision which you will find in Rev., ch. 4. "And in the midst of the throne (that is, the throne of God) were four living creatures; and the first living creature was like a lion, and the second like unto a calf, and the third had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature was like unto a flying eagle."

It is impossible for the reader to fail to note the similarity of these two visions. According to some of the early Fathers, these cherubic forms were representative of the four phases of Christ's person, character, and works, which the Four Gospels delineate. It is clear that a different aim prompted and guided each evangelist in his work. There is nothing casual or random in their narratives. Each seems to have a well-defined line of thought and purpose. Each has a plan through which this purpose is seen running like a thread, around which the incidents crystallize into beautiful and symmetrical shape. They do not describe four Christs, but the one Christ in four aspects. Christ is the same in each and all. It is the same glorious figure that stands forth upon the pages of each, the difference is only in the lines of perspective. Now this view of the Fathers may be only a fancy, but it is not a vain or profitless one. It was, as Illuminated Missals, old Bibles, Windows of Churches and Marble carvings witness, for centuries regarded by the church as a correct application.

Matthew shows us the face of the *Lion*: Christ as a king and the founder of a kingdom. His Gospel binds

as a clasp the Old with the New Testament. He holds up the lamp of prophecy and flings its radiance full upon Christ the Messiah, and shows us that the kingdom of Israel which found its first fitting expression in David was but an adumbration of the greater kingdom of which Christ was the king. Matthew's is the Gospel of the Royalty of Jesus.

Mark gives us the face of the patient *Ox*. In his evangel we see the divine Son, the servant of man, bearing men's burdens, healing their sicknesses, and whether bound to the plough or prepared for the altar the servant of all.

John's is the face of the *Eagle*. He soars into realms of thought so bright with the light that enfolds and drapes Deity, that we shade our eyes in the dazzling presence.

Luke discloses the face of *The Man*. Christ on the human side. Humanity shown as God designs it to be. To this third Gospel and its author I am requested to direct your thoughts, and to this particular manifestation of Christ it is my purpose to devote this lecture.

Firstly, I will speak upon the author. You will acknowledge that acquaintance, either personal or historical, with the author of any work tends to increase our interest therein, and enables us the better to understand it. You stand before a painting by some master hand. You are charmed by the genius it displays, its breadth of tone and fidelity to truth. But if you have a knowledge of the artist, his mental peculiarities, the idiosyncrasies of his style, (if I may so call them,) your pleasure

in viewing it is greatly enhanced. Fine lines and slight touches, which would otherwise pass unnoticed, become deeply suggestive. So is it with a book. Every true book is to a greater or lesser extent a revelation of its author. Knowledge of the author alone enables us to fully enter into and understand it. This is certainly true of the Gospels. For while we claim for them a *plenary inspiration*, we also claim they are stamped with the personality of their authors.

The Gospel according to Luke. The records concerning the writer of this book are few and fragmentary. His name is an abbreviation of Lucanus, and he is not to be confounded with Lucius mentioned in Acts 13:1; Rom. 16:21. His name is mentioned three times in the New Testament, and is found in some few brief ecclesiastical traditions. We must be content to blend the certain and uncertain, the traditional and Scriptural records. Brief as these are, and dim as is the outline of his life they furnish, we nevertheless gather three very important and undeniable facts.

First in order is the passage found in Col. 4:14. "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you." From the connection in which this passage stands it is clear Luke was of Pagan origin. In verses 10-12 Paul mentions his fellow-laborers who were of the circumcision, that is, Jews, and in verse 13 those who were of Gentile birth, and in this group Luke is placed. He was probably born at Antioch. (Eusebius' Hist. 3:4.)

This is a very suggestive fact. It demonstrates that not only was not the mission of Christ confined to the

limits of Judaism, but the work of recording it was not to be exclusively in Jewish hands. It was eminently fitting that the Gospel, which should more than any other declare the fulness, the universality of the grace of God, the light which should lighten the Gentiles, should be written by one who had been brought out of pagan darkness into its marvellous light. When he was converted we know not. Some have supposed under the ministry of Christ himself, that he was one of the Seventy, and also one of the two unto whom Christ appeared on the way to Emmaus. But this, I think, the prologue to his Gospel disproves. There is in that a clear intimation that he was not an eyewitness of the facts he records. The strongest supposition is that he was converted through the labor of the apostle Paul, with whose journeyings and toils he became so intimately associated.

The second fact we learn is, "he was a physician." This is of value. It shows that he was a man of education. I know this is disputed by the archbishop of York, who wrote the article upon Luke in Smith's Bible Dictionary; but there is one important historical fact cited by Tholuck and Godet, which is confirmatory of this opinion: "There existed at Rome in the time of the emperors a system of medical supervision; a superior college was charged with the duty of examining in every city those who desired to practise the healing art. Newly-admitted practitioners were placed under the care of older physicians; their modes of treatment were strictly scrutinized, and their mistakes severely punished, sometimes by taking away their diplomas." Luke must have

passed through this ordeal successfully, and therefore possessed, we conclude, an amount of scientific and literary culture above the majority of the other evangelists and apostles. We need only refer you to the grace, dignity, and purity of his literary style as a further confirmation of this. It is in beautiful harmony with the design of this Gospel that the writer should have been a member of one of the most humane, liberal, and beneficial professions.

The third fact we learn is that he was a beloved fellow-laborer with Paul in his mission to the heathen, and the writer of the Acts of the Apostles. Read in 2 Tim. 4: 11. As this lecture is not a critical one, I will simply call your attention to a few passages which throw light upon this, and thereby considerably enrich our knowledge of our author's life.

“And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days,” etc. Acts 16: 10-17.

“There accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. These going before tarried for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas

in five days; where we abode seven days." Acts 20:4-6.

"And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly." Acts 21:17.

"And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius." Acts 27:1.

"And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him." Acts 28:16.

From these passages we see the first clear ray of historical light fall upon Luke when he joins Paul at Troas. They also indicate through what parts of the great apostle's missionary tour the beloved physician was his companion.

Silently, unobtrusively, he takes his place with Paul, the fact being marked only by the transition in the style of narrative from the singular to the first person plural. He accompanies him to Philippi, the place where the gospel standard was first planted in Europe; with some slight interruptions shares in his toils and perils until the end came in the last imprisonment and the martyr's death at Rome.

Of the latter part of Luke's life we know nothing certainly. Legends cluster about his name, but we have no means of ascertaining their truth—the most probable being that he died in Achaia; and Jerome says "the emperor Constantine sought for his ashes to carry them away to Constantinople."

Such is a brief and imperfect outline of the life of the man who by birth, character, culture, and association, was eminently fitted to write this third Gospel. We will now proceed to the study of the book.

When and where was it written? What are the proofs of its authenticity? Is the gospel we possess the gospel written by Luke and dedicated to Theophilus? What relation to the other Gospels does it sustain, and what is its aim and purpose? These are the questions we propose to examine briefly and as far as we are able to answer.

I. The place where it was written is unknown. Opinions are divided between Cæsarea, Achaia, Alexandria, Rome, and Asia Minor. It is impossible, however, to verify any of these traditions and conjectures, neither is the verification, if possible, of any great importance. The date, however, is of grave importance. And upon this we are not left in much doubt. We will with Godet take our stand in the middle of the second century and ascend the stream. If we find in a book of any certain date, quotations from some other writer, then it follows that the book quoted from existed before the composition of the one in which the quotation is found. Now it is well known that quotations from this Gospel are found in works issued between the years 160 and 195. Theophilus of Antioch wrote about 170; Irenæus about 180. The Clementine Homilies appeared about 160. In all of these and other works I have not named of the same time, undoubted quotations from Luke are found. Still further proof is furnished by the fact that the Gnostic

Heracleon wrote a commentary upon this Gospel and upon John's between the years 175 and 195. By Origen this Gospel is ranked among the four Gospels admitted by all the churches under heaven. A majority of the most reliable commentators place the date of its composition between the years 58 and 64, some years before the Acts, it being "the former treatise," to which Luke refers in the opening of that book. We thus perceive that it was given to the world while there were upon the earth eyewitnesses of our Lord's life who could have exposed the falsehood of any statement therein contained, had it been untrue.

II. Its authenticity. Proofs of genuineness are furnished first by heretical writings. The enemies of the cross of Christ have ever been made to minister to its triumphs. From the writings of errorists and perverters some of the strongest confirmations of truth have been gathered. From the years 120 to 170 lived and taught three great heretics, Marcion, Cerdo, and Bassilides. Marcion was the author of a gospel written evidently to support theories he himself taught. His system may be briefly stated thus: He held that the Old Testament was not a preparation for the coming of the Lord, but was in spirit hostile to the gospel. That the God of the Old Testament was a lower being than Christ, and characterized only by jealousy and cruelty. In this divorce of the Old Testament and the New, of God and Christ, he was preceded by Cerdo. Perhaps his error was the result of his strong repulsion to the Judaic conception which claimed Christ as the Messiah of the Jews only. But his

gospel is manifestly a perversion and falsification of facts gained from other sources. Many passages are clearly alterations of Luke, and says Godet, "A scientific criticism can only conclude that our Gospel of Luke was in existence before that of Marcion, and that he chose this among all the gospels as the one which he could the most readily adapt to his system." Thus it is clear that in the year 140 this Gospel possessed full authority, the result of a conviction of its genuineness.

Bassilides, a Gnostic of Alexandria, claimed to be a pupil of the Apostle Matthias, which claim implies the circulation of the Acts, in which alone is the apostolate of Matthias recorded, and consequently of this Gospel which we have proved was composed before the Acts.

Secondly, we have the testimony from the church Fathers. Having proved that this Gospel was in the hands of Marcion and Cerdo in the year 140, it is perfectly legitimate to assume that it was received by the church and would be in the hands of the Fathers of that period. To their witness we therefore turn for further proof of its genuineness. I here refer you principally to Godet's Introduction and also to Ebrard's Gospel History. In the writings of Justin Martyr, says Godet, we find passages which prove unanswerably that the writer was acquainted with and used as authoritative this Gospel. The angelic announcement to Mary is quoted in his dialogue with Trypho almost verbatim. The taxing of Quirinus, which is given only by Luke, is also mentioned. The institution of the Lord's Supper is given according to the text of Luke, and the sending of Jesus to Herod, as also

the cry, "Father, into thy hand I commit my spirit," both of which facts of the passion of our Redeemer are recorded only by our evangelist. Is it possible then to doubt that this Gospel formed a recognized part of those apostolic memoirs from which this eminent Father derived all the gospel facts by him narrated?

We have seen that beyond question this Gospel was written before the Acts of the Apostles. Now every proof from the writings of the Fathers which proves the existence of and acceptance of the Acts, must be taken as proving the existence and acceptance of this Gospel. As the citation of such passages will more properly belong to a future lecture, I pass them by, only saying, there are many such in the writings of Polycarp, Clement, and others. Says Ebrard, "The existence of the Gospel of Luke in the very earliest times is attested by a multitude of proofs." Referring to the witness of the Fathers, he says, "These witnesses all agree in this: that in this Gospel we possess the carefully elaborated work of a well-educated man, who was intimately acquainted with many eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus."

Thirdly, we have evidence from other parts of the New Testament. My time and space will prevent an elaborate presentation of the proofs from this source. They are found in the Gospels of John and Mark, and in the Acts. A most distinct trace of its existence and influence upon other New Testament writings is found in the close of Mark's Gospel, chap. 16:9-20. In many ancient manuscripts the second Gospel closes with the words of the eighth verse. It is absent from the Sinaitic *

and the Vatican manuscripts. It is impossible for a comparison between it and some portions of Luke to be instituted without concluding that it is borrowed from the Gospel of the latter. Compare the following passages :

Mark 16 : 9 : Now when Jesus was risen early, the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Mark 16 : 10, 11 : And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

Mark 16 : 12 : After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

Mark 16 : 13 : And they went and told it unto the residue : neither believed they them.

Mark 16 : 14 : Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

Luke 8 : 2 : And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.

Luke 24 : 10, 12 : It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

Luke 24 : 13, 32 : And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures ?

Luke 24 : 33, 35 : And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

Luke 24 : 36, 43 : And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And he took it, and did eat before them.

Up to the last chapter we find no trace of Luke in Mark. We infer that this portion was penned by some other hand than Mark's; and if so, it places our Gospel as a received authority in the middle of the second century. Mark must have been interrupted in his writing by some event which prevented its completion for some time. The only probable explanation is that the sudden persecution under Nero in A. D. 64 and the martyrdom of Paul led to Mark's hurried flight from Rome. A copy of the unfinished work remained deposited in the archives of the church there. This would explain the existence of the unfinished manuscript and its completion by the help of Luke's Gospel, which must then have been in circulation. This explanation implies the high antiquity of this book.

Passing over the corroborations from the Acts, we sum up thus: The use of this Gospel by Marcion and Cerdo demonstrate its existence in the middle of the second century. The comparison with Mark and the Acts gives color to the presumption that it was in circulation in the latter part of the first century. But admitting this as open to question, ecclesiastical use of it in the church in the second century, as shown by Justin and other fathers, is decisive and sufficient with every candid mind to establish its authenticity.

Concerning the sources from which our author derived his facts there can be but two opinions: 1st, that he was an eyewitness of the events recorded. This his prologue denies. Or, 2d, that he received his information from the lips of the apostles, and from other wri-

tings, and was preserved from errors by writing under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This latter view I believe to be the correct one. Some of the ancients held that he wrote entirely under the influence of Paul. But his own language is against this idea. Doubtless he gathered much from the lips of his great Master, but with the Spirit of God as his guide the evangelist made the Saviour's life a subject of close research, and with the materials thus gained wrote the Gospel which bears his name.

"But are we sure that the book as we have it has come to us as it came from the author's hand?" I answer, Yes. The afore-given evidences can be taken in proof of this. Moreover, we can securely rest our faith upon the fact that of the forty-four New Testament manuscripts we still have, written previous to the tenth century, and which, from their antiquity and variety, are deemed of the greatest importance, thirty in all contain this Gospel in whole or in part.

III. Let us now proceed to consider its distinctive aim and characteristics.

I have already intimated what I believe these to be. Recurring to the cherubic symbol, this Gospel shows us the face of *the Man*. It is emphatically the Gospel of the humanity. It sets forth the perfect manhood of Christ in all its regal grace and beauty, in all its human and universal gentleness and sympathy. In Matthew He is the fulfiller of the law, the restorer of the kingdom. In Mark He is the Lord of nature, commanding its forces as a monarch his vassals, hushing the waves in their

wildest mood with a word, and holding the winds like hounds in a leash. In Luke *He is active and all-embracing compassion*; the good Samaritan, binding up the wounds of despoiled and smitten humanity; the good shepherd, seeking over mountain steep and desert wild the lost sheep. It is the memoir, not of the son of David, the saviour of a race, but of the Son of man, the Second Man. "Here is man according to God; the pattern man in and through whom all men are blessed and God is glorified, not only in moral perfectness, but in all the sufferings and honors which according to God's purpose are the heritage of the sons of men."

In Christ we see humanity, triumphant over evil, bowed to the dust of death, raised to God's right hand and invested with the right to rule over all. So that the words which the poet uttered, when exultingly he sang,

"Slain like him, like him we rise,
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies,"

are not poetic rhapsody, but grand and blessed truth. To do more than give a few hints, which you may supplement by closer study, would demand more time than is permissible. I can but glance at some few forms in which this Gospel distinctively portrays Christ the *Man*.

First the prologue and opening chapters. Luke is the only evangelist who mentions, in connection with his work, a personal friend. He dedicates his Gospel to Theophilus. Mark also the difference between his genealogy and that given by Matthew. Matthew's is decidedly Jewish. The descent of Christ is traced to Abraham.

Luke gives the genealogy to Adam, thereby showing us that He was akin to the race.

No less characteristic is the opening chapter. When St. John opens, he at once lifts us as upon eagles' wings above the earth, bears us unto the presence of the eternal and unbegotten Word; but Luke opens with the human aspect only. He introduces us to human relationships and sympathies in a way unlike any other Gospel. He alone gives us the angelic annunciations to Zacharias and to Mary, of the coming both of the forerunner and of the Lord. Here, and here only, do we find the canticles of Elisabeth and Mary. What a fine touch of human nature is given in thus recording the joy of motherhood which broke forth in these songs of blended maternal and pious hope. Here also we have the prayer of aged Simeon, whose eyes, dim with age, yet see God's Salvation, and who rejoices that the light shall be not only the glory of Israel, but the light also of the Gentiles. Equally remarkable is the announcement made by the angels to the shepherds. Matthew speaks of monarch-sages who came seeking a king; but Luke records the angelic song, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy," etc.—a *Saviour*—all that God could give, all that man could want; and the notes of that chorus still linger upon earth, and in their music shall all its discord yet be hushed.

I pass over much which might be noted in this chapter in the same connection, and come to the baptism. Here only do we read, "When all the people were baptized, Christ also being baptized, and praying, the heaven

was opened." Here he is linked with all the people in the rite of baptism and in an act of devotion.

Glance at a few facts of his early ministry. He opens that ministry at Nazareth, the place where he had been brought up. Bringing up is a part of every man's lot. He commences by reading a prophecy which he claims for himself, which describes Him as *an anointed man*, and declares his mission is to proclaim to all captive souls deliverance, and good tidings to all the sad and broken-hearted. And this peculiarity runs all through this Gospel, this extension of grace far beyond the elect Israel to the Gentiles. He sends out the Twelve, and they go everywhere preaching the gospel; and when on their return John tells of one whom they found casting out devils, and forbade him because he followed not with them, He rebukes the narrow spirit, and declares that he who is not against Him is on his side.

Luke also is the only one who gives us that touching revelation of the Lord's love for and forbearance with men even while they rejected him—when he rebuked his disciples for their uncharitable severity towards the Samaritans, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

In harmony with this special love for man as man is the manner in which, in many passages peculiar to Luke, Christ reveals to men His own nature, that they may be made to feel their need of Him. As an instance I cite the revelation which was made to Peter by command to let down his net after an unsuccessful night of toil, and

the result: "Depart from me," cries Peter, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord." It is the cry of a heart conscious of sin in the presence of Sinlessness. The first desire of any soul awakened to a sense of its own sinfulness is to have the vision of infinite purity removed. Many such fine touches, which are distinctive of St. Luke, you will readily recall.

Again: Luke gives us glimpses into Christ's interior life which we do not find in the other Gospels. Especially are we impressed with this in relation to that most important subject—prayer. Matthew records very fully Christ's directions concerning prayer, impresses its obligations, and gives most fully that inimitable model for prayer which has become a part of all Christian liturgies. But Luke does more than this: he shows us most fully our blessed Lord exemplifying and illustrating his own precepts. As man He needed help to fulfil his great work, power to meet and overcome temptation, patience to endure trial and contradiction. So Luke, picturing Him as man, shows how He continually exercised this grace of dependence. Only here do we read that at his baptism he prayed. Before him lay the work of conflict, the pain and agony of Gethsemane and Calvary; and he prayed as he was baptized, and entered upon it. When he chose the Twelve, we read here only that "He continued all night in prayer; and when it was day he called his disciples unto him, and of them he chose twelve."

May we venture with most reverent footsteps to attempt to enter the mystery of that night of prayer? What supplications ascended that the men to be chosen

on the morrow might be endued with his spirit and be fitted for their great, new work! And what strength the remembrance of that night-vigil of their Master must have given them!

In the ninth chapter and eighteenth verse we see that it was after his disciples had suddenly come upon him praying, that Peter made that grand confession of Christ's deity, upon which, as an immovable rock, the church stands.

When with the favored three, the sons of thunder and the man of rock, he stood upon the mountain-brow and was transfigured, it is Luke only who records, "*As he prayed*, the fashion of his countenance was changed." A grand truth this: prayer, the transforming power. And to this Gospel we are indebted for the words spoken to Peter after his fall and recovery, words which have cheered many a soul saddened by failure in time of testing—"I have prayed for thee." All of this, I say, is peculiar to Luke, and is in beautiful harmony with the aim of this Gospel of the human side of our Lord.

Again: this is manifested in the narratives of certain miracles of our Lord: for example, in the touching story of the widow of Nain, chap. 7: 11-16, and that of Jairus, chap. 8: 41-56, compared with Matt. 9: 18-26. A father came seeking his help, and here only are the words recorded, "She is mine only child." Comp. Matt. 17: 15. Such facts reveal beautifully and blessedly the perfect sympathy of him who is not ashamed to call us *brethren*. The same trait appears in the parables peculiar to Luke. We have not the parables of the kingdom as they appear

in Matthew ; but we have those which are more especially related to us on our human side. Truth is presented to us through human characteristics and affections. They always begin, "A certain man." Witness "The Good Samaritan," "The Pharisee and Publican," and especially that blessed three, "The Lost Sheep," "The Lost Coin," and "The Prodigal Son." What a fellowship with man, lost, helpless, beggared, degraded, and perishing, do these parables reveal ; and what an unfolding of the depth and tenderness of the Divine yearnings over him they likewise give ! Thousands have been, and countless thousands yet unborn will through them be, won from the mountains of unbelief and from the far-off land of first revelry and then want, to the warmth of the Father's house and heart. As we near the close of his life this tender human element is still more manifest, and the universality of the blessings his death will procure more plainly declared. We can only allude, in this connection, to the promised "times of the Gentiles," to the place of crucifixion called by the Gentile name of Calvary, the salvation of the dying thief, and to the pathetic and yearning voices of Calvary.

I had designed to dwell upon Luke's witness to our Lord's divinity ; but I am warned I must close. I refer you for this to Liddon's Lectures upon the Divinity of Christ, where you will find the subject clearly and exhaustively treated. As a conclusion, allow me to present three practical lessons :

1. The view here given of Christ encourages us to approach him with confidence. His royalty alone would

fill us with trembling awe. As we see him rebuking the winds and waves, controlling the powers of darkness, summoning the universe to his judgment-seat, we feel constrained to cry, "Depart from me!" His deity fully unveiled would overpower us with its infinite splendors. But in this Gospel we behold our Elder Brother—man with us—compassed with the same infirmities, grappling with the same temptations. Are we tempted? He was tempted also. Are we saddened by the faithlessness of friends? He passed through the same sorrow. Are we disheartened because our most earnest efforts fail? He scattered seed only in many instances to see it die upon the rock. When we come in contrition or sadness or discouragement to him, we come not to a cold abstraction, but to a loving, human-hearted Saviour, helper, friend. With such thoughts, how full of sweetness and force are the words we sing :

"He in the days of feeble flesh
 Poured out strong cries and tears,
 And in his measure feels afresh
 What every member bears."

2. Christ's frequent praying impresses us with the importance and value of prayer. Did he pray in the presence of duty, on the eve of conflict, and in the darkness of approaching death? and shall we not pray? Beloved, believe me, success in labor, triumph in strife, calmness in trial, are all alike impossible to the prayerless soul. Fellow-laborers in the vineyard of this world, learn, I beseech you, this lesson from your Lord. The history of the church's heroes is a history of the

power of prayer. Great results must be prepared for in the closet. The true soldier burnishes his armor and sharpens his sword ere he enters the battle. The best reapers whet the sickle ere they stand amid the grain.

3. That which was the crown and glory of Christ's humanity must be ours also. I have said Christ's manhood was a manifestation of humanity, as its Maker meant it to be. He was perfect: tried in every way, yet always true. He came to do the will of the Father, and from that purpose he never swerved. His life was one of unflinching loyalty to God, and complete sacrifice of self for humanity. By these he gained an eternal sovereignty. Angels hastened to minister unto him in his weariness after conflict and his agony in sacrifice. He conquered death and broke the bondage of the grave, and as he ascended gave the pattern and pledge of the dominion which all who trust in him and strive by loyalty to God and love for man after perfect manhood, shall receive. The man Christ Jesus is the measure of man's capacities. Embrace him by faith. Study his life as your example; rely upon his sacrifice as your salvation. Through these Gospels behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Look away from imperfect men to the Perfect. Look until, with the disciples upon the mount, you see Jesus only. Here, the gaze will feed you with triumphant hope, and hereafter will make that hope a reality, as gazing upon The Man, the God, Jesus, blessed for ever, you become like him.

THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO JOHN.



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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS: It is an alluring and a delightful task, but it is also a very large and difficult task, which has been assigned to me this evening—to speak upon the Gospel according to St. John. If that canon of criticism be a just one which affirms that a man can speak worthily only of that which he was competent to have produced—that only the poet can justly criticise or celebrate the poem—that only the accomplished and skilful architect can fairly illustrate the subtile mysteries of proportion and rhythm in great cathedrals—that only the philosopher can rightly expound the profound philosophic treatise of another—who among the sons of men would venture to speak of the Gospel of St. John: the supreme literary work in the world; which presents the highest subject, and presents it in the most harmonious and perfect manner; where the author is always hidden, while the theme is always luminously exhibited; where the style is lucid as the light, while the contents are immense, incalculable, surpassing thought, celestial in nature, Divine in glory? who shall speak without presumption of

this book, which aims to present to us, almost as in an autobiography, the infinite personality of the one Divine Being who has trodden the earth?

I compare with this aim that of any other writer, the most distinguished in the world: of Plato, in his "Republic;" of Milton, in his "Paradise Lost;" of Dante, in his "Divina Commedia." I compare with it the aim of any man who has lifted the rocks in praise to God, in the walls and spires of the cathedral, or who has covered the canvas with the glowing outbreak of his imagination, in the pictured forms of the Madonna and her child: I compare with it the aim of the physiologist, searching into the secrets of life, or of the astronomer, with his penetrating tube sounding the untrodden spaces of the heavens: and there is no other aim, contemplated or conceived by man, which is comparable to that which the writer of this book had before him, and which he has so marvellously accomplished. If we wait till some one has become worthy to speak of this Gospel of John, we must wait until we can call him back from the heavens, again to open his lips before us as he did before the assemblies at Ephesus, to tell us of the things concerning which he here has written, to show us how he was moved and inspired to write as he did!

And yet there are some things which may be said concerning this book, in a merely general and external way, which will not be adequate, certainly, to the theme, but which may not be unprofitable, and which may assist, more or less, in the study of the book; and to say a few of these things, in a very simple manner, is the purpose

of my coming here this evening. I hope that God may bless them at least to my own heart, as I utter them, and may add his blessing upon them to your hearts, as you hear them.

The first question which arises concerning this Gospel of John relates to the peculiar office which it was intended to accomplish.

It comes, you observe, after three preceding lives of the Son of God in the world; and the question naturally arises, "Why was the fourth needed?" What does it do for us which neither of the others, nor all the others combined, had sufficiently accomplished?—It is a fair question. It meets us at the outset; and we ought to have an answer, reasonable and sufficient, to give to it. The answer, I think, is not hard to find.

In the biographies of men we are familiar with two forms and sorts of composition. In the first of these, the external events and incidents of the man's life are narrated, often faithfully and largely; the actions which he performed, the letters which he wrote, the words which he spoke, the enterprises which he planned, and the general way in which he bore himself amid the great crises of danger, or suffering, or duty, which beset him. These are narrated in order that from them we may infer the character, genius, power of the man whose life in its external particulars is thus set before us. And such narratives, in proportion as they faithfully record and clearly present the circumstances, the actions, and the words of the man, enable us, reasoning backward from these particulars, to judge of the genius and temper of the man,

the phenomena of whose life are thus set before us. From the phenomena we infer the personality, which is involved in them ; and often, thus, we gain a perfectly vivid conception of the spirit of the man through the actions and the words which are full of significance.

Of course we have innumerable examples of this kind of biography. Xenophon's "Memorabilia" sets Socrates before us in this way. Hildebrand, Luther, William of Orange, Washington, have been shown by such biographies. Almost every eminent man in the world, who has had large power or borne a distinguished part in affairs, has been presented to the appreciation, perhaps to the admiration, perhaps to the condemnation, of the reading world, by those who have thus traced his career and illustrated his character.

But now there is another kind of biography, in which he who writes it seizes at the outset, as by a vivid spiritual intuition, the peculiar force, genius, spirit, of the man concerning whom he is to write. These are present to the writer from the very inception of his work ; and he simply illustrates them in the particulars which he afterwards recites, concerning the action and career of the man. He does not infer the personality from the incidents of that career ; but, having all that was peculiar to the man clearly before him at the beginning, he interprets and illuminates by that the subsequent action, the record of which he rapidly makes. This is the highest class in biographical writing—most appreciated by the matured, cultured, and sympathetic reader. We feel at once that such would have been the life of Socrates, if

it had been fully written by Plato. Any life so written, of Cicero, Bernard, Angelo, Pascal, permanently enriches the world. It is in this way that Shakespeare treats the characters which he sets before us. He develops them from within outward; from the person to the phenomena; from the internal genius and character, vividly apprehended, and continuously carried in the mind of the writer, to the action and the speech in which that specific genius and character subsequently reveal themselves. And thus it is that he holds his place as the first dramatist of the world; because, having seized so distinctly, and held so decisively in mind, the spirit which he would illustrate to the world, he afterward presents it so naturally—through imaginary incidents, indeed, but through incidents which are real in their fitness to the character which they are contrived and constructed to reveal. Carlyle, in our time, has this power to a remarkable, almost to a preëminent degree; and it is this which makes him the recognized master of biographical writing, in spite of all that is cumbrous, unattractive, perhaps repellent, in his style. You see it where he traces the career of Frederick the Great. In the marvellous portraiture of his character and life which Carlyle has given to the world, he has seized the character first, and the genius of the man, and then has illuminated the subsequent particular external story by the radiance of that original conception which he never has lost, which nothing has ever obscured in his mind, and by which he interprets whatever he subsequently in detail narrates.

There are, then, these two classes of biographical

writing : the first, that in which the external incidents are related, in order that the writer may work back through them to the conception of the character and the power of the man whose life he is to describe ; the second, that in which the character and power of the man, perfectly, vividly comprehended by the writer, are made subsequently to illuminate whatever his pen afterward records. And we should expect, I think—certainly we should regard it as desirable—that when a Divine Person comes into the world, if it be possible in the nature of things, both of these classes of writings should be combined in the narratives which present him to the honor, the homage, the adoration of the world. We must hope that there will be this, which relates the familiar acts, the incidental words, the apothegms, the gnostic sentences, the parables, as well as the wondrous works of power, and through which we are carried back to the conception of the power and spirit which dwelt and reigned in Him who is thus revealed to our faith ; and we must hope, also, if it be possible, by the constitution of human nature and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that there will be at least one writer who will seize at the outset the unique, the supreme, the transcendent, the Divine, in this solitary Person thus walking the world to challenge its allegiance, and who afterward will, simply by the radiance of that conception, illuminate all discourse, emphasize all action, interpret all suffering, and gloriously unfold the consummation and the end of the life thus wondrous in nature and in scope.

In the one case we are like a man travelling from the frontier toward the capital; in the other case we are like one who first understands, surveys, masters in thought, the imperial capital, and then from that point surveys the empire in which it is central, over which it is dominant. In the one case we are like the man who follows a campaign in its successive incidents, of battle, march, and apparent defeat, and through all these successive combinations reasons back to the plan, and even to the genius, of the general commanding; in the other case we comprehend the genius and the plan at the outset, and in the light of this foreknowledge read whatever subsequently occurs. In the one case we go from moon and planet toward the sun; in the other case we stand in the sun itself, central and supreme, and from it survey the entire system which it irradiates, and which it carries through the immense ethereal spaces,—which takes from it all light and beauty, and which is evermore upheld and controlled by its unfailing sovereign energy.

Both these classes of biographical writing, as I have said, might perhaps have been expected—certainly both might have been desired—in a book which should seek to present to us the marvellous story of a Divine Person coming into the conditions of human life, subjecting himself to the limitations of our weakness and frailty, tarrying on earth through the term of a mortal life, that he might lift the race to which he came toward God and heaven! And both these sorts of biographical writing we find in the New Testament.

We have first the early oral teachings of the apos-

tles concerning the Master—whom they had so long accompanied, whose words had fallen with immense impressiveness upon their minds, from whom they had fled, their affection and their allegiance failing at the critical moment, yet whom they revered, trusted, adored, especially after his resurrection from the dead, and to whom they gave the service of their life. This early oral teaching of the apostles was the Gospel, which was proclaimed by them, which their office ordained them to proclaim, as eyewitnesses of the things which they had seen and heard, and which afterward they were to report to mankind. This was the Gospel by which men were first to be addressed, that they might be converted to Christ, and made the believing disciples of him, under the quickening grace of God's Spirit. This was the Gospel in which they were to be examined afterward, questioned and catechized, when they offered themselves to be received into the church. This was the Gospel by which they were to be subsequently instructed, built up in the faith, and through which they were always to be pressed to new and nobler Christian activity, after their conversion and their personal association with the body of believers.

Now, as the apostles grew older, and it was increasingly evident that, in the multiplying number of the churches, some of these would hardly be able to hear at all the apostles' voices, and that sooner or later, in the nature of things, they must pass from the scene of their ministry, it was a natural desire of the churches—and certainly not less a desire of the apostles, a movement in their

minds of the Spirit of God—that there should be carefully reduced to writing these narratives which they had given orally; that these might remain, permanently instructing and inspiring to good, among the churches; that copies of them might be multiplied, and circulated more widely; that there might be no possible risk of that interpolation, and that gradually growing misinterpretation, which would be plainly likely to occur if they should leave the Gospel, thus taught by their several voices, to be communicated to subsequent times simply by tradition. So that oral proclamation of the apostles, concerning Him whom they had seen, was reduced to writing by three evangelists. By Matthew, who was himself an apostle, and a witness of the things which he recorded; who writes with many personal characteristics appearing in his style; its Hebraistic peculiarities showing him to be of the Hebrew descent; the carefulness of his method indicating his commercial training; collating miracles by themselves, and parables by themselves; arranging according to the nature of the subject, rather than chronologically; and who writes with primary reference, evidently—as internal and external proofs conspire to teach us—to the dispersed converted Hebrews. He shows how the Old Testament was continually fulfilled in the life, the action, and the sufferings of the Divine Person, concerning whom his pen is reciting what before his lips had told.

Then Mark—not an apostle, but long a companion of Peter, and perfectly familiar with his account of the life of the Lord—writes that account as he had received it; writes, according to the earliest testimony which remains

to us concerning this Gospel, under the supervision of Peter himself, and under his direction. He gives no genealogy of Jesus ; but starts, as the impetuous apostle might have been expected to start, suddenly launching forth in full career upon the wonderful historical action of the Lord in the world. He writes, apparently, especially for the Romans. He writes as though he were inditing an answer to that scornful and skeptical question of Pilate, "What hast thou done?"—the question which naturally arose to the Roman lip. "No matter what thou hast thought or taught ; that is a mere fancy in the mind, or a mere noise in the air." The Roman law takes cognizance of character only as revealed in action, and thus becoming the fit subject of judicial inquiry, approval, or punishment. So, "What hast thou done?" Mark writes as if to answer this : to show what the Son of God, anointed with the Holy Ghost, and clothed upon with power from heaven, had done in the world. His entire Gospel has, apparently, a principal reference to the Roman world.

Then Luke, long a companion of St. Paul—possibly, though not probably, one of the seventy disciples—of Greek descent, and of careful Greek culture—writes his narrative, to set forth in order what he has heard from St. Paul ; what he has gathered, as he tells us himself, from all the sources to which he has had access, which could furnish him the authentic information of eyewitnesses, concerning the career of the Lord in the world. He writes with great care, skill, and elegance. His personal characteristics appear in his narrative as clearly as

those of Mark and Matthew do in theirs. He writes evidently for the Greek converts ; that they may share the inestimable benefits of which the Hebrew and Roman converts were assured through the other gospels, and may know exactly what the Lord, whose message of grace was for Greek and Jew, had done and said.

Each of these, you observe, writes independently of the others ; neither having seen, apparently, the equivalent or the parallel writing of either of the others. They write in substantial agreement, because they are writing the same original apostolic story—the story of Christ's work upon earth, and of his teachings, as the apostles had severally heard them. They write, however, for some reason to us unknown, but which to them was controlling and imperative, principally, almost wholly, of his ministry in Galilee, and of his last visit to Jerusalem, with the discourses which he there uttered, in the hearing of the Pharisees, the people, and his disciples, and with the significant and tremendous particulars of his death and resurrection. Except so far as that last visit is pictured in their narratives, we should hardly know that he had made any journeys to Jerusalem, or had accomplished any ministry in Judea. Of these only the last Gospel especially informs us. Each of the others writes, as I have said, independently of the rest ; yet all write in substantial agreement, though with incidental differences and superficial diversities, which, as plainly as anything else, show that these narratives were directed by the Holy Ghost. They attest sincerity, and they grapple attention. To these three harmonious and parallel but

diverse records the attention of scholars is incessantly drawn anew ; and the labors of harmonists in reconciling their apparent differences, and in bringing into one continuous narrative these three stories of the life and work and words of the Lord—these have been, as you know, continuous and immense.

One characteristic belongs to them all. In each we have the external action ; the word spoken to the world at large, rather than to the disciples : the words spoken concerning the kingdom of Christ in the world, with the means and appliances to forward it, and through its extension to bless mankind. But from all these records we are led constantly backward and upward to the conception, more and more clearly and strongly presented, of the power and the spirit of Him by whom the words were spoken, and by whose might the acts were performed.

Turn now to the fourth Gospel, and you see at once the other method of biographical portraiture, applied by the human mind, under the inspiration and instruction of the Divine Spirit, to the representation of the life and person of this mysterious Son of God ! At the very beginning we are confronted by that which is transcendent, supreme, unsearchable, Divine, in the person and the life of Him whom the writer would present. He traces the Lord's genealogy, not to Abraham, not to Adam, but to the eternity of God's own being ; and the subsequent discourses, and the sublime actions, are intended to set forth with vivid fidelity the amazing truth contained in that majestic proem with which the book opens. They are the illustrations of that central, domi-

nant, illuminating fact, which breaks upon us with the first writing of his pen, with the earliest utterance of his intuitive and inspired soul. Everything else is tributary to this. You are throned in the sun, and are looking forth thence upon the whole system. You have started at the capital, and are traversing the country which that governs and crowns. You begin at the centre and summit of the story, and go from thence, through all the crowded and radiant gospel, to its utmost circumference.

That is the peculiar office which this Gospel is intended to fulfil, and which it in fact marvellously accomplishes. The aim of the writer is to present this holy, omnipotent, eternal Son of God, in that which he said, in that which he did: nature first, action afterward; first the mind, then the utterance which revealed it. It is the grandest aim, as I said before, ever conceived by the human intelligence; an aim so vast that, unless you recognize not only the genius, or the character, but also the special inspiration of the man, his folly in attempting it will be most obvious. Ambition so daring, unless sustained by divine assistance, must shadow all his claims on human attention. The folly of the attempt will become only more final, and more fatal, because of the absolutely transcendent character of the unique purpose which he has in view.

So we come to observe more distinctly the man himself, to whom this task has been committed, and by whom it is sought to be accomplished. But concerning him we know comparatively little. We know that he was of the middle class in society—not of the very poor, not of

the very rich. We know that he was by human relationship a kinsman of the Lord ; that there was some bond of blood between them. What precisely this was, it is perhaps not possible absolutely to affirm. Probably his mother Salome was a sister of Mary. If so, he was of course, on the human side, a cousin of the Lord ; and that relationship would have led him naturally, we should suppose, to observe and magnify the human side of Christ's life. If he, standing in such a relationship to the Lord, affirms his divinity, and shows it streaming into and everywhere exalting the subsequent record, then that affirmation and that demonstration are emphasized by the fact that he was humanly so close in the kinship of him concerning whom he writes.

But the temperament, spirit, and genius of the man are the things we must especially consider. He walks before us as "a veiled figure," it has well been said, throughout his Gospel. He does not mention his own name. He speaks of himself in the third person, whenever he has occasion to refer to himself at all ; and yet his words so throb with the beautiful and intense vitality of his spirit that we know him almost as if the whole book had been written about himself, as if there had been exact descriptions, detailed accounts, of his characteristics as revealed in his life. A meditative, contemplative, affectionate, enthusiastic, ideal nature—this is evident in all parts of the Gospel. It is evident especially in all the relations which he sustains to the Master. It is evident in his Epistles, and in the Apocalypse, as well as in his Gospel. A nature endowed with almost feminine intuitiveness ; with a deli-

cacy of insight incomparable among men. "A virgin spirit" he has been called, and called most justly—pure, ethereal, unsecular, reserved. He appears indeed a Son of Thunder—the Master thus named him; but this describes, not boisterous and noisy force, but the intensity, the moral earnestness, the vivid and masterful energy, which were in him; the affectionate ardor, the devout and adoring fervor of spirit, the intense and consuming enthusiasm of nature. In such a nature the sharpness of moral conception and judgment is perfect. It is capable of the most profound and absorbing excitement, in which is involved also a vast power over others, in kindling and quickening their hearts with ardor. As such a person the Lord describes him; as such a person we always see him, in the wondrous and inspiring records of this book.

Then observe, further, his special relation of affection to the Master. First, he is one of many disciples. Then he is one of the twelve apostles. Then he is one of the three disciples with the Master in the chamber of death, where he raises the dead child to life. He is one of the three with him again on the Mount of Transfiguration; one of the three nearest to him, amid the gloom and agony of Gethsemane. Then he is the one of all the disciples who leans on the Master's breast at the supper; the one to whom Lord commends his mother from the awfulness of the cross; the one to whom he reveals himself later in the final Apocalypse, from amid the glory which succeeds the ascension. The circle constantly narrows; the relation becomes more intimate and pecu-

liar, between this affectionate, enthusiastic, intuitive apostle and the Master whose glory he discerns ; whose glory he is afterward to portray to the world as no other could.

Out of this affection, pure, tender, supreme, comes inspiration to every faculty ; comes always added clearness of insight into the temper, into the nature, into the essential relations to the universe, of Him whom he loves. Compare him with Matthew, for example, or with James, or even with Peter, and you see instantly the peculiar intimacy between his mind and Christ's mind. You see how much more fully the Lord was revealed to him than in the nature of the case He could be revealed to a less capacious, less sensitive and delicate receptivity, in another. We know in daily experience how different is the very faculty of seeing among men. One looks upon a picture, and marks it on his guide-book, and passes on. Another sees in it the gloom and agony and triumph of Calvary, painted by the master's hand ; or sees the flush of rapture in the martyr's face, as Agnes or Perpetua looks up into the heavens whose radiance is opening wide above them. One man sees nothing on the canvas but the reproduced lines of hills and valleys, such as he has seen in nature a hundred times ; another in the same picture sees the scene of great historic events, where Charlemagne conquered, Columbus landed, or Titian was born. To him a spell and charm are in all the lines to which the other is wholly blind. So St. John, with this intense, intuitive, ethereal nature, saw more in Christ, when the Spirit of God had purified, had almost transfigured that nature, than any other of the disciples, even stand-

ing in the same external relations, could possibly have seen. The intimacy became closer, the fellowship sweeter, the inward revelation of Christ more perfect, the longer the interactions of their minds upon each other continued in the world.

Observe, too, the peculiar opportunity which John had for the most perfect knowledge of Christ, through his subsequent companionship with Mary, the revered mother of the Lord. No commentator, so far as I remember, has dwelt upon this point, as especially arresting his attention, and as illustrating the hidden and peculiar riches of this Gospel. Perhaps some have done so, but I do not recall it. Yet there is great significance in it. It was with John, after the death of Jesus, that Mary tarried, you remember. Has it occurred to you that her mother's heart must have known more, in some respects, of that wondrous Son than any other human heart? that there were facts connected with his coming into life upon the earth of which she alone was conscious, of which others could only have heard? that there must have been inward recognitions of the Divine in him on her part which almost superseded the necessity of outward revelation? which illuminated facts, emphasized discourses, and gave a certain transfiguring glory to all the common life of the Lord? Yet she has said nothing concerning it to the world, except as she has spoken through Luke and through John. Unquestionably Luke must have got from her much of that which he reports, so particularly and so fully, in the first two chapters of his Gospel. Unquestionably, I think, John also got much from

her, in the long hours of reverent conversation which followed the ascension of Christ from the earth, when Mary and her young nephew—if nephew he were—were talking together of Him whom they both supremely adored. And it is to me a beautiful thought that the mother's heart speaks to us in this Gospel, which has been referred to so justly in the words of the prayer, as "the heart of Christ revealed to the world."

It was not the intrepid dialectics of Paul, or his sovereign submission; it was not the rugged fidelity of Peter, or the clear ethical convictions of James; it was the sympathetic tenderness and the illuminating affection of the mother's heart—who had followed that divine Son from birth to death, and after death had seen him going up into the heavens, with his hands lifted in benediction until the cloud received him out of her sight—it was this which largely, instrumentally, I think, interpreted to John the mystery of grace and glory in Christ. He was sure of the Incarnation; and he made it the keyword of his Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Observe, too, how the inspiration of the Holy Spirit operated constantly, though silently, upon this enthusiastic, ideal, intuitive nature, purified by grace, instructed by affectionate intercourse with the Master, and by prolonged subsequent converse with His mother; how it recalled to him what otherwise might have faded, and

interpreted to him what otherwise might have been obscure ; how it refreshed, exalted, augmented every power, and made him competent, if ever man was competent or could be, to write the amplest Life of the Master, on the plan which I have indicated—beginning with his divinity, and from that summit-fact illuminating everything ; not beginning with the external work, and from this ascending towards the ultimate sovereign conception of its author !

So qualified in himself, so blessed in abundant opportunity of knowledge, so quickened by the Spirit, in his old age, after the others had written their records, but while everything is yet vivid before him, he writes this Gospel, spreading out as in a panorama before us his whole recollection of the Lord and of His work. He tells us when he first met the Lord, at that most critical moment in his life ; he remembers that “it was about the tenth hour ;” he remembers just how high the sun was above the Mediterranean ; the very aspect of the Jordan valley is vividly before him. He recalls the words of Christ, reasoning with the Jews on the temple floor. He sees again their bitter hatred, hears their contemptuous replies, sees their sour faces ; and the chill of the wind still smites him, as he says “It was winter.” The very blast is on his cheek as he pens the word. He feels again the icy sharpness of that cold hour, corresponding to the sullen chill in the skeptical temper of those around Christ. He speaks of Judas, and we see the sign by which Judas is disclosed and made known as the traitor. Judas rises and goes out, and John says, “It

was night." What a picture has he sketched in this single line! John was reclining, I suppose, with his Master, next to him; Peter was perhaps at the end of the table; and Judas, perhaps, opposite to John; and as Judas went out, having received the morsel of bread which was the sacrament of brotherhood, when the door swung open into the windy inner court, John, following him with his eye, sees the darkness, hears the gust, and he writes it all in that one word, "It was night." He went into the night, prophetic of the darker, denser, eternal night which lay beyond!

So vivid is his recollection, even in old age, because of his affection, because of his intuition of the glory of Christ, because of the inspiration of the Spirit which is upon him. In the evening of his life, having often talked of these things with his disciples, he writes the narrative out in full, that this Divine Person whom he had known may be set forth before the world:—the grandest work ever committed to a man; committed to the chiefest of the apostles in fitness for it; the last work of his life, it is supposed; and certainly the greatest work that the human mind has ever imagined, has ever attempted to achieve.

Then observe, in the light of this office of the Gospel, and of the man to whom that office is intrusted, the method which the Gospel followed. It differs essentially from the method pursued in the preceding narratives, which treat principally of the ministry in Galilee, of the external actions, and of the teachings of Christ to the world at large concerning his kingdom. This Gospel starts, as I have said, with the Divine, eternal genealogy

of Christ. Then it represents his Divine mind in his discourses—discourses uttered not to the world, so much as to the chosen circle of his disciples—discourses, not concerning his kingdom in the world, of which the other disciples have chiefly written, but concerning his own attributes, his own nature, his relations to the Father, his plans and purposes for mankind. John undertakes to give these to his readers ; illuminating them all with the light of that supreme conception with which he starts—the absolute union of the Lord with God in the essential deity of his person. Not merely thus does he set forth the mind of Christ ; he sets forth also his spirit and character, his Divine temper of self-sacrifice—that supremest thing in God of which there is no other revelation in all the universe known to us ! It implies no self-sacrifice on the part of God to carry the planets for ever forward, in their musical order, or to set the suns on their poise in the heavens. It implies no self-sacrifice on the part of God to carry the world on its path through the heavens, from age to age ; to adjust the rhythmic and melodious motions of those mighty masses with which the earth is related. It is the joy of God—so far as that joy springs from anything material—to uphold and control the mighty universe which He has built. It involves no self-sacrifice in yonder organist when he loosens into the air the mighty harmonies and the cadenced melodies with which the instrument is instinct, by the touch of a key. It involves no self-sacrifice to the poet when he utters, in his melodious numbers, the thoughts and fancies which fill his soul. And there is no self-sacrifice to God

in sprinkling the sod with summer blooms, or making the autumn orchards rich with ripened fruit, in bending his bow upon the clouds, or piling beauty and wealth upon the world. The only revelation of self-sacrifice in God is that which is made in Christ his Son, through whom His heart is declared to the world. That is part of John's conception of God in Christ; and he writes to show how that self-sacrifice wrought itself into transcendent exhibition, in his long patience, his suffering, and his death. God's Son was to be glorified; that was a part of the infinite counsel. But His glorification was not at all to be on a throne, lifted up, in sight of Jerusalem. It was not to be in his suddenly descending from the pinnacle of the temple, as the tempter had suggested that he should, with a legion of angels for his attending acclaiming cohorts. His glory was to be realized in this: that while he had power to sweep Pilate, with all his legionaries, into the Mediterranean sea—power, when the officers came to take him, not merely to beat them to the earth by a glance of his eye, but to pin them there forever, if he chose, till their dry ashes mingled with the dust—he yielded his mighty and omnipotent hands to the binding fetters; he allowed them to be transfixed with nails, and fastened to the cross; he permitted himself to be crowned with the acanthine crown, on the brow where now are many diadems! He was glorified in dying, because he died the Sinless for the sinful, the Lord of the earth for the redemption of mankind.

That is the burden, that is the consummation, that is the supremest lesson, of the Gospel of John! Starting

with God manifest in the flesh, flashing back thenceforth each Divine discourse from the mirror of his serene contemplation and his clear recollection, rehearsing the ever-memorable works in which the kingly mind in Christ was illustriously revealed, he shows us as well the celestial spirit, the unimagined Divine temper, most fully shown, most gloriously crowned, when dying for His enemies; dying beneath Jewish malice, and Roman cowardice; dying for the world which hated and killed Him! Only a nature like that of John, related to Christ so intimately as he was, taught by Christ's mother as he had been, inspired of the Spirit as he certainly was, could have given that amazing conception of Christ:—which has lifted the race, and brought the heavens nearer the earth, as he has wrought it out in the manifold illustrations which crowd his record.

Herein he indicates the whole plan of Christ's kingdom, and the universality of that kingdom in the earth. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." How touching it is that the next words he puts into a parenthetical form, as if to show that he did not feel himself to have wholly understood them at the time! "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John no doubt thought, when he heard the words, that what Christ meant was: "If I be lifted up in some illustrious transfiguration, over the temple and the city;" "If I be lifted up as on the wings of sustaining angels:" and so he adds afterward, when he came to a better and deeper understanding of the saying, "This he said, signifying by what death he should

die." It was to be the lifting up on the cross which at last should draw the world unto himself! This is John's conception of Christ; this his manifestation of His glory, transcendent in the world; this his foresight of that universal kingdom on earth, in which He is at last to reign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The Apocalypse itself only answers thus to the sovereign idea of John's Gospel. If the Apocalypse were written before the Gospel, then it interprets some things which are otherwise obscure in the history of this book. But whether written before or after, it only carries out, in that vivid, tumultuous, panoramic exhibition, as of a supernal drama, the same idea which John elsewhere more simply develops, of the universal kingdom of the Lord on the earth. It is there shown coming to its final supremacy, over the stress of human resistance, and through terrific clash of conflict, by instrumentalities which God in his providence raises up, but coming at last to the same complete and final supremacy which is all put before us when we read these words of Christ himself, recorded by his affectionate scholar, 'I will draw at last all men to me!'

It is a beautiful thought, too, concerning this Gospel, in its connection with the Apocalypse, that the first impression ever made on the mind of John concerning Jesus was made by that which was spoken at the outset by John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God!" It shows the tenacity of the memory which lost nothing; it shows the spiritual perfection of view which interpreted everything,—that this title of Christ recurs continually in the Apocalypse. It links that book with the first impression

which John ever received of Jesus. The vision of the royal Conqueror is before him, of the mighty King, of Him whose face shines as the sun, who is girt about with the golden girdle, who marches at the head of the armies of God, leading them to victory ; and yet, "I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, a Lamb, as it had been slain !" From the first moment of his incipient discipleship to the last ecstasy of the final Apocalypse, was John filled with this image of the Lamb—of the Lamb that was slain for the sin of the world ! Perea and Paradise are inseparably linked by it.

This is the method of John's Gospel. It is the one which in large measure supplements the others. It has sometimes been spoken of, therefore, as the supplementary Gospel. In some sense it is such ; not as filling out the tracings of their previous delineation, or adding other particulars of the same kind which they had narrated ; but as presenting, as I have said, the ministry in Judea more thoroughly than they had done—developing freely what the others had touched upon lightly—and especially as giving us the profounder discourses, under the higher and clearer illumination of that supreme conception of Christ which John had at the outset, and which irradiates all his writing. So it is an ever-unfolding Gospel, and will be such to the end of time. When we have searched the heavens through, and counted and weighed each star in its orbit ; when we have reduced those luminous films of celestial light to the islands in the universe which they undoubtedly are ; when we know all the august and solemn mysteries of the heavens, in their order

and brightness, their secret harmonies and their immense outreach, beyond our thought,—even then we shall not know God to perfection, in the majesty and the beauty of his mind and his will; and until we know Him, as manifest in Christ, we shall not fully have apprehended the meanings, have comprehended the ideas, have searched and sounded the spiritual facts and spaces in their immeasurable depths, which are infolded in this divineness of the Gospels, this luminous and transcendent book of the Word!

Finally we must face this question, and give if we can the answer to it—a question which meets us often: Why was this book so late in appearing? and what was at last the immediate motive in which it originated?

Evidently it tarried long, imbedded vitally in the consciousness of St. John, but not written out by him until that comparatively late period in his ministry when he put it into this full and wonderful expression. Really, therefore, the question concerning this book, which is urged so often by skeptical writers on the battlefield of debate in the Biblical controversy of this century, is this: Why did not John write his Gospel earlier? Why did he delay it so long? To this question it is not perhaps possible for us to give an answer wholly satisfactory. We do not know why. Any answer must be largely conjectural. It is one of those matters concerning which, after so many centuries have passed, it is almost idle to inquire. By-and-by, perhaps, when we meet him in the heavens, we may learn directly from him whether the Christian consciousness of the churches was not suffi-

ciently advanced to receive it at an earlier stage, or what other influence it was which detained him from writing. But the motive for ultimately writing the marvellous book is easy to comprehend.

He did not write it in order to fill out the synoptical outline of the earlier evangelists, supplying similar particulars which they had failed to narrate, and completing the early teachings of the apostles by adding other details of the ministry in Galilee. He wrote to supplement the preceding gospels in a different and a higher sense. He wrote from an independent and supreme point of view, in an original method. There must have been the continual motive in his mind, which is in the mind of any man who has a great truth, known to himself but unknown to others, which it is for their profit and welfare to know, and which he can communicate. An affectionate and enthusiastic nature like John's, reverent, adoring, wholly consecrated to Christ, must have been moved all the time to utter to others those things which he knew and had seen concerning this Divine Lord. Then there was, added to this, that practical motive which he himself indicates in the thirty-first verse of the twentieth chapter, where he says, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name."

That is reason enough for his writing at any time; while the special reason for his writing at a period so late may possibly be found in the fact that there was then a comparatively rich maturity of Christian knowledge and

spiritual experience among the churches, which had been wanting in the earlier time. The first converts had been suddenly brought out of Judaism and heathenism, into the knowledge and faith of Christ, and into a personal consecration to him. All their conceptions of truth were crude ; their chief thought concerning Christ contemplated him as a governing Master. Into the mysteries of his life and love, of his esoteric teaching, of his stupendous redemption, they hardly could enter.

In the last ten years of that first century, in the time when John wrote this Gospel, there were many Christians who had been born and trained in Christian households ; who had had, one may say, a hereditary Christian experience behind them ; who had not been born heathen or Jews, but had been taught, from the earliest unfolding of consciousness, the truths and precepts and the promises of the New Testament. To such a comparative maturity of Christian knowledge, and of spiritual experience, this Gospel is addressed. It presupposes a fruitful preceding moral culture. It is not apt to rude beginners in the Divine service. The missionary now may reach the heathen better and more directly through the narratives of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, than through the sublimer record of John. It is after a man has been converted, has been trained and disciplined by teaching and by suffering, after his children have come to read and love the New Testament, and the spirit of it has moulded the life of the household—it is then that the great, incomparable truths of the Gospel of John will be most amply and familiarly opened to the soul.

So in the gradual development of the church at Ephesus—which was half an Oriental, and half an Occidental city—where magic and heathenism confronted fiercely the rising power of Christian consecration and apostolic instruction—it had come to pass, in the old age of John, that there were many for whom the magic had utterly ceased to have charm or power; over whom superstition exerted no influence, and to whom an idol had never been anything but a dead image, of brass or of wood. They had been taught, from their earliest recollection, in the new and Divine dispensation of religion, had always walked in the prospect of the unending Future! They were ready, therefore, to hear what John now said, at first with his lips, and afterwards with his pen. The plate was prepared for the impression of all his words to be stamped upon it, in the clear radiance of the Sun of Righteousness. Their souls could now contain the truth which, fresh from idolatries, they could not before have mastered or have held.

Then there were special crises arising, calling for just this exhibition of the truth, which had lain imbedded in the consciousness of John, while Paul was writing, journeying, and founding churches, while Peter was contending valiantly for the faith, and was being crucified with his head downward. A controlling design appears in the writing of each of the apostles. John's Gospel certainly is not wanting in it. He knew the very ultimate truth ever revealed to the human mind concerning Christ. He had spoken of it, no doubt, to his friends, but it had not yet been committed to documents. Now was the time,

without the church as well as within it, for that to be done. Differences were arising, which had begun to appear in Paul's time, and questions were being asked: as to the authority of the apostles, and the certainty of their knowledge concerning the reality and the nature of the resurrection of Christ; a question as to why it was that Christ had been rejected of his own nation; a question as to why it was that Christ, if Divine, had submitted himself to the strange endurance of anguish and of death. On the one hand, the Ebionites maintained that he was not Divine in any essential eternal sense; that he had been only a just, benevolent, highly-gifted, noble-minded Jew, who had been taken as the Messiah by those who believed him because of these excellent characteristics, and because of the spiritual influence which they gave. That conception of the Lord was to be answered and displaced. On the other hand, the Docetæ affirmed that Christ's humanity had not been real. While the Ebionite denied his divinity, these differing doubters held that his humanity had not been actual and true; because they held, with other Gnostics, that matter was essentially and eternally evil. Either, then, what appeared the body of Christ had not been his body, but one which he phantasmally assumed, without taking it for the true garment of his soul, or else it had been of an ethereal substance, not of the earthly material which men thought that they saw. It was either a fiction altogether, or it was a cheating appearance. This doctrine was active against the church on every side, and even was widening within it.

Other errors, as well, were springing up, out of that

mysterious Gnosticism, that malignant compound of polytheism, pantheism, monotheism, materialism, mysticism, and the wildest demonology. The fiercest and haughtiest enemy which Christianity has met was this organized, many-sided, aristocratic, licentious heresy. It seriously tried, and it hopefully expected, to drive the Gospel from the earth. John does not antagonize it by argument. He simply supersedes it, rules it out of the sphere of thought, in his disciples. He crushes it to powder, and scatters it on all the winds, by setting forth in contrast with it the true doctrine of God manifest in the flesh: the Eternal Word, creating at the outset the heavens and the earth, and in the fulness of time becoming Brother, Redeemer, and King of men!

So heresy always brings out the truth. So the doctrine of meritorious works in the Roman church, with the doctrine of a purchasable indulgence for sin, however flagrant the sin might be, brought out the doctrine of justification by faith, which was thundered through the world in such articulate trumpet-tones by the early reformers. It was preached with an earnestness—it had a vivid and vehement development—which it could not have had except for that heresy which confronted and aroused, in a sense determined it. So the law of true Christian perfection is revealed when Antinomianism assails the church. So the proper Divinity of our Lord, and the efficacy of his atoning death as the condition of man's salvation, are proclaimed the more earnestly when the doctrine which denies his Divinity and his sacrifice, and which makes Him only a beautiful example, finds

currency in periodicals, and in the common speech of men. So the doctrine of Retribution, final and inevitable, continuing as long as sin continues, is to be more distinctly developed, more earnestly and more impressively preached, because men are daring enough to set their minds against the sovereign mind of Christ, and to affirm that he spoke rashly, and did not know what he was saying when he said, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

Always, heresy brings the truth to more vivid exhibition. And these heresies, then, arising around Ephesus, and around all the churches which John supervised, brought out at length, from his enlightened and certain consciousness, this consummate and illustrious doctrine of Christ: his divinity, his eternity, his oneness with God, his oneness with man, the wisdom of his discourse, the glory of his spirit in his supreme sacrifice, and the universality of his kingdom in the earth! It was an original, self-moulded Gospel, inspired by the Spirit, but dependent on no other. John may never even have seen the writing of any other of the evangelists. What he wrote came from his own mind; it came with a gush. It is the most profoundly individual book, one may say, in all the Scripture. It is "like the seamless garment of the Lord," one has said, so thoroughly interwoven, so glistening with celestial gold. I should rather say it is like the sudden gush of the gold, long fused and simmering in the furnace, until all dross has vanished from it, and all impurity has been cleansed away—which at last, when the door is opened, rushes forth, glowing, incandescent,

streaming with light, and precious beyond estimate or compare! So came the Gospel from the heart which had held it so intimately and long, and which spoke it at last, to be thenceforth the inestimable possession of the world for ever!

One cannot but wonder and admire, as he comes to the end of this train of thought, at the immense diversity of gifts which God employs in his ministry to the world! I think of Peter, resolute, tough, fearless against resistance, zealous and courageous, though far enough certainly from perfection, at last asking as a favor, tradition says, to be crucified with his head downward, as not worthy to be crucified as his Master had been. I read his Epistles, eloquent and powerful, of faith and of hope. I think of Paul, that man of immense incisive intellect, discursive, energetic, perfectly acquainted with the Greek literature, catching his images from the Greek games, the illustrious and unwearied champion of the truth in his own time and in all time—whose firm will, braced upon God, the whole Roman empire could not break down—whose words have rung evermore through the ages, from that day to this, whenever liberty of conscience has been imperilled, and individual conviction has been fighting against tyrannical assumption—himself the Calvinist and the Puritan of the world—alike magnificent in character and in mind, the pattern and the exemplar of whatever is at once most heroic and most lovely in personal valor and in personal courtesy. And then I turn to John, the ideal, the contemplative, the affectionate, the adoring one, who was nearest the heart of Christ, who saw his

glory most clearly, and portrayed it most tenderly and triumphantly;—and I think of the Mind above them all, which used them as its instruments, having prepared them for their office and sent them on their errand, and having constantly inspired them to their endeavors and successes; and then I know that the kingdom of Christ remaineth for ever! He who had these men, all alike, while so unlike, for his servants—for his “slaves,” as they proudly represented themselves—He of whom these men equally witnessed, and for whom they equally gladly wrought—in whose name they triumphed and died, and for the vision of whom they looked when the heavens should open—His kingdom can never fail! It must be as pure as His heart—as supreme and immortal as His power and will!

It has been said that the Roman church is the church of St. Peter—the church of exact administration and discipline; that the church of the Reformation is the church of St. Paul, with his development of the plan of Redemption, and his doctrine of justification by faith; that the church of the Future is the church of St. John, the apostle of love, and of the holy heart of Christ. I do not accept this, altogether; but I know that in the future, when the three shall have blended together in the Christian wisdom of the world, as the blue and the crimson and the gold are blended in the perfect splendor of the sunbeam, this Gospel of John shall still irradiate all the Scripture, and shall be unfolding new treasures and riches, transcendent ideas, celestial meanings! that wherever a soul hungers then for the vision of Christ, once

tarrying on earth, now ascended into heaven, it shall find it here! wherever a soul has manifested to it the glory of Christ, in any rapturous vision of His person, it shall find it reflected from these supreme and luminous pages! wherever a soul goes to death, triumphant in the Lord, it shall carry still these words on its lips: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!" To the end of time—where experience is deepest, where vision is clearest and most transfiguring—this Gospel of John shall be still most precious. And next to the vision of the Son of God himself, in his glory, there can be nothing so attractive in all the future, nothing so rejoicing to the heart, as to look on the illumined face of him who clasped the hand of Christ, and leaned upon His sustaining breast, and who, as taught by His own Spirit, has taught the world that "the Word was God," that "the Word was made flesh," and that that Word, so incarnated in our nature, shall at last conquer the world!

THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.



BY REV. JOHN HALL, D. D.,

NEW YORK.

THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.*

IT has been suggested to me by the Vice-President of this Association that instead of attempting to deal with the whole subject of the Acts of the Apostles in one address, it should be divided into two; that I should take the opening part of the book for to-night, and some one will no doubt be found happy enough and competent enough to take up the latter part of the book in some subsequent series of lectures; in this way it may be possible to fix your attention more closely upon details than it otherwise would be possible to do, for any one who looks at the book must be conscious of what a very wide region it covers, and how difficult it would be to bring immediately, solidly and instructively before the view of an audience, all this broad area within the compass of an evening's address.

I remember a time in my own thought when, if any one had asked me how the books of the New Testament came to be as they are, I should either have been at a loss altogether for an answer, or I should have been ready to say that in the process of putting the books together,

* This is a verbatim report of an address which was spoken, not read; hence its colloquial form.

perhaps in the process of binding them, it had been found convenient to arrange them just as they are. But when one comes to know his Bible a little better, he gets rid of all such hazy explanations as this, and he finds out that the New Testament in its place, and the Old Testament in its place, are both organisms with a distinct and definite structure, with their various portions so placed that he who would undertake to make a change of the the order in which they are arranged would, in a great degree destroy the symmetry of the whole. It is a little easier to make that perfectly plain in connection with the New Testament than it is with the Old ; although I do not doubt that we shall be able to see some general principle running through the Old Testament. It is very easy to see how it is with the New. The New Testament, being the revelation of Jesus Christ, naturally the first part of the book is devoted to a history of Christ. This is done by four consecutive evangelists no two of them alike. I dare say to many of you it appears a strange thing that there should be four writers going over the same ground and dealing with the life of one individual. I am afraid that in the first instance many persons do not discriminate between the various evangelists, or look out for the personal characteristics of the writers of the Gospels in their various productions. Whenever the reader does come to discriminate in this way, then I think the interest with which he reads the Gospels is very greatly increased. I have been in the habit of illustrating this fourfold characteristic of the evangelistic narrative by an illustration which all of us

can easily comprehend. If you want a plan for a house and one is prepared, it is scarcely ever presented upon a single surface. There will be a ground plan ; there will be a front elevation ; there will be a side view and, generally speaking, there will be four presentations of the building you desire to erect. In no other way can it adequately be brought before the eye. So here we see the manifold character of our blessed Lord. Men are placed at different standpoints, so to speak, and they have an opportunity to study him, and each from his own particular standpoint as it were, inspired by the Spirit of God, has recorded what he has observed so that it shall stand out with distinctness before the reader, that at the distance of centuries he may be able to get some clear, full and comprehensive notion of the character and the life of Christ. Generally speaking, writers are agreed that Matthew prepared the Gospel for the Hebrews, as is indicated by the genealogy which he gives of our Lord and by his very numerous quotations from the Old Testament Scripture, and the application of those passages to a general delineation of the truths as brought out by our blessed Lord, which would strike the mind of the Jewish reader and suggests to him that the advent of the Saviour introduces the fulfilment of the prophecy that had been given to the Fathers. There is an obvious and natural transition from the Old Testament to the narrative of Matthew. How easy is the translation from Malachi to Matthew. Then comes Mark's Gospel, the general understanding among critics being that he received his main assistance from the apos-

tle Peter. It is a gospel of movement or action, in which our Saviour is seen as doing rather than heard as speaking, and in which he stands before us so prominently and distinctly as the man Christ Jesus going about doing good.

Then we come to the Gospel of Luke, connected as it is with the subject that we have before us to-night. It is not necessary for us to enter into speculations as to who Luke probably was. There are some who allege that he appears to have been a Gentile by birth. That, however, is only a matter of speculation. Probably nothing can be said with confidence one way or the other about that matter. He was, for a long time, the companion of the apostle Paul; and we can trace, as we proceed in the narration of the Acts of the Apostles, in the use of the pronoun "*we*," very naturally, a writer who was with Paul. We can trace points at which he takes up the journey and becomes the companion of Paul without mentioning the fact. By his use of the pronoun "*we*" we conclude that he must have been a companion of Paul, and a fellow-laborer with Paul.

He is called the "Beloved Physician." I do not think we are bound to attach any importance to the speculation that probably, as has been suggested, he is called a physician in a figurative and metaphorical sense, so as to indicate the bringing of medicines for the minds of men. Nor is the parallel of his case to be found in the case of those servants of the Lord who were called fishermen. It is to be borne in mind that such was their occupation at the time that Christ commanded them to

follow Him, and the title was subsequently applied to them in a spiritual sense, having a spiritual significance; but it is not, to my mind, in any figurative or spiritual sense, but in a practical and actual sense as an historical statement, that Luke is alluded to as the Beloved Physician. It appears that in many instances educated Greeks, who were really no higher socially than slaves or freedmen, were nevertheless educated for physicians, educated upon the standard of the time; and it has been conjectured that he stood in this rank. At any rate, his style and the general character of the expressions by which his narrative is marked, indicate that he was an intelligent man, such a man as would be regarded among us relatively as an educated man.

There are certain features about Luke's Gospel which would seem to indicate that he had been specially selected to write a gospel intended for Gentile believers, in which the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ and his work might be presented in such an aspect as would conciliate the Gentile mind. And it is impossible for any one to go through the Gospel of Luke without noticing these characteristics, standing out with great clearness, even upon the surface of the narrative. Wherever the Messiah comes in contact with the Gentiles, whenever a word is spoken in their favor, whenever they are presented in a favorable aspect, whenever the matter that is being referred to touches their case, though it may not find a place in Mark or in Matthew, you are sure to find it upon the pages of the evangelist Luke. His exhibit is not Jesus Christ simply as the Messiah

for the Hebrews, fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies as to the Jews, but a Messiah for the world—for the Jews as well as the Gentiles. So the parable of the Good Samaritan finds a place in Luke's pages. So the existence of the grateful Samaritan finds its place upon Luke's pages. In one word, (for I have no time to particularize upon this subject,) any seemingly insignificant circumstances in our Lord's career that touch this great feature, have a charm for this writer; and as the Spirit of God directs him he puts them in his pages as if he were thinking that educated men, freedmen, slaves, good centurions, Romans and Gentiles, to the very ends of the earth would need to study the character of our Redeemer; who came, not to Jews only, nor to Gentiles only, but who came to make Jews and Gentiles one, breaking down for ever the middle wall of separation between them.

It does not lie within my purpose to touch the Gospel of John, although if it were proper to do so I would say here that it goes to show in the clearest way the plan and the unity of these narrations of the evangelists. It is easy to see how this evangelist, Luke, is the proper person to be used for chronicling the establishment of the Christian church in the world. Jesus Christ comes. He reveals the Father unto men. He is the witness to the truth. He is a leader unto the people. He sets forth the old Hebrew law in a new light. He clears away from it excrescences that were permitted to remain there. He discriminates between the local and temporary, and the spiritual and permanent; and above

all he sets forth himself as the representative of the Father, with his gracious invitations, repeated in numerous texts, such as, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." If this were all of the New Testament, an earnest questioner might ask, "What will come of it? Here we have a great teacher, and a great revelation, and floods of light come upon that which has hitherto been obscure. But he leaves the earth, he says he is going to his Father and our Father. What will come of it?" and if our New Testament had been cut off, so to speak, abruptly at the close of the Gospels, how many wondering interrogatories must have been in the human mind. Will any permanent result flow from this Teacher? Will there be any organization? Will there be anything further? Will there be any organized unity? Will there be any sympathy or fellowship with this Jewish church—this visible theocracy that has been identified with God and his truth and his cause in the world? The Acts of the Apostles as a book furnishes the answer to that great question. We do not need to deal in any degree with the questions that have been raised touching Theophilus, to whom the Gospel of Luke and this book alike are dedicated. It is not material to our purpose to determine whether it is a fictitious name, intended to represent everybody that loved the Lord and honored him, or whether it is the actual name of a real man. But it is proper to say that it is in no wise contrary to the analogy of the Scripture to suppose that it was the name of an actual man, a believer and a Gentile—as we

may presume from his name, compounded as it is of two Greek words—and whom Luke made prominent by introducing and dedicating to him a Gospel like that, and a history like that which it was the function and the honor of Luke to present to Christendom. He says, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus," which naturally suggests that there is a close link or connection between the former and that which is now produced, so that the Acts may be taken as a kind of second Luke, a continuation of his Gospel, a carrying forward of the history first introduced by Jesus Christ, and then to be perpetuated and to be rung in the ears of men in all lands and through succeeding ages, through those who received his commission and were baptized with his Spirit.

I remember my attention was called many years ago to a work that I suppose is not very much used now, because some later books have superseded it—namely, Baumgarten on the Acts. It is in Clark's Foreign Theological Library. It is not by any means a perfect book, but it contains some most admirable and useful presentations of the truth, and if you should come in the way of it, and should find time to read and study it, I think it would be of great service and value to you. I remember that it was a kind of revelation to me. I was comparatively young when I saw, what he takes pains to delineate in this work, that, strictly speaking, the title of the book is misleading. I do not mean that the title is not applicable to the book itself, but strictly speaking, the book does not contemplate the acts or do-

ings of the apostles, so much as it contemplates the acts or doings of Christ who sent the apostles ; as though we read between the lines in some such way as this : " The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach until he was taken up into heaven ; and this I dedicate to thee, O Theophilus, that I may show thee what Jesus continued to do and to teach after he was taken up into heaven." And the more you study the book the more just that criticism will seem to you to be.

Practically all the apostles are not here. They are just mentioned as a list in the beginning. We find that most of them were put out of sight. Practically two apostles monopolize the attention of the writer throughout this book. The book never claims to give a consecutive history of either one or the other of these two. We have the apostle Paul, who has the largest share of the book, and whose movements are presented to us with great fulness ; yet we can easily satisfy ourselves, by comparison of the Epistles with the book of the Acts, that some movements of Paul that had a very important bearing upon the world's evangelization do not find any place in the Acts of the Apostles. Plainly it is not intended by the writer to give us successive pictures of the whole of the apostolic band. His intention is to present to us the continuous work of the Lord ; and he has selected certain things as examples. It is his intent to keep Christ before the mind of the reader, and to make the reader understand what is being done by the church below, The Head of the church is above. But he con-

tinues to teach ; he continues to do ; he continues to work. If you by his grace are the children of God, you are being taught by him. If you do as Stephen did, as Peter did, as John did, as Paul did—if you do mighty works, it is because Christ from his throne is working in you and by you, and carrying on his gracious purposes in the banishment of the Mosaic law, and in the introduction and establishment of his truth among the nations of the earth.

Accordingly we find this book is not at all biographical in the strict and proper sense of the word. It is more ; it is what might be called ecclesiological. It is not intended to show how a particular man or particular men carry themselves ; it is intended to show the progress of the work of the church of Christ on earth. The veritable body of Christ disappeared from the earth, but another and no less glorious body is to be set up on the earth, the mystical body composed of living saints, an organism with Christ as its head and the Holy Ghost as its heart. The Acts of the Apostles shows how this organism grew up, and how it contained all the requisites that it needed to take within itself every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

In accordance with this general character of the Acts, one need not exercise any subtle ingenuity in seeking for the divisions of the book. It divides itself into two great portions. The first we find occupied with the establishment of the Christian church among the Jews ; the second by the establishment of the Christian church among the Gentiles. The idea is to show how

this truth that Jesus Christ left alone in our world, so to speak, and which he charged his servants in his name to make known, grows ; how it comes from one great centre to another and finds a lodgment in each one of them, and impresses itself upon the attention and the conscience of those who hear ; how it spreads in each one of these centres, beginning at Jerusalem, until it has reached what was then the capital of Gentiledom, Rome, and established itself there ; and when that has been done, when the narrative of that has been set before us, then the book closes, and closes with an abruptness that shows how little the writer thought of himself, and how little he thought about anybody else, dear as they were to him, and venerable as most of them were in the church ; how little he thought of them except in so far as they were the instruments of Christ in carrying out his will and in fulfilling that portion of the Old Testament prophecy that the Lord should come forth out of Zion and out of Jerusalem, and at the same time that the Gentiles should see his light and all the nations of the earth behold his glory.

Now these two great classes of Jews and Gentiles constituted the world at that time ; and I need not dwell upon the bitter animosities that existed between these two races, nor call your attention to the fact of how wide was the chasm that separated them, or what a gulf of prejudice, mutual suspicions, and bitter hostility, lay between them ; how complete was the contempt with which the Jew, forgetting what he owed to grace, and taking his high privileges as a right, regarded the Gentile, and

with what compounded interest the Gentile returned his scorn and hatred, so that "the accursed Jew" was the formula that most naturally came to the lips and tongue of even the cultivated Roman when he had occasion to speak of an inhabitant of Judea. Any man who would appreciate the gigantic difficulties in the way of establishing this living spiritual unity among Jews and Gentiles and placing them upon the same level as brethren, must take into account all the divergences which grew up for centuries, dividing the Jew from the Gentile. It is no wonder that we should find so many indications in this book, and so many corresponding indications throughout the Epistles, of the jealousies with which, even when they became Christians, Jews by birth regarded Gentiles by birth, and Gentiles by birth regarded Jews by birth, that were believers.

Having now called your attention to the order and the sequence of the gospel narrative, and to the narrative of the book of the Acts in general, it will be proper for me, in the second place, to proceed to an analysis, such as ought to be before the mind of the teacher if he would give a clear and comprehensive account of the succeeding portions of the book. The first chapter is in some sense introductory to that which comes after. After the graceful preface to which allusion has been already made, involving the dedication, the writer takes up his narrative where he dropped it at the end of his Gospel, and proceeds to give a vivid description of the ascension of our blessed Lord: upon which it is not necessary for us to dwell. In obedience to the Master's

command, they had waited for the promised Spirit that was to constitute their motive-power. In the mean time they seem to have been mindful of the theocratic arrangement that had prevailed among the tribes of Israel, having no doubt the idea that there was some intentional resemblance between the twelve tribes and the number of the disciples or apostles; and it seems to have appeared to them proper that, one of their number having fallen by his transgression, they should take the necessary steps for appointing his successor, so as to make the complete number twelve. This was done apparently, not by the eleven alone, but in consultation and apparent coöperation with the rest of the believers in Jerusalem, the number altogether being about one hundred and twenty.

They seem to have continued in this state of prayerful expectation until the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the second chapter of the book very naturally occupies itself with the startling details of that transaction. Peter is the man who figures most prominently in it. Just at this point I cannot refuse myself the satisfaction of calling your attention to the singular delicacy which runs through the whole of this narrative when it touches individuals. I will suppose one to be reading continuously through the Gospels, and as he finishes the Gospels the thing that is uppermost in his heart is: What a shame for Peter! What a disgrace that a disciple so favored as he was, so honored and so near to Christ as he was—what a disgrace to him and to humanity that he should so dishonor and belie his calling and his Lord! Suppose that, passing with these feelings from the Gospels,

he comes into the Acts and reads the narrative in the second chapter. We have some feeling of revulsion in our minds, that feeling of suspicion of which we are all conscious when some one of our brethren has committed an error or has been betrayed into some action that is not according to our standard of right. We come to the Acts of the Apostles with a kind of feeling against this man, so base and so mean, being brought forward so prominently here. - But you will notice that the Gospel which immediately precedes the Acts is the Gospel of John. The last chapter of that Gospel gives us a most touching delineation of the details of the restoration of Peter by Jesus Christ himself: "Feed my lambs; shepherd my lambkins; take care of my sheep." Again and again and again Jesus Christ spoke to this man, lifted him up, restored him to his love and confidence, and restored him therefore to ours, so that we have no sense of revulsion. Our idea of the fitness of things is not shocked when this impulsive, impetuous, and brave man, sound at heart, though momentarily weak, is permitted to stand forth in that day when the Holy Ghost is shed upon the believers, and to bear, in the Master's name, that testimony which thousands believe, and believing it, they are received into the Christian faith. There is to me a singular beauty in this collocation of facts. The Lord Jesus knows, not our thoughts only, not our convictions only, not our souls and consciences only, but he knows our feelings, and with a touch of infinite delicacy applies his gospel to them, so that we shall not only adore, but admire while we adore him. He is the incarnation of

grace and beauty as he is dealing with the children of men.

I do not need to dwell upon this second chapter. I have already mentioned the work of Baumgarten, and I will say here to any one who wants to get a book that will touch his heart with its delineation of this great miracle of Christianity, let him provide himself with the book of Mr. Arthur, a most able and earnest Methodist minister and a most entertaining and instructive writer, called "The Tongue of Fire." It is a striking thing that when the Master sends out his disciples to conquer the world he does not give them swords to fight with, but tongues of fire, to speak burning words that will save human souls and inflame the people with love to God and zeal for Christ.

That was practically the birthday of the Christian church. It may be said that the church was born on the day of Pentecost. Now it began to stand forth as a unity. Baptism is the recognized emblem and badge of the believer. We have been baptized unto the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. We have a most beautiful picture of the condition of believers in the temple. "And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all people; and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." This is the model

church ; this is the mother church ; this is the pattern of what a church should be. Other churches, as they are established throughout the nations, are, so far as possible, catching the spirit of Jesus. They are looking back to this early, pure, bright day of Christianity in the world, and, so far as possible, are catching its spirit and reproducing its features.

Now one might suppose there is nothing but for such a church to go on with successful and ever-increasing movement throughout the world. But that has never been true, dear friends, of any good movement in the world. Accordingly the next chapter brings before us, with sufficient distinctness and with sufficient fulness, the subsequent dangers to which the church may be expected to be exposed in her future history. A miracle is wrought by Peter and John. As a consequence of that miracle, attention is drawn to the church of Christ and an opportunity is given of explaining the way in which the miracle is wrought, and calling attention once again to the risen and glorified Saviour. But as the people of Christ speak to their fellow-citizens, a hostile power is aroused and is arrayed against these men. "The captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being aggrieved that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." These Sadducees were the liberals of their time—broad-minded men, men at least who so complimented themselves ; men of advanced thought ; men that had got rid of the supernatural ; men to whom indeed angels and spirits were nothing ; men to whom the resurrection was a mockery

and the future life a mere dream. But behold these Christian teachers, who not merely say that they are witnesses of the resurrection of the dead, but they say that their Master has risen from the dead and that they have proof of it. The Sadducees were too liberal to persecute or to annoy anybody for an abstract opinion. The Sadducees in all ages have been ready to make a great parade of their liberalism, but the moment that a doctrine that is new touches their own creed, true to their own character in more ages than one they have been forward in the ranks of the persecutors and among the readiest to put down, with the strong hand of power, the humble witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is not the only kind of danger to which the church is exposed. I do not need to go into these details. Every person has read them, or can read them and satisfy himself. Well, the church got over that danger as it always will get over such dangers. It has nothing to fear from mere brute power, but there are other perils to which the church is exposed. It seems a perfectly obvious thing that there was no design on the part of the sacred writer to chronicle every incident and every fact. On the contrary there is a principle of selection running through this narrative, and specimens are given of that which the church has to encounter or which the church has to anticipate or fear in all time to come. On the one hand the church was to be apprehensive of the world's persecuting power. On the other hand she is to be afraid of secularism and vanity, ambition and self-seeking, ostentation and corruption among her

own members. How early Ananias and Sapphira led the way in that direction. This was not "Socialism." There was no obligation upon the people to give up their possessions for the common good. It was a matter of free will, but it was undoubtedly true that credit was given to those who did sell their possessions for the sake of the common benefit. So Ananias and Sapphira laid their heads together. "We have possessions," they say, "and let us sell them and keep a portion of them ourselves; let us appear to be giving the whole and get the credit for the whole while we keep a portion ourselves." And they talked it over with themselves. Many a man will do a bad and wicked thing while its secret is in his own bosom, who is not base enough and bad enough to do it in concert with another. Men have always held a conspiracy to be a worse crime than a mere individual offence. They conspired together; they were so deliberate about it. They talked it over. Husband and wife are sometimes bad enough individually, but they are very bad when they come to concert a plan of wickedness with one another. They did that, and so they are detected and exposed and signally punished. Of course there is a parallel between this tragedy at the beginning of the Christian dispensation and the tragedy at the beginning of the Jewish dispensation. There was a reason for both. Covetousness was the lesson of both tragedies, that of Judaism in its infancy and Christianity in its youth.

I said there was no Socialism in the church at this time; that seems to be assumed in the very appeal which Peter makes when he says, "Was it not thine own?"

They were not bound to dispose of their possessions, and after they were sold there was no obligation upon them to give up the whole of the money. They could give as much or as little as they pleased. It was because they agreed together to tempt the Holy Ghost, that the punishment was visited upon them. This was another proof of the personality of the Holy Ghost, for man cannot tempt an attribute and cannot lie to an attribute. It is proof also of the Deity of the Holy Ghost, for it is said afterwards, "Ye have not lied unto men, but unto God;" and on that sad day, for it must have been a sad day even to the church, the bodies of these two transgressors were carried out and buried. No wonder that great fear fell upon the church and upon as many as heard these things, and that of the rest durst no man join himself unto them. Brethren, it is not always a healthy sign when crowds are joining themselves to the church. It is sometimes a good sign when men feel that there is something awful and holy about the church, and that they are not to join themselves to it as a light and every-day matter.

I do not mean to dwell upon these things. What I want to make plain to you is this: that among the multitudinous incidents that must have happened, the sacred writer describes just those that may be expected to be typical of the future, and full of instruction to the church in all time to come.

But there is another danger that menaces the church. First it is the persecuting power of the world; then it is vanity and ostentation in the members; and now it is

class feeling, and the rivalry of old antipathies and old class jealousies. The number of the disciples was multiplied, and somebody had to administer the possessions that were sold and put into the common stock. There arose a murmuring among the Greek-speaking people—who did not always live in Palestine, but who were there only for the time—against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. We all know how it comes about. There begins to be a little shaking of the head and a little side-whispering of a man to his neighbor, and a little intimation that there is something in the way or something wrong—something that had better be looked into. “Don’t you talk about it; you need not quote me as saying it, but there is something that had better be changed.” There arose a murmuring, an undertone of discontent and dissatisfaction, such as sometimes runs through a congregation and paralyzes its usefulness for a time. That was the trouble; and observe the brave and manly way in which the trouble is met by the men who are by God’s appointment at the time the leaders of the church. They do not stifle it. They do not hush it up. They do not say, “Let us quiet it, and say nothing about it.” Powder is perilous when it is closely confined. Let the explosion go off in the open air, and there is a mere whiff of smoke, and the thing is harmlessly over. Bring it into the daylight and see what is wrong. Let us look fairly at it, and if there be anything wrong, let us meet it and make things right. This was done. “It is not our business to take charge of this matter. The thing was put into our hands be-

cause there was nobody else to take hold of it, and we have done it. It is no particular pleasure to us to do it. It would be a relief to us to get rid of it. Let us choose men to administer to the various wants of our people." And so to this ecclesiastical body, this corporation of Christians, there comes the needed supply in the election of these good and true men to administer this trust. Thus they took away the cause of complaint that existed among the people in regard to this matter. They treated the subject in a bold and manly way, and the people became obedient to the faith.

This was the way in which the church in the olden time treated the danger that came to her then. The dangers that menaced the church in those times exist in the history of the church to-day. The church is not only exposed to the danger of persecution, and the danger of pride and vanity, but there is a danger against which Christian people ought constantly to be on their guard. It should be a matter of solemn duty to stop whispering, to put down the backbiter; to say, "If there is anything wrong, out with it! out with it! Let it be explained and cleared away, and dealt with in a manly, straightforward way; but let there be none of this subterranean rumbling, that never can do anything else than disturb and harass and paralyze men honestly seeking to do their duty."

I am reminded by looking at the face of the clock that the time has come when it will be proper to bring these remarks to a close; and probably there is not much more to be said; at any rate, not very much that will not come legitimately under the notice of the broth-

ers who will succeed me in dealing with Paul, and especially his work among the Gentiles ; and so, if you please, with the few remarks with which I shall conclude, I shall turn your attention away from this analysis of the narrative and ask you to look at two or three prominent instances that pass before us in the course of this history, and at two or three men who act a prominent part, and in whom there is so much that we may with great advantage imitate. Take for example, Barnabas, who is to play a very conspicuous part in the latter part of the book. The sacred narrative takes occasion to introduce him at a proper time as one of those who, having a possession, sold it for the common good. There was no particular claim upon him to do this, but out of the love of God, and the spirit of Christ which animated him, he dispossessed himself of that which he owned and sold it for the benefit of the church. We will omit, for the time, any reference to the rest of the apostles, and follow him through the book. See how intelligent and how true he is ! He was evidently a man of good family and of considerable property. He had a sister who had a house in Jerusalem, and it was there that many of the leading Christians came. Everybody knew Mary's house. It was the headquarters of the Christian people in that city. As a matter of course they used to have prayer-meetings there, and when Peter was released from prison, we learn from the sacred narrative that he went to the house of Mary, the sister of Barnabas, where there was a company of Christians assembled together. Even the domestic that served in the house of Mary caught some-

thing of her mistress' spirit. I can almost picture the girl as she stands looking through the lattice to see who is there. She has heard people talk about Peter ; about his being in prison ; and when she sees him there at the door she goes in and tells the assembled company that Peter is at the threshold. They say, "Why the girl is mad! Peter is in prison!" But she is so earnest, and reiterates her assertion with such solemnity that they go and look, and behold, he is there!

Now Mary has a son ; and his name is John, and his surname is Mark. Barnabas, having no family of his own, takes his nephew John Mark with him and pets him as it were. Now John Mark had to give up a good deal. He might have thought something in this wise : "There are the possessions which my uncle owned that might have been mine ; but he has given them up to the church. I have no liking for this kind of life. It is not by any means a pleasant kind of work ; there is a great deal of inconvenience and some danger, and it is very different from the comfort and luxury of my life in Jerusalem at my mother's house." And so he turns his back, for the time being, upon the gospel work, and this produces some sharp words between Barnabas and Paul, and leads to a temporary separation. But then, as we follow the sacred narrative, we find that this young man comes back again—as the sons of good mothers nearly always do when they go astray—into the path of loyalty and obedience. And we find that Paul himself bears evidence to the faithfulness of John Mark, and of his personal affection for him.

There is another man mentioned in the narrative, of a different sort entirely, and his name is Gamaliel. He had the reputation of being a man of great wisdom. It seems to some persons that on that occasion he uttered words of profound wisdom in the advice which he gave touching these men, when he said, "Let them alone. If this cause be not of God, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, there is no use of your fighting against it." I have never been able to see any indications of great wisdom and nobleness in that man: never. He was a man learned in the law, a very eminent doctor of divinity in the city, and he should have had very decided opinions upon matters of this kind. He should have been ready to give his opinion in favor of the right side, and against the wrong side, if there was a wrong side: but he did not do it. It seems to me that he exhibited a good deal of mere human wisdom, a little approximating to what we call "being on the fence." "If this cause be of God, it will stand of itself." Is that a test of duty to you and to me? Am I to remain undecided until I see whether a cause will succeed or not, and then if it succeeds attach myself to it? Are accessions of that kind worth anything to a cause? Is that a proof of heroism, of devotion, of self-sacrifice for the cause of duty? And even if you test his principle by the facts of history, it seems to me that his principle will not stand the test. Am I to allege that everything that is put down is proved not to belong to the cause of Christ? Why, they trampled out Protestant reformation in Spain, and they trampled it out in Italy, and they baptized it in blood and wellnigh tram-

pled it out in sunny France. Am I to say that the cause of this Book is not God's cause because some earthly power triumphs against it for a time? Rather would it seem to me to have been the duty of Gamaliel, learned in the Scriptures, to have searched the Scriptures and compared their testimony with the testimony of these men; and if he should be convinced that these men were on the side of truth, and that this cause was of God, then should he have been on their side fearlessly, whether the cause should seem then to succeed, or whether it should seem then to fail.

One thing further. Peter and Paul are the typical men of the apostles. It is probably one of the meanings of the statements made by Christ to Peter, "I will give to thee the keys," that Peter has the honor of opening the door of the proposed path to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. These two men worked on parallel lines for the most part, but sometimes they crossed each other's path in such a way as to show that they were working in the same service and were moved by the same spirit. Peter seems to have been chosen to bring the Gentiles into the Christian church. Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles; but in the providence of God Peter was first chosen to carry the gospel to them. Peter was just the man for bringing in the Gentiles. Peter subdues the Gentiles and leads them along in the light of the truth.

I need not detain you by referring to the wonderful wisdom and the wonderful grace that was shown to the man who was to be first brought in. He was not a notoriously bad man; he was not a disreputable man; but he

was a praying man, an almsgiving man, a man against whom there was no possible objection but the one of being a Gentile. The offence is made as light as possible so as not to offend too strongly the prejudices of the Jews. The barrier between them is reduced, so to speak, to a minimum, so as to make it as easy as possible for these Jews, who were Christians now, to overcome their rigid prejudices and breathe the free air of the unity, in which there is to be neither Jew nor Greek, neither barbarian nor Scythian, nor bond nor free, but all to be one in Jesus Christ. It will come naturally to your mind to notice the beautiful and exquisite way in which the Christian church grows up out of the Jewish—not a new creation, but the old with a new form in a new body; the old with a new and more glorious nature. Brethren, we are the children of Abraham; we sit down with Abraham and Isaac and with Jacob. It is one of those thoughts that sometimes come to me when I think of heaven, what a glorious, inspiriting, and freshening thing it will be to meet upon equal terms the grave fathers of the olden time, to meet men like Isaiah and Jeremiah and Daniel and Ezekiel and Hosea, washed by the same blood, sanctified by the same Spirit, basking in the beams of the same eternal light, and with the same ceaseless and ever-rolling eternity of unbroken felicity in the presence of the common Lord! I would like to realize this conception in its earthly application; I would make no walls between the Old Testament and the New. I would draw no line of demarkation between. I would study the New Testament in the light of the Old, and the Old in

the light of the New. I would have the Christian church looked upon as the outgrowth of the olden time. The temple indeed has no parallel of a material kind. But the Temple of Zion to-day is more lovely because it is a temple in which all true saints are stones ; these edifices, indeed, in which we worship are analogous to the synagogues of the Jews ; and our talking to the people, our Scripture reading, our Scripture explanations, our singing of hymns, our prayers in common, and even our collections, are the literal and lineal descendants, as any man will see who will take the trouble to examine into the matter, of the ordinances and institutions and ways of worship that were carried on in these Old Testament synagogues. The temple was to be taken out of the way. The priest was gradually going down, and the prophet was rising up to prepare you and me, to prepare the Jews and the Gentiles, and all the world for that dispensation, the joys of which we inherit, and which Christ bade his disciples to go preach to all nations, saying to them, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

May we be led to catch the spirit of this new dispensation of which we are made heirs, so that we may be true, faithful, and effective in the noble and blessed service of the best of masters.

THE
EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.



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SOMEWHERE about three hundred years before the birth of Christ a horde of adventurers from the western extremity of Europe pushed their way eastward, crossed the Hellespont, and overran the greater portion of Asia Minor, where for a time the Syrian kings were compelled to submit to them. At length, however, they were themselves overcome by Attalus of Pergamus, who hemmed them in within comparatively narrow limits. The territory to which they were thus confined was composed of parts of Phrygia and Cappadocia, and came to be known as Galatia, from the name "Gauls," by which the invaders were called. There these western barbarians came into contact with the original Phrygians and the Greek settlers who were scattered among them, and were so influenced by them that they adopted the manners and customs of the Greeks, so that their land was sometimes denominated Gallo-Græcia. In the conflict between Antiochus and the Romans they took the side of the former, and were easily subdued by the consul Manlius.

But their conquerors allowed them for more than a century and a half to retain their own form of government, and it was not until the twenty-fifth year of the Christian era that they were reduced to a Roman province.

The population of this region was thus, at the time when Paul wrote, of a composite description. First, there were the descendants of the invading Gauls, who retained those peculiarities which even till this day have kept such persistent hold on all the branches of the Celtic race. Next, there were the genuine Phrygians, who were devoted to the idolatry of Bacchus and Cybele. Then came the Greek colonists, who carried with them their culture, their language, and their philosophy. To these must be added a large Jewish element, for Antiochus had settled two thousand Jewish families in Lycaonia and Phrygia, and many more were probably attracted to the three great cities—Pessinus, Ancyra, and Tavium—by the facilities which their situation afforded for commercial enterprise. Each of these classes brought its own deposit and contributed it to the formation of the national character; but the dominating qualities were those of the Gauls. The rugged external features of the half-barbarous Europeans had yielded somewhat to the enervating influence of the effeminate Phrygians, but beneath the surface they were Celtic still, and were distinguished by eager restlessness, shallow vivacity, short-lived enthusiasm, and that unreliable fickleness which Cæsar found in his Gallic allies and antagonists. Indeed, one cannot read this letter of Paul's, even in the most superficial manner, without being reminded that

the Galatians were the kinsmen of those whom the great Roman general has described as "fickle in taking up plans, fond of innovating, and utterly untrustworthy." The Jewish influence, so far as it went, was no doubt wholesome, and the presence of his kinsmen among the people gave the apostle the same point of contact with the Gentile mind which he invariably improved in other quarters; but on the other hand, the Celtic fondness for ritual observances served also to give the Judaizing party in the early church an advantage which they were not slow to use against the gospel which Paul preached.

So far as appears the churches in Galatia, which were probably situated in the three principal cities which I have already named, were founded by the apostle himself, and in the Acts of the Apostles there is special mention of two visits which he made to this district. The first (Acts 16:6) was in the course of his second missionary journey, not long before he crossed from Troas into Macedonia. He was suffering at the time from some severe bodily affliction—probably from an unusually acute attack of that chronic malady which he has elsewhere called his "thorn in the flesh;" for in his letter he speaks of his having preached to them at first "through infirmity of the flesh" (4:13). But the effect of his weakness was to elicit the sympathy and kindness of his hearers, for he represents them as neither despising nor rejecting his trial, but as receiving him as if he had been an angel of God; nay, as if he had been Christ himself. Such had been their eagerness to help him,

that he bears them record that if it had been possible they would have plucked out their [own] eyes and given them to him. His preaching among them had been a setting forth before their eyes of Jesus Christ as evidently crucified among them. And as Lightfoot has eloquently said, "If we picture to ourselves the apostle as he appeared before the Galatians, a friendless outcast, writhing under the tortures of a painful malady, yet instant in season and out of season, by turns denouncing and entreating, appealing to the agonies of a crucified Saviour, perhaps also, as at Lystra, enforcing this appeal by some striking miracle, we shall be at no loss to conceive how the fervid temperament of the Gaul might have been aroused, while yet only the surface of his spiritual consciousness was ruffled."* Great enthusiasm apparently prevailed among them; they received, by the laying on of apostolic hands, the gift of the Spirit and the power of working miracles. They spake of the blessedness that had come to them through his ministry. They started off with eagerness and did run well, so that when he left them his heart was full of joy, and he anticipated great things from them in the future. But when, after an interval of two years or more, he made them another visit (Acts 18:23), he found that some evil influence had been at work among them, and felt it necessary to denounce every one who preached to them another gospel than that which he had proclaimed (1:9); while at the same time he told them some unpalatable truth, for which he seems to fear that they held him as their enemy

* Lightfoot's Galatians, p. 24.

(4 : 16). We know next to nothing of what was done or said by him on this occasion, but it is probable that he went to Ephesus feeling reassured concerning them, and having the hope that he had established them in the faith. Yet he would be naturally solicitous about their movements, and would endeavor to keep up his knowledge of them by every means in his power. Indeed it was the report of their virtual apostasy which struck out of him the letter which we are now to consider, and which is in some respects the most remarkable of his writings.

Its genuineness is as good as universally admitted. Only one even of the negative critics of Germany has ventured to call its authorship in question, and his views have been condemned by all. We have here, therefore, an undoubtedly authentic letter, written some think from Ephesus, about the year 54; and others, as Lightfoot, Howson, and Alford, from Macedonia, about the year 57 or 58. At the very latest, therefore, we are only twenty-nine years from the crucifixion of Christ; and as we crowd into our modern years, by steamship, railroad, and telegraph, so much more than they did in ancient times, these twenty-nine years may be taken as representing only fifteen years of this century. That is to say, we have here a letter which is virtually as near to the date of the Redeemer's death, as we are to-day to the battle of Gettysburg. Let that fact be realized in all its significance, and you will see how absurd all these theories are which would account for the Gospels by the gradual accretion of mythical stories round some ideal nucleus. Those myths, to which Niebuhr and others refer in sec-

ular history, are the growth of ages ; but there is positively no opportunity for their formation in the brief interval which elapsed between the resurrection and the beginning of the Christian literature, even if the epoch to which we are referring had been adapted to their production. Here is a letter of a date that is less than thirty years removed from the death and resurrection of Christ ; it is the undoubted production of one of the most intellectual men of his own or any other age ; and it has come to us virtually as he wrote it ; yet we could easily bring out of it all the great facts and doctrines of the gospel : so that the mythical theory is thereby demonstrated to be a palpable impossibility.

The occasion on which this letter was written, as we have already hinted, was the receipt of intelligence by the apostle to the effect that the Galatian converts had fallen from their belief in salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, and had submitted to the Jewish rite of circumcision on the alleged ground that it was essential to their acceptance with God. This had been brought about by the agency of false teachers from Jerusalem, who pretended to speak as the messengers of the apostles ; and from the specification by Paul of one particular troubler (5 : 10), it is probable that there was one individual among them who made his antagonism peculiarly prominent, and was, as we might say, a ring-leader in the revolt against his instructions. But, whoever they were, they went most insidiously to work, for they began by endeavoring to undermine the apostolic character and authority of Paul. They represented that

he was subordinate to James, Peter, and John, and that these pillars of the church were irreconcilably opposed to his teachings; and, working upon the fears and foibles of the people, they drew them away in large numbers from the simplicity of the gospel. The apostasy was as sudden and as enthusiastic as their original conversion had been. It seemed to the apostle almost as if they had been spellbound by some evil influence; and as he heard the news of it there was a strange commingling and contending of opposing feelings within his heart. Indignation at the troublers; sorrow, surprise, and displeasure, at the conduct of his old friends; yearnings after their return, interblended with dissatisfaction at their departure from the faith; scorn at the accusations which had been brought against himself, and deepest anguish at the dishonor which had been done to Christ—all were simultaneously at work within him. Out of this tumult of emotions the Epistle to the Galatians was born; and as we can trace the marks of volcanic fires on the rocks which some great convulsion has upheaved, so we can clearly discern the effects of Paul's inner feelings in the style and argument which he has employed. It has a burning vehemence peculiar to itself. The "arrows of its thoughts" are "headed and winged with flame." It is characterized by passionate energy, scathing invective, rapid movement, parental tenderness, and condensed power. It is logic on fire, and its conclusions scorch those who refuse to be convinced. As Douglas of Cavers has admirably said, "The mind of Paul [in it] is rapid as the lightning, and yet strikes, by its zigzag

impetuosity, every projecting point that approaches its path ; and, still undelayed by these deflections, attains instantaneously the goal." The sternness of its reproof, however, as many passages in it conclusively prove, was but the other side of love ; and even its personal references are to be accounted for by his longing for the return of those who had gone back, by his zeal for the purity of the gospel, and by his enthusiastic devotion to the cause of Christian liberty.

In the order of the development of Christian doctrine, the Epistle to the Galatians stands midway between the second letter to the Corinthians and the letter to the Romans. Indeed, as Lightfoot has conclusively established, there is the same connection between the Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, that there is between those which have been called the Epistles of the Imprisonment. They constitute a group, and they reach their climax in that greatest of all our apostle's writings, which may be styled a treatise rather than a letter. In the second letter to the Corinthians we have a personal vindication similar to that which makes so conspicuous a feature of the letter to the Galatians ; in both we have the same indignant denunciation of his antagonists, with the same concern for the honor of the Gospel and for the restoration of the fallen ; while in the Epistle to the Romans we have the full elaboration of the argument which is briefly epitomized in that to the Galatians. Or as Lightfoot has expressed it in his own clean-cut fashion, "To the Galatians the apostle flashes out in indignant remonstrance the first eager thoughts kindled by his zeal

for the Gospel striking suddenly against a stubborn form of Judaism. To the Romans he writes at leisure, under no pressure of circumstances, in the face of no direct antagonism, explaining, completing, extending the teachings of the earlier letter, by giving it a double edge against Jew and Gentile alike. The matter which in the one Epistle is personal and fragmentary, elicited by the special needs of an individual church, is in the other generalized and arranged so as to form a comprehensive and systematic treatise.*

Proceeding now to the analysis of the letter itself, we find that it may be easily divided into three parts: the *Personal*, the *Doctrinal*, and the *Practical*.

The *Personal* portion extends to the close of the second chapter, and is devoted to an establishment of his apostolical authority. So eager is he to get at his theme, that in the very salutation he calls himself an apostle, "not of man, neither by men," that is, not of men's appointment, nor even of the appointment of Jesus through any human instrumentality, but designated directly and immediately by the Lord Jesus himself. And he proceeds to the establishment of these assertions by affirming that after his conversion he had no communication whatever with any of the apostles for three years; because he went immediately to Arabia, and after a while returned to Damascus, from which, at the end of the period I have just named, he went to Jerusalem. But even then he had no opportunity of receiving any commission, for he was only fifteen days with Peter, and he saw none of the other

* Lightfoot's Galatians, p. 49.

apostles save James, the Lord's brother. Indeed, so brief was his sojourn, that he was unknown by face to the churches of Judæa. The only other occasion on which at Jerusalem he came into contact with any of the apostles was at the meeting of what is styled the Council of Jerusalem. He had indeed with Barnabas, as we know from the narrative in the Acts, been at the Holy City with offerings for the poor saints in the interval between those two visits to which he here refers ; but that was in the very heat of the Herodian persecution, when in all likelihood the apostles were absent, and he himself made a very limited stay ; therefore, as it is to his purpose only to mention his personal interviews with the pillars of the church, he leaves that altogether out of the account, that he might give prominence to the fact that for fourteen years he had been preaching continuously, recognized and unchallenged as an apostle, though he had only spent fifteen days with Peter.

It may be regarded by some persons as a difficulty that Paul affirms in this letter that he went up at this time to Jerusalem by revelation, whereas in the narrative in the Acts it is alleged that he and Barnabas, with certain others, were deputed by the church at Antioch to consult the apostles and elders on the circumcision controversy which had just arisen. But to this the answer is obvious, for the journey might be both "by revelation" and by the appointment of the church, since the revelation might be given either directly to the church, or to Paul himself after the action of the church, for the purpose of removing any doubt which he might have as to the propriety

of the proceeding. We have here one of a class of cases in which the addition in one account of some particular that is unmentioned in another is neither a contradiction nor a discrepancy. A week or two ago, when I returned to my home from the Sabbath evening service in my church, I was told of a great fire which was raging in Twenty-third street in this city; and when I inquired into its character, I was informed by a member of my family that the first account she received from a passer-by was that it was a chair-factory; the second, from another casual informant, was, that it was an armory; and the third, from still another witness, was, that it was a church, and she did not know which to believe; but when I opened my newspaper on the following morning, I found that it had been all the three, and that even if there had been a fourth report that two churches had been destroyed, *that* also would have been accurate. Now a case like that, occurring at one's own doorstep, is a complete vindication of the harmonizing principle which we have here adopted, and which permits us to believe that Paul went to Jerusalem by the appointment of the brethren of the church at Antioch, fortified and confirmed by a direct revelation to himself from the Lord.

Now on this visit two things occurred, which proved the independent apostleship of Paul, and his coördinate authority with James, Cephas, and John. The first was his refusal to circumcise Titus, a Gentile Christian, who was one of his companions. The Judaizing party insisted that this Greek should be subjected to the Abra-

hamic rite, as a thing essential to his salvation and his standing in the Christian church ; but Paul “gave place to them by subjection, no, not for an hour.” But so far from being repudiated by the other apostles for this action, he was, in a private interview which he had with them, distinctly recognized by them as coördinate with themselves, and they came to an understanding with him that he should go to the Gentiles, while they should continue to work among the Jews ; both alike honoring the grace that was given to them, and giving to each other the right hand of fellowship.

It may seem strange that here Paul makes no reference to the public deliberations of the Council, or to the decree which was adopted by it, and which, specifying a few things from which the Gentiles were to keep themselves, yet left them free from the yoke of the Jewish law as a whole. But the decree was the determination of the church, speaking through the apostles and elders and brethren ; and Paul is arguing here throughout on his own official standing and position ; therefore he keeps himself rigidly to the matter in hand, and suffers no side issue to be raised.

For the same reason it is that, passing all other things, he fixes attention next on his contention with Peter. From the account here given, it would appear that, after the discussion in the assembly at Jerusalem, in which it will be remembered that he took the extremely liberal side, and gave his voice for leaving the Gentiles perfectly free from the yoke of the law, Peter went down to Antioch. On his first arrival, and proba-

bly with the view of showing that he was in full accord in every respect with Paul, he ate with the Gentiles without scruple. After a while, however, certain Jews came from James—that is, not necessarily commissioned by James, but from Jerusalem, the place where James was—and then, fearing them that “were of the circumcision,” Peter withdrew and separated himself. The influence of his example was so serious, that all the Jews went after him, and even Barnabas was carried away with the current. We can readily understand the case, especially when we remember that with all his admirable qualities, Peter was too much a man of impulse, and went frequently from one extreme to another. That scene with the Master upon the lake was typical of the elder son of Jonas throughout his career. He was always the first to start out over a sea of difficulties to meet his Lord, but often, ere he reached Him, his fears overmastered his faith, and he began to sink. It certainly was so in this instance. At first he braved all opposition and despised all prejudice; but the men from Jerusalem got round him, and wrought upon his fears. They represented, perhaps, that a great outcry would be made against his conduct by his friends in the Holy City; that the course which he was taking would create controversy and develop antagonism; that it would seriously interfere with his comfort and mar his usefulness, and that if he had any regard for his own happiness, he should at once retrace his steps. Thus they prevailed upon him to do as they desired. But in Paul’s estimation this conduct was dissimulation. He did not mean to allege, indeed, that Peter

designed to deceive others, for he imputes no motives. But he indicates that Peter's action was dissimulation, in the literal sense of the word, that is, an appearance of being what he really was not. He had not changed his opinions. He was as sound in the faith as he had ever been. But what Paul complained of was, that his alteration of his conduct at that particular juncture was such as to convey the impression that he had changed his convictions; and feeling that something should be done to counteract the evil which would otherwise result, he went directly to his friend and publicly exposed the inconsistency of which he had publicly been guilty.

Let it be clearly understood therefore, that Peter's error was not one of doctrine, but of practice. Hence, they are entirely at fault who bring up this difference between these two apostles as if it disproved the inspiration of either or of both. Inspiration is one thing, sanctification is another. Both indeed are the effects of the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul. In the one He employs the powers of the mind in the communication of truth to others: in the other He operates on them in the formation of the individual's own character. There may be inspiration without sanctification, as in the case of such a one as Balaam; and there may be sanctification without inspiration, as in the case of ordinary believers. In respect of inspiration the two apostles were upon an equality, and the sermons and epistles of Peter are in perfect harmony with the discourses and letters of Paul. But in respect of sanctification they were different. Each had his own distinctive excellen-

ces, and each his own characteristic defects. One of the failings of Peter, as we have seen, was a hasty impulsiveness, which sometimes made him the first in noble daring, and occasionally led him to act with startling inconsistency. But his convictions were right; and it was his knowledge of that fact that led Paul to expostulate with him in the address which is here epitomized, and which presents the finest possible combination of firmness with delicacy, and of faithfulness with affection. It would well repay the most minute consideration; but I must be content with setting before you the substance of the appeal which it makes, and while I do so you will perceive that Paul by introducing it here is at once vindicating his own apostleship, and presenting a most cogent argument against the reasoning of the Judaizers, which it is the main design of this letter to refute. Fitly therefore, does it form the point of transition from the personal to the doctrinal section of the Epistle.

It is something like the following: If you who are a Jew by birth, and therefore have been brought up under the law of Moses, feel yourself at liberty to disregard its prohibitions and to live as you were doing a little while ago after the manner of the Gentiles, it is absurd in you to oblige the Gentiles to conform in everything to the Mosaic institutes. You do not, indeed, insist on that in so many words; but still the natural inference from your present withdrawal from the Gentile Christians, is that you have now come to believe that circumcision is essential to salvation. For this is not a case of conform-

ing to the wishes of a weak brother ; it is a complying with the demands of those who say " Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye can not be saved." Now observe how your conduct affects the fundamental principles of the gospel. We who are Jews, having become convinced that we could not be justified by the works of the law, have sought salvation through faith in Christ ; but if in so doing we are after all found to be transgressors, because we have wilfully neglected the law as an appointed means of salvation, then it must follow that Christ, who taught us to neglect it in that relation, has been to us the minister of sin. That is a conclusion, from which of course you will shrink with horror ; still you must be prepared to face it, or you must admit that by your present conduct you have made yourself a transgressor. There is transgression somewhere. If you were wrong before in eating with the Gentiles, then as you did that under the direct command of the Lord given to you in a vision, he was to you the minister of sin. But if you were right before, then you are wrong now, and you are yourself the transgressor. If you were right in destroying then it is clear that you make yourself a transgressor by building up again the things which you had formally thrown down. There is no other alternative. By your present conduct you are either making Christ the minister of sin, or making yourself a transgressor ; and when the matter is put thus, I know well what will be your answer. For indeed your experience and my own are here identical, and I through the law am dead to the law. Its condemnation killed

me. But Christ killed it; and delivered me, yet not to lawlessness but rather to love, that I might live unto God; and such is my union to him, that I am crucified with him, yet I live, but after all it is not I that live, but he that liveth in me. Thus I do not make the grace of God unnecessary, as I certainly should do if I were to go back to the law for salvation; for if it were possible to obtain righteousness by the law, then there was no need for the death of Christ, and he was sacrificed in vain.

There is nothing said anywhere as to how Peter received this admonition; but from what we know of his character and temperament, we may conclude that he frankly owned his error; and we are sure that no root of bitterness was left by it to spring up and trouble the heart of the apostle of the circumcision, for long after he writes of his censor as "our beloved brother Paul."

The sum of this personal *apologia* then is, that after his conversion Paul received no instruction in the gospel from any of the apostles, and was not commissioned by men; that he had only seen Peter for fifteen days in fourteen years—and that three years after he had been commissioned by Christ himself; that when he had met the apostles in conference at Jerusalem, he had done so as an equal; and that at Antioch he had stood up successfully against the leading apostle, in defence of the liberty of the Gospel; therefore it could not be said with any truth, that he was a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

But before proceeding to the second division of the Epistle, it may be well to see how many facts in the his-

tory of Paul, additional to those which are elsewhere furnished to us, are brought out here ; and to mark how, though incidentally mentioned in the course of this argument, they fit into the other records, in a manner which proves at once the independence of the separate narratives and the truthfulness of them both. Perhaps no portion of Paley's admirable work (*Horæ Paulinæ*) is so rich in undesigned coincidences as that which he has devoted to this Epistle ; and as a specimen of the argument of a book which I fear is too much neglected in these days, but which is of inestimable and perennial value, I will direct your attention to one or two of the points which he makes. We are indebted to this letter for the information that Paul went from Damascus into Arabia ; now see how Paley makes this establish the independence of the Acts and the Epistle, in this convincing style : "If the narrative in the Acts had been made up from the Epistle, it is impossible that this journey should have been passed over in silence ; if the Epistle had been composed out of what the author had read of Paul's history in the Acts, it is unaccountable that it should have been inserted." Bearing in mind then this evidence of the fact that these two writings, the Acts and the Epistles, come from independent sources, see how they confirm each other. The history tells us that Paul was "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God ;" the Epistle says, "I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceed-

ingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." The history affirms that "Saul made havoc in the church;" in the Epistle he confesses "that beyond measure he persecuted the church and wasted it." The history records that he was converted on the way to Damascus and went immediately into that city; the Epistle says, "I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus." Now if you recollect that in the Epistle Damascus has not been before named, and is only now brought in incidentally to give an accurate description of his return journey, you will agree with Paley when he says, "Nothing can be more like simplicity and undesignedness than this." Again the shortness of Paul's stay with Peter in Jerusalem fits in with the words which were heard by Paul while he was praying in the temple and which the historian has preserved: "Make haste! get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." Thus the words of one book are seen to be in incidental conformity with a specification delivered in another book, "a species of consistency," says Paley, "not, I think, usually found in fabulous relations."

The *Doctrinal division* of the Epistle begins with the opening of the third chapter, and extends to the close of the fourth; and the transition to it is made both naturally and easily from the experimental reference with which the first portion concludes. The apostle has affirmed that if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain; and, remembering with what distinctness he had set the Lord before their eyes as evidently crucified among them, he appeals to them whether they had re-

ceived the miraculous gifts of the Spirit in connection with their submission to the law, or with the hearing of faith. He knew what their answer must be; for their beginning had been in the spirit; but if now they were to be made perfect by the flesh, then over and above the absurdity of such an anti-climax they stultified themselves, for all the persecutions which they had endured at the hands of the Jews had been in vain, and they had made themselves martyrs by mistake. Then, as in a later day Luther went behind the Fathers who were quoted in support of justification by works, to the grandfathers, as he called the apostles, who proclaimed justification by faith, so Paul here goes back beyond the law to Abraham, who "believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness," and affirms that the true spiritual descendants of Abraham are those who are seeking salvation by faith. He alleges that the promise made to Abraham, "in thee shall all nations be blessed," was the gospel in germ; that thus the gospel came before the law, and that its blessing now, as in the days of Abraham, was to be obtained through faith. It was indeed true that the law was not of faith; for its foundation principle was this: "The man that doeth them shall live in them." But there was no salvation in that; for they could not keep the precepts of the law, and so the only effect of their attempt would be to bring them under its curse; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Indeed, it was to redeem us from that curse that Christ had condescended to be

made a curse for us in giving himself up to crucifixion on our behalf, and thus it comes to pass that the blessing of Abraham is enjoyed by the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; for they receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

To all this it might perhaps be answered, that as the law came after the promise it virtually annulled it; but there is no force in that objection, for the covenant of God stands through all generations, and is not affected by anything that came after it; and, as that covenant gave the inheritance by promise, the law could not take it back. The law was given by angels in the hand of a mediator, even Moses, who represented not only the people before God, but also God before the people: for a mediator is not a mediator of one, but of two parties; and as in this case one of the parties is God, who is unchangeably faithful to all his promises, it follows that the law, to the covenant of which he was one of the parties, could not be a retraction of the promise.

But if this be so, some one will ask what was the use of the law? It was added, replies Paul, because of the liability of the people to transgressions, and its purpose was to keep them under due restraint until the coming of that seed of whom God in the promise spake to Abraham. The law was the *pædagog*, or slave that kept the child in its minority under strict surveillance until the coming of Christ; but when Christ came, the office of the *pædagog* was at an end, and the boy passed from minority to manhood, from the position of a child under a guardian to that of a full-grown son. The

law served for a disciplinary restraint until Christ came ; but when he appeared the restraint was thrown down ; and Jews and Gentiles alike were introduced by him into the status of full-grown sons of God, or into what the apostle has elsewhere called "the glorious liberty of the children of God" by faith. Thus speaking from the Jewish standpoint, to go back from the gospel to the law was as foolish as it would be for the heir who had attained full possession of a large inheritance at his majority, to abjure it and the liberty of its enjoyment, and voluntarily return to the position of a minor, by placing himself under his old tutors and governors. And though the Gentiles among them had never come under the Jewish law, yet the same principles applied to their old heathenism, which, however degraded it had been, was, equally with Judaism, a system of restraint, and had this in common with it, that, as a ritual, it was made up of precepts and ordinances, and so was a system of law as opposed to grace. Therefore, even for those of them who had been Gentiles, the adoption of the Jewish law would be a going back to a rudimentary bondage to elements which, though far from being so rude and low as heathenism was, were yet in themselves weak and beggarly as every merely ritualistic system must be, now that Christ has absorbed the spirituality that was in them all.

At this point of his argument the apostle breaks off into an earnest and affectionate appeal to his readers in which an effective contrast is drawn between their first reception of him when he preached to them in weakness, and their altered feelings toward him now that they

seemed to regard him as their enemy because he had told them the truth. He affirms that his attachment to them is unabated, and beseeches them, as his little children of whom he travailed in birth again until Christ be formed in them, that they should return to their first love. Then knowing the allegorical use which his antagonists made of many portions of the law, he turned their own weapons against themselves, by taking the history of Isaac and Ishmael as an illustration both parabolical and prophetic of the argument which he had just enforced. The sons of Abraham were two: the one, Ishmael, was of the bond woman Hagar, and was of the flesh; the other, Isaac, was of the free woman Sarah, and was by promise; but Ishmael and his mother were cast out and Isaac and his mother were retained, according to the command, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Now the spiritual analogues to these historical yet typical characters are as follows. Hagar represents the Sinaitic covenant, that of the law, and has her issue in the earthly Jerusalem, which is in spiritual bondage with her children. Sarah represents the covenant of promise, and issues in the heavenly Jerusalem, that city of which even now the Christian is a denizen, and which is the home of spiritual freedom. Thus the difference between Paul and the Judaizers was that while they both alike traced their parentage to Abraham, he claimed to be a son of the free woman and they were the sons of the slave. He was a child of promise, and they were children of the flesh; and that

accounted perfectly for their antagonism to him ; for just as Ishmael mocked Sarah and Isaac and he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now. Thus even their opposition to him made it only the more apparent that he and his adherents were not the children of the bondwoman but of the free.

The argument of this portion of the Epistle turns on the use of the law, and it is needful to a right understanding of it that we clearly perceive the meaning which here belongs to the term "adoption," when it is said that Christ came "to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons." Usually adoption denotes the reception of a stranger into the family as a son ; but here it is the elevation to the status of full-grown sonship, of those who having been children from the first, were up till that time under the charge of tutors and governors ; and so the view which he gives of the law is that of restraint, rather than of education. It is true that elsewhere he speaks of the law as having been of signal service in the religious training of the people, and our translation, by giving the rendering here, that the law was our schoolmaster "*to bring us to Christ,*" would seem to favor the idea that he lays stress on that aspect of it in this Epistle. But the office of the pædagogus was one of control rather than of instruction, and the proper translation, as is made evident from his contrast later on between the heir as a servant and as a son, ought to be "the law was our pædagogus until Christ." Hence, when Christ came the occupation of the law was

gone. There was no further need for its operation, and they who were set free from it came under the higher principle of love. They were absolved from the control of minute restrictions, only however to give free play to the strength of their filial affection as the full-grown sons of God.

So when he proceeds to the *Practical part* of his letter in the fifth chapter and bids his readers stand fast in their liberty, he is careful to distinguish between liberty and license; and warns them against using it for an occasion to the flesh. He contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit; and after an enumeration of evils, each of which is in itself an indication that the individual guilty of it is still carnally-minded, he holds up to admiration the one grape-cluster of Christian graces, which is the Eshcol earnest of the heavenly inheritance; and the presence of which not in single virtues, but in a group, is needed in order to authenticate it as the result of the Spirit's work.

Then, after brief but pointed exhortations to mutual burden-bearing, to liberality and to unflagging perseverance, he sums up in a few comprehensive sentences, each of which, like Luther's words long after, is in itself a "half-battle." He bids them take note of his affectionate solicitude for them, as manifested in the fact that he had written to them, not through an amanuensis as usual, but with his own hand; and they might see how much that effort cost him, when they looked upon the large letters which, owing to his infirmity, he had been compelled to make. He contrasts the conduct of

the Judaizers, whose desire was only to glory in external ordinances, with his absorbing purpose to glory only in the cross of Christ. He asserts that the one grand indispensable thing is, not to be circumcised, but to be created anew in Christ Jesus. And alluding to the fact that the ownership of a slave was attested by the brands which had been burned into his flesh, he declares that he carries with him the evidence of his apostleship in the scars of persecution with which he was marked. "From henceforth, let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks," or stigmata, "of the Lord Jesus." Then, calling them once more by the endearing name of "Brethren," he concludes as usual with a benediction.

Such is a brief analysis of this unique Epistle. We cannot tell what effect it produced upon the churches to whom it was primarily addressed. But many centuries later, when the truths which it contends for had been buried under the rites and ceremonies of the Papal church, the exposition of this portion of Scripture by Martin Luther was one of the most powerful agencies in giving depth and breadth and permanence to the Reformation with which the name of the German preacher is imperishably associated. And now in our times, when many among us are seeking to give undue prominence to ritual observances, the principles which it enforces have come again into importance, so that its study is incumbent upon all who would make themselves men who have "understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." For what is true of circumcision, which

was the ordinance of the old covenant, is just as true of baptism and the Lord's supper, which are the ordinances of the new. Everything which in any degree would tend to make the cross of Christ of non-effect ; everything which would lead men to glory in an external rite, rather than in the death of the Lord Jesus ; everything which would exalt baptism and the Lord's Supper above that faith which worketh by love, and make them of more importance than the new creation which is the result of the work of God's Spirit upon the soul, is to be resisted with an energy as intense and a zeal as vehement and an earnestness as sublime as those which Paul manifested in the instance of the Galatian apostasy. When men, anywhere, insist on something as essential to salvation, other than that faith in Christ which has received the promise of the Spirit, we are to give place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel may continue with us. Nay more ; if the inconsistency of one who is recognized as a pillar of the church should seem to lend the influence of his name to error, we are to withstand him to the face. We are to make the cross of Christ the touchstone and test of every novelty in religion ; and if the necessity of that is repudiated, or its efficiency denied, then no considerations of a personal character are to prevent us from opposing the innovator with all our might. The truth of the Gospel, and the honor of the cross, are to be dearer to us than all else ; and however tolerant we may be in regard to minor matters, however much like Paul himself we may seek to become "all things to all men," we are to be firm and

resolute and uncompromising here—not scrupling even to use the language of the apostle, “though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be anathema.” The danger of our day, unless I greatly misread the indications of the spiritual barometer, lies just here. In our zeal for liberality we are becoming latitudinarian, and forgetting that there is a point where intolerance is necessary in order to the very preservation of liberty. This letter was written in the interests of freedom. Its conclusion is, “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free;” and yet, for the very purpose of maintaining that liberty, Paul here hurls his anathema at the Judaizers’ heads. Let us not forget, therefore, that there is an intolerance in the Gospel as well a toleration. We may, and we ought, to exercise the fullest forbearance in regard to minor matters; but there must be no toleration of treason to the cross; for the toleration of such treason is always treachery. I say not, indeed, that all such errors should be put down by force. God forbid. But I do say that they should be denounced by every loyal servant of the Lord, and that the church should absolve itself from all complicity with the errorists. And though there be many who would cry out against such a course as bigoted, I would rather, even in the interests of freedom itself, have, if you choose to call it so, the bigotry of Paul, than the indifference of him who counts nothing essential, and who is “everything by turns and nothing long.” Luther was no foe to freedom; and in the proportion in which like him we are intolerant of everything that compromises the honor of Christ

or the doctrine of his cross, we shall conserve and widen the liberty which he did so much to secure. So let us raise anew the shout of Paul, making it our motto, not for the moment of enthusiasm merely, but for all our lives. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

THE
EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS



BY REV. MARVIN R. VINCENT, D. D.,

NEW YORK.

THE

Epistle to the Philippians.

ON a spring day in the year of our Lord 61, the crowd of idlers who usually were found lounging on the quay at Puteoli might have been seen watching an approaching vessel. The words, "An Alexandrian corn-ship," passed from mouth to mouth. From the sheltered nook in the north of the Bay of Naples, where lay Puteoli, the Liverpool of Rome, the loungers could see the vessel as she came up between the island of Capri and the Minervan cape, and would recognize her character from her not striking her topsails as other vessels were compelled to do on entering the bay. She swept past the lighthouse on the end of the mole, of which seventeen arches may still be seen by the modern tourist; and as the throng buzzed round the landing-place, eager to catch a sight of her passengers and to pick up scraps of news from Africa, they met, passing to the shore, a centurion and some soldiers having in charge prisoners for Rome. Perhaps few noticed among these unfortunates a somewhat undersized man with keen, aquiline features,

an oval face shaded with gray hair, bushy eyebrows, pointed beard, worn and travel-stained, as if from a long and hard journey.

It was thus that the great apostle to the Gentiles made his first appearance in Italy—a prisoner. Assaulted by the Jews at Jerusalem, Paul had put himself as a Roman citizen under the protection of Claudius Lysias, the commandant of the Roman garrison, and had been sent by him to Felix, the procurator of Judæa, whose headquarters were at Cæsarea.

Here Paul had been detained for two years, appearing meanwhile before Felix and his successor Festus, and again before Herod Agrippa II., then king of Chalcis, during his complimentary visit to the new governor. Festus having desired Paul to go back to Jerusalem and be tried under his protection, Paul refused, falling back on his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to the emperor.

The governor thus had no alternative but to send him to Rome under guard. The journey was made by sea, and involved the memorable shipwreck at Malta; and it is at the end of this journey that we now meet the apostle at Puteoli.

Time forbids us to follow him along the Appian Way to the metropolis. Once in Rome, he became the subject of "the law's delay." The official documents in his case had probably been lost in the shipwreck, and it would be long before duplicates could be obtained. The prosecutor and witnesses had to be brought from Syria to Italy, a tedious and perilous journey. Nero the em-

peror was full of caprice, and so averse to business that it was only at rare intervals that he could be persuaded to hear a suit and pronounce a verdict.

Thus began another confinement of two years, yet not a season of idleness, as we shall soon see; and in order that we may understand some of the points at which Paul's activity was brought to bear, and to which reference is made in the epistle under consideration, we must glance at certain of the elements of Roman society with which the apostle found himself in contact.

And, first, there were the JEWS. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Acts we are told that Paul, three days after his arrival, called the chief of the Jews together, and strove to disabuse them of the unfavorable impression respecting himself which he naturally supposed that the Asiatic Jews would have endeavored to create among them in advance of his arrival; and that, on a subsequent day, he defended and expounded the gospel in their hearing. The Jews formed a very large and influential community in Rome. In such numbers had they, with other Orientals, poured into the city, that a contemporary poet represented their influx by the metaphor of the Syrian river Orontes pouring itself into the Roman Tiber. The draught upon the specie of the city, made by the annual payment by each Jew of about twenty-five cents towards the expenses of the temple, was so great as to cause complaint. They were feared and hated, yet they stood high in the favor of the government. Jewish slaves and freedmen rose to influence in patrician households, and Jewish names are still found in the aristo-

cratic burial-places on the Appian road. Their assemblies were countenanced, their temples received gifts from the emperor, and they were admitted to share in the public distribution of corn. Not only this, but their faith became fashionable. The religious dilettanti of Rome affected Judaism, and professed to honor the name of Moses and the sacred books. Poppæa, Nero's consort, than whom no viler creature ever disgraced a throne or dishonored a home, was their patroness; and so successful were they in the work of proselyting Greeks and Romans, that Seneca, Nero's tutor, said, "the Jewish faith is now received on every hand. The conquered have given laws to the conquerors." It was among these, as we shall presently see, that the "envy and strife" and the attempt "to add affliction" to Paul's bonds (1:15) were chiefly nourished. From them came the "dogs," the "evil workers," "the concision," to whom he alludes in chap. 3:2.

2d. There were the CHRISTIANS. In ch. 1:14 reference is made to "the brethren," and in 4:22 to "the saints," especially "they of Cæsar's household." In Acts 28:14 we read that, on landing at Puteoli, on his way to Rome, the apostle found a Christian community evidently in intimate relations with the church at Rome, since they communicated Paul's arrival to it, and called out the deputation which met him at Appii Forum. There was, then, a church at Rome when Paul arrived there; not organized, indeed, but numerous, since, three years before his arrival, he had addressed to the Roman Christians the most important of his Epistles, in which he

sends salutations to more persons than in any other. We know very little about its members, but the presumption is that they belonged mostly to lower social grades, yet were not for that reason altogether without influence. Every student of Roman history knows what a large and often terrible part was played by petted servants of the imperial households, and what multitudes of them were required not only to minister to the sensuality and luxury of their royal masters, but also to serve their intellectual demands. Hence among the servants, the freedmen, even the slaves of Cæsar's household, one might easily come into contact with secretaries, professors, physicians, and philosophers. Singularly enough there was discovered some years since a burying-place belonging to the emperor just preceding Nero, a sepulchre of the kind known as a "columbarium," or dovecot, because its walls were lined with pigeon-holes for the reception of little caskets containing the ashes of the dead. In this were found many of the identical names mentioned in the salutations of the Epistle to the Romans: Amplias, Urbanus, Stachys, Tryphæna, and Tryphosa, with others. "If," as Mr. Merivale remarks, "these are indeed the very individuals to whom he sends his salutations, we are authorized to conclude that the faith as known at Rome before his own arrival there had already made its way within the precincts of the palace itself." The gospel was already heard among them "of Cæsar's household."

3d. There was the PRÆTORIAN GUARD. In the thirteenth verse of the first chapter, we read or ought to

revised
read, "my bonds in Christ are manifest throughout the prætorian guard and to all others." The scene of Paul's confinement is a matter of conjecture. It may have been the camp of the prætorian guards, to the northeast of the city, outside the walls, which was large enough to have contained within its precincts lodgings for prisoners under military custody; so that Paul could dwell, as we are told he did, (Acts 28:30,) in "his own hired house," and yet have been within the camp. These prætorians formed the imperial guard. They were picked men, ten thousand in number, and all of Italian birth. Their pay was higher and their privileges greater than those of other troops. Their power was enormous and dangerous. Already they held the empire in their hands, and the day came at last when, having murdered their emperor, they put the empire of the world up at auction on the city wall and knocked it down to the highest bidder. Into the camp of these haughty, licentious troops the apostle was thrown, and as each soldier took his turn in guarding him, he was chained to his hand. Hence comes his frequent mention of his "*bonds*" in these Epistles, as in Eph. 6:20, where he says "I am an ambassador in bonds," using the word which means the coupling chain. Relieving one another in the duty of mounting guard, the members of the corps would come successively into personal contact with the apostle; so that it is easy to understand how he could say to the Philippians that his bonds had "borne witness to the gospel throughout the Imperial guard.."

We have thus the Roman setting to these four

Epistles, to which let us now turn our attention. These four Epistles—to the Colossians, Philippians, Ephesians, and Philemon—are perhaps the richest fruit of Paul's first imprisonment. No serious question arises as to their authorship, or as to the place of their composition. They are generally conceded to be Paul's, and to have been written at Rome. A very few critics have vainly endeavored to show that they were composed at Cæsarea during the apostle's two years' confinement.

On the *order* of their composition, however, a question of some nicety arises. It is generally conceded that Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, belong together, being written and despatched about the same time; while Philippians stands by itself. The question is whether these three were first written, or Philippians. The majority of critics adopt the opinion which places Philippians *last*, basing it on the following arguments.

1. That the progress of the gospel indicated in the Epistle would require a longer time than would be allowed if the Epistle were written early in the imprisonment.—But we have already seen that Paul *found* a strong body of Christians on his arrival.

2. That the names of Paul's associates, Luke and Aristarchus, mentioned in the salutations in Colossians and Philemon, are not mentioned in Philippians, thus showing that they had left Rome before the Epistle to the Philippians was written.—But, if this proves the later composition of Philippians, why does it not equally prove the later composition of Ephesians, since neither of those names occurs there? Or, to take another case,

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why is Jesus Justus, who is saluted in Colossians, not saluted in Philemon, which was written at the same time, sent to the same place, and carried by the same messenger? The matter is sufficiently explained by the fact that the salutations in Philippians are *general*, "all the saints," which may have included these names, while those in the others are special.

3. That the numerous journeys between Rome and Philippi, to announce the apostle's captivity, to carry the Philippians' contribution to Paul, to announce the sickness of Epaphroditus, and again to tell Epaphroditus that the Philippians had heard of his sickness, required more time than the early composition of the Epistle would allow.—But it is not proved that these four journeys were made or were necessary; and if they were, the time required in going between the two places was a little less than a month. It has been supposed by some that Aristarchus left the vessel at Myra, and went to his home in Macedonia before going to Rome; in which case he could have announced to the Philippians the apostle's journey to Rome, and Epaphroditus might have left at once and have met Paul on his arrival in Rome.

4. It is said that the tone of the Philippian Epistle is more despondent than that of the others; indicating the depression attending a long confinement.—On the contrary the Philippian Epistle is perhaps, on the whole, the most cheery of all Paul's writings. Even his possible sufferings are contemplated with joyful hope. Look, for instance, at 1:21, 22. So marked is this that Bengel,

a commentator who knows how to compress a great deal into a word, says, "The sum of the Epistle is, 'I rejoice, do ye rejoice.'"

Thus, as it seems to me, the evidences fail to substantiate the later date of the Epistle, while, on the other hand, its resemblance in style and contents to the earlier group of the Epistles, especially Romans, and the fact that Ephesians and Colossians both deal with advanced forms of error, and assume a larger development of the church than appears in Philippians, seem to indicate that Ephesians and Colossians ought to be placed as late as possible, and Philippians as early as possible. I therefore follow the minority in placing Philippians first instead of last; somewhere about 61 or 62 A. D.*

Let us now try and get some idea of the place and people to which this Epistle is addressed.

Philippi was in Macedonia. Travellers by sea, like Paul, landed at Neapolis, and then travelled ten miles over the mountains along the Roman highway to Philippi.

The city commanded the high road between Europe and Asia. It was a Roman colony; or, in other words, a little Rome, in which every feature of the parent civilization was reproduced as minutely as possible. The civil and military organization, the language, the names of the magistrates, were the same as at Rome. As we read the story of Paul's visit as told by Luke, we discover a Roman sentiment in the protest of the officers against the recep-

* I have followed Professor Lightfoot, both in the argument and in the conclusion; but have carefully gone over the ground with other authorities, and have reached his conclusion independently.

tion of strange customs in religion. It is because Paul is a Roman citizen that he obtains redress and apology for his imprisonment from the magistrates, and in the Epistle to the Philippians it is the franchise of Roman citizenship which he uses to symbolize that of the kingdom of Christ: "Our citizenship is in heaven" (3:20).

From its central position between Asia and Europe, on a thoroughfare of traffic, a variety of national types met and mingled in Philippi. There were the Greek, the Roman, the Asiatic, representing all varieties of philosophy and of religious speculation; Greek and Roman paganism, Greek skepticism, Oriental mysticism, Jewish legalism. It was a grand theatre on which to demonstrate the power of the gospel to deal effectively with all phases of nationality and of faith alike, with both sexes and with all social grades. Thus the three conversions which were specially identified with Paul's first visit represented. 1st, three *national types*. Lydia, the purple-seller, was an Asiatic of Thyatira, the crazed slave was a Greek, and the jailer a Roman. 2d. Three types of religion. Lydia was a Jewess, the damsel a Greek pagan, and the jailer a Roman pagan "of the politico-religious type, if he preserved the characteristic features of his race." 3d. Three social conditions. Lydia was a rich merchantwoman; the Greek sorceress was a slave, a chattel without social or political rights; the jailer was a subordinate officer under the government. In the early history of the Philippian church there is therefore illustrated one of the great features of the work of the gospel as set forth in Paul's words to the Gala-

tians (3 : 28) : "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Another interesting fact, and one which seems to interpret at least one significant allusion in the Epistle, is the exceptional position of woman in Macedonia. Not only popular prejudice, but the deliberate verdict of Grecian wisdom in its best age, asserted the natural inferiority of woman. The Athenian law enacted that everything which a man might do by the counsel or request of a woman should be null in law. She was little better than a slave. To educate her was to advertise her as a harlot. Her apartments were a prison, her companions mainly children and slaves.

But in Macedonia, for some reason, woman was evidently held in high esteem. Monuments were erected to women by public bodies ; and what is very significant, records of male proper names are found in Macedonian inscriptions, formed on the name of the mother instead of on that of the father. Macedonian women were permitted to hold property, and were treated as mistresses of the house. These facts are borne out by the account of Paul's labors in Macedonia. In Thessalonica, Berea, and Philippi there were additions of women of rank to the church ; and the prominence of women in church affairs at Philippi appears from the fourth chapter of the Epistle, where two ladies, Euodia and Syntyche—or, to give the English equivalents, "Sweet Scent" and "Happy-go-lucky"—are besought by the apostle to reconcile their differences which had caused disturbance in the

church, and are commended to his colleagues as women who labored with him in the Lord.

Paul, as you will remember, was summoned to Macedonia from Troas by the vision of the Macedonian man saying, "Come over and help us." Taking ship at Troas, and accompanied by Silas, Timothy, and Luke, he proceeded to Neapolis, on the southern coast of Macedonia, and thence, as we have seen, along the Egnatian road, one of the great Roman highways, ten miles in a north-westerly direction, to Philippi.

With the coming of Paul and his companions to Philippi, the gospel first entered Europe. The first Christian service was held in the Jews' praying-place by the little river Gangas; and Lydia, the first Christian convert, opened her heart to Christ, and her home and purse to his ambassadors.

I need not dwell on the familiar stories of the healing of the possessed damsel, the imprisonment and scourging, and the conversion of the jailer. Paul's first visit closed with the persecution which violated his right as a Roman citizen by scourging him, and condemned him to a night in the inner or lower prison. If the Philippian jailer continued in office, it is a suggestive fact that Paul should have left a Christian convert in charge of the very prison to which so many would be likely to follow the apostle for Christ's sake.

But Paul did not forget to provide for the nurture of the infant church. He left Luke behind him to complete its organization. Five years later he sent Timothy and Erastus, and shortly after made, himself, a second visit

(2 Cor. 1:15-17; conf. 1 Cor. 16:5, 6), which was followed almost immediately by a third, owing to a plot against his life which compelled him to return from Corinth to Macedonia. (Acts 19:21; 20:1, 3.) From this time we hear nothing of the Philippian church until Paul's letter is written to it from Rome.

The Philippians had been already marked by their generosity in contributing to Paul's needs. After the close of his first visit, while he was still in Macedonia, they had more than once sent him timely assistance to Thessalonica. (Phil. 4:16.) When from Macedonia he passed on to Achaia, fresh supplies from Philippi reached him at Corinth. (Phil. 4:15; 2 Cor. 11:8, 9.) Then when they heard of his being sent to Rome, Epaphroditus was despatched with their gift. Epaphroditus, having come to Rome, not only discharged his commission as the bearer of the gift, but entered so heartily into Paul's work that he fell sick. "He staked his life on the hazard," says Paul (Phil. 2:30), "that he might supply the lack of your personal ministrations." He recovered, but with returning health came home-sickness. He feared that his friends in Philippi might be alarmed by the tidings of his sickness; so that in the year 61 or 62 he started for Macedonia, carrying with him the Epistle to the Philippians. The general state of the church, as gathered from this Epistle and elsewhere, may be thus briefly summed up: They were *poor*. In 2 Cor. 8:1, 2, we read of their *deep* poverty. They were *in trouble*, probably from persecution. In the same passage we read of their "great trial of affliction," and in

the last four verses of the first chapter of this Epistle, the mention of "adversaries" and conflict, together with the figure of the arena which underlies the whole passage, seem to indicate a state of persecution. They were in danger of dissension, if not already suffering from it. To such a condition the exhortation to humility and the warning against strife in 2:1-4 are addressed, also the admonition "to stand fast in one spirit" (1:27), to "do all things without murmurings and disputings" (2:14), and the words to the two ladies at the beginning of chapter 4, counselling them to "be of the same mind in the Lord."

Coming now to the Epistle itself, our first duty is to present a brief analysis of its contents. This must needs be unsystematic, for the Epistle itself is utterly unsystematic. As Professor Lightfoot remarks, "Of plan and arrangement there is even less than in St. Paul's letters generally. The origin and motive of the Epistle are hardly consistent with any systematic treatment. As in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, the torrent of personal feeling is too strong to submit to any such restraint. Even the threefold division into the explanatory, doctrinal, and hortatory portions, which may generally be observed in his Epistles is obliterated here."*

The opening salutation is of unusual length, consisting of the first eleven verses of the first chapter, and containing thanks to God for their Christian fellowship and coöperation, expressions of confidence as to the com-

* Int. to Com. on Philip., p. 67.

pletion of the good work begun in them by God's Spirit, and prayer for their growth in grace. From 12 to 26 he describes his personal circumstances, the progress of the gospel at Rome, the work of his opposers, the zeal of his friends, and his own feelings as to the possibility of his death or life. With verse 27 he begins an exhortation to Christian unity and courage which extends to the 4th verse of chapter 2, where he enters upon the example of Christ as an exhibition of the humility essential to the maintenance of fellowship, expanding into that magnificent picture of our Lord's humiliation: a passage profoundly suggestive and inspiring; yet of which a recent writer has said that "the diversity of opinion among its interpreters is enough to fill the student with despair, and to afflict him with intellectual paralysis."* A few words of exhortation follow, and he closes chapter 2 with an expression of hope of his speedy release, his purpose of sending Timothy, and the announcement of the recent illness and contemplated return of Epaphroditus. The word "*finally*," at the beginning of chapter 3, seems to indicate that the apostle was about to close the Epistle with some parting exhortations to unity and peace: but some tidings may have reached him at this point respecting the attempts of the Judaizers to corrupt his converts, reminding him that the same influences may be at work in Philippi. At the 2d verse of chap. 3, therefore, he diverges into a warning against these; and proceeds to contrast his teaching with theirs—the true circumcision with the false; the power of faith with the inefficiency

* Bruce, "Humiliation of Christ."

of works ; all of which he illustrates by a comparison of his own early education, prospects, and aims as a Jew, with his present hopes as a Christian (to ver. 15), following this with an exhortation to steadfastness, a lament over the victims of sensuality and worldliness, and a contrast of these with the citizen of heaven, who, instead of minding earthly things, looks for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus from heaven. With the beginning of chap. 4, he resumes the line broken off at the beginning of chap. 3. He exhorts two prominent ladies to reconciliation. At ver. 4, he says, "*Farewell,*" not "*rejoice,*" "in the Lord:" following the salutation with some parting admonitions to high aims and holy thoughts of things lovely and pure, ver. 8, and after dwelling at some length as has been aptly said "with a graceful intermingling of manly independence and courteous delicacy" upon the gift brought from them by Epaphroditus, he closes with salutations and the usual benediction.

The pervading tone of the Epistle is imparted by the apostle's strong personal attachment to the church. The only Epistle which bears comparison with it in this particular, is the first to the Thessalonians. He thanks God at every remembrance of their Christian fellowship from the first day (1:3-5). He congratulates himself on being the subject of their prayers (1:19). He is assured that the continuance of his life and work will be not only profitable but grateful to them (1:24-26). He rejoices at being "poured out" like a libation for their sakes (2:17). He speaks of his sufferings as such a man is wont to speak only to his nearest friends (1:7,

16, 23, 29, 30). He longs after them "in the heart of Jesus Christ" (1:8). They are his "joy" and his "crown" (4:1). In the very opening salutation of the letter he drops his official title, and greets them as a friend and fellow-servant of Jesus Christ. The tone of the Epistle is one of almost unmitigated commendation. This puts it in strong contrast with the "sustained severity" of the Epistle to the Galatians, and the sharp reproachfulness of portions of 1st and 2d Corinthians. There is no more personal feeling expressed here than in Galatians, 1st Corinthians, the second part of 2d Corinthians, and 1st Thessalonians; but it is of a different character from that of the three first named. In Galatians, the feeling is intense, indignant, and sustained. In 2d Corinthians it is affectionate, but apologetic and self-vindictory, changing from a "conciliatory and affectionate strain of entreaty" in the first part, to a tone of stern command and almost of menace. Expressions of devotion to the church blend with sarcasm and irony. Thankfulness and indignation struggle in his mind like cross tides. The Epistle to the Philippians, on the other hand, flows on to the end in a steady stream of thankful joy and commendation. The feeling has equal strength and depth; but less tension: equal energy, but less fire. In 2d Corinthians we have the expression of a heart relieved by the penitence of offending brethren. In Philippians we have the calm of unimpaired confidence. It is without the sense of restraint which attaches to Colossians, where the writer cannot forget that he is in a controversial attitude, and is treating truth in its relations to

heresy. It more resembles Ephesians in the freedom with which Paul gives himself up to those spontaneous impulses of thought which lead him away from the direct line of his subject into the awful depths of some divine counsel, or bear upward his soul in some impassioned prayer. At the same time, the Philippian Epistle does not imply so high a capacity as that of the Ephesian believers for receiving the higher mysteries of the faith, such as the unity of mankind in Christ, and the symbolism of the marriage relation as setting forth the relation of Christ to his church. In this epistle we see none of Paul's "sensitiveness about the behavior of his converts to himself, which appears in Galatians and 2d Corinthians; none of the earnestness about points of difference, none of the consciousness of the precarious basis of his authority in the existing state of the two churches."* There is the assumption throughout of frank understanding and Christian friendship, the substitution of lively hopefulness for the gloomy foreboding of the 2d Corinthian Epistle.

The second general characteristic of the Epistle is the absence of formulated doctrinal teaching, which throws it into such marked contrast with the Roman, Galatian, and Colossian Epistles. In Philippians we have the substance and heart of the Gospel, rather than its relation to any specific form of error. The doctrinal points elaborated in other Epistles are here matters of allusion, rather than of development or of discussion. The document is not a theologian's lecture nor a bishop's encyclical.

* Jowett, cit. by Lightfoot, Intro. to Galatians.

cal, but the affectionate letter of a father to a household. Between the apostle and his readers there is assumed a community of faith in the truths to which he confidently appeals for the enforcement of all that is honest, pure, lovely, and of good report.

This *ethical* character of the Epistle is very strongly marked; by which I mean that its tendency is to exhibit doctrine on the side of practical duty, rather than on its abstract side. In this particular the whole Epistle partakes largely of the character of the twelfth chapter of Romans. When he praises them, it is for their active coöperation in the defence and confirmation of the gospel (1:7). His exhortation centres upon their "conversation," or daily behavior, that it may be such as "becometh the gospel;" that they "stand fast" in "*striving* for the faith of the gospel" (1:27); that they "work out their own salvation" (2:12); that they be "blameless and harmless," so as to be "lights in the world" amid a perverse people (2:15). The finest example of this, however, occurs in the second chapter, in the description of the humiliation of Jesus. There he describes, in one of the grandest passages of inspired rhetoric to be found in Scripture, the descent of Christ from the glory of God to the conditions of our earthly state: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the

death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Had this passage occurred in the Epistle to the Colossians, it would probably have been used to illustrate the doctrine of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ; to show how the incarnation of the Son of God contradicted the Gnostic, whose doctrine of the inherent evil of matter led him to shrink from associating God with a material body, and consequently made him resolve Christ into a phantom, a mere semblance or effigy of flesh and blood. But in this Epistle this whole tremendous passage is brought to bear upon the practical duty of humility: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ."

The section of the Epistle which, more than any other, partakes of a doctrinal character, is that embraced in chapter 3. The apostle there deals with two doctrinal errors—*Judaism* and *Antinomianism*. Yet, to repeat what has been hinted at already, his treatment of the former error is significant of the earlier date of this Epistle as compared with Ephesians and Colossians. It marks a transition-point between the discussion of the old Pharisaic Judaism and the discussion of the new philosophic Gnosticism with which the two latter Epistles are occupied, and which was to disturb the church for two centuries to come. "In the Epistle to the Philip-

pians we have," to quote the words of Professor Lightfoot, "the spent-wave of the old Judaic controversy."

At the same time you observe that within this chapter the contrast of faith and law, and of the true and false circumcision, are sharply emphasized, and the introduction to the chapter is marked by three epithets, "dogs," "evil workers," "the concision," the severity of which indicate strong feeling on the writer's part.

We are through these epithets introduced to a phase of Judaism and to a party in the Christian church from whom Paul experienced the most bitter and persistent opposition; namely, the *Judaizers*. These were nominally Christians, who accepted Jesus as the Messiah, but as the Saviour of Israel only. They insisted therefore that Christ's kingdom could be entered only through the gate of Judaism. Circumcision was their watchword. Circumcised converts alone were in a state of full acceptance with God. They appeared quite early in the history of the church. These were they of whom we read in Acts 15 : 1, who came down from Judæa and disturbed the church at Antioch by teaching the converts, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

Your attention has already been called to the numbers and influence of the Jews in Rome. In the provinces of the empire these were still greater; and however the Judaizers might be disowned by the pure Jews for their position on the Messianic question, they could avail themselves of their influence and organization everywhere to undermine the faith of the new converts, to

establish the rite of circumcision and the law of Moses, and especially to attack Paul. As the centre and soul of the movement towards the Gentiles, he was the object of their special hatred and abuse. They challenged his birth, his authority, his motives. They charged him with weakness, with vacillation, with cowardice, with serving his own interest under a cloak of disinterestedness. "In a thousand ways they struck at his reputation, and exerted themselves to counteract his work. 'Paul must be destroyed,' was as truly their watchword, as the cry for the destruction of Carthage had been of old to the Roman senator."* These are the persons referred to in the sixteenth verse of the first chapter, who "preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds." These are the "dogs," the "evils workers" of chapter third, against whom the Philippians are warned—"the concision;" that is, those whose circumcision, being a mere form, was nothing more nor better than the senseless mutilations which the priests of Baal inflicted on themselves on Carmel, or which were practised by the worshippers of Cybele, of whose orgies he had probably learned in Galatia. Against these his words in the third chapter are aimed—contrasting the doctrine of salvation by works with that of salvation by grace; claiming that those who are saved by faith are the true Israel; illustrating the futility of lineage and of works from his own example. The whole passage, from the third to the eleventh verse, is well worthy of study, since it is full of

* Stanley, "Sermons and Lectures on the Apostolic Age."

incidental hints lurking in single words, and not always apparent in our version; hints which, while they serve to illustrate the main point in the discussion, are also answers to the assertions of the Judaizers. For instance, "We *serve* God in the spirit." The *choice* word, used by a Jew to express his *service* as one of God's elect, is here boldly claimed by Paul for a Gentile Christian's service. He alone is of the *true* Israel. Such an application of the word would appeal to a Jew just as the phrase "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" would appeal to you if a Chinaman should apply it to the worship of Joss. So, too, in recounting his own lineage and education, it is interesting to see with what care his words are chosen. Do the Judaizers depreciate him in comparison with the apostles of the circumcision? He was circumcised the eighth day; and thus proven to be neither an Ishmaelite, who would not be circumcised until his thirteenth year, nor a proselyte, who would be circumcised in mature life, but a Jew according to the law. Do they challenge the purity of his descent? He is not only a *Hebrew*, which would merely distinguish him from a Greek-speaking Jew: not only a *Jew* as distinguished from a *Gentile*. He is of the stock of *Israel*, the name which expressed the dignity and glory of the people as God's covenant people, not descending through Ishmael nor Edom, but direct from *Israel*, the prince of God. Do they challenge his Palestinian birth? He was indeed born in Asia Minor, but he is of the tribe of Benjamin, the only one of the patriarchs born in the land of promise. He is of ancestors, too, who had not, like so many

others, given up their native tongue, but had continued to be Hebrew speakers. He is a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Thus the old theme, so thoroughly and exhaustively treated in Romans and Galatians—citizenship in Christ, as against Jewish pretension ; faith in Jesus, as against fleshly descent and fleshly ordinances, is here treated again, but this time mainly in the light of Paul's own experience, with an undercurrent of self-defence against the Judaizing "dogs" and "evil workers" who are disturbing the Roman converts and seeking to add affliction to his bonds.

The second doctrinal error is *Antinomianism*, the extreme reaction from Judaism, the doctrine which declares that the gospel does away with the obligations of the moral law. This is handled from the sixteenth to the nineteenth verse of the third chapter. Though the Christian brethren are made free in Christ Jesus, let them remember that they are nevertheless to walk by a *rule* ; and not like those who have given themselves up to sensuality, making "their God their belly," forgetting that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ;" glorying in the unfettered license which is their "shame," and having their minds set on "earthly things." The treatment of this error is incidental ; not argumentative, but hortative, and illustrated by the contrast with those (ver. 20) whose "citizenship is in heaven," whose mind is set on "heavenly things," whose God is the coming Saviour, and whose end is a change into his likeness.

Thus it will be seen that the attitude of this Epistle towards doctrinal error is none the less decided and uncompromising for its lack of the distinctively doctrinal

type of Romans or Galatians. Its dealing with these errors reminds us, by the intensity of its language, that the writer is still the Paul of the Galatian and Corinthian Epistles, yet it cannot but be noted how this, as all the other Epistles, bears witness to the discriminating quality of a ripe charity; to the sound wisdom of Christian love which knows how to draw the line between weakness and perverseness, between the lapses of an undisciplined will and the obstinate wickedness of an estranged heart, between the mistakes of an untutored conscience and the selfish persistence of an unholy desire.

But while the Epistle commends itself to those who are concerned with the *substance* rather than with the *processes* of Christian doctrine, while it is ethical rather than controversial in character, it gives, on the other hand, no countenance to the effort to resolve the gospel into a mere code of morals. The peculiar value of this Epistle is its exhibition of the gospel as centring in a *person* and a *life*, rather than in a *code* or a dogmatic system. The personal Christ is its very heart, though his person and work are treated from its own point of view as distinguished from others of the Epistles. In Romans and Galatians we see Christ in his relation to the Jewish law and ordinances. In Colossians his divine majesty and authority are emphasized as against Gnostic angel-worship and asceticism. In Ephesians we see him as the head of the body, the church; the chief corner-stone of a building; his divine energy informing the earthly church, himself the centre and perfection of the promised church above. The controversial element underlying all

these three is wanting in the Epistle to the Philippians, as is the handling of those profounder Christian mysteries which characterize Colossians and Ephesians, such as the relation of Christ to the eternal counsels of God ; his position as the instrument of the divine election ; his exaltation, through resurrection, to the heavenly places ; the secret of vital union with his earthly church as set forth in the marriage relation. In both these Christ is sharply defined as the instrument of God's redeeming plan of salvation by faith as compared with works. He is the reconciler of Jew and Gentile in one body. In Philippians the treatment of Christ is more *subjective* than in Ephesians or Colossians. I mean that while in Ephesians, for instance, we see Christ *before* Paul as an *object* of contemplation, in Philippians we see Christ *in* Paul as the *subject* of his experience ; not what he *knows* Him to be by study, and by revelation of Him as the King of glory and the Head of the church, but what he *feels* Him to be in His power over his own life. In Paul's experience we see a *rule* of life indeed, but we see the person and life of Jesus incarnating and interpreting the rule. The summary of Paul's life is Christ (1 : 21). Christ's death is not only a sorrowful recollection ; it has been shared by Paul's moral nature in his own death to sin. His view of Christ's resurrection is a standing rebuke to the loose grasp with which the modern Christian church holds that truth. It is to him a blessed *memory* and an inspiring *hope*, but it is also a *present* energy. The goal of his spiritual ambition is to know the power of Christ's resurrection *now* and *here*, as well as hereafter (3 : 10).

Christ's life is more than a beautiful story. He not only lives *after* it, he *lives it*. Christ's own affection possesses him. He longs after the brethren as with Christ's own love, "in the heart of Jesus Christ" (1:8). He emphasizes the inward impulse of duty—the *mind* of Christ (2:5). He urges them to "work out" their own salvation, but in the next breath reminds them that God worketh *in* them to *will* (2:12, 13). He does not depreciate *conduct*. No man could ever draw from his words license for moral looseness, but he exalts conduct by exhibiting it as the expression of the inner life of faith, and as a growth into the likeness of Christ.

Having thus discussed the great characteristics of the Epistle, it now remains to call attention to certain minor details.

And first it is interesting to discover in the words and imagery of this Epistle some traces of the coloring of stoicism, the best moral system of paganism, with which Paul had probably become acquainted in the East, the representatives of which he had encountered on Mars' Hill at Athens, and which, at the time of Paul's imprisonment, was represented in Nero's household by the philosopher Seneca. Whether Paul and Seneca ever met, as some have supposed, is very doubtful; but it is not strange that the apostle's vigorous and picturesque language, in which so many of the objects of his wide and varied observation constantly appear, should have taken some tinge from a school so widely known and so influential as that of the Stoics. There, for example, is the word "citizenship" (3:20), "our citizenship is in

heaven," and also in 1 : 28, "Be citizens in a manner becoming the gospel." The ideal of a great human brotherhood, of a world-wide state, was a favorite one with the Stoic. "I will look," says Seneca, "upon all lands as belonging to me, and on my own land as belonging to all. Nature gave me alone to all men, and all men to me alone." It certainly is not impossible that this conception may have helped to give the mould to the thought of heavenly citizenship, the more so since the Stoic ideal seems to have included heaven as well as earth, the divine system as well as the human, in its ideal commonwealth; so that the conception has an external resemblance, though of course not a deep, inner correspondence, to Paul's beautiful thought of a Christian living in the economy and communion of heaven even while he remains upon earth.

There, too, is the word in 4 : 2, "content," or, literally, "self-sufficient," and the whole sentiment of the passage to the eighteenth verse. That word "self-sufficient" was the Stoic word. It set forth the Stoic's idea of moral kinghood—man sufficient unto himself because he possesses all things in himself. Was it not most natural that the Stoic's word should have carried to the apostle's mind the thought of a higher self-sufficiency, centring not in Paul, but in Christ, Paul's *new* self, and interpreted by the words, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"? And once more: if you will take the passage in chapter 1 : 21-27, and begin studying it with the thought that the Stoic had no hope of immortality, and that his philosophy encouraged and

justified suicide as a means of escape from the world's burdens, you will find it most instructive to pursue the vivid contrast presented not only by Paul's contemplation of death, but by his brave willingness to live and suffer and delay the being with Christ for the church's sake.

Paul's language, as I have said, is peculiarly picturesque ; not only in his constant use of vivid metaphors and striking figures, but from the fact that very often a single word contains a picture in itself, which is not reproduced in the translation, but which really gives coloring and tone to the thought, and sometimes furnishes the mould in which the whole thought is cast. This Epistle is very rich in such words ; and I will call your attention to a few of them. In the twenty-eighth verse of the first chapter the apostle exhorts the Philippians not to be *terrified* by their adversaries. The word "terrified" is that which is used of a frightened horse, flying out of the road at every stump or wisp of straw ; pointing a good lesson to those timid Christians who live in constant fear that something will overthrow the church or undermine their faith.

In the twenty-third verse of the same chapter we have a beautiful picture in the word "depart," which is entirely lost in our translation. Its selection is exquisite, when we remember the atmosphere of struggle in which Paul lived. It is a soldier's word, meaning to "break camp." Join it with those other words in 2 Cor. 5 : 1, "Our earthly house of this *tent* or *tabernacle*," and you have the picture complete. The feeble, manacled

body is but the weather-stained tent through the torn curtains of which the tired soldier looks out towards home. To strike this tent, to "break camp," and to go to be with Christ is "far better."

In chap. 2, ver. 17, we read, "If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Here, again, our version gives scarce a hint of the picture in the word "*offered*," which is, literally, "*poured out as a drink-offering*." Thus Paul says, "You have laid your faith and service on God's altar; now if my very life be poured out like a libation upon this offering of yours, to further your Christian work and consecration, I rejoice with you."

So in chap. 4, ver. 7, we read, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall *keep* your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." Here is another military figure, of which, by-the-way, Paul is very very fond, in the word "*keep*." It is, "*mount guard*"—the peace of God, like a sentinel patrolling before the believer's heart. The picture might almost have been in the poet's thought when he wrote,

"Love is and was my King and Lord,
 And will be, though as yet I keep
 Within his court on earth, and sleep
 Encompassed by his faithful guard,
 And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to place,
 And whispers to the worlds of space,
 In the deep night, that all is well."

These are all that time will allow me to unfold; and now, in conclusion, let me briefly refer you to the prin-

cial passages in which our version gives a wrong or inadequate idea of the text.

In chap. 1, ver. 8, instead of "*bowels*," you should read, "the *heart*." The Greeks used the original word to mean the nobler intestines—the heart, liver, and lungs—where the affections were supposed to reside. Indeed, our use of the word "*heart*" in that sense is really a trace of the same error. The apostle means that he loves the Philippians with Christ's own love.

In chap. 2, ver. 1, instead of "*consolation*," read, "*exhortation*." The word is an appeal to the power of Christ's precept and example as exhorting them to unity and peace. The word *consolation*, or *comfort*, follows immediately after.

In ver. 6 of chap. 2 is a very important one. You will remember that the apostle is illustrating the *descent* of Christ from the glory of heaven to our earthly state ; showing that, though equal with God, he did not hesitate to become man, and to serve and to suffer. Now if we read according to our version, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," you see that we abruptly introduce the thought of *Christ's laying claim to equality with God*, into a course of thought which hinges on *Christ's voluntary humiliation*. On the contrary, Paul's words mean that, in his assuming our nature, Christ did not for the time being emphasize or press his claim to equality with God, but laid aside his divine majesty and entered into the conditions of our humanity. It remains true, as appears by the words, "being in the form of God," that Christ did not think it robbery to be equal with God ; but

that is not the truth which is held in these words, which we ought to read thus: "Being in the form of God, *He did not regard equality with God as a thing to be eagerly grasped at* (as though he were anxious only to assert His deity), but on the contrary, "*emptied Himself,*" which is the right rendering of the words "made Himself of no reputation."

In chap. 2, ver. 10, instead of "*at the name of Jesus,*" read, "*in the name of Jesus.*" The difference seems slight, but is very wide. To bow *at* the name of Jesus, is to bow at the mention of his name; and hence this verse is cited as authority for the custom of bowing when the sacred name is pronounced. Whereas the meaning is the same as *doing* or *asking* in the name of Jesus. It simply means that all prayer shall be made in his name; that no man shall come unto the Father but by him." In the words of Dean Alford, "It were much to be wished that such indefensible senses of Scripture texts might be universally, by honest men, abandoned, and that we might no longer be told that St. Paul, in the sublimest part of his most sublime description of the glory of our exalted Redeemer, is laying down a rule for a mere outward gesture when his name is mentioned."

In chap. 2, ver. 12, instead of "*work out*" your own salvation, which conveys the idea of our saving ourselves by our own works, read "*carry out*" your salvation; not forgetting indeed that salvation is God's gift, but equally not forgetting that it is to be carried out by a "life of holy obedience and advance to Christian perfection." In the following verse, instead of "*of his good pleasure,*" read

“for his good pleasure.” In the one case the meaning is, God does with and in us as he *pleases*; in the other, that God works in us to carry out in and by us his own perfect and holy will.

In chap. 3, ver. 20, for the word “*conversation*” it is better to read *citizenship*. If conversation retained the meaning it had when our translation was made, representing the whole sum of a man’s active relations to society, the translation could not be improved. But conversation has now come to mean almost exclusively the interchange of talk, so that the apostle’s meaning is better expressed by the word “*citizenship*,” for he means to say, we are members of the heavenly commonwealth here on earth. God is our King, and we live under heaven’s laws and speak heaven’s language, and are on earth as strangers and pilgrims.

In verse 21, instead of “vile body,” read “*body of our humiliation*,” for, as the dying Archbishop of Dublin said when the passage was read to him, “Nothing that He made is vile.” So, instead of “*glorious body*,” we should read, “*body of His glory*.”

The name Euodias, at the beginning of chapter four, should be Euodia, the other form being a masculine termination, and the person referred to being a Macedonian lady.

Thus tender and strong, wise and sympathetic, beautiful in that very lack of systematic structure which marks the impulsive utterance of a loving heart, this precious letter comes into our hands. It appeals to us through this element of personal sympathy, because it

shows us so much of Paul's inner self. We do not lose sight of the teacher, but he falls into shadow behind the confiding friend ; yet, best of all, though the letter is pervaded with the apostle's personality, the prominent figure in our minds, as we rise from its perusal, is not Paul, but Paul's Master and Saviour. The apostle is, after all, our medium for the clearer seeing of his Lord and ours. And in this magnifying of the living Christ above the forms of doctrine, through this, the least doctrinal of the apostle's letters, we receive a legitimate stimulus to a broader, more generous, and more intelligent study of doctrine. The Philippian letter is the best introduction to the study of the Pauline writings, in that it leads us to the noble themes of Christian doctrine in Christ's own way—through the adorable person of Him who through self-emptying, service, and obedience to death, justly claims the homage of every knee and the confession of every tongue.

There comes to my mind to-night a memory of a summer evening among the Styrian Alps, as I drifted in my boat past the gray, scarred rocks which encircle the beautiful Trauensee. The twilight drew on almost unawares, and the great mountain bulwarks began to fall back into the shadow which crept across the quiet lake ; but as I cast my eye upward, it lighted on a neighboring height crowned with a cross ; and there, while the shadows lay dark below, while the mountain ramparts were fading out in the gathering gloom, the sunset light lingered round the cross, and it stood out clear and sharp against the evening sky, as though some strange power

had been given it to beat back the darkness. And so the cross, and the men and the works which the cross inspires, ever lift themselves into the light while the night of time gathers thickly round the old empires and the memory of their tyrants and of their prisons. So it comes to pass that a Christian apostle outlives and outworks a pagan empire, and a Christian letter survives a pagan prison. So it is that we to-night, after the lapse of nearly nineteen centuries, are studying this brief letter of Paul to a little feeble provincial church, and are stimulated to thought and kindled to devotion by those same words, while the shadows gather round the forgotten graves of Nero and of Seneca, while the tourist wanders idly over the Palatine, and looks down into the choked vaults of the palace of the Cæsars, and the antiquarian digs where Nero's fish-ponds sparkled and wild beasts rent the limbs of Christian martyrs for the amusement of the populace. The cross which gives this cluster of Epistles their stamp and their inspiration, will lift them with itself into ever clearer light and sharper outline, while the world passeth away and the lusts thereof, until, in the sunset of the latter days, the world with its rebellious wills, and the church with its warring creeds, shall vindicate Paul's unswerving faith, and Christ shall be all and in all.

THE EPISTLES
TO THE
COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON.



BY REV. JAMES F. ELDER, D. D.,

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THE EPISTLE

TO

THE COLOSSIANS.

COLOSSÆ AND ITS CHURCH.

Two hundred miles due south of Constantinople, one hundred miles due east of Ephesus, would be the approximate site of Colossæ. The river whose name has given to our language one of its most expressive words—meander—here receives into its upper waters from the east a tributary called the Lycus. On the south bank of the Lycus, just above its junction with the Meander, lay the commercial city of Laodicea, which is mentioned repeatedly in this Epistle. * Here was that lukewarm church mentioned in the Revelation to which Jesus wrote, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” Its haughty claim, “I am rich and have gotten wealth and have need of nothing,” was no idle boast: and though prostrated by an earthquake a few years before, it speedily rose from its ruins—by its own resources alone—with more than its former splendor.

Six miles across the valley of the Lycus, on the rocky

spur between the Lycus and the Meander, was Hierapolis, also mentioned in the letter to the Colossians. This was a gay and fashionable watering-place, the mountain streams containing medicinal properties; and its ruins still testify to its former greatness and importance. About twelve miles farther up the valley of the Lycus is the probable site of Colossæ. Unlike Laodicea and Hierapolis, which were situated upon the banks back from the river, Colossæ lay right athwart the stream. It was near the great highway from Ephesus to the Euphrates Valley, and in the days of the Persian conquests was a great and populous city. But at this time it was a place of little note, overshadowed by its more prosperous rivals toward the mouth of the Lycus. Its site has only recently been identified, if at all; its very name is uncertain, Colossæ or Colassæ; and altogether, according to Lightfoot, here was the least important church to which any Epistle of Paul was addressed.

There is no evidence that Paul had visited the neighborhood prior to writing this letter. On the contrary, in the first verse of the second chapter, he says, "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh"—language which, fairly construed, would imply that he had never been either at Laodicea or Colossæ. But we know that Paul labored three years at Ephesus, only one hundred miles away, holding daily discussions most of the time in Tyrannus' lecture-room, and supplementing his public teaching with the most assiduous and tender labors from house to house: "so

that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." His methods, no doubt, were analogous to those of modern missionary leaders. Keeping his headquarters at Ephesus, he received curious and interested listeners from all parts of the country. Here and there one would be converted, and return to his own city carrying the word of life. Now Colossæ, we have seen, was near the great highway of travel, and its representatives would be certainly found at Ephesus, and very likely some of them came in contact with the noted preacher of the new religion. It is altogether probable that in this way Philemon, a native of Colossæ, was converted through Paul's ministry, and Epaphras also, who appears to have been a spiritual father to the churches of Lycus. Through such converts in part—what in modern missions would be known as native helpers—Paul kept up his intercourse with a large number of communities, and maintained his "care of all the churches."

And now, five years later, during his imprisonment at Rome, Epaphras of Colossæ visits him with tidings from the valley of the Lycus. Of the Colossian church he has much to say that is hopeful and encouraging to the apostle: but the insidious influence of some false or incompetent teacher is plainly hinted, and gives Paul no little anxiety. He is about to send Tychicus to Asia Minor to inform the churches of his condition and prospects; and by him he sends the letter which we know as the Epistle to the Ephesians, but which some consider a circular letter, copies of which were to be distributed

among prominent churches in Asia. In this view, the letter from Laodicea, alluded to in chapter 4:16, is supposed to be one of these copies. Paul also wished Onesimus to accompany Tychicus and return to his master, and so prepares the letter to Philemon. At the same time and by the same messenger he sends a special letter to the Colossian church in order to prevent further mischief, if possible, from the false teaching of which Epaphras had brought him word. The three Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, therefore, were probably written and despatched at the same time. That Paul wrote the Epistle we have under consideration has never been seriously questioned, save by some modern German writers, who have been sufficiently answered by competent critical authorities. It may be safely assumed that there is no intelligent lay reader of Paul's letter who would not recognize on internal grounds his authorship of this Epistle.

THE DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE.

But the more interesting question for us is, What were the special difficulties and harmful tendencies which this letter was designed to meet? So far as these have express mention or clear intimation in the Epistle, they are pretty much grouped in the last sixteen verses of chapter 2 (8-23). That part of the Epistle which follows these verses—chapters 3 and 4—consists for the most part of plain and practical observations, and for our present purpose may be dismissed without further notice—save perhaps, the first four verses of chapter 3.

Turning now to the first chapter, we find Paul, after his customary benediction (1, 2), expressing his thanks to God for the encouraging report received from Epaphras of their spiritual condition (3-8), and assuring them of his constant prayer for their increase in knowledge and good works, for their patient and joyful endurance, and for a thankful spirit to the Father who had given them so glorious a redemption through the Son of his love (9-14). On this allusion to the Son he glides into a most eloquent and exalted strain, asserting the preëminence of Christ, both in creation and in the church, and the good pleasure of God that through the blood of the cross the universe should yet be reconciled to himself (15-20). He then speaks of this reconciling grace as it had been bestowed on the Colossians (21-23), and concludes the chapter with a reference to his own stewardship in the mystery of the gospel, the sufferings which it involved and the anxieties and the labors which it imposed.

With the opening of the second chapter we can almost see the shadow of these anxieties settle on the very page as we read. He now gives utterance to his great struggle of mind for the welfare of the churches of Colossæ and Laodicea, and adds frankly, "This I say lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." He compliments them, however, on their firm array and steadfast faith, and exhorts them to persevere in the same (2: 1-7).

This brings us to the sixteen verses in which are grouped the special allusions which give to this Epistle its distinctive character. In the whole letter there are

thirty-six words not found elsewhere in Paul's writings or in the New Testament. Of these words one-half are in these verses before us, showing that the new ideas combated or advanced in this Epistle are largely concentrated here. Unfortunately, however, for a clear understanding of the situation, we do not find well-developed systems of doctrine or sharply-outlined heresies assailed by the apostle; but rather certain mischievous tendencies, superstitious customs, vain speculations, whose precise character and bearings are not always clearly defined. Nor is there apparently any logical treatment of these errors, but Paul seems to pass to and fro among the various types of error with perplexing freedom. Let us, nevertheless, select some of the most distinctly marked evils which Paul combats, as they are suggested by his language, or confirmed by subsequent developments of speculative thought.

RITUALISM.

I. The influence of JUDAIC RITUALISM is very apparent in the teaching of this Colossian errorist.

Jews were everywhere. Antiochus the Great transplanted 2,000 Jewish families from the Euphrates into this very region. Laodicea as a great trading mart would attract them; and as their fondness for watering-places is by no means a modern characteristic of the race, Hierapolis would have its charm for them also. But it was hard for Judaism to appreciate the freedom which the gospel taught. Even a converted Jew would find it difficult sometimes to emancipate himself from the tram-

mels of the old faith (as witness Peter's dissimulation at Antioch), and Judaizing teachers were constantly springing up in the churches, and insisting on some of the old ritualistic observances. To some of their scruples Paul was lenient. But when they insisted on these dead forms as essential to salvation, circumcision for example, he was a roused lion, and would give place by subjection, no, not for an hour. How sternly he combated that fatal error may be seen in the Epistle to the Galatians.

But as compared with that Epistle his tone here is moderate and calm. And the explanation is to be sought in the different attitude which the Judaic errorist here assumes. There he made the keeping of the law vital to salvation. Here the end of his ritualism seems to be the attainment of a superior piety. Circumcision is not now so much a condition of salvation, as a species of self-mortification tending to and perhaps symbolizing a holier life. As such it was comparatively harmless, but at best a beggarly provision against carnal nature, in the light of that grace by which the gospel enables us to triumph over the flesh. "Your circumcision, performed by hand," Paul would say, "is utterly futile as regards the putting off your fleshly nature. It takes away but a small part of the body, and removes not one sinful propensity. But there is a spiritual circumcision performed by Christ, which consists in the putting away of the whole body of the flesh by the renewal of your being; so that when you are buried with him in baptism you leave your carnal nature, as it were, like graveclothes in the tomb, and rise with Christ to his

new and exalted life at the right hand of God. Your holiness does not proceed from outward observances, but from an inward life, and that life draws its inspiration from your practical participation in Christ's resurrection to glory. It is a life hidden with Christ in God. Your sins are forgiven; your nature is renewed; henceforth keep your mind fixed on this substantial fact, that you share by faith in Christ's resurrection-life, and sin shall not have dominion over you."

How many, who are yearning for greater attainments in holiness, would find this thought helpful in their struggles for victory over self and sin. As Paul elsewhere says: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The reckoning it to be so will go far toward making it so. We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. We are to live constantly in the consciousness of this resurrection-life of Christ shared by us through faith. And when temptation presents its alluring face, instead of wallowing in the mire of our own corrupt natures as we wrestle and roll in the bitter struggle with sin, let us simply reckon, consider, believe, know that we are by Christ's side, at his Father's throne, with the angels, citizens of the heavenly kingdom, and the temptation will vanish like a horrid dream, and we shall walk in the white robes of victory.

ASCETICISM.

2. A decided ASCETIC TENDENCY is discernible in connection with this Judaic ritualism.

This ascetic tendency in Judaism had already crystallized in an organization known as the Essenes. They were as much stricter than the Pharisees as the Pharisees were stricter than the common people. Their reverence for Moses and his word amounted almost to worship. They observed the Sabbath rigidly, were most scrupulous about eating and drinking, and eschewed marriage—recruiting their ranks by the adoption of Jewish youths into the order. Their principal settlements were on the Dead sea, though members of the order were scattered throughout Palestine. That some one in love with the tenets of this order had found his way into the Colossian church is by no means improbable. Or, considering the location of Colossæ, some philosophy tinged with Oriental Buddhism may have prompted these ascetic practices—which is almost saying that they are the spontaneous product of our poor, yearning, groping human nature. But the rigorous self-denials inculcated among the Colossian Christians, were more likely connected with the Mosaic law. The “feast days, new moons, and Sabbaths,” point to Jewish festivals, annual, monthly, and occasional, enjoined by the old law. And the restrictions in the matter of food have the same source. To this “observance of days and months and times and years,” Paul in Galatians applied the same curious term, which he twice uses in similar connection in the passage before us—“the rudiments of the world.” The word “rudiment” means the beginnings of things—the first principles—like the letters of the alphabet, or the lines and points and surfaces with which you begin

to teach geometry. "This vaunted wisdom in keeping of ordinances, which you prize so highly," Paul would say, "is the merest alphabet of knowledge. It had its place when men were first put to school in things divine; but in the school of Christ these things are comparatively useless and childish. They were only a shadow cast before the substance; and the body—the substance that cast the shadow—is Christ's, *i. e.*, is found in the things of Christ—his cross, his resurrection, his spirit of life.

"But do you say that such things are commanded in the law, and we are under bonds to keep them? Bonds? Why talk you of bonds? Do you not understand that that bond was cancelled when Christ died? that he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross? so that lifted far above your reach, torn with the same cruel nails that rent his hands, and stained and blurred by his blood, that law of ordinances which was such a yoke of bondage to man should never again confront him to condemn him? Why, then, do you let any man take you to task about eating or drinking, or observing festivals or Sabbaths? When Christ died on the cross you died—as your burial with him in baptism testifies. Is Christ subject to that law of ordinances in his resurrection state? then no more are ye who died with him and rose again. But if your participation in Christ's resurrection-life emancipated you from all law of ordinances, why, as though you were still living only in the world, and your participation in that life were an utterly meaningless thing, are you overridden by these foolish ordinances, such as 'Handle not, taste not, touch not'? What possi-

ble influence on your souls can the things have to which these rules refer, if wisely used? They are all made to be used with thanksgiving, and in the using to be destroyed. They go into the belly and are cast out into the draught. Do ye not perceive that whatsoever thing from without entereth into a man it cannot defile him? These are teachings of men, and you subject yourself to them after the Lord died to deliver you from like bondage."

"To be sure," Paul adds, "such things have a show of wisdom. It seems commendable for a man to impose such self-denying service, and to humiliate himself and treat his body rigorously; it might do some men good, done in a proper spirit; but these things, after all, have no permanent value in preventing our carnal natures from asserting their sway." And how true it is that a monastic life and ascetic practices cannot bring the body of the flesh into complete and lasting subjection. A man may immure himself in a desert cave, may macerate his body unsparingly, but he cannot get away from himself. Our sinful nature clings to us despite all such self-mortification, and like the garment of Hercules steeped in the blood of Nessus, fills our whole being with the agony of its poison. In some instances, too, men claiming that the body alone was the seat of evil, and that the soul could not be contaminated by it, have professed a lofty contempt for this miserable mass of clay and corruption, and veering to the other extreme, have given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness. Not philosophy or asceticism, but a vital union with Christ in

his enthronement at God's right hand can solve this problem of victory over the flesh, and emancipate from its thralldom the millions of earth who to-day are seeking rest through self-mortification and conformity to rigorous ordinances and traditions of men.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Obviously this treatment of the evil in the Colossian church has an important bearing on the great question of *Christian liberty* under the gospel. It is human nature to multiply ordinances and impose restrictions—to make rules. Churches might be found who have made almost every questionable practice, from tobacco-chewing to slaveholding, a disqualification for membership. So far as such rules are an expression of opinion—a kind of moral Nilometer—they may have their place and their use. But when they are imposed as conditions of Christian life and fellowship, they are Judaism reënacted. Who ever knew of a church enacting, "No member of this church shall commit murder or steal, or worship idols"? And why? Simply because such a rule would be superfluous. As well enact a law that no mother shall hate her own babe. Before such a law could reach the subjects of it, it would fall to the earth of its own impotence. In such matters—these grievous breaches of public morals and fundamental obligations—you concede everything to the restraining and directing influence of the enlightened Christian conscience, or to universal human instinct. So the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which reigns in the renewed man, may be trust-

ed, if followed, to keep him from walking after the flesh.

Now I say—as I believe Paul says, in effect—Seek to have all Christian conduct regulated by the same internal law—this same divine instinct. Educate it by all the truth of God to its intensest susceptibility, but let that inner principle of the new life decide all matters of duty and indulgence. Away with your handwriting of prohibitory ordinances: handle not—the billiard-cue; taste not—wine; touch not—a partner in the dance. The church of God has no right to make such rules for the control of its members. Christ has put an all-sufficient law in their renewed natures, and by that law, as confirmed and illustrated by the Word, must they stand or fall to their own Master. But has the church no right of discipline over its members? Most assuredly; and when the church or its regularly-established tribunal is convinced that a member is not walking according to that law of the Spirit, as they understand it, it is their duty to interfere, remonstrate, and, if need be, discipline the offender. I only say, beware how you impose minute prescriptions and special rules for the government of the Christian life of others. The New Testament is remarkably free from prohibitory legislation in the way of special precepts, but exceedingly rich in great principles for the conduct of life. While your regulative code may be a restraint on one, it may only be a pall on the Christian life of another. Your negative rules may be unconsciously adopted as a standard of Christian attainment by some inexperienced soul, and resting in the let-

ter of your ordinance, he may only repress the spiritual life within him that was meant to be developed from grace to grace.

Hearken, my beloved brethren : Does the risen Christ need a law to keep him from going astray? Would he be more likely to remain the Sinless One if there were hung before his eyes an eternal "Thou shalt not"? No more does the Christian whose life is truly hid with Christ in God need the restraint of outward law. He does need restraint ; he does need law. But the law that will be most potent to keep him will be the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, written on his renewed spirit by the finger of God, and faithfully followed in the light of Scripture teachings. He may, under the impulse of that renewed nature, lay down special rules for himself, for daily guidance ; but even that is perilous, for he may find himself following a formal rule long after the free spirit would otherwise have made this rule superfluous. Life in nature makes most symmetrical organisms : so in spiritual things inward life will make the most faultless conduct. The measure of a Christian's indulgence must be determined in all cases by the law of the renewed spirit in the light of Christ's enthroned presence.

Does that Christian young man frequent the billiard-saloon? Do not say to him dogmatically and imperiously, "This is all wrong." But try to lead him to an appreciation of his share in the risen Christ-life ; help him to realize what are the associations of that life which is hid with Christ in God ; bring these heavenly ideas into con-

trast with the associations of the billiard-room, and endeavor so to stimulate his Christian instinct that from pure disrelish he shall drop his cue. This of course will take time and patience and prayer ; but when your work is done, you have not only rescued the young man from degrading associations and a vicious habit, perchance, but you have put under his Christian life and character an immutable and eternal foundation. You have given him a principle of action, and not put him under bondage to a rule. But go to him with your short and arbitrary "Thou shalt not," and you will get only a reluctant surrender of his pastime ; you may bring a sense of bondage over his spirit, and perhaps in the end a reckless and defiant reaction, in which his last state shall be worse than the first.

Or that Christian man who insists on his right to drink wine ? You may dash the cup from his hands with your inflexible ordinance, "Taste not," but you have not won your brother—perhaps made an angry foe. Keep your ordinances, and for him (though they may be of temporary advantage to many) your pledges out of sight, and address yourself to the Christ-life within. Ask him if such gratification of his appetite mars his enjoyment of the Holy Spirit's presence ? Can he ask his Master's blessing on the cup ? Is there no peril for himself or his children in this habit ? no slavery of spirit ? Or does he know that yonder pale, shrinking wife has no power over her drunken husband to reform him, because he defends his rum-drinking by the example of his Christian neighbor over the way ? Would Christ's self-sacrifi-

cing love not prompt the abandonment of the cup for the sake of the perishing men and weary wives and suffering children about him? Self-sacrifice is the highest law of that realm from which, as a Christian man, the springs of his life are expected to flow.

Or that Christian girl who dearly loves to dance—are there no considerations, drawn from the new life which she has professed, that will regulate or even subdue her indulgence in this pleasure? Is she indeed crucified to the world, and the world to her, by the cross of Christ? Or does she only wear a cross as an ornament on her neck, and not take the cross to her heart as a means of self-mortification? Does her sense of fellowship with Christ suffer no shock from the associations and spirit of the ballroom? If right for her to dance at all, it is right to “do it heartily as unto the Lord”—even as David danced before the Lord with all his might. Are there no misgivings in reference to that which she allows and defends? “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Thus her dancing, under given circumstances, is to be controlled by her participation in that life which is hid with Christ in God.

By this perpetual reference of life and conduct to the Christ life within us, and the heavenly citizenship into which that life inducts us, Christian character is freed most rapidly from unworthy elements, and built up most swiftly and completely on principles that shall rule throughout eternal ages.

I acknowledge that this liberty into which the gospel introduces us is attended with great peril. So is the possession of free will in God’s intelligent creatures every-

where. But as that is what makes them likest God when their choice is directed to holiness, so this Christian liberty, used as not abusing it, is the very flower and perfection of our prerogatives in Christ. We are no more slaves and children, but full-grown sons, with liberty to do as we please, on the presumption that we will always please to do right. Christ has lifted from our souls the crushing tables of stone, but he has left there in living characters of love the knowledge of his will written in our hearts. And to this inner law of our renewed being is all conduct to be referred—the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And nothing will help us to realize the Scripture ideal faster than the conscientious exercise of our freedom in the constant study of the Word and prayer. The perils of this liberty, to a true Christian, are as nothing compared with the paralyzing influence of such rules and ordinances as Paul here condemned.

In the same connection in which he speaks of their liberty in the matter of eating and drinking, Paul also mentions "*Sabbaths*" (ver. 16). If he refers at all to the weekly Sabbath, he may have meant that none were to consider themselves bound to keep the seventh if they preferred to observe the first day of the week. But the more probable reference is to occasional festivals and fasts, also called sabbaths, which were observed by the Jews, but could not be regarded as binding on the Christian conscience. Being distinctively Jewish or ceremonial, they were a part of that handwriting of ordinances which Christ took out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Some, however, find in Paul's language here and in Romans 14:5 the entire abrogation of the Sabbath, and deny that it is binding in any form on the Christian church. But it seems impossible that the Sabbath, as a day of physical rest at least, should ever be abrogated. Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man;" and while man needs its merciful provisions, it will stand. The obligation to labor six days and to rest one day, in regular alternation, appears to ground itself in constituent laws of being, and will last so long as the present constitution of man endures. The importance of the Sabbath as a provision no less for man's religious nature, implies its permanence and demands its regular observance. For these reasons it was embedded in the Decalogue among other fundamental and immutable laws.

The Lord's day has taken the place of the Jewish Sabbath—as autumn takes the place of summer, as noon takes the place of dawn. The *proportion* of labor and rest is alone immutable, while the object commemorated in that rest may be changed by divine direction, if a more worthy occasion should arise. And a finished redemption took the precedence of a finished creation as the supreme object of Christian contemplation. (See Taylor Lewis, in Lange's Genesis, page 197.)

If it be asked how we may spend the Sabbath most appropriately without falling into Jewish bondage on the one hand, or transcending our Christian liberty on the other, I would say, in a word, that we shall best keep the day by observing it in the spirit of its new name—the *Lord's day*. As on Washington's birthday we recall the

man, recount his sacrifices, and review his character, so on the *Lord's* day we are to give our thoughts, disengaged from the world by the Sabbath rest, to the contemplation and the imitation of Christ; to study his person and word, to sing his praise, to adore his name, to do works of mercy, and to teach the children his love. We should carefully refrain from all unnecessary things that will infringe on the repose of the day, or distract our minds from fellowship with the Lord. For it is a day to be spent in the company of the Master; sometimes, like Mary, sitting in happy communion at his feet; sometimes listening to his divine teachings in the gathered throng; sometimes helping the little ones to come unto him to be blessed; sometimes, like the favored three, going with him to the house of mourning; and sometimes, like them also, standing with him in the mount, where we have dazzling visions of his glory, and fain would abide for evermore.

But if the Gospel does not abrogate the Sabbath, either as a day of rest or worship, neither does it propose to leave it in utter isolation as consecrated time. The ideal life in Christ, of which Paul speaks in the passage before us, demands, in its practical workings, that holiness to the Lord shall be upon the bells of the horses, and that the meanest cooking utensil shall be as the bowls before the altar of God. (Zech. 14:20, 21.) In other words, Christian life and conduct in all their details are to be permeated with that spirit of devout consecration which alone can really sanctify the deed or the doer. The Israelite under the law was required to give one-tenth of

his substance to the Lord ; the ideal under the Gospel is that of life and possessions wholly devoted to God. And if God still claims one-seventh of our time as peculiarly his own, it does not imply that he means us to be any less holy when engaged in the duties of intervening days than when employed in the services appropriate to the Sabbath. A Christian's life is hid with Christ in God, not only on Sunday, but at all times. In that heavenly presence he moves as a royal priest of God continually, and every act of daily duty is a priestly service. He is bound to keep holy the Sabbath-day, according to the commandment ; but he will also endeavor to sanctify the rest of the week by doing whatever he does—the eating and the drinking, the marrying and the giving in marriage, the buying and the selling, as well as the praying and the praising—all, all to the glory of God.

But the Sabbath itself will always be to him a day above all other days. Its welcome rest, its distinctively religious employments, its hallowed associations, its divine sanctions, will ever give it a peerless rank, and he will haste to meet it as the lark soars to meet the morning in the upper air. Indeed, without this glad and faithful observance of the *Lord's* day, there is small hope of living on a high spiritual plane on any other day.

As regards, however, a holy temper and a consecrated purpose, there should be no violent divorce of the Sabbath from the rest of the week ; no chilling transition as we turn from worship to business, from rest to toil. I fear the idea that Sunday alone is God's time tends to make some professed Christians unconsciously put on

and off their religion with their Sunday clothes ; while the Gospel idea is for all days to be spent in priestly service, and all, even the most mean and trivial of daily duties, to be done to the glory of God.

ANGEL-WORSHIP.

3d. But the last point which we notice among the errors rebuked by the apostle is the *WORSHIP OF ANGELS*.

The Pharisees, we are told, confessed the existence of both angels and spirits, but there is no evidence in Scripture that the worship of angels was a part of the Jewish faith. This element, therefore, was probably introduced from extra-Judaic sources, and was no doubt a part of that "philosophy and vain deceit" against which Paul warns the Colossians as having no more substantial basis than the tradition of men. Later Jews, indeed, indulged in the most extravagant speculations as to the successive ranks and orders of angels ; and in the second century a most stupendous system of error, embodying analogous speculations, arose—derived largely through Alexandrian literature from the various Oriental speculative and mystical philosophies. This system was known as Gnosticism, and arrogated to itself the possession of peculiar knowledge, to be comprehended only by the favored few. Certain Gnostic tendencies are supposed to be hinted at in this Epistle, and indeed one of the charges brought against the genuineness of the Epistle by Baur is, that it reveals the existence of a system which historically should be placed a century later. But such a charge cannot fairly be supported. There are only hints, at the most,

of Gnostic tendencies, not the outlines of a Gnostic system to be found here.

But perhaps a brief glance at the main features of full-grown Gnosticism may give us a clearer idea of some of these mischievous tendencies which Paul combats. Adopting the dualistic theory of the universe, Gnosticism postulates the existence of two mutually opposing kingdoms: one of light, the abode of the absolute and incommunicable God, and the other of darkness, a world of formless matter in which all evil inhered. The great problem was how to bring God into relation with this world of matter so that creation could occur, and yet God not be compromised by contact with this kingdom of evil. Accordingly, they conceived a series of æons, or spirits, varying in number with different systems, evolved in successive emanations from the absolute God. At each evolution less and less of the Original Light was reflected by the æon, till at last an emanation was produced sufficiently remote, and contact with the kingdom of evil became possible, and creation took place.

Now this angel-worship grew out of a similar false idea about the distance and incommunicability of the Deity. It said, apparently, Sin cannot come into immediate contact with holiness: even Christ is too pure and too remote for us to approach directly: it will be more fitting and expressive of proper humility if we interpose the mediation of the angels, who excel in strength, and who may intercede for us, at least avail to help us. Here comes in the apostle's warning, "Let no one rob you of your prize—the Christian's reward—by persuad-

ing you into this false humility in the worship of angels. These men are idle dreamers, puffed up by their idle carnal speculations. As there is to your body one head from which the whole body, duly attached and supported, derives its unity and growth, so in spiritual life there is one Head, even Christ. No angel mediators should be suffered to come between you and him. As your own head is directly and firmly attached to your body, so the contact and union of each believer with Christ is direct, organic, vital. To interpose other mediators is to cut yourselves off from the only source of life and growth. In him, made flesh, dwells all the fulness of the Godhead; and out of his fulness all your fulness comes, and that directly from his divine-human person. He is the head of all principality and power and every other name you may apply to the celestial hosts: yea, he rules the spiritual hosts of darkness as well: for on the cross he stripped them of their power and made a show of them openly, leading them in triumph. And will you sever your connection with your spiritual head, and yet hope to grow? Will you turn from the personal audience of the King, freely tendered you, to seek his favor through his servants? You do but dishonor your Master with such mock humility."

With reference to the more fully developed Gnostic scheme, while it cannot fairly be discovered in the Epistle, yet a single passage in the first chapter is wondrously adapted to meet this false conception of God's relation to the universe. With Paul there is no room, as there is no occasion, for successive emanations. He knows of but

one being who stands in any such relation to God: and he is the image of the Invisible One, the first-born of all creation. There are no long approaches to be prepared before God can compass the work of creation; for in him, the first-born of God, were created all things, those in the heavens and those on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things subsist. As he is the head of creation, so also he is the head of the body—the church, since he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he may be preëminent. For God was pleased that in him all fulness should dwell. Outside of Christ, then, there are no æons or angels who in any sense are an extension of the Godhead. All the fulness of the Godhead resides in him who was made flesh and who wears our nature still. What revelation of God was better calculated to meet the incipient evil of angel-worship at Colossæ, or the more gigantic system of error that afterward arose as Gnosticism?

A SIMILAR ERROR OF TO-DAY.

And what shall we say, in concluding our remarks on this Epistle, of those who to-day are repeating and defending an error almost identical with that which Paul here condemns, namely: the invocation of saints, and for that matter, of angels too? who dishonor the Head of the church by making their approaches to him through a deceased woman? who invoke departed Christians,

and supplicate the good offices of angels on the ground which would place them on a par with the Gnostic æons, that in a subordinate degree they are partakers of the Divine nature? It only shows how inveterate is that instinct of false humility which dishonors Christ by refusing to recognize him as the sole and sufficient mediator between God and man. Well does the Scripture exhort us to come *boldly* to a throne of grace.

And are we not liable unwittingly to fall into the same slough by magnifying too highly the intercession of living saints on behalf of ourselves or others? This urging the anxious to rise for prayers, this sending up of multitudinous requests to some popular place where prayer is wont to be made, this desire for the prayers of some individual especially prominent or gifted—may there not lurk in it all the germs of a feeling that may unconsciously put some one else in the place of Christ as intercessor? When the idea is that others "*strive together with us*" in prayer to God, there is no impropriety or peril; but if the secret thought is, "This person is better than I, Christ will listen to him more readily than to me," we are verging towards the idolatry of the Romanist and the angel-worship of the Colossian church. "*Whosoever* cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Let us teach men that the throne of grace is free to the direct approach of all, and may the good Lord keep us from the subtleties of our own deceitful hearts, and enable us to live in close and conscious fellowship with our living Head.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

BUT a few moments remain for the consideration of the Epistle to Philemon ; and, in truth, there are no serious difficulties to detain us, though it would furnish in its suggestiveness a multitude of practical lessons. It is brief—a single chapter of twenty-five verses—conceived in the most beautiful spirit, and easy of comprehension. We deem the following to be consistent with Paul's letters as the *probable* history of the case.

Paul's language in the 19th verse, "to me thou owest even thine own self," implies that Philemon was indebted to the apostle as the instrument of his conversion. As we have stated before, it is altogether likely that in some visit to Ephesus Philemon, who was a citizen of Colossæ, fell in with Paul and became a Christian. A warm personal friendship was established between them, and on his return to Colossæ Philemon became an active member of the church, and opened his house for its meetings. His wife also appears here as a convert, and Archippus, probably their son, held some important office in the church at Laodicea, within easy walking distance of his parents' home. Another member of Philemon's household was a slave named Onesimus, who perhaps may also have been known to Paul, or who most likely knew of Paul at Ephesus. For some reason, not gathered from the letter, Onesimus ran away from his master, and apparently also robbed him at the same time. Perhaps the theft was what led to his flight. He at last made his way to Rome, where he would be most likely to escape detec-

tion in the crowds of the metropolis. But whether his previous knowledge of Paul led him to the apostle's presence, or whether he was driven by want to go to him, or whether Epaphras found him and brought him to Paul, certain it is that he became a convert to Paul's preaching, and a most useful helper to the apostle. Indeed, Paul would gladly have retained him about his person to minister to him, but he felt that Philemon's rights must be considered, and Onesimus be returned. He knew that he had only to write to Philemon and request his consent to retain his slave, but that would seem to put Philemon under some constraint, and he wished the favor to be granted of his own free will. In addition, therefore, to the letter to the Colossian church at large, he writes a private letter to Philemon to secure the favorable reception of Onesimus, who had doubly wronged his master by theft and flight.

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

After the salutation to the various members of Philemon's household (1-3) and a hearty expression of thankfulness for Philemon's love to God's people (4-7), he enters on the principal object of his letter. He hints at his right to command Philemon on the ground of his apostolic authority, but prefers to plead with him as a dear friend. He reminds him, too, that Paul is now an old man and a prisoner, and exhorts him to receive the once "good-for-nothing slave" as though he were the apostle's own child—as indeed he was, spiritually (8-12). After alluding to his wish to keep him with him, as fur-

ther evidence, perhaps, of his own confidence in Onesimus' conversion, he dwells on the wonderful providence that had taken Onesimus away for a season that he might be returned for ever; for the bonds which now united slave and master were those of Christian brotherhood, and would never be broken. And if Paul had occasion to rejoice, how much more Philemon, over the happy change (13-16). Again, by their old-time comradeship he urged the reception of Onesimus, even as himself; and promises, over his own signature, to be responsible for anything in which the runaway may be indebted to his master; albeit he reminds Philemon how he owes to him his own self (17-19). "Yea, my brother," he adds, "let me have joy of thee in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord." At the same time he expresses his confidence that Philemon will even exceed his wishes, and bids him prepare him a lodging in the hope of a future visit (20-22). A few salutations close the Epistle (23-25).

But no paraphrase can do justice to the simple earnestness, the delicate tact, the Christian courtesy of this short letter. It has been and will remain unapproachable, in these regards, in the annals of epistolary correspondence. The letter with which it has been oftenest compared is one addressed to a friend by the younger Pliny. The following translation of this beautiful letter is given in Lightfoot's Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon, a book to which I have been very greatly indebted in the preparation of this lecture. The letter runs as follows:

"Your freedman, with whom you had told me you

were vexed, came to me, and throwing himself down before me, clung to my feet, as if they had been yours. He was profuse in his tears and his entreaties; he was profuse also in his silence. In short, he convinced me of his penitence. I believe that he is indeed a reformed character, because he feels that he has done wrong. You are angry, I know; and you have reason to be angry; this also I know; but mercy wins the highest praise just when there is the most righteous cause for anger. You loved the man, and I hope will continue to love him; meanwhile, it is enough that you should allow yourself to yield to his prayers. You may be angry again if he deserves it; and in this you will be the more readily pardoned, if you yield now. Concede something to his youth, something to his tears, something to your own indulgent disposition. Do not torture him, lest you torture yourself also at the same time. For it is torture to you when one of your gentle temper is angry. I am afraid lest I should appear not to ask, but to compel, if I should add my prayers to his. Yet I will add them, the more fully and unreservedly because I scolded the man himself with sharpness and severity; for I threatened him strictly that I would never ask you again. This I said to him, for it was necessary to alarm him; but I do not use the same language to you. For perchance I shall ask again, and shall be successful again; only let my request be such as it becomes me to prefer and you to grant. Farewell."

And Lightfoot adds:

"The younger Pliny is the noblest type of a true Ro-

man gentleman, and this touching letter needs no words of praise. Yet, if purity of diction be excepted, there will hardly be any difference of opinion in awarding the palm to the Christian apostle. As an expression of simple dignity, of refined courtesy, of large sympathy, and of warm personal affection, the Epistle to Philemon stands unrivalled."

THE MORAL VALUE OF THE ÉPISTLE.

But the great importance of this Epistle to the Christian church lies in the attitude in which it placed Christianity to slavery. The evils of slavery in that age and the proportions it assumed were simply enormous. The slaves of Attica, Lightfoot tells us, were as numerous as its citizens, and in the contracted territory of Corinth there were not less than 460,000. In Egina, scarcely 40 square miles in extent, there were 470,000 slaves. Some wealthy Roman land-owners had 10,000 or 20,000, or more. These slaves had no protection in Roman law, and were absolutely at their masters' disposal. And so great was the dread of their violence, that the law enacted that in case of the murder of a master all the slaves under the same roof should be put to death—a law which was probably executed on 400 human beings in a single instance during Paul's residence in Rome.

Now what Paul would have done had his century been the nineteenth instead of the first, we can only conjecture; it is safe to assume that he would have been judiciously conservative. But in that age and under those circumstances he deemed it his duty to send the run-

away slave back to his master. Perhaps he would have done the same had Philemon not been a Christian, but a cruel heathen ; we know not. But we can conceive him talking to Onesimus familiarly something after this strain: "To be sure, Onesimus, it was your lot to be a slave ; but you are now Christ's freeman. From a worse bondage than that of the body has the grace of God delivered you—even bondage to your own degrading life and passions. Henceforth you have really but one master to serve—the Lord who has redeemed us all. Poverty and toil are not the lot of slaves alone. Go back and serve Philemon faithfully, doing what you do heartily as unto the Lord, and not merely to please your earthly master. Serve Christ, and from him shall be your reward." What he wrote to Philemon we have already seen, and in the letter addressed to the Colossian church he had enjoined on all masters to deal justly by their bond-servants, remembering that they had a Master in heaven who was no respecter of persons.

Paul felt that he could safely leave this case to the inherent influence of the gospel in the heart of both master and slave. He knew that Philemon would not be likely to pass the cup to Onesimus at the Lord's table as a brother beloved, and then order him to be tortured for his recent fault. And before that same idea of universal brotherhood and equality of man which inhered in the gospel, Paul knew that slavery everywhere was doomed ultimately to fall. To attempt to do away with the evil as then existing by prohibitory injunctions on the Christian church, or by inciting social crusades against

it, would have been repeating the great tragedy of Samson's end, and for the time at least Christianity and social order would have been brought down together in one awful wreck. But from the hour when the gospel was preached as recognizing no distinctions of race or rank in Christ Jesus, the work of sapping and mining this hugh social fabric has been going steadily on. Progress has been slow; the cries of successive generations of enslaved and outraged humanity have gone up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth apparently unheeded. But it is our glad privilege to live in the far-off age that has seen the mine fired and a huge portion of the gigantic structure fall. And what England, Russia, and America, have done presages the utter and speedy extinction of slavery the wide world around. The silent, all-powerful moral influence of the gospel of Jesus Christ has done it.

And when slavery falls from such a cause there is no likelihood of its restoration. Though nominally as a war measure emancipation took place in this country, yet the moral sentiment of the people as dominated by the spirit of Christianity led the way for it, and alone made the triumph permanent. And it is remarkable, with all the social ostracism and political intimidation and grinding opposition that have been visited on the Freedmen of the South, there has been no suggestion of their reënslavement. The situation seems to have been accepted not merely as a dire necessity under political conquest and military force, but with a sense of relief as from a horrid nightmare. Southern slavery is twice dead,

plucked up by the roots ; and I doubt if there were to-day a Southern Confederacy, and the blacks were left solely to the mercy of those States, whether the boasted corner-stone of that Confederacy as originally organized would not prove to be a stone which the builders would reject ; and, so far from ever being exalted to the head of the corner, it would be ground to impalpable powder.

If there be, then, one lesson to be drawn, in closing, from the study of these two Epistles, it would be the renewing and revolutionizing power of the truth as it is in Jesus. We have seen the transforming power of that lofty ideal of a life hid with Christ in God, more potent far, in regulating individual conduct, than all prohibitory legislation and outward rules. And we have to-day the palpable evidence that great social and political systems of evil yield in God's good time to the same omnipotent influence of the truth of the gospel. May we not gather thence wisdom and encouragement for our assaults on the gigantic evils that yet remain ; and while not neglecting any legitimate means for restricting their outward growth, yet be most assiduous in our endeavor to pierce their very heart with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ?

THE
PASTORAL EPISTLES
TO
TIMOTHY AND TITUS.

BY REV. C. C. TIFFANY,

NEW YORK.

ST. PAUL'S PASTORAL EPISTLES.

It has become my grateful task to address you concerning the *Pastoral* Epistles of St. Paul. It is a pleasant duty, albeit an arduous one: pleasant, because we cannot read any writing of the great apostle to the Gentiles without a sense of coming in contact with a master mind, nor without a strong impression that his was a human spirit, nobly fitted by its discipline and its attainments to be the channel for the message of the Divine Spirit; pleasant, because he summons us to audience with a great heart and a grand intellect, along which and through which the truth of God marches with imperial tread; but an arduous task, both by reason of the subject-matter, so lofty and at times so subtle, and of the disputations of men, which have woven their interpretations about it—interpretations which bewilder us by their variety, and distract us with the din of theological and ecclesiastical conflict. It is my purpose, however, to avoid as far as possible this outside confusion, and to gather from out these Epistles themselves the salient truths they were meant to teach—truths which we must

learn for ourselves if we would rightly teach them to others.

The Pastoral Epistles are three. They consist of two to Timothy and one to Titus. In the order of their composition, the one to Titus comes in between the first and second letters to Timothy, but they were all written within the space of a few years, and all after the first imprisonment of St. Paul in Rome, with the account of which Luke's history in the Acts of the Apostles ends.

It may be asked why we are to assume a second imprisonment of the apostle Paul unrecorded in Holy Writ, during which and between which and the first imprisonment these Pastoral Epistles were written. There are both internal and external reasons which compel it. Those which are internal refer to the subject-matter of the Epistles, and the nature of the heresies and false teachings which are rebuked in them, which are of such a character as could not have arisen in the earlier period of the apostle's life. Indeed, to certain destructive critics the form of these ripe evils herein treated has been the occasion for strong doubt, if not for stout denial, of the apostolic authorship of the Epistles. Both Schleiermacher and De Wette have urged this argument, which we will consider farther on, when we think we can show that the evils herein treated coincide exactly with that late epoch in St. Paul's life which marks the interval between the first and second imprisonment. But undoubtedly the nature of the heresies here mentioned and the phrases applied to them are so advanced upon the evils

corrected and opposed in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, or appearing at any time of the period extending from the year A. D. 54 to A. D. 63, during which the other Epistles were written, that we are forced to place these writings among the latest productions of the apostle's pen, and assign them to the period subsequent to the account of his residence in Rome, with which the Book of the Acts of the Apostles so abruptly ends. The concluding notices of the second Epistle to Timothy, wherein the apostle speaks (as in chap. 4:6) of his prospect of immediate martyrdom, forbid our placing that Epistle at any earlier period, and all the three letters stand together in the nature of their contents.

The external reasons for assuming a liberation from the first imprisonment followed by a second imprisonment, are as follows: The Epistles to Timothy are written to him at Ephesus, and in his character of presiding officer of the church there, to which special charge he had been set apart by the apostle Paul himself when he went into Macedonia. See 1 Tim. 1:3. This time must have been subsequent to St. Paul's first visit to Ephesus, recorded in Acts 18:20, 21, when the church was founded, if indeed it was at that time founded. For at that time of his departure, St. Paul did not go to Macedonia, but to Jerusalem. The second visit to Ephesus was the long one related in Acts 19, when he continued there (see ver. 10) at least two years; which statement may not have included the whole time, since St. Paul, in his address to the elders of Ephesus, who met him by appointment at Miletus (Acts 20:31), says "by the space

of three years" he preached among them ; which, by the well-known method of Jewish reckoning, may mean no more than parts of three years, but must mean as much. The apostle did at this time depart to go to Macedonia (Acts 20 : 1) ; yet he did not leave Timothy behind him, but, as we read in Acts 19 : 22, he sent Timothy and Erastus before him. Again (in 1 Tim. 3 : 14), we find the apostle hopes soon to follow his letter to Ephesus ; but in the Acts we find no trace of such intention and no attempt to accomplish it. It has been supposed by some that Timothy's stay in Macedonia was short, and that he returned to Ephesus before the apostle left (see 1 Cor. 16 : 8-11) ; but if so he must have almost immediately deserted his charge ; for, as is evident from 2 Cor. 1 : 1, he is again in the autumn with St. Paul in Macedonia (whence the 2d Epistle to the Corinthians was written), in the winter in Corinth (see Rom. 16 : 21), where the Epistle to the Romans was written, and returned to Asia with him (Acts 20 : 3, 4) ; so that the ruling and ordering of the Ephesian church during the apostle's absence, which furnish the whole scope of the Epistle, would have been defeated. Some critics, to meet this difficulty, have supposed an unrecorded journey of the apostle into Macedonia during the two or three years' residence in Ephesus ; but the whole character of the first Epistle shows that (to quote Dean Alford) it belongs not to a brief and casual absence of this kind, but to one intended to last some time. The hope of returning soon is faint (1 Tim. 3 : 14) ; the provision is for a longer absence.

Taken, then, with the internal considerations already alluded to, the external indications form a strong argument for a later composition of these Epistles than the theory of one imprisonment would furnish, especially as the fact of a second imprisonment is supported by an ancient tradition not easily set aside, referred to in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius (2 : 22), in the 1st Epistle of Clement of Rome to Corinth, and in a fragment of Muratori on the Canon.

Now as to the fact, time, and place of the writing of the 1st Epistle to Timothy, we have the following indications: In the Epistle to the Philippians (1 : 26 and 2 : 24), written during the first imprisonment in Rome, the apostle intends and hopes to come to see them shortly. The hope of release also appears in the Epistle to Philemon (ver. 22), written from Rome. The supposition is that the apostle realized this hope and visited (when once set free) the Macedonian and Asiatic churches, leaving Timothy at Ephesus, and writing the Epistle from some place on his journey where he was detained and was likely to be kept longer than he had anticipated (1 Tim. 3 : 14, 15); that he went with Titus to Crete, leaving him there to complete the organization of the Cretan churches (Titus 1 : 5), writing the Epistle soon after from Asia Minor, when proposing to winter at Nicopolis (3 : 12), a well-known city in Epirus. We judge, from 2 Tim. 4 : 13, 20 (written after his last communication with Timothy and from the Roman prison), that he journeyed from Crete to Nicopolis by Troas and Miletus. Nicopolis was a Roman colony, and the apostle having

been known in Rome as a leader of the Christians, would be exposed to the hostile action of parties plotting against him in the metropolis, and would be likely, at any time after the great fire at Rome in A. D. 64 (which Nero, who caused it, charged upon the Christians), to be arrested as implicated in causing it. As in this case the crime alleged was committed in Rome, the Decemviri of Nicopolis would send him to Rome for trial. We learn from 2 Tim. 2 : 9 that he was in this imprisonment treated as a criminal, not as an offender in matters of the Jewish law—as before, when he dwelt two years chained to a soldier in his own hired house (see Acts 28 : 30). As a criminal he is now thrown into prison. Of his Asiatic friends only Nicephorus was faithful and found him out (2 Tim. 1 : 16; 4 : 10, 11). Luke was faithful still; but in his loneliness and infirm and premature old age, at 65, St. Paul writes this second letter to his favorite Timothy, begging him to come with Mark to see him. It was written after his first appearance and pleading before the court (2 Tim. 4 : 16, 17), but how long after we cannot tell. But both Eusebius and Jerome mention the tradition that he suffered martyrdom in the last year, or last but one, of Nero, therefore late in 67 or in 68. And this Epistle (2 Tim. 4 : 6) was written in immediate expectation of that event. It has, not without reason therefore, been called the testament of the dying Paul to his spiritual son, and through him to the whole community.

Let us now turn from the writer to the recipients of these letters. Of Titus but little, of Timothy much is known. Titus is never once mentioned in the Acts, un-

less under another name, which some have supposed to be the case, since of all the companions of St. Paul, he seems to have been the most valued and trusted. But some have supposed that at last he deserted the apostle, and so found no mention at the hands of St. Luke. In view, however, of his excellent character and devotion; we are compelled to regard his departure from the imprisoned Paul at Rome for Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10) as suggested by the apostle himself. He is first mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians, chap. 2:1, 3, where we learn that he was of Gentile origin; and we conclude that he was certainly converted under St. Paul, from the expression (Titus 1:4), "To Titus mine own son after the common faith." The next notice of him is in 2 Corinthians, where (12:18) we find that he, with two other brethren, was sent forward by St. Paul from Ephesus, during his long sojourn there, to set on foot a collection (8:6) for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and to ascertain the effect of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. In 2 Cor. 2:12, 13, we learn that notwithstanding the great opportunities of usefulness at Troas, where the apostle Paul waited after his departure from Ephesus, he was so anxious for the return of Titus that he went over into Macedonia to meet him, and (chap. 8:6-15) was greatly comforted by the satisfactory account which he brought of the effect of the 1st Epistle, and by the effective zeal and earnestness in the work of the gospel shown by Titus himself. In chap. 8:23, St. Paul calls him his partner and fellow-helper; and in 12:18 he appeals to his integrity and entire unity of action with himself. From this

time for a period of ten years (A. D. 57 to 67) we know nothing of Titus, except the notices furnished in the Epistle. From this we learn that St. Paul had left him in Crete (1:5), "to set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city." His stay at this time was not long, for in 3:12 the apostle summons him to come to Nicopolis, where he was to winter, and whence, as we have seen, St. Paul was probably sent to Rome for his last imprisonment and martyrdom, charged with criminal action. From 2 Tim. 4:10, we learn that Titus left St. Paul for Dalmatia, whether before or after the apostle reached Rome we cannot tell. So far as tradition goes, Eusebius speaks of him as the first bishop of Crete; and Butler, in the "Lives of the Saints," says he is honored in Dalmatia as its principal apostle; that he returned from Dalmatia to Crete, and finished a laborious and holy life at Crete, at an advanced age.

Concerning Timothy we have fuller information. He is first mentioned (Acts 16:1) as dwelling in Derbe or Lystra, on St Paul's second visit there. His mother was a Jewess, his father a Gentile, and he was probably converted under the apostle's preaching on his first visit, as (1 Tim. 1:2) the apostle styles him, "My own son in the faith." His mother and his grandmother Lois (2 Tim. 1:5) were both Christians, probably converted on St. Paul's first visit from being pious Jewesses (3:14, 15). Though young, Timothy was well esteemed at Lystra and Derbe (Acts 16:2), and St. Paul took him as a helper in the missionary work, having first circumcised him, his father being a Jew, to remove any obstacle to his access

to the Jews. This has been made a charge of time-serving and inconsistency against the apostle, as he had refused to circumcise Titus. But the cases were different. Titus was a Greek. To circumcise him, would have been to yield to the principle of the Judaizers—that a man must be made a Jew to be a true Christian. To have refused to circumcise Timothy (of Jewish stock) would have seemed to declare that the Jew could not be in the fullest sense a Christian. St. Paul's open position opposed both these views. His watchword was, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision." His action in regard to both Titus and Timothy showed strict adherence to his principle of the indifference of outward acts. In Titus he resisted circumcision when declared necessary and made an essential of Christianity. In Timothy he performed the rite, not in itself wrong, when it would give greater access to the gospel—in respect of which neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything. He combined in his diverse actions the same principle, which led in the one case to the maintaining of freedom and in the other to the expediency of free concession.

Without tracing all the events of his career, suffice it to say, that from this time on Timothy was the companion and fellow-worker of the apostle. He probably accompanied him in his progress through Macedonia, for he was left behind in Berea with Titus (Acts 17:14), when the apostle was sent away to Athens by sea. He rejoined the apostle with Silas at Corinth, having brought tidings from Thessalonica. (See 1 Thess. 3:6.) He

remained with the apostle at Corinth, and his name appears in the addresses of both the Epistles to the Thessalonians written at Corinth. We next find him ministering to St. Paul during his long stay at Ephesus (Acts 19:22), whence he was sent with Erastus to Macedonia. He was with the apostle again in Macedonia when he wrote the second Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:1); and in the winter following was with him in Corinth when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:21), and on the apostle's return to Asia went forward and waited for him at Troas. We next hear of him from the three Epistles of the first Roman imprisonment. He was with St. Paul when he wrote to the Colossians (Col. 1:1), to Philemon (verse 1), and to the Philippians (Phil. 1:1). From this time we hear of him no more till we come to the Pastoral Epistles. From these we learn that he was left by the apostle at Ephesus to take charge of the church in his absence; and St. Paul's urgent appeal to him to come to him in Rome makes it probable that he would set out immediately to see him there. The tradition mentioned in Eusebius styles him the first bishop of Ephesus; and the ancient martyrologies make him die by martyrdom under Domitian.

When Timothy was ordained to the ministry we cannot tell. Dean Alford inclines to the view that it was when left by the apostle for his isolated work at Ephesus. Be the time what it may, he was solemnly set apart for the ministry with the "laying on of the apostle's hands and those of the presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6); and according to prophecy (1 Tim. 4:14; 1:18).

His character was earnest and self-denying, as shown by his leaving home with the apostle, his submission to circumcision at his hands, and from (1 Tim. 5:23) the fact of his abstinence from wine. There are tokens of timidity apparent in the apostle's exhortations to him, as though he were better fitted for a coadjutor than an independent laborer. (1 Cor. 16:10.) For about fifteen years he was as a son in the Gospel to the apostle, a source of great consolation to St. Paul, and a man of devoted and affectionate character, though doubtless lacking in the boldness of his spiritual father—an apostolic Melancthon to the apostolic Luther.

I have dwelt thus long on the writer and recipients of these Epistles, because they are so especially personal communications. It is indeed an official person who writes and who is written to, and of course there is much reference to official station and official duties; but there is a personal strain throughout these letters, and they are rather the utterances of affection than official admonitions. We shall find much of the value of the Epistles to consist in this. They give an insight into the very heart of the apostle, and teach us how the Divine inspiration mingled with and made use of the natural affections and characteristic emotions of the writer, as well as of his higher intellectual endowments.

* FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

This Epistle itself states the occasion of its composition. St. Paul had left Timothy in charge of the Ephesian church. Heresies, such as he had foretold in his

address to the elders of Ephesus—who met him at Miletus, when he took a supposed final leave of them—had arisen; and Timothy, comparatively young, and unused to independent labors, must be encouraged and enlightened concerning his work, in the doubtful prospect of a return of the apostle—a return which he had hoped to accomplish when he left. (1 Tim. 3:14, 15.) The precepts of the apostle, however, regarded two quite different branches of his duty: one was to keep down and extirpate the growing heresies of the day; the other had respect to the government of the church itself.

Before, however, dwelling upon either of these topics, I would call your attention to one feature of both the Epistles to Timothy, which marks them at once as personal communications and as the utterances of an aged Christian man. I do this because it illustrates the natural flow of his supernatural inspiration, and lets us see how free and unconstrained in the method of its expression was that Divine enlightenment which gives to these Epistles the force of a Heavenly Authority, while it preserves intact the characteristics of the human author. Indeed, we learn from this feature of these letters how the Holy Spirit, who inspires the thought, uses what some might term the infirmity of old age, and what all recognize as its characteristic, as the means of conveying some of the most touching as well as the most exalted expressions of Divine truth, and leads our thoughts to dwell on the author as an inspired man rather than merely an inspired penman—as one whose whole being was suffused with the truth and spirit of Christ, so that it could

not but manifest itself, whether by a direct effort of argument, or the indirect expressions of personal experience.

This peculiar characteristic of these Epistles is St. Paul's habit of going off, on the mention of anything which reminds him of God's mercies to himself, or of his own sufferings on behalf of the Gospel, into a digression on his own history or feelings or hopes. The habit of digression, or of having his attention caught by a word or phrase which suggested some side-truth, and leaving for a while the direct argument to pursue it, is characteristic of St. Paul in all his epistles. But in the letters before us the cause of digression is different, while the habit remains. Here it is not a suggestion of subsidiary, though connected truth, but of some personal experience which sets his heart glowing, rather than his mind moving, and stirs him up to the utterance of that eloquent ascription which is kindled from the embers of feeling, rather than by the fuel of ideas. Turn to 1 Tim. 1:12-18 for an illustration of this characteristic fact. St. Paul here turns from the subject to himself. He has been giving a charge concerning errors in the church. But the words "glorious gospel" were too much for the argument. The aged apostle could not then think only of those who perverted it. His feeling kindles in the thought of what it had done for him, and so he goes on to speak of his own experience of it. I doubt if in all the Biblical literature can be found expressions more dear to the Christian heart than here. They have inwoven themselves into the universal Christian experience, because

they originated in the utterance of just such experience. "He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." What clergyman does not con over that expression as the classic utterance of his own emotion as he contemplates the high responsibilities and the beckoning privileges of his calling, especially when the sense of his personal insufficiency presses most heavily upon him! What Christian does not linger fondly over the expression of ver. 15, as he comes to the cross of his Redeemer for forgiveness and for strength, words which have broken many a criminal's hard heart, and which are by the Episcopal Church put among the comfortable words to be read in the hearing of all the faithful as they approach the table of the Lord's bounty: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief"! If we should attempt to sketch even the associations of these words with the scenes they have brightened and glorified, with the hours of holy communion they have sweetened, the joys of the new-born believer they have begotten, the triumphs of the dying-bed which they have assured and lightened,

"Where would the glowing numbers end?"

Must we not thank God for this inspired utterance of an old man's heart, as fervently as for the profoundest argument begotten by the same Spirit in his brain? And when we look at the ascription in ver. 17, which closes this interjected paragraph, where shall we, in all literature, find the equal of its sublimity? "Now unto the

King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." Of these and other like passages in these Epistles might be said with far deeper and truer meaning, what a distinguished modern writer says concerning the effect of the writings of Thomas à Kempis.* See how what she writes of him applies here: "This voice out of the far-off (Middle) ages was the direct communication of a human soul's belief and experience, and came . . . as an unquestioned message. I suppose this is the reason why the small old-fashioned book . . . works miracles to-day, turning bitter waters into sweetness, while expensive sermons and treatises newly issued leave all things as they were before. It was written down by a hand that waited for the heart's prompting; it is the chronicle of a solitary hidden anguish, struggle, trust, and triumph, not written on velvet cushions to teach endurance to those who are treading with bleeding feet on the stones. And so it remains to all time a lasting record of human needs and human consolations; the voice of a brother who ages ago felt and suffered and renounced, . . . with a fashion of speech different from ours, but under the same silent far-off heavens, and with the same passionate desires, the same strivings, the same failures, the same weariness"—we may joyfully add, of our Master, the apostle, with the same faith as ours, and with the same Lord to inspire it.

There are other such passages, though shorter, to be found in 1 Tim. 2 : 7 ; 2 Tim. 1 : 11, 12 notably, "For I

* George Eliot in "The Mill on the Floss."

know whom I have believed," etc.; 2:9, 10; and especially 4:6-9, which I must read to you before we go off on the heresies, as being so full of that joyful faith in the midst of all difficulties and dangers that it may well teach us to keep a steadfast trust in the face of any menace to the faith. Read 2 Tim. 4:6-9, 16-19; also 1 Tim. 6:13-16.

These illustrations of the personal breaks or interruptions of the course of the Epistle, show the general character of its style. It is not succinct and logically coherent, but discursive, now speaking of this, now of that; more in the character of a private letter to a public person, than an official document. Our criticism of its contents, therefore, must keep this in view, if we are to really grasp its import, both in regard to the heresies of which it treats, and to the church government which it recommends; for we have here germinant principles to guide action, rather than positive edicts and set institutions.

The passages in relation to the *heresies* touching the church, are found in the 1st Epistle, chiefly in 1:4-11; 4:1-9; 6:3-5; and in 2 Tim. 2:14, 16-26 generally; 3:1-9. And we find in them a special character of their own. I said earlier that the form of these errors had been urged by some (Schleiermacher and De Wette especially) as an argument for a later composition of the Epistles than St. Paul's lifetime would allow, because of the elements of Gnosticism contained in them, a form of error which did not come to its full development before the second century. Now in any of the

passages I have indicated, you will find a common feature running through this error: it is a false speculation, an attention to "endless genealogies which minister questions, rather than godly edifying" (1:4); a "giving heed to fables and seducing spirits" (4:7); a false asceticism (4:3); "perverse disputings" (6:5); "strifes about words" (2d Epistle 2:14; 16-23); "heady and high-minded" persons (3:4-7); with all which erroneous doctrine was mingled dissoluteness of life. Now in this false knowledge and disputings of genealogies, we do find Gnostic elements. But it is germinant, not developed Gnosticism. These heresies represent a transition period from the old Judaizing opponents to the later Gnostic opponents of the gospel. The old Judaizing party would confine Christianity within the limits of Judaism. They would keep it chained to the law. The later Gnostic heretics would identify it with speculation, and merge it in a philosophy, and so would wholly spurn and reject the law as an outward institution. In the heresies of these Epistles we see a mingling of both elements, showing the transition stage from one to the other. The traces of Judaism in the heretics of these Epistles are numerous: they professed to be teachers of the law (1 Tim. 1:7); they commanded to abstain from meats (4:3); in Titus 1:10 they are designated as being of the circumcision, and in 1:14 gave heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men; and were given to strivings about the law (3:9). But these are not the Judaizers of the earlier Epistles, notably of that to the Galatians. Those were strong upholders of the law and

all its requirements; and would make circumcision essential as well as faith in Christ. In the Epistle to the Colossians there is also an advance. There they have added to Jewish tenets such excrescences as "will-worship," "neglecting of the body," "voluntary humility," "worshipping of angels," "intruding into those things which he hath not seen," "puffed up by his fleshly mind," "not holding the Head." (Col. 2: 18, 19, 23.) In Philip-pians there is a further advance. In 3:2 they are called "dogs, evil-workers, the concision." And in the 11th verse of the same chapter we find indications of the same heresy, concerning the resurrection's being passed already, which is fully developed in 2 Tim. 2: 18. Now in these Pastoral Epistles there is noted the same progress from legality through superstition on to godlessness, only in a riper stage. The heretics here have lost all true understanding of the law (1 Tim. 1: 7-19), repudiated a good conscience, are hypocrites and liars (4: 2), use religion as a means of bettering themselves in the world (6: 5, and Titus 1: 11), "overturning the faith" (2 Tim. 2: 17), with mind and conscience defiled (Titus 1: 15, 16). "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate."

There are also in these Epistles traces of Gnosticism. The endless genealogies may point, as Dean Alford suggests, to the lists of Gnostic emanations which in their full form come later: though I rather incline to refer them to the Jewish traditions, which purported to contain the mysteries Moses had handed down by tradition, as a tra-

ditional law or Kabbala. But plainly in 1 Tim. 4:3 we have the seeds of Gnostic Dualism. The passage is prophetic, but the germ of the future was evidently already present. In 6:20 the phrase rendered "oppositions of science" has a reference to the Gnostic speculations.

But the Gnosticism of these Epistles is not that of the second century. That was altogether antijudaistic. The Jewish Creator, law, and system, were held in contempt and abhorrence by it. The whole system stood over against the Jewish stand-point. The heretical speculations found no root in the permanence of the Mosaic economy. It rather despised it as a thing gone by. The Oriental and Greek elements which had been fused with Judaism completely cast it out. And one great cause of this was the obliteration of the Jewish hierarchy and national system by the destruction of Jerusalem. The logical outcome of the unnatural alliance of positive Jewish law and Greek intellectualism and Oriental mysticism, was thus assisted by the course of outward events. But while these events were preparing, the tendency to the break was growing, and we reach a very interesting period of its growth, in the ripening heresies of these Pastoral Epistles. For these exhibit a state of things far in advance of the principles of the old Judaizing party, and far in the rear of the full-blown Gnosticism of the next century. As the progress from the one to the other was gradual, the peculiar features of the period marked by these Epistles indicate just what we might expect, a mingling of legal and speculative elements, which passed

by for ever when, a few years later, the temple was destroyed, Jerusalem made a heap of stones, the priesthood scattered, and religion decentralized.

I have spoken thus fully of these heresies, not because they are in their special form of much practical interest to-day, but because they have been used as an argument against the genuineness of the Epistles, whereas they seem to me to mark out very distinctly the date of their composition, and to be, according to Meyer, Alford, and Van Oosterzee, whose views I follow, a proof of their authenticity. But they have not only a speculative interest. Their special form of error passes, but their principle remains. And the method of the apostle's treatment makes them intensely practical and gives a lesson to every age. It is this which must interest and edify you as teachers of the truth here taught. If as such you rightly grasp its significance, you will not spend your time and strength on expositions of ancient Judaism or speculative systems, but will seize and press home the ethical principles which appear in the apostle's treatment of them, and which are applicable to every age and to all error.

Now if we examine any of these denunciations of error, we find the animus of the apostle's objection to lie in their practical ungodliness. Against both the legal and the speculative spirit the apostle opposes "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." He lets us see that "the faith of Christ" is neither a system of legal precepts nor a system of intellectual speculation, both of which may leave the heart, out of which are the issues of

life, as barren as before. The gospel is not to be apprehended as a subject of disputation, as a material out of which theories are to be spun, as though either perfunctory behavior or mental comprehension were the result aimed at by it. No, it is a source of life. It is that heart-trust in God, as revealed in Christ, which must hold the faith in a pure conscience, and which cannot substitute either ritual acts (bodily exercise) or intellectual acuteness (oppositions of science) for righteousness of conduct flowing from devotion of soul. "Now the end of the commandment," he says (1 Tim. 1 : 5), "is charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned;" *i. e.*, it is faith, not the pretence of faith; no empty thought or fancy, but a spiritual light and a spiritual life. The general character of these false teachers was not so much error in doctrine, as leading men away from the earnestness of the living, Christian life, to useless and vain questionings, ministering only strife. Therefore St. Paul opposed the gospel to that. Whether in his denunciation of errorists, or his positive exhortations to Timothy himself, the constant tenor of his teaching is, faith and a good conscience: "Take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine." The body of the gospel truth is righteousness of life, against all false asceticism on the one hand, as well as lawless sensuality on the other. Its soul is that living alliance with the Lord, which takes him for the personal love of the heart. The gospel faith is, as portrayed in the Epistles, the practical alliance of the soul with Christ. Its spring is love, not legalism. Its effect is moral obedience, not mental spec-

ulation. And this is so because the gospel centres in a living person. It is not a product of philosophy ; *i. e.*, of man's thought, but of revelation ; *i. e.*, of God's thought. And this divine thought became a human fact, and was revealed in a human Person, to whom all love can be given, and to whom all obedience is due. Or, as it is expressed in that cresting phrase of the Epistle to Timothy : "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, who was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

This is one of the celebrated texts of these Epistles, and we may as well examine it here, having arrived at it in the progress of our thought, before we glance at the ecclesiastical portion of the Epistles.

You will have noticed that I did not quote the passage exactly as it stands in our version. The best and most orthodox scholars are now agreed, especially since the light thrown upon the text by the Sinaitic Manuscript, that the word after "mystery" is not $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, "God," but $\delta\varsigma$, "who." The rendering with the relative "who" does not alter the sense of divineness, which is expressed by the substantive, "God ;" indeed, it is so expressive of it that the change in the manuscript seems to be the natural effort of some commentator to make the meaning plainer, not to alter it. "There is hardly a passage in the New Testament," writes Dean Alford, "in which I feel more deep personal thankfulness for the restoration of the true and wonderful connection of the original text." And says Van Oosterzee (who edits these Epis-

cles in Lange's Commentary), "The reading 'who' is not only critically, but exegetically proved to be the best, and the view that it is an heretical corruption is quite excluded." The ground for these expressions of learned commentators is that the sentence is made by the word "who" so much clearer in its connection, while undiminished in its divine meaning. To understand it fully we must regard the context. In the verse preceding, St. Paul explains the object of his writing to Timothy: "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (of the living God). "And" (the thought seems to run, well may I exhort you to behave well in so responsible and exalted a place where the truth of the living God is guarded), for "great, weighty, glorious, is the mystery of godliness" (equivalent to the truth of the living God): and then follows the description of the mystery of godliness, which is not that it is a mere sentiment, or statement, or law, but a personal manifestation of God (the article is not neuter, agreeing with mystery, but masculine, and refers to a person); not the mystery *which* was manifest, but the mystery of Godliness *who* was manifested. This reading brings the passage into exact accord with Colossians 1:27, where St. Paul defines the mystery of the Gospel as something long hidden, but now made known, when he writes, "Even the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints (to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this

mystery among the Gentiles), which (mystery) is Christ in you the hope of glory." Therefore we have announced in this text in 1 Timothy not something which is a great mystery, but the great and glorious mystery (of Godliness), what it is; and it is, as I said, not a law, or doctrine, or statement, but the manifestation of God in a living Person; *who* was manifested in the flesh. The words are descriptive of Christ alone, and we learn from them concerning him that he was the mystery of the living God revealed; and we learn of them concerning ourselves that the mystery of piety for us is Christ in us. This is precisely the practical truth which the apostle is teaching all through his warnings and exhortations. It is the rich truth of the Epistle, which we are to aim to extract and teach from every portion of it; namely, the religion of Christ, not a precept, not a speculation, but a divine fact, in which we are to live, and which is to live in us; or, to follow the style of the apostle, the religion of the gospel a divine fact, God manifested in Christ, in *whom* we are to live and *who* is to live in us.

Let us turn to look at the *ecclesiastical portions* of these Epistles. These are contained chiefly in the second, third, and fifth chapters of 1 Timothy and the three chapters of the Epistle to Titus. These have been the subject of ceaseless controversy, but more generally for the facts they are assumed or not assumed to presuppose, than for the directions they evidently contain. The difference of opinion is more in regard to the office held by Timothy and Titus, than the office of those to whom they were sent, or the directions of which they were the

messengers. As our subject here concerns the Epistles themselves and their contents, we may pass by unnoticed the controversy concerning the nature of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the apostolic messengers. We need not enter into the question as to whether they were diocesan bishops or evangelistic missionaries. On these points we may hold different opinions. Careful scholars on either side would hesitate to say that we could accurately determine this question from the Epistles themselves without light from other literature; and it is with the Epistles themselves only that we have to do.

Apart from this vexed question then, it is evident, from the Epistles themselves, that Timothy and Titus were commissioned by St. Paul, and had the two powers of ordination and judicial rule (See 1 Tim. 5:1, 19, 20, 22; Titus 1:5), and whatever their rank, all candid scholars admit that the terms *bishop* and *elder*, *episcopos* and *presbuteros*, are here interchangeably used. Presbyter was the earliest Jewish Christian name, *nomen ætatis*; episcopos the later, taken from political usage among the Greeks, *nomen officii*. The origin of the order of deacons we know from the Acts. The origin of the order of elders is not given. They existed in the Ephesian church before these Epistles were written, as the elders came down to meet St. Paul at Miletus, when he calls them *episcopoi*. The direct lesson for us concerning church government which we are to gather out of these Epistles, is not the special method of it, but the fact that, in the church, government is of Divine institution. The church is to be orderly; and Order is the pa-

rent of Orders. There is a power to bear rule, and there are those set apart to exercise it, and to them reverence and obedience are due. The whole tenor of these instructions to Timothy and Titus is a protest against all lawlessness in the church. It is to exercise discipline, and to exercise it through duly-appointed officers. But the discipline has respect to sound doctrine, or wholesome doctrine, that which tends to righteousness; and moral fitness is the indispensable characteristic of those who exercise it. The fact is, the directions given in these Epistles are of an ethical, not of a hierarchical kind. They refer to the selection of men whose previous lives and relations in society afford good promise that they will discharge faithfully the trust committed to them, and will work faithfully and successfully in their office.

The lesson of great practical importance to be drawn from all these directions is the one of the Divine appointment of rule, of the necessity of moral fitness for office, and of the responsibility, both of governors and governed, for the faithful discharge of their respective duties.

excellent
It is very evident, from these Epistles, that women were not mere ciphers in the church, and were not meant to be. They are mentioned specially in the 2d and 5th chapters of 1 Timothy. In regard to their teaching in the general assembly, it is expressly forbidden (2:12): "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Women preachers, whatever else they may be, are *not* an *apostolic* institution. Some have argued from the different status of woman

to-day, that for her now to ascend the pulpit and preach, while it would break the letter, would not transgress the spirit of the apostle's injunction, because it is not now an unwomanly act. They attribute the necessity of this apostolic command to the fact of woman's position in the East, and declare it to be of a temporary and an expedient character merely. To have preached there and then would have brought the charge of immodesty against the Christian community; it would not have comported with Eastern notions of propriety, and so had to be discountenanced. But now, when, through the influence of Christianity, woman is accorded a wholly different position, different duties may rightly be demanded of her, and different functions permitted to her.

In opposition to this, I would say that the apostle based his argument not on an exceptional condition, but on a universal truth; not on the character of Greek or Oriental civilization (and he knew Roman civilization and woman's position then), but on the primitive relation of the parents of us all. "Adam was first formed, then Eve." He views the public act of preaching to a miscellaneous assemblage, as contradictory of the true position and functions of womanhood. She is not for less noble, but for other uses than that. I know that in these days of "Woman's Rights," this judgment of St. Paul is considered a very narrow one; and men who agree with him are held to be tyrants without his excuse. But notwithstanding, I venture to say that in all the results (and many have been excellent) of the woman's movement of our day, I have never yet seen one advantage arising

from putting woman into that publicity from which her own true nature shrinks. There is no gain, but infinite loss to her, in according her any station which destroys or blurs the charm of womanhood. Her unique position seems to me to be plainly written in her nature, stamped by her organization, and illustrated by her special functions in society; and I deem that we have the expression of the Divine mind for our age, as well as for the age of the apostle, in the words, "I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." You will see, of course, that this direction has respect to the public functions of the ministry. It has nothing to do with unofficial activity, or with the ministry of consolation; with woman's meetings for prayer and conference—all which are not only allowable, but useful in the highest degree. It only accords to woman the glorious privilege of being a woman; and places in her hand a potent weapon of defence when any would urge her, on the plea of duty, to push beyond the barrier which the delicacy of her nature and the most sacred duties of her position would set up. It is in fact an affirmation of that greatest of woman's rights—the right to be a woman.

But, as I said, women are not to be ciphers in the church. In 1 Tim., ch. 5, we have an indication of their work and power in the church, in the directions concerning the widows, who evidently were not merely the beneficiaries of the congregation, but formed part of a corps of workers in the church. It would be too much to assume, and would doubtless anticipate the future, to call them an order of deaconesses, though this opinion

has been widely held ; but they undoubtedly held in a simple and less-organized form the virtual position, afterward organized into the early order of church deaconesses, and were the original germ from which such an order sprung. But here we find no trace of a vow of ordination, no semi-clerical office which marked the order which Canon XI. of Laodicea formally established. Exact distinctions of class and name do not suit the character of the primitive age. These women were doubtless real widows, not the nominal widows of a later age, called so because of their renunciation of the world and of domestic life. They were persons who had been married (5 : 9), and now, in their advanced age, gave their activity to the affairs of the Christian community. The character of their work is sketched in ver. 10, as also in ver. 5. Benevolence and devotion combined to form woman's official occupation.

It is not so much for the special feature it reveals, as for the universal fact it emphasizes, that we prize the passage. It gives the seal of the apostle's approbation to woman's work in the church of Christ ; and would that the strong common sense here manifest could mark all attempts to organize and conduct it. How marked in contrast do the apostle's precepts stand to the early novitiate of many in the conventual orders, who, without experience, renounce the world before ever they have attempted to accomplish their task in it ; where separation from domestic life and family ties are made in direct contradiction of the apostle's decision, that the young women are to marry, and train their households well,

and are only thus to gain the discipline and the matured experience which fit them for the position of fellow-workers in the congregation of the faithful. It is not the girlish sentimentality which turns to the imagined poetry and mystic seclusion of the cloister as its ideal life, which the apostle in these Epistles endorses; but rather the sobered devotion of those who have known life's vicissitudes, and deepened and strengthened their religious fervor by an experience of life's discipline.

Indeed, in the treatment of every subject which the apostle touches in these letters there is apparent the equipoise of the loftiest enthusiasm for the subject, and the plainest common sense in its treatment—a balance which awakens confidence by both its earthly and its heavenly wisdom; the heavenly wisdom of undying devotion, the earthly wisdom of uncompromising discretion. A lesson we may well learn and teach from any portion of the Epistles, is the lesson of “zeal according to knowledge”—the lesson of the love which inspires and the wisdom which guides. In fine, there runs through all these letters that true practical strain which traces the fruit to the root, and develops the root into the fruit of the Gospel. The action and reaction of faith and practice are everywhere made apparent. Take 1 Tim. 6:10, where he declares against covetousness, and writes, “The love of money is a root of all evil,” and traces as one of those evils the loss of faith itself; “which some having coveted after, have erred from the faith;” practical wrong-doing resulting in mental bewilderment, or as in 1 Tim. 1:19, where, speaking of holding faith and a good

conscience, he says, which (a good conscience) some having laid aside, "concerning faith have made shipwreck." And again in that oft-misquoted passage, 2 Tim. 3 : 16, where, while he is not giving the statistical limits of inspired writing, nor compiling a canon of Scripture, but indicating its object and value, he declares, "All inspired or God-given Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." He is here expressly avoiding a question of strifes and jangling, a controversy concerning what are and what are not Holy Scriptures, and is indicating the sure touchstone by which they may be discriminated, even the purpose for which they were given—which is not a worship of their letter, but the incorporation of their spirit in the life and action of those who read them. Judged by such a test, how fully is the inspiration of these writings themselves vindicated and confirmed. They are addressed to the correction of special faults and errors of that far-off time. They are written to give order and peace to the Christian community of a far distant age. They record passages of an old experience, and are laden with exhortations to a youthful minister who lived in circumstances greatly different from our own. Yet how living they are to us! They let us see that the primitive church was no happy family wherein no errors found lodgment, and no brawls disturbed the peace, but a church militant like that of our own day, with foes of the household as well as of the camp. Within were fightings and without were fears.

But they let us know, too, that the true solvent of our troubles was the one applied to their own ; which solvent is not to be found in a code of rigid laws, a legalism of edicts, and bulls, and encyclicals and canons ecclesiastical ; not in a speculative philosophy, nor the refinements of intellectual dogmatism ; but in Him only who was the great Mystery of Godliness, who was manifest in the flesh, the Lord himself ; Whom to follow is to war a good warfare ; Whom to love is everlasting life.

THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

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NEW YORK.



THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews brings us face to face with the great unsolved problems of existence. It grapples with them as if confident of victory. Like some stalwart knight who, disguised by the very brightness of his armor, and riding into the circle of titled champions, unannounced and unendorsed, with no title but his courage, and no passport but his sword, hews for himself a path to power, and bears off the fear of foes, the admiration of strangers, and the confidence of all: so our *Epistle* comes into the field of our convictions, joins the goodly company of canonical books, and with no apostolic name for authority, and no clear tradition for defence, it shines with the fulness of apostolic inspiration, and by the power of its marvellous revelations demonstrates both its supernatural origin and its divine authority.

It comes out of the apostolic age with apostolic inspiration, but with no certain apostolic name. It made its way late into the canon, coming in by the way of the

Eastern church, and so slowly gaining the recognition of the Western church. But its internal structure and vitality, its spirit and power, have dissipated all doubts about its right to recognition, and have secured for it the highest encomiums from modern scholarship. It rises to the highest themes of possible revelation, yet it handles them in the most human and natural way. Now and then it ventures upon interpretations of older Scriptures with a freedom justified only by inspiration. Yet it relies upon the Old Testament Scriptures for its arguments, and seeks not so much to make a new revelation, as to unfold the germs of the old. While the Roman Epistle of the great Paul presents the theology, the doctrine and divinity of the New Testament, and is essential to a comprehension of the Gospels, this Epistle of the "Great Unknown" unfolds the spirit of the Old Testament and the relations existing between the Old Testament and the New. Some have called it an epistle, some an essay, some a treatise on theology; but if we were to name it we would call it THE GOSPEL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT UNFOLDED BY THE LIGHT OF THE NEW.

It presents the *priest*, rather than the victim, and familiarizes the reader more with heavenly things than with the Cross. Elsewhere in the New Testament Jesus is regarded chiefly as a King; here he is seen chiefly as a Priest. While the evangelists dealt with the incarnated Christ, and Paul constantly defended his apostolic character as one who had seen the Lord, yet in treating of Jesus as *King* they were occupied with an *invisible* kingdom, and were thus necessarily led to handle principles.

In our Epistle the author toils and builds about the *priesthood of Jesus*, which, being in his church, had a visible embodiment ; and maturing through the Old Testament rites and ritual, was constantly handled by visible signs. Its necessary environments therefore made it both ponderable and tangible. Thus this Epistle comes nearer to our capacities than any other part of the New Testament, except the Gospels themselves, which in their chief character took on our form, had an experience, and became like unto us. The rest of the New Testament exhibits the Son of God as heir to the eternal throne ; this Epistle as High Priest in the eternal sanctuary. The evangelists exhibit the law not as *destroyed*, but as fulfilled by the Son of God ; Paul exhibits the law as a wandering schoolmaster leading the worshipper to Christ ; this Epistle exhibits the law as administered by the Great High Priest. The evangelists, by the tragedy of Calvary, give us the breadth of human wickedness and want ; Paul, by the faith that overleaps the middle wall of partition, gives us a glance at the breadth of Divine love ; this Epistle, by exhibiting the web, woven from the garden of Eden to the most holy place in the heavens, shows us a little of the breadth of that wonderful revelation by which Infinite Wisdom is seeking the education and salvation of the race.

It is impossible to read this Epistle carefully and not be impressed with that "unfolding in time of the eternal purpose of redeeming love," which can best be grasped and comprehended as the *growth of revelation*. We get a hurried glance at the "divers manners" in which God

has revealed his truth, and then we are led into the mystery of our spiritual instruction. Revelation is a germ in the hand of our first parent in Eden, and as we watch it it soon waves like the cedars of Lebanon. It was a dim promise of a Deliverer, a statement that somewhere, somehow, some time, the bruised and bruising heel would appear, so dim that a murderer was mistaken for this Deliverer. When Earth's first mother, in the bewilderment of bearing her first son, cried out, "I have gotten a man — the Lord," this dim promise was added to and built upon till holy fire, blazing on the altars of the patriarchs, illumined the darkness of nature; till a prescribed and ratified covenant secured a chosen people and visible covenant; till a tabernacle with a Holy of Holies contained the shining presence of God; till a temple, made after the pattern seen in the Mount, gave permanence to both ritual and service; till prophets disclosed the offering of the Great Sacrifice; till in the fulness of time Christ came and his Spirit was poured out upon all flesh. This Epistle, more than any other part of the Bible, gives us the unity and completeness of all this revelation. As we read, the ages roll together, humanity is condensed into one family, and the Divine revelations are reduced to one lesson given and perfected by God's Son. Yonder it is but a bubbling spring, hardly able to lift a single shining grain of sand into the light; so small that the foot of the passing ox might trample it out, or the thirst of a single sunbeam might drink it dry. Soon it overflows its narrow brim, trickles down the hillside, crawls under the willows, vivifies and fructifies

its green way through the meadow, pushes across states and territories, and sweeps on over wide zones, bearing on its broad bosom the commerce and navies of mankind. Yonder the "father of the faithful" pays tithes to a Gentile priest; next the washed and robed priests minister for the chosen people. Finally the Great High Priest enters within the veil and offers the one full and sufficient sacrifice once for all, and sits down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This great Epistle to the Hebrews, so complete and so profound, so comprehensive and so minute, shows us Jesus as the author of the first covenant and the finisher of the second, leading Israel out of the land of bondage and delivering mankind from the bonds of iniquity.

At first thought it seems strange that so great an epistle should be left without an evident author. But then it soon occurs that so great a Book, so deeply woven into the religious history of two thousand years, so closely in league with events, does not need the bolstering of any particular apostolic name to insure its authority. It is enough that it is vitalized with the spirit of inspiration and radiant with the light of the eternal world; enough that, building us up upon fifteen centuries of sacrifices and types, it gives us first the shadow in these types, then the express image in the incarnated High Priest, and lastly a glimpse at the substance, the reality that awaits the believer in the world to come.

While we cannot go into a detailed argument showing why modern scholars are looking elsewhere than to

St. Paul for the author of this Epistle, we do not feel at liberty to pass this over in silence. We must at least give an opinion based upon an examination of the evidence in the case. We are compelled to abandon the theory of a Pauline authorship, partly because it treats its subjects so differently from Paul's treatment in other epistles. Paul always begins with man's need, and reasons out to the supply in Christ. Hebrews begins with Christ's exalted character, and leads down to man's need. Paul emphasizes the victim; Hebrews the priest. Paul gazes on the cross; Hebrews into the heavenly places. The argument deduced from the style of the Greek used is of great weight. Paul is rugged; Hebrews melodious. Paul is angular; Hebrews flows like oil. Paul is limitedly provincial; Hebrews is classical. More decisive than these peculiarities of language and style, which are far greater than the demands of the varying subjects and circumstances, must be regarded the statement in chap. 2:3, which classes the author as one who never saw the Lord, "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him," while Paul always defended his apostleship by the fact that he too had seen the Lord.

It is of sufficient value to justify the introduction here of the fact that Bleek, according to Dr. Mall, has shown that the citations in Hebrews from the Old Testament are all from the LXX, and follow the variations of the Alexandrian Codex, while Paul, in citing the LXX, always follows the Vatican Codex.

This fact is introduced not simply because it is very

nearly determinative of the non-Pauline authorship of this Epistle, but also because it furnishes a good example of the care with which every syllable and letter of this sacred Book has been examined. This opens the door and gives us a glance into the furnace in which these sacred oracles are tested. Surely if the form of the Fourth was not with them, we should not have them to-day without even the smell of fire upon them. While all things are being proved or tested, let us hold fast that which is good.

The theory first made prominent by Martin Luther that Apollos was the author of this Epistle is now generally accepted. He was a man "with great power to convince the Jews from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ," and a man whom some of the Greek Christians preferred to Paul on account of his eloquence. Though this theory is without support from Scripture or tradition, yet it is gaining ground. The canonical character of the Epistle is not affected in the least by this probable authorship. The Epistle remains *a Gospel from the Old Testament*.

This exalted character of this Epistle is sustained by the fulness with which it discovers the meaning of the old types. The march of knowledge is always from the known to the unknown. This involves figures, comparisons, illustrations, and types. These types were ordained to foreshadow the truths that waited by the thousand years for capacity in the race for their reception. Take this ninth chapter, and with it walk back into the old temple service on the great day of atonement,

and how much of Divine truth blazes from those old forms and ceremonies! While we bow on the pavement with the great congregation, waiting for the annual entrance into the Holy of Holies of the high priest, our representative, and holding this ninth chapter in our hands, how our faith is strengthened in these rites when we read concerning these types, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the Holiest was not yet made manifest." Surely this gives a divine light to all these ceremonies. We are surrounded with Gospel ideas. The great sacrifice is made on our behalf. Pardon, the remission of our sins, is vicariously reached. An essential Calvary rises before our eyes, a shadowy cross stretches out its arms for our embrace. We are surrounded with the supernatural revealments of a supernatural salvation. Prophecy is in the place of history. True, the glass is reversed, and the image of the good things is very small, but it is an image. The reality is taken by faith in each case—faith in the divine word as to what is to be, as in the divine word as to what has been. This Epistle opens all the ages back to Abel. It marches through all the centuries with the unquenchable torch of its holy fire, and kindles the flames on every altar, in every dark valley and on every mountain side. It transforms every bleeding victim and offering priest and blazing altar into footlights about Mount Calvary. It quickens into life, as with the inspiration of the Almighty, the vast body of Old Testament ritual and service. It unlocks the bosom of every Hebrew worshipper, and exposes to open gaze the secret faith that elevated him above the low plane of

corrupting idolatry, and exalted him into personal communion with the living God. This Epistle collects and exhibits the Gospel of the Old Testament Dispensation.

The analysis of the Epistle is not difficult. The only chance for mistake is in attempting to dissect it with a knife, instead of analyzing it in a retort. It must not go into the dissecting-room, but into the laboratory. It can be measured, not by a yard-stick, but by a spirit test. Taken as *a living organism*, with a certain design, it will not be difficult to determine the function of each part.

It was probably written to the Jews dwelling in Jerusalem, and who were just breaking up their old habit of attendance upon the services of the temple, and who were thus peculiarly exposed to the peril of relapsing into Judaism. It seems to have been written by some Jew, like Apollos, trained and perfected in Alexandrian Greek, and familiar with the temple service as ordered by Moses, rather than the actual service as conducted in Jerusalem. From this standpoint the Epistle must be considered, not as an argument and exhortation, like some sermons, in which the argument serves as a stock on which to swing round the exhortation as a lash, but as a living organism created for certain uses, in which the different parts are not only fitted into each other, but grow out of and into each other. The doctrine or argument of the Epistle is more like a skeleton than a stalk, and the exhortations, for they are many and frequent, grow upon and are attached to the bones from end to end.

The aim of the Epistle is to *prevent apostasy or relap-*

sing into Judaism. The argument is centred about this idea. The design of the old service is therefore presented, and its relations to the perfected system of Christianity pointed out. The superiority of Christianity is argued, and applications and exhortations are frequently interjected.

The spinal column of the argument is the exalted High Priesthood of Jesus. The high priest is the central figure in every sacrificial system. He is a necessity created by the guilt that demands or resorts to sacrifice. The worshipper is guilty, and therefore consciously unworthy. Some one must represent him and offer his gifts, and make peace for him. Thus the central claim urged is the exalted Priesthood of Jesus.

The law was given in consideration of a Priesthood to administer its rights and services, and as a trainer or schoolmaster, to be temporary. Thus it is said, "The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Heb. 7:12.)

The Priesthood of Jesus is expressly declared to be the central thought concerning him. The eighth chapter, after the great argument, showing the exaltation of Jesus, from many considerations, and well on toward the end of the argument, opens with these words, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum. We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man."

While Romans deals with law and the sacrifice and

faith, Hebrews emphasizes the Priesthood. There were good reasons why this part of Christ's character and work could not have been presented earlier in the history of the infant church. The Jews were looking for a Messiah, with kingly qualities, suited to their temporal needs. That was one open door through which Jesus might enter their hearts. Then their *patriotism* would have prevented their comprehending his Priesthood. Thus in Acts we see how they stone Stephen, charging him with speaking against the temple, and saying that Jesus would change the customs of Moses. So they sought to kill Paul in the temple for alleged teaching against the temple and bringing Greeks into it. At the probable date of this Epistle, about 64, the breach between the Jews as a nation and Christians was complete. The Christians were no longer allowed to come into the temple. The national hatred was as intense and bloodthirsty as it could be, so that the presentation of the Priesthood of Jesus could not prejudice their case any more. The fullness of time for this doctrine had come.

The argument sustaining the exalted Priesthood of Jesus *opens with the opening of the Epistle*. Jesus is set forth as the Son of God, having the same nature, being his express image, making the worlds, upholding all things, and receiving the worship of angels. The argument is most wonderful. Complete and determinative in its character, it is also majestic and mighty in its movement. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the

earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up ; and they shall be changed ; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." (Heb. 1 : 8-12.)

This is accompanied with his elevation above all angels and all things.

In the second chapter our author pauses to show how the incarnation and suffering of Jesus prepared Him for his work of "bringing many sons unto glory," and exhorts obedience to him. In the third chapter Jesus is exalted above Moses, as the maker of a house is greater than a servant in the house. His claim and supremacy are urged on account of his sinlessness and his antemundane glory.

The most of the third and all the fourth chapters are intense exhortations to faithfulness, and encouragements to come unto the great High Priest, who, having been tempted, and having suffered, is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Having established the divinity and sympathy of Jesus, our Epistle proceeds to show the exaltation of his Priesthood over all other priesthods.

Having shown the exaltation of Jesus above Moses, it is easy to show his exaltation above Aaron, whom Moses constituted a priest. This is done by going back to the priesthood of Melchizedec, who was greater even than Abraham, in whose loins Levi and all the Levitical priests paid tithes to Melchizedec. This man's priesthood, after which Christ's was typed, was greater than Aaron's,

because it was not for one people, but for all peoples, and was without end, and not temporary.

The Priesthood of Jesus was also confirmed by an oath, and was made surety of a better covenant. The Levitical priests were continually changing, while this man had an unchangeable priesthood.

The failure of the old system to perfect the worshippers is not charged upon any sins of the priests, but upon the system itself. The Priesthood of Jesus purges or cleanses its subjects, and has this supreme dignity. The Epistle runs on from the beginning, showing the divinity of Jesus, and how he is greater than Moses, and has a Priesthood that swallows up the Aaronic priesthood, and is applied to the whole race, like the priesthood of Melchizedec, till it reaches the eighth chapter, sixth verse, when we are told, "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant." Here our author swings out into another line of thought, and identifies Jesus with the Jehovah of the Old Testament, who made the old covenant when he took Israel by the hand and led her out of Egypt. The various sides of the work of Jesus in Redemption are brought before the mind. The victim and the priest are united, so the work of atoning and of administering the atonement are presented as embodied in Jesus. This better covenant is offered as a part of the dignity of our Great High Priest.

Jesus is brought before us as on the great day of atonement. The parallel between the old typical work in which the high priest offered sacrifices for himself, and

him =

for the temple and for all its appointments, and then for the sins of the people, is carefully traced. Jesus as High Priest offers himself once for all ; and having thus completed and perfected the system of Old Testament worship and types, he sits down on the right hand of the Majesty on High to await the results of his sacrifice as they shall appear in the salvation of a lost race.

The great doctrine of blood atonement, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission," is affirmed, illustrated, and sanctified. It receives the infinite emphasis of the death of the Son of God. However much modern skepticism may be offended at the blood atonement, yet this Epistle reaches back through the centuries, lifts the high priest and his victim, the blood of sprinkling and the blood of cleansing, out of every shade of heathenism, and by the death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Jesus, gives us a way of approach even into the presence of God. We are enabled to come boldly to the mercy-seat and obtain grace for our needs. Here we are brought face to face with the great doctrine of the Bible—the offering of a life for sin that forfeits life—that was first illustrated by the acceptable sacrifice of Abel, and was taught by every sacrificial offering that stained an altar or cheered the church from Abel to Jesus. The flames that flickered heavenward century after century, burned on night and day through the ages, consuming the victims and types of the passing system, kindled at last upon the victim slain from the foundation of the world. They consumed his humanity, but when they came to his divinity they went out never again to be re-

kindled. An argument divinely constructed, and drawn out through fifteen centuries of supernatural attestations, and crowned with the awful tragedy of Calvary and the amazing miracles of the resurrection and ascension, cannot be answered by the dulness or blindness or scoffing of a few doubters. Conscious of our sins we know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, that Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe, that we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Take the doctrines of atonement, as embodied in this Epistle, out of the Bible, and the book would not hold together. All the light of Old Testament ages that was borrowed from the coming Sun of Righteousness would be extinguished, leaving all those generations in hopelessness. Whatever there is about the tragedy of Mount Calvary that has gone forth among the idolatrous and heathen nations, quenching their false fires and destroying their idols, is centred in the atonement as explained by this Epistle. Other sacrifices cease because Jesus has suffered once for all. In him is all fulness. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

The lessons of this Epistle are too numerous to be catalogued in much less space than that occupied by the Epistle itself. It is a great mass of world-embracing truths filled in with constantly-recurring exhortations.

Adult babes, persons who are men in years and babes in wisdom and strength, are set on thinking about their responsibilities. While the great doctrine of salvation by faith is not slighted or shadowed, there comes out the counterpart of this vital truth, that while we are *saved by faith, we are rewarded according to our works*. Entering heaven with a common password, the name of Jesus, and cleansed in a common fountain, the blood of Jesus, we pass up to our places in the presence of the King on the works of righteousness we have wrought in his name, assured in this Epistle that "God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love."

Passing over in silence many great truths, such as the power of faith—to which much space is given—let us briefly glance at some that seem to be incorporated in the very groundwork of this marvellous Epistle.

In this long and yet condensed summary of all God's revealments through all past history, only *two possible ways of treating sin* for its correction and cure are even so much as hinted at. These are by law for its conviction and condemnation, and by the Gospel for pardon and cleansing. It never dawns upon one of the sacred writers that it can be treated in any other way than as the mortal tormentor of man and enemy of God. It never conceals its deformity under any cloak of ignorance. Mere knowledge is never prescribed as an antidote for this disease. It is never thought of as a mere trial necessary for the acquisition of character, and so a blessing that ought to be disseminated throughout the universe, for the spreading of which angels ought to be sent out as

missionaries of sin to all worlds for the purpose of inspiring and arousing rebellion against God. Sin never receives such treatment anywhere in the Book of God. It is here exhibited in its horrid deformity. It stands on the earth a monster with its haughty head among the eternities. Beneath its feet is the dying race, in its bloody hands is the dying Christ, and in its aching heart is the undying worm. It has broken into the universe and carries woe wherever it goes. It desolates every world it touches with sword and fagot. It runs up the black flag of treason against God's government. It tortures and torments his children. It threatens the safety of his court. With sin loose anywhere in the universe there is no peace for his palace, no security for his kingdom, no comfort for his children, and no allegiance for his subjects. Sin is the one enemy of God's government whose capture and destruction tax the energies of his empire. It is the one thing that God hates. The shoreless ocean of his being flows like an everlasting tide of fire and wrath against sin. He seeks by all possible means to corral and capture it. But in its treatment he is estopped from every policy of approval, compromise, or allegiance, by his own eternal righteousness, which cannot look upon sin with the least degree of approval; estopped from the use of his omnipotence by the very conditions of his moral government; estopped from intermitting his remedial efforts by the infinite love that set him on the work of creating. In all the agony of his soul, which extorted from his bosom his only-begotten Son, he has never found out any other way of cor-

recting and curing sin than by the chastenings of the law to reveal the fact of lostness and awaken the sense of want ; and then by the magnetism of the cross to draw men up to himself. Surely in the presence of these facts there is infinite value in the blood of reconciliation, even the blood of Jesus, and in his prevailing advocacy of every case that commits itself to his care. God offers but one escape from sin, and that is set forth in this Epistle as by the blood of Jesus. We have in him a sin-offering and an advocate, let us therefore come with boldness and obtain mercy.

The great purpose of the Epistle is to warn the Hebrew Christians of the danger of apostasy. Words of exhortation are constantly wedged into the argument of the Epistle. Thus, after the brilliant and marvellous presentation of the exalted character of Jesus made in the first chapter we are told, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (2:1). Again, we read, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (3:12). Every few verses our author breaks out, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (4:1). And "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (4:11). We are exhorted not to lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works, on account of the impossibility of renewing again unto repentance any who may thus fall away (6:1-10).

The Epistle abounds in most fearful warnings against apostasy, such as, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary" (10:26, 27). It is warning enough that in this great argument for fidelity and obedience, 113 verses out of 416, a little more than one fourth of the entire Epistle, is given to practical exhortations in application of the truths. Surely we could hardly be more powerfully urged to vigilance and faithfulness.

We cannot close this hurried and brief sketch of this Epistle without returning to the great thought of the Book, *the Priesthood of Christ*.

Exactly what we need on account of our sin and guilt we find in Jesus. Our littleness is supported by his vastness, our want by his fulness; our guilt is met by his grace, our fear by his intercession. All we do or can need we find in him. It has pleased the Father that all the fulness of the Godhead should dwell in Him bodily. He has entered into our disabilities, he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham; wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, "for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted," (2:16-18).

We know in this city how even the slight and shifting distinctions of society separate men from each other. There is a great world of ignorance and crime that boils

and surges under society that we never touch. We pass them on the street, we are offended at their coarseness and crime, we cringe when we look at their nakedness and bruises, we soon come to think that they are accustomed to their ills and diseases and gnawing hunger and pressing want. We watch them picking coal out of the ashes we have cast out, and picking food from the garbage-carts, and we say to ourselves, "They find considerable comfort in finding a solid piece of coal, or in stumbling upon half a biscuit." It is true they do. But we overlook the fathomless sorrow and want that can make such refuse fortune a comfort to them. We do not live in the same world with them. We are in no condition to sympathize with them. Even the temporary order of society so separates men that their sympathies seldom touch each other.

Your neighbor is rich, you are poor. How widely you are separated. He cannot find wants enough; you know not how to want things. He struggles to put the most sixpences into a given space; you struggle to put one sixpence into the most places. He never makes a garment do half duty; you always make it do double duty. He rides; you walk. He has many friends; you toil on in solitude. He has skilful physicians; you suffer on without relief. There is little or nothing in common between you.

All these distinctions and disabilities Jesus sees, and avoids, and enters into our actual condition, and by his poverty puts his strong soul up against our little souls and throbs into us some of his own almightiness, "For

we have not a High priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (4 : 15).

Our High priest comes to us under double types and with a double nature. He comes to us through the Aaronic priesthood as a man, "who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way, for that He himself also is compassed with infirmity" (5 : 2). He is typified unto us through the priesthood of Melchizedec as an Eternal Prince. "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec." Thus he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. All gentleness and all power.

It is not possible to fathom the infinite mystery of the suffering of Jesus. We can tell as little about it as we can about any suffering. There is a ministry of pain that seems to have an exalted place in the divine economy. Characters are led out of selfishness up into sainthood by the burning hands of pain. Mortals, crushed by great sorrows, discover their rarest fragrance. It seems quite safe to affirm that suffering is the only path up to perfection. Every soul on the soil of probation, whether it be the soul of a mortal or the soul of a Redeemer, can pass up to perfection only by this weary way of suffering, "For it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" (2 : 10, 11).

The mystery of the suffering by which Jesus was

perfected for his office is hardly open to human speculation. We can only behold and adore. I have sometimes fancied that this suffering was the only way in which it is possible to demonstrate love. This proves to us the love of Jesus. In his broken-hearted sobs that went out from Calvary there went an argument for God's love for man than can never be excelled or doubted. I have also thought as I have gazed upon some helpless innocent babe writhing in the death agony, that possibly this suffering, so dark to the loving parent here, might over yonder furnish the alphabet with which in the eternal ages to spell out the boundless love and meaning of Calvary. This much we do know that God perfects his Son by suffering. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. "And the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord."

It is enough for us to approach the suffering Jesus without seeking to fathom its mystery. Enough that he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a High priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (7:25, 26). Enough that he has entered within the veil with his glorified humanity, and standing there in the presence of the Father presents us in his person. Enough that, as our advocate and representative, he presents our atonement and hears our prayers, which we know not how to offer as we ought, but which Jesus vitalizes with his blood

and presents unto the Father in such a way as to make them prevail.

“Erect at the uttermost gates
Of the city celestial He waits,
With his feet on the ladder of light,
That crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night.

“The angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn and expire,
With the song’s irresistible stress—
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harpstrings are broken asunder
By music they throb to express.

“But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song,
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, but deathless,
The Saviour stands listening breathless,
To sounds that ascend from below;

“From spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
In the fervor and passion of prayer;
From the hearts that are broken with losses
And weary with dragging the crosses
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

“And He gathers the prayers as He stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
Into garlands of purple and red,
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the city immortal,
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.”

THE
EPISTLES OF PETER.



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THE
EPISTLES OF PETER.

WE must know Peter, if we would know his two Epistles. The record of his life is brief. Let us look at it as we find it before the ascension, and after it.

PETER BEFORE THE ASCENSION.

Simon and his brother Andrew were two plain fishermen, who plied their calling on the Galilean sea. They were born at Bethsaida (John 1:44), on its western coast. They afterwards removed to Capernaum, where Peter lived with a wife, and in his own house. (Luke 4:38.) Andrew became a disciple of John the Baptist. But when John pointed to Jesus, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God," Andrew left the Baptist and followed Jesus. Soon afterward, he sought his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messias;" and he brought him to Jesus. (John 1:41, 42.) At this first interview with Jesus, Simon received his new name, Cephas (Aramæan), or Peter (Greek), *i. e.*, a rock, a stone, prophetic of what grace would make of his ardent and energetic nature. Subsequently to this interview, the brothers still pursued their occupation as fishermen, not

permanently attaching themselves to Jesus until called to be his apostles. Then they "left all," and followed him. (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11.) After the twelve apostles were chosen and ordained (Mark 3:14-19), Peter took foremost place among them in speech and action. He is named first in each of the four catalogues of the Apostolic College. (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13.) He was oftenest the spokesman of the twelve. He was frequently addressed as their representative. He, with James and John, was admitted to special intimacies with his Lord, as at the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:37), at the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1), at the hour of Christ's agony in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37). It was Peter who saw the miraculous draught of fishes, and straightway "fell down" at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke 5:8.) It was Peter who walked on the water to Jesus. It was Peter who, in answer to the Master's question to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. We believe and are sure that thou art the Holy One of God." (John 6:68, 69, Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.) And it was Peter again who answered Christ's question, "Whom say ye that I am?" by the glorious confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:16.) For this the Master said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my

church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Yet this same Peter had the high presumption to take his Master aside and rebuke him for predicting his sufferings and death, calling forth from Jesus, in stern censure of his presumptuous interference, "Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offence unto me." (Matt. 16:22, 23.) It was to Peter, sinking in the sea, that Christ said, "O thou of little faith." And to Peter, sleeping in the hour of his Master's agony, that the Master said, "Simon, sleepest *thou*?" (Mark 14:37.) Peter would die with his Master before he would deny Him, yet in less than a day he is denying Him with oaths and blasphemy. And yet again, one look from his grieved Lord breaks this apostle's heart, and he stands without the palace, leaning against the wall, his great frame shaken with weeping. He who will not break the bruised reed, by the same sea where Peter was first called to his apostleship, affixes the seal anew to his heavenly commission, and reinstates Peter in his apostolic office by the thrice-repeated question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" and the thrice-repeated charge to feed the flock ; and thus the record of Peter's life before the ascension is ended.

"The weakness and the strength of our human love for Christ," says Alford, "are both mercifully provided for in this apostle's character." "He is very remarkable among the apostles," says Leighton, "both for his graces and his failings"—"a singular instance of human frailty on the one side and of the sweetness of divine grace on the other." Certainly no other apostle in the gospel nar-

rative so fixes upon himself the eye and the thought of the reader. He is oftenest at the front in speech and deed. He is a bundle of seeming contradictions. He gets from his Lord on the very same day most royal commendation and most severe reproof. We hear him saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet;" and the words scarcely die on the air before they are followed by, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." All readers find themselves drawn to this eager, impulsive, generous, energetic soul. The strange inconsistencies, the contradictory moods, the heights and depths, the unquestionable strength, and the as unquestionable weakness of this apostle's heart, are the counterpart and partial explanation of what is true of multitudes of other hearts. And when he reappears in the Acts of the Apostles, he is followed with a strange, intense interest. We are justifiably curious to know what is to be made of this intensely human disciple under the dispensation of the Spirit. We naturally ask whether this fiery temperament, finding expression in such rash speech, this generous, impulsive outspokenness taking on at times almost the tone of bold bravado, this eager earnestness swinging so often back to wayward weakness, as if here were the very child of vacillation—whether these are to get pruning and stay and blended proportion, and to be purified and glorified by the power of the Holy Ghost.

PETER AFTER THE ASCENSION.

Well, the record of apostolic doing after the ascension tells us. There we find, at the very first anointing from heaven, the impetuous ardor still, but backed now by

granitelike firmness ; the old bold, outspokenness still, but sustained now by a courage that fears nothing but God. Simon, son of Jonas, has indeed become Cephas—a rock. He who cowered before a barmaid, faces the murderers of his Lord, and charges their guilt home. And not even Paul, a man of far greater genius and culture—not even He who spake as never man spake, ever used so effective speech. Never in all human history were multitudes wielded after such a fashion as the two crowds that gathered before Peter, the one in an open square near the temple, on hearing the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and the other in Solomon's Porch, on hearing of the healing of the lame man at the gate Beautiful.

Besides these two recorded occasions of public and courageous speech in behalf of Christ as the Messiah, we find Peter twice before the Jewish court (Acts 4 : 5-13 ; 5 : 27-32), displaying there also the courage of his convictions and fidelity to his Lord. He next appears in the record as sent by the apostles into Samaria. (Acts 8 : 14.) Subsequently he travels through Judea, performing miracles and preaching Jesus at Lydda and Joppa (Acts 9 : 32-43), and is directed by God in vision to open the door of the church to the Gentile Cornelius. (Acts 10.) He next vindicates before the brethren at Jerusalem this reception of an uncircumcised heathen. Soon after, being imprisoned by Herod, he is miraculously delivered, and leaves the city. (Acts 12 : 17.) Later, he is again at Jerusalem, in the council of apostles and elders, called to consider the question raised at Antioch with reference to circumcision. His voice is pronounced in favor of

liberty, and against putting a yoke on the neck of Gentile disciples. (Acts 15.) At this point Peter drops entirely out of view in the sacred history. He does not have even another mention in the record of the Acts of the Apostles. Paul in one of his letters (Gal. 2:11) refers to him as being subsequently at Antioch, where he refused to eat with Gentile Christians. Peter here was guilty of undeniable dissimulation. He knew better. It was in the face of his own speech at Jerusalem, and a triumph of his old vacillating, cowardly nature; for the record is, he was in fear of "them which were of the circumcision," so that Paul "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

This is the last item of Peter's life on the pages of the New Testament, until we come to the two Epistles that bear his name. Was Peter their author? Our review of his life should help us to an answer to this question.

WAS THIS PETER THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLES THAT BEAR HIS NAME?

Look, first, at the probabilities. Wishes are not arguments, I know. Likelihoods are not demonstrations. But the weight of probability arising from Peter's position and character in favor of Petrine authorship is something very considerable, and decisive of the question except in the face of direct proof to the contrary.

Take, first, Peter's *pre-eminence among the apostles*, both before and after Christ's death. It was personal, and not, as the Romish church claims, official. It was a primacy of *order*, not of *power*. But it was a real leader-

ship, and because of his energy and enthusiasm and impulsive ardor and promptness and decision. It was recognized by Christ. The only apostles who approached him in personal power and favor with the Master were James and John and Paul. James fell so soon a martyr that he could leave the church little save the testimony and seal of his blood. But John's legacy to the church is a Gospel, three Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. Paul crowds the inspired record with his splendid and weighty Epistles. Now is it at all probable that Peter, the greatest of the twelve, singled out by his Master, and charged with special and royal commissions, of whom the gospel narrative warrants us to expect so much, should so early and so utterly drop out of sight, with no bequest to the church whatever from his inspiration, save the three or four speeches of his to the unbelieving Jews, recorded in the Acts? Would it not be a marvelously strange thing if he were left in this silence? And is not the presence of his Epistles in the Canon justified by a very natural and very confident expectation?

Take again *the way in which the record of his life closes*. The very last item is Paul's account of Peter's recreancy to his own convictions at Antioch. He plays the coward there. His old waywardness gets the better of him, and many—Barnabas among them—are carried away with his dissimulation. Now is Peter's record on the page of inspiration to end in such a cloud as this? The rocklike firmness that he has shown since his Master's ascension seems to be gone. Satan is sifting him again. Is Satan to have him? Where is the proof

that this wayward apostle continued faithful? How do we *know* that Peter grew to be perfectly representative of his Christ-given name, if we do not know anything more of him after this weakness and cowardice at Antioch? If these epistles are the Epistles of Peter, the case is clear.

Once more : take the solemn words of Christ, just after the Last Supper, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat : but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. *And when thou art converted strengthen the brethren.*" Where is the proof that Peter gave heed to this solemn and peculiar charge? Not in his sermons to the Jews, nor in his addresses before the Sanhedrim, scarcely at all in the entire record of his life in the Acts. But these two Epistles are all aglow with the spirit of consolation, and are by eminence the stay and comfort and strength of believers. There is nothing left us to prove that Peter felt it to be peculiarly his office to "strengthen the brethren" and thus obey his Lord, if these Epistles are not his. In the absence of direct proof, therefore, the probabilities are strong in favor of these Epistles as the genuine work of the apostle Peter.

Let us next consider the *external* evidence. It is unquestionably conclusive with reference to the first Epistle. It was unanimously received by the primitive church. It is found in the ancient Syriac version of the New Testament, called the *Peschito*, a product at the latest, of the second century, and a translation from the Greek into the very language spoken by many of the

primitive churches. It is quoted repeatedly by the Fathers from Polycarp of the first century onward. Express testimony in favor of its genuineness is found in writers of the second and third centuries. With scarcely even an insignificant exception the testimony of antiquity is one way. Indeed Olshausen affirms that "Among all the writers of Christian antiquity there is not one who doubted the genuineness of the Epistle, or had even heard of any doubts concerning it."

The external testimony to the second Epistle is by no means so abundant. Not until the fourth century is it recognized without dispute as belonging to the sacred canon. There it appears in all the catalogues of the Fathers and church councils. In the third century its genuineness was doubted. There are *certain references* to it as in existence in the second century, but nothing whatever of a positive nature as to its canonical character. It must be admitted that the historical evidence for Second Peter's place in the inspired books of the New Testament is not as full and satisfactory as could be wished. While, however, the authority is not proved by external evidence, it is not disproved.

The silence of the earliest Fathers may be accounted for in that only the merest fragments of their writings have been handed down to us, and thus it might easily come to pass that in these fragments no citation would appear from so short a book as Second Peter.

Moreover it was written just before Peter's death (2 Pet. 1 : 14), and so his continued living presence could not give the same authority to this as to the first Epistle.

It was not specifically addressed, and so came under the guardianship of no particular church. It was received in a time of persecution. Mutual communications were interrupted and difficult. This, combined with the great hesitancy with which the churches of one section accepted from the churches of another section any new writing as canonical, would account for the original obscurity of Second Peter, and for its gradual admission into the catalogues of sacred books until its final, definitive and universal acceptance as inspired and genuine.

The *internal evidence* of the genuineness of these Epistles demands brief consideration.

As to the first Epistle, there has been little question worth the mentioning. An examination of particular words and phrases is here out of the question. But the tone and feeling of the Epistle are strikingly characteristic of Peter. The diction is similar to that of the speeches at Pentecost and in Solomon's Porch. There is a ruggedness of language that befits the rocklike man. The style is marked by force and fire rather than ease and elegance. Yet the force and fire are so far chastened and subdued, that all the old brusqueness and self-assertion of this apostle's nature are gone. The warnings and consolations are given by one whose fiery temperament has known the fellowship of his Lord's sufferings, and realized the sufficiency and the joy of his upholding grace. Surely it is Peter, in memory of his boastful confidence, who says, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, *with meekness and fear.*" Surely, it is Peter, with his

Lord's forgiving love still fresh in his heart, who says, "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins." And surely it is Peter in vivid remembrance of his own terrible sifting by Satan, who says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." Wiesinger is unquestionably right in saying, as quoted by Alford, "If we had not known from whom the Epistle comes, we must have said, 'It must be a rock of the church who thus writes; a man whose own soul rests on the living Rock, and who here with the strength of his testimony takes in hand to secure the souls of others, and against the harassing storm of present tribulation to ground them on the true Rock of ages.'"

The internal evidence concerning the second Epistle has been held by some to be against its genuineness. A full and minute discussion of the points is here impossible.

The chief objections are

1. *The diversity of style in the two Epistles.* But this is not so marked as not to be accounted for by the diversity of condition in the persons addressed, by the different mood of the writer, and by the difference of time in which he wrote.

2. In ch. I:18, *the Mountain of Transfiguration is called "the Holy Mount,"* betraying, it is held, *a later age than the apostles, as no such title is given it by any evangelist.* But what more natural than that Peter, profoundly impressed with the ineffable glory of that mountain vision, should speak of the place as the Holy Mount.

3. *All of Paul's writings are referred to and classed with "the other Scriptures,"* or sacred writings (ch. 3:16), as if a full collection of Paul's Epistles were already made, and the canon of the New Testament already settled. But these words may clearly refer only to such of Paul's writings as Peter knew, and they imply no more than that "there were certain writings by Christian teachers which were reckoned as on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures, and called by the same name."*

The chief internal evidence in favor of the genuineness of the Second Epistle may be briefly stated as follows:

1. It is worthy of an apostle. It is authoritative in language. It is conformed to the analogy of faith. There is in it not only no error of fact or of doctrine, but sublime instructions, novel and significant, in eschatology; and all its counsels and warnings have been eminently conducive to truth and godliness.

2. It is superior every way to the writings of the age subsequent to the apostles. In power, vivacity, intensity and wealth of thought, it is immeasurably in advance of anything that succeeded it in post-apostolic times. It is separated from the earliest and best of all other writings of the second century by a difference so marked as to be recognized but utterly unaccounted for by the opponents of its authenticity.

3. If Peter did not write this Second Epistle, it is a bold, shameless, deliberate forgery: for the writer affirms in the first verse that he is "Simon Peter, a servant and an apos-

* Alford.

tle of Jesus Christ." He further claims to have been with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (ch. 1:17, 18), and to have been the author of the First Epistle, which bears Peter's name. But this compels the most unnatural conclusions—conclusions impossible of rational belief.

Here is a writer who impresses all readers with his moral earnestness, who passionately loves truth, and seeks above all things to establish his readers in the truth (ch. 1:12), who claims personal revelations from Jesus Christ (ver. 14), who warns against false teachers coming with "feigned words," and declares that "their damnation slumbereth not" (ch. 2:1-3), who urges his hearers, as himself about to die (ch. 1:14), to be found without spot and blameless in the coming of the day of God (ch. 13:12-14); and yet he is a hypocrite, clothed with fraud, guilty even of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost in claiming to have been the author of the First Epistle of Peter! Well has it been said, "If Peter is really the author of this Epistle, everything is in glorious harmony: if he is not, we have before us an insoluble psychological riddle." Even the German Bleek, who denies that this Epistle is the work of Peter, and who admits the author's adoption of "disguise" and "counterfeit," is yet forced, in senseless and suicidal contradiction, to avow that "the Epistle itself throughout teaches us to regard the writer as a man of earnest moral sense—a man whose spirit and principles were thoroughly in accord with those of the apostolic writings, and presented nothing unchristian or heretical." Is it possible for this

to be true? An odious impostor, coining falsehood on falsehood, blasphemously assuming to speak as he is moved by the Holy Ghost, yet "a man of earnest moral sense," whose "spirit" presented "nothing unchristian!" Surely this is a moral impossibility. Can horses run on the rocks? Shall one plough there with oxen? Has Christ such concord with Belial?

TO WHOM WERE THE EPISTLES ADDRESSED?

The first Epistle opens with a salutation "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." That the Second Epistle was sent to essentially the same readers is clear from 1 Pet. 3:1, where the author says, "This second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto you."

The provinces named in 1st Peter were all of Asia Minor. At the northwest was Pontus, dwellers in which were at Jerusalem when Peter preached his Pentecostal sermon. (Acts 2:9.) Pontus was the native home of Aquila. *Galatia* was next westward, visited by Paul in his second and third missionary journeys. (Acts 16:6; 18:23.) *Cappadocia* was south of Pontus and Galatia, also represented in Peter's great audience at Pentecost. (Acts 2:9.) *Asia* was still westward, embracing several minor provinces, as Phrygia, Mysia, Pisidia, etc., the scenes of Paul's abundant labors in places like Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Ephesus, Troas: containing also the cities of Philadelphia and Sardis and Pergamos and Colosse and Smyrna and Thyatira. The last province named in Peter's salutation, was *Bithynia*, lying

north of Asia, and into which Paul assayed to go on his second missionary journey, but the Spirit suffered him not. (Acts 16:7.)

But who were "the strangers," scattered throughout these provinces, to whom Peter sent his letter? His words of salutation literally are, "To the elect strangers or sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus," etc. *Dispersion* is beyond doubt a technical term, whose proper application is to the Jews dispersed in other countries than their native Palestine. On this ground, and because Peter's was the apostleship of the circumcision, it is held by some that Peter addressed Jewish Christians only. But the reference in ch. 4:3 to their once having walked in "abominable idolatries" is conclusive as against this limitation. This and other passages (as 1:14; 2:10) make it clear that Peter had Gentile Christians in view. Moreover the Christians of these provinces, as we learn from the record in the Acts, were composed mainly of Gentile converts. Nor is it at all likely that Peter would address *one part* of the believers in these provinces and ignore the other. His ministry was not *exclusively* to the Jews (Acts 10) any more than was Paul's *exclusively* to the Gentiles.

It is scarcely to be doubted that both Jewish and Gentile Christians were "the strangers" of the salutation. They were strangers in the same sense as in chap. 2:11, where the very same word is used by the apostle when he beseeches them, as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from lusts. Thus *they were together the people of God's covenant*, the Gentiles being grafted by faith into the fam-

ily of Abraham, a chosen generation, called out of darkness into his marvellous light.

These "strangers" were not an unorganized, disintegrated body of believers, broken up and widely scattered as individuals throughout these provinces, as one might infer from the salutation. They were formed into churches, with regularly-ordained elders, as is evident from Peter's charge to the elders (1 Pet. 5:1-5), and from the record of Paul's having ordained elders in every church in some of these parts (Acts 14:23).

These churches had never enjoyed the personal labors of Peter, nor heard the gospel from his lips. He makes no allusion, drops no hint in either Epistle implying personal acquaintance. On the contrary, when he refers to those who had preached the gospel unto them, he seems designedly to exclude himself. (1 Pet. 1:12.)

WHERE AND WHEN WERE THESE EPISTLES WRITTEN?

The first Epistle was written at Babylon, as Peter sends to his readers the salutations of the church there (ch. 5:13). There is no good reason to doubt that this was the renowned city of Babylon on the Euphrates. There were certainly Jews there at this period, as profane history tells us. And Peter's presence in that city would indicate that the apostle of the circumcision had been eastward seeking his scattered countrymen, and preaching to them the true kingdom of God.

The time of writing the first Epistle was about A. D. 63. Several considerations determine this date.

3
4 or 65

There is no proof in the Epistle that the terrible persecutions under Nero had commenced, and we know these dated from A. D. 64. But the Epistle furnishes abundant evidence of the actual foreshadowing of some coming storm, as if that Neronian outbreak of bloody violence were near at hand. Moreover, the personal references to Sylvanus and Marcus, and the evident traces in the Epistle of Peter's familiarity with Paul's letters, even those of the first imprisonment at Rome, point to the year 63 as that in which Peter's first Epistle was probably written.

His second Epistle could not have been written much later, not more than four or five years. The reference to the first Epistle (ch. 3 : 1), "This second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in which (two epistles) I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," shows that the two could not have been very far apart. If the tradition be accepted, and there is nothing to balance the testimony of Christian antiquity in its favor, that Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome at or near the time of Paul's martyrdom, then his death occurred about A. D. 67 or 68. This second Epistle could not have been written long before, and Peter may have written it either while on his way to Rome, or just after reaching the imperial city. But the time and place are alike conjectural.

THE OBJECT AND CONTENTS OF THESE EPISTLES.

The one supreme, comprehensive object of these Epistles is that which had been made by Christ in peculiarly sacred circumstances, Peter's special office. "Simon,

Simon," said the Master on the memorable night of the supper and the betrayal (Luke 22 : 31-34), "thou art to know the terribleness of Satan's assaults ; thy temptation and trial and fall are to be grievous and bitter ; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. And when thou art tried in the fire and dost come forth with a purified, self-renouncing, and conquering faith, *strengthen the brethren.*" And to "strengthen the brethren" is the paramount, all-controlling aim of these two precious portions of the Word of God. It is not a little remarkable that the very word (*στηρίζω*) with which the Holy Ghost records the charge to Peter is again and again used by the apostle in these Epistles to stay the hearts of his readers. He writes, "The God of all grace *stablish* (*στηρίζει*) you." (1 Pet. 5 : 10.) He writes again, "Though ye be *established* (*ἰστηρικμένους*) in the present truth, I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance, so as to establish you the more." (2 Pet. 1 : 12.) And still again, the very last word of warning he ever gave them, his dying appeal, "Beware, beloved, lest, being led away by the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own *steadfastness*" (*στηρικμοῦ*). (2 Pet. 3 : 17.) This is one of those internal and undesigned evidences of the genuineness of these Epistles with which so many books of the New Testament abound. Who but Peter, sifted of Satan because of his self-confidence, thinking himself a rock when he proved a bank of sand, would thus thrice have used this very word ?

But it is not simply by this word that the object appears. It breaks out everywhere in the two letters, from

the opening reference to the trial of the faith of his readers that would be found unto praise and glory and honor at the appearing of Jesus Christ, to the very last appeal, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. The Epistles are not doctrinal, though doctrine is in them; they are full of the strong meat of the Word, the choice manna of the Son of God. They are not a profound unfolding of a logical system of divine truth. His readers had been already grounded in Christian doctrine by Paul and his companions. Peter therefore aims not so much at instruction as confirmation. His Epistles are *exhibitive* rather than demonstrative; and exhibitive of those grand and inspiring truths that have been the stay and the joy of believers in all circumstances of trial. They merit for themselves this distinctive title, *The Epistles of consolation*, and they win for their author this, *The Apostle of hope*.

But while the one great object of Peter is "to strengthen the brethren," each Epistle has a distinctive aim, by reason of the differing condition of his readers at the time of his writing.

When Peter wrote his first Epistle, the Christians scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, etc., were deprived of the personal labors of Paul. Paul's great missionary journeys in these parts were ended. He had been a prisoner at Cesarea and Rome. Possibly he was now liberated and on some distant tour westward. We know from his Epistle to the Galatians that Judaizing teachers were among these churches, troubling the Gentile Christians by teaching that circumcision was necessary to sal-

vation, and entangling them with the yoke of bondage to the flesh. (Gal. 3:1; 5:1; 6:12.) Moreover, they were in manifold trials of afflictions by reason of the heathen. The bloody persecutions of Nero had not yet actually broken forth. There is no proof in the Epistle that they were haled before judges or violently put to death. But their faith was sorely tried, even as "with fire;" they were "evil spoken of," "falsely accused," "reproached for the name of Christ," "buffeted" for doing well, and railed at for not indulging in their former "lusts and revelings and abominable idolatries" (1:7; 2:12; 3:16-18; 4:14). It is clear also from the Epistle that there were intimations of far severer trials (4:12), of a terrible judgment to come (4:17), as if Peter heard already the roar of the lion so soon to go forth threatening to devour the faithful (5:8).

See now how he meets this twofold necessity of strengthening these brethren. To antidote the poison of the errorists, he assures his readers that the doctrine that had been preached unto them by Paul and his collaborators is the unchangeable word of the Lord that endureth for ever. As the apostle of circumcision and the chief of the twelve first chosen by the Lord, he ratifies the preaching of the apostle of the Gentiles, and magnanimously endorses him in the very point in respect to which Paul had once withstood him to his face. He comforts and strengthens the disturbed brethren by stamping with falsehood these Judaizing teachers, saying to his readers, "The word of the Lord endureth for ever," etc. "This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you"

(1 : 25). And again, "This is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (5 : 12).

But the apostle looks beyond these Judaizing trouble-makers of the churches. Heresy is not yet so rife among his readers as to constitute their chief trial and danger. Their sorest strait is the perils they are in from the heathen. Suspicions, calumnies, reproaches, are heaped upon them. Their situation is critical and hazardous. Everywhere they are maligned and maltreated. There are signs of impending storm and disaster. The air is thick with evil omens to these infant flocks. And all the fervor and warmth of Peter's nature are poured out in furnishing these buffeted and storm-tossed believers in Jesus a strong ground of consolation. The Epistle, therefore, while assuring them, as against the errorists, that they stand in the true grace of God, exhibits that grace in its peculiarly stimulating and inspiring aspects, to stay and cheer their hearts in their fiery trials. It abounds in the most affectionate warnings and the most soul-comforting promises. Especially is it full of the sufferings, the exaltation, the power, and the coming of Christ.

Mark the proof of this.

CHAPTER I.

Faith is given anchorage in the very opening sentence of the salutation, "Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God." Then the apostle proceeds :

"Ye are begotten to a living hope of an eternal inheritance, and kept by the power of God. Herein ye greatly

rejoice, even in tribulation, as it is thus made sure that the end of your faith, though tried in the fire, will be salvation, and salvation so great that prophets talked of it and angels desired to look into it. *Hope*, therefore, to the end; be obedient and holy, remembering the precious blood that redeemed you, and in the fellowship of this ransom love one another, as alike born by the enduring word of God.

CHAPTER II.

“Feed on this same word by which ye were born, that ye may grow thereby, and be ye built up on Christ, the precious cornerstone, who will be to believers an honor, but to unbelievers ruin.

“Be of pure conversation among the heathen, obedient to authorities, subject to masters, even when suffering wrongfully, for Christ so suffered.

CHAPTER III.

“Wives, win your unbelieving husbands by subjection, chaste conversation, and the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Husbands, yield honor to the wife. Be ye all loving, courteous, guileless, and of good conscience, so as to shame and silence false accusers. See to it, at all events, that if you suffer, it be for well-doing, as your Lord suffered.

CHAPTER IV.

“Forasmuch, then, as Christ suffered, arm yourselves with his mind; be of patient endurance and dead to sin, for there is to be a judgment both of the living and the dead. Discharge your social duties, use your gifts, and

in participation in sufferings *as Christians* rejoice, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you, and when Christ's glory shall be revealed, ye will be glad with exceeding joy.

CHAPTER V.

“Elders, feed the flock, and do not lord it over God's heritage. Ye younger, submit to the elder. And all of you be clothed with humility; cast care on God, who careth for you; resist the devil; and the God of all grace, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.” And surely peace, like a river, must have flowed through the troubled souls of saints in Pontus and Galatia and Cappadocia as they went sounding the depths of this Epistle. All its wealth of consolation was specially fitted to strengthen the brethren in their sufferings and fiery trials.

But when Peter wrote his second Epistle, destructive forms of error were gravely threatening the churches. The danger was from within rather than from without, and had already grown formidable. Just exactly what these fatal heresies were it may be impossible to designate. They were doubtless beginnings of what afterwards developed into destructive heretical systems. They were the roots of antinomian gnosticism, “the great moral ferment of the first fatal apostasy.” These errorists denied that Christians were under the restraints of law, turned the liberty of the sons of God into license and lust, and crowded out the Lord Christ, denying his re-

demption, raising angels to the rank of creators, and reviling Satan only to be led captive at his will, and to perish at last and utterly in their own corruption.

See now how, in his second Epistle, Peter meets this necessity of strengthening the brethren.

CHAPTER I.

His salutation is, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the *knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord*," striking here at the very outset the keynote of the whole Epistle; for heresy can only be antidoted and its pestilent evils stayed, and hearts made proof against it, by a true knowledge of God and of Christ.

Then the apostle proceeds:

"Ye are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye may be made partakers of the divine nature. Be diligent, therefore, in the cultivation of the gospel's rich cluster of Christian graces, that by fruitfulness in the knowledge of Jesus ye may secure an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom. I put you in mind of these things, as myself about to die. You have not been fed on cunningly-devised fables, in what you have been taught of the power and coming of Christ, for we were eyewitnesses of his majesty in the holy mount, and the prophets do testify of it also, speaking by the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER II.

"But as there were false prophets among them, so there will be false teachers among you, bringing in damnable heresies, and denying the Lord that bought them.

With feigned words they will make merchandise of your souls. But their damnation slumbereth not. For God, who dealt with the sinning angels, and the old world and Sodom and Gomorrah, will deal with these adulterous walkers after the flesh, who, in their shameless apostasy, sport in their own deceivings, and speak great swelling words of vanity. And when he does deal with them, their last state will be worse than the first, and it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness.

CHAPTER III.

“This second Epistle I write to remind and assure you it is the unchangeable truth of God which you possess, spoken before by the prophets, and now by your* apostles. Beware, therefore of the scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and flouting at the coming of Christ; for as the world once perished with water, so it shall perish with fire, and suddenly too, as a thief in the night. Therefore be holy and watchful, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, which shall lead to new heavens and a new earth of righteousness. Knowing these things, take heed, beloved, lest ye also be led away with the error of the wicked, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

Surely now, if Peter's first Epistle is specially adapted to strengthen the brethren in view of trials from without, this second Epistle is equally adapted to fortify them against the seductive assaults of heresy and fatal apostasy

* According to the Alexandrian, Sinaitic, and Vatican MSS.

from within. The one Epistle is the complement of the other, and each fits to the present and pressing need of the sorely-bested saints to whom it is addressed. In the first Epistle, it is by holding up the *sufferings* of Christ that he would take the sting out of the fiery trials of God's suffering saints. To this thought he turns again and again; and with what tenderness and pathos he reasons: "Because Christ also *suffered* for us" (2:21); "for Christ also hath once *suffered*" (3:18). "As Christ hath *suffered* for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind" (4:1). "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's *sufferings*" (4:13). In the second Epistle it is the *Lord* in *majesty* and *power* who is revealed, for it is the *lordship* of Jesus that best serves to strengthen human faith in the truth, and to warn against apostasy. So in the first Epistle the names with which Peter names the Master are *Christ* and *Jesus Christ*. In the second they are "*our Lord and Saviour.*" In the first Epistle, however, the look is not simply backward to Christ's sufferings; it is forward also to when his glory shall be revealed (1:7; 4:13). But it is the coming of *Christ* in the first Epistle, and for *comfort*, that Christians may be *glad with exceeding joy* (1:7; 4:13; 5:4). In the second Epistle it is the coming of the *Lord*, and linked with *suddenness* and *destruction*, for *warning* as well. Again, in the first Epistle, *hope* is the joyous and electric word ringing down through it *as an antidote to sorrow*: Begotten unto a living *hope* (1:3). "*Hope* to the end for the grace that is to be brought you" (1; 13). "That your faith and *hope* might be in God" (1:21). "Be ready

always to give a reason of the *hope* that is in you" (3:15). In the second Epistle *knowledge* is the strong word that gets repetition and emphasis, as an antidote to "*false teachers*" and "*feigned words.*" "Grace and peace be to you through the *knowledge* of God and of Jesus" (1:2). "That ye be not unfruitful in the *knowledge* of our Lord Jesus" (1:8). "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them" (1:12). "After they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the *knowledge* of the Lord and Saviour" (2:20). "Grow in grace and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (3:18).

Blessed Epistles of consolation these. Who could have written them but the tempted, tried, sifted, tempest-tossed, impulsive, ardent, wayward Peter, the sufferings and infinite patience and forgiveness of whose Lord at last transformed this apostle into a rock of firmness, no longer resting on a human will but on the Rock of Ages. "When thou shalt be old," his Master had said (John 21:18)—"When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not." And the beloved disciple afterwards added, "This spake he signifying by what death he should glorify God." And standing within the shadow of that predicted crucifixion, knowing that very soon he must put off his earthly tabernacle, chastened, subdued, enriched by grace, Peter penned these letters. Ever since, the aching head has found a softer pillow with Peter's first Epistle underneath. The smitten and bereaved have gone down into some new sepulchre

that God has made in their heart's garden, and taking this Epistle with them and reading it there, the sepulchre has come to be the dearest spot in the garden. This word of consolation has led many a weeping saint out of the Valley of Baca upon the heights of the Delectable mountains. Faces with all the hope washed out have looked into this glass of the Word, and brightened like fires new stirred, as they beheld the glory of their Lord. It has put rifts in clouds and let light through. It has lifted sorrows off; or taken the sting out of them. It has changed cowards like Peter before the ascension into heroes like Peter after it.

And surely the second Epistle has also had its special, distinctive and most precious uses. Many a waverer and doubter has here gotten better anchorage in the truth. In times when defection has spread in the church, when it has seemed as if the very foundations of God's temple of truth were being broken up, timid believers have grown calm and fearless, as they have caught the confidence of this ringing word of Peter. They have turned to this second Epistle and have grown sure as they read it, of the ultimate and utter overthrow of those by whom the way of truth is evil spoken of. "They have believed in their inmost souls that the church is built upon the rock and that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her. Here they have learned that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, that God has therefore a great while to do things in, that he does not measure years or altitudes as men measure them. And if, by the hope flashing out in the first

Epistle, thick darkness has been dispelled from many a believer's sky, by the knowledge enjoined in the second Epistle better anchorage has been secured in the cleft of the Rock for God's storm-swept hosts. They are both full of the rich fruits of Peter's experience. No other apostle could have copied just such things out of his heart. Men have mocked Peter's memory since with stately piles of architecture wherein they have crowded out Jesus by Jesus' mother. Here is Peter's true building work, full, not of Mary, but of Jesus. Men have named Peter's successors vicegerents of God. But Peter's true successors are those who heed his dying injunction and grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of Peter's Lord. Men have put Peter's so-called power of the keys to infamous uses. But here are the keys that have unlocked the mystery of suffering and sorrow to many a believing soul. In the books that God keeps will be found no richer memorial than of these two alabaster boxes of precious ointment that Peter broke for the world's bruised and burdened hearts.

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