

CT 195

PAUL: THE DISOWNED APOSTLE.

A SURVEY OF THE ORIGIN OF
CHRISTIANITY.

BY

JOHN W. LAKE.

“PAUL, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father.”—Gal. i. 1.



PUBLISHED BY THOMAS SCOTT,

NO. 11, THE TERRACE, FARQUHAR ROAD,

UPPER NORWOOD, LONDON, S.E.

1876.

Price Sixpence.

“ Not in vain, Apostle bold !
Unto us the tale is told
Of thy day of trial,
Every age, on him who strays
From its broad and beaten ways,
Pours its seven-fold vial.

“ But happy he whose inward ear
Angel comfortings can hear
O'er the rabble's laughter ;
And while hatred's faggots burn,
Glimpses through their smoke discern
Of a bright hereafter.”

J. G. WHITTIER.

PREFATORY ADDRESS.

THE object of the following pages is to set forth the important part which Paul took in the course of events that eventuated in the establishment of the Christian religion, to place the incidents of his career in a more truthful light than that in which they are commonly viewed, and to shew the real character of the doctrine which he taught.

They contain little more than suggestive notes for the reconsideration of the above questions, and though they do not profess to advance any new or original matter, yet the ordinary reader will find much of which he was not previously cognizant, and the instructed reader will be reminded of the importance, to a fair estimate of the question, of much that, though well-known to scholars, has yet been strangely overlooked by them, and kept screened from the popular eye. Especially is this the case with the Logos and Gnostic theories that influenced the speculative thought of the era in which Paul lived,—the legendary and unhistoric character of the Book of Acts,—the wide gulf of severance that existed between Paul and the immediate apostles and followers of Jesus,—and the repudiation by the authorities of the early church of the self-asserted claim by Paul to be an apostle of Christ. If matters be as herein set forth, and we fearlessly challenge re-

futation, it follows that the creeds and doctrines of our various Christian Churches are founded on a misconception alike of the teaching of Jesus and of Paul, and of the spirit and meaning of the New Testament, and that there is pressing need for a reformation of the current religious beliefs of Protestant England of a far more radical and searching nature than that effected by Luther in the sixteenth century on the corrupted Christianity of Rome.

PAUL: THE DISOWNED APOSTLE.

IT is now a well-known fact that, to use the words with which the author of "Ecce Homo" commences his thoughtful and interesting essay, "The Christian Church sprang from a movement that was *not begun* by Christ," and it is equally capable of proof that the actual establishment or construction of the Christian Church was due to the labours of those who came on to the scene after he had passed away, notably to the person since known in history as the Apostle Paul. When Jesus died no Christian Church existed, and the religious society which his immediate followers and personal companions founded, died out and became extinct with themselves, or rather merged into a new and divergent society. When the Christian Church was in process of construction, its most bitter opponents were the Apostles of Jesus, who regarded the teachings of Paul as a heresy and as a corruption of their Master's faith.

It is true that the Churches which Paul formed, (for it is he whom we regard as the actual and virtual founder of the Christian Religion), were formed on the basis of Christ's ministry; that Paul admitted this ministry of Jesus to be the only foundation on which the Church of God could rest. But Paul was neither the associate nor yet the immediate disciple of Jesus, never saw him in the flesh, and probably heard of him for the first time on the occasion of his crucifixion. Moreover, Paul had no written record of his teaching

to study, nor was he ever on that intimate footing with the actual Apostles by which he might have been himself instructed in the doctrines which Jesus taught. Some knowledge he doubtless had acquired, but this gathered from current rumour would have been of a very vague and unsatisfactory character, and would have been altogether insufficient to have constituted either the inspiration or the material of his own ministry. Paul's slight knowledge of Jesus was necessarily enlarged from other sources, and the ministry of Jesus as Paul understood it, and as he so ardently preached it, was in great measure the creation of his own thought.

Let us make this matter more clear. Paul knew little or nothing of Jesus. But Paul had very copious knowledge of, and very definite ideas concerning, "the Christ." Paul knew what "the Christ" ought to do, and what he ought to teach, and what should be the object of his mission. He knew also what office "the Christ" should hold, what relation he should sustain to God on the one hand and to man upon the other. He knew what "the Christ" had done in times past, how being in the image of God he was the representative of God, how the world had been made by him, how it was still governed by him, and how it would be eventually judged by him. In other words, Paul knew much more about the Christ of God than did Jesus himself, and Paul asserted for, and affixed to, Jesus, a title that Jesus never seemed to dream of taking, till just prior to the closing scene of his ministry, and which even when he did assume it, he understood in a very different and in a much lower sense to that which Paul attached to it.

The mob hailed Jesus as the Messiah or Christ who should deliver them from the Roman rule. Jesus accepted and asserted for himself the office on the strength of his being a religious reformer, disclaiming all hope of his effecting any political conquest.

Common usage, by converting the official title into

the personal name, and speaking of "Jesus Christ" when the proper phrase should be Jesus "*the Christ*,"* has greatly obscured the true relation in which Jesus stands to Christianity, so that it is impossible for us to obtain a clear and definite idea as to the nature and origin of the Christian Religion till we have made a severance between these appellations, and considered the value of the official title apart from the character of the individual to whom for eighteen centuries it has been indelibly attached. The conception of the Christ of God which Paul has so fully delineated in his Epistles as having been realised by Jesus, was not only in Paul's mind before he had heard of the existence of Jesus, but was in the higher speculative thought of the age before Jesus commenced his ministry. It was known here as the "Divine Logos," and it came into Judaism through the Alexandrian Jews. The thought-currents of which it was the outcome are to be found fully and freely developed in the later scriptures of the Jews, now known as the Old Testament Apocrypha, their true birth-place being the schools of Grecian philosophic thought.

We have only to read the New Testament to discern at once that the ministry of Jesus had a precursor in that of John the Baptist, and that a startling summons to repentance of sin as the sole means of its remission had sounded through the villages of Judea before Jesus had commenced his work. A wider range of study than that which the New Testament of itself furnishes, shows us the relation of John the Baptist to his age, and informs us that though he was the earnest and forcible preacher of the doctrine which he taught, he was by no means its originator.

To trace the origin and growth of the thought-currents which led up to and inspired the ministry of Jesus, suffices to dispel from our minds the popular fancy that

* The term "Christ Jesus," which is sometimes, though rarely, used, is less open to exception. We say to-day "Queen Victoria," but we do not customarily or ever speak of the Royal Lady, who rules these realms by the personal appellation of Victoria Queen.

that religion was a special or supernatural revelation, for it shews it to us as a link in a long chain of gradually progressive thought, and we find that the growth, which was in operation centuries before Jesus, continued after him, and within a quarter of a century from the date of his death effected a marked and striking change in the character of his own teaching, and, through the agency of Paul, gave to the world, in his name and on his authority, a religion widely different from that which he himself had taught. Jesus died in the faith in which he had been born, viz., in that of Judaism. The last act of his ministry and almost of his life had been to celebrate the Jewish Feast of the Passover, the central rite of the Jewish religion, a rite which no true Jew could omit, and in which none but a Jew could participate. Jesus then died as he had lived, a Jew. What he taught was therefore something that could be harmonised with Judaism, something that was grafted upon Judaism, nay more, it was something that made Judaism an *essential* portion of itself. It was not meet, he himself said, "to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." The ministry of Jesus was a ministry addressed to Jews, a ministry confined to Jews, a ministry which contemplated the perpetuity of Judaism, for in the new dispensation it was to inaugurate, in the coming kingdom it was to establish, the apostles were promised to be seated on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Jesus, it is true, contemplated a reform of Judaism, he recognised personal righteousness as a higher service than ceremonial obedience, and placed purity of heart above the ritual of the Temple. It is very certain, however, if the narratives of the three earlier gospels are to be trusted, that Jesus did not contemplate the destruction or abolition of Judaism. Witness his own

* Many texts might be quoted from the Fourth Gospel in opposition to this view, but the well-known unhistoric character of this gospel saves us from the trouble of noticing these.

emphatic declaration, that he came "not to destroy but to fulfil," and that "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."—Matthew v. 17, 18.

We desire to fix the reader's attention on the fact of the distinctively *Jewish* character of the gospel which Jesus taught. His religion was a projected reform of Judaism, a re-awakening in the Jewish mind of a sense of personal and direct relation to the Father in heaven. Paul's gospel we shall see based itself on the destruction and abolition of the Jewish faith,—Paul preached Christianity as a new and distinct religion, which, though it was at one with the religion of Jesus in the summons it gave to personal righteousness, yet differed fundamentally from it in the estimate it attached to Judaism, and though this difference may appear a small matter to our thought to-day, it was in the early years of Christianity, and among the Jewish or semi-Jewish communities that constituted the early churches a question of deepest and most vital importance, a question as great as the denial of the Pope's supremacy or the Church's infallibility would be to a Catholic of our own age.

The religion of Jesus was simply a reform of Judaism; so it was understood, and so it was preached by the Apostles, who, after the crucifixion, took up the master's ministry and carried on his work. But it was not a reform that was then for the first time projected. It simply epitomised and repeated teachings that for centuries had permeated Jewish literature. The protest which Jesus raised against the formalities of ceremonial religion being put in the place of religion's self, had been made by the Prophets and Psalmists before him, and the summons to personal righteousness which he gave is but an echo of their thought. The prophetic delineations of the greatness and glory of Messiah's rule, and of the national happiness and prosperity of those who should exist beneath it, antedated

by centuries the "kingdom of God" which Jesus preached. There is scarcely any distinctive teaching attributed to Jesus in the New Testament which may not be found more or less clearly expressed in the older Scriptures.

But these Hebrew Scriptures were by no means the sole agencies that were fashioning the religious thought of the Jewish people in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. They had also a copious Greek literature now known as the Old Testament Apocrypha, which was replete with the teachings of a fresher and later philosophy. Through this literature streams that poured from the rich fountains of Plato's thought mingled themselves with the more legitimate traditions of the Hebrew people. At Alexandria, colonies of Jews had dwelt for many generations, the bulk of these were prevented by distance from any participation either in the national feasts or in the ordinary temple-worship, while their daily lives were passed in the midst of a heathen population, and in an atmosphere of thought which Plato dominated, and in which Moses was but little known. These Jews soon forgot their national language—so that their own Hebrew Scriptures had to be translated into the Greek tongue before they were able to read them, and we may add here that it became necessary to translate them still further by copious commentary into harmonious relation with the prevailing philosophic thought before they could reconcile themselves to their acceptance.

This work commenced by Aristobulus was mainly effected by the erudite Philo, whose commentaries on the Mosaic writings invested Jewish theology in a Platonic garb. Neo-Platonism thus effected a lodgement in the Jewish schools. Colonies of Jews similar to those of Alexandria were to be found in many of the leading cities of the Roman Empire. These lived necessarily in the midst of a heathen civilisation, surrounded by the schools of Grecian Philosophy and the

temples of heathen worship, and at the same time they were prevented by distance from any participation in the temple or ritual worship of their own faith. Hence these outlying colonies of Greek-speaking Jews which were termed Hellenists, were looked upon with suspicion by their stricter brethren of Judea, as being weak in faith, and heretic in thought.

At home in Judea religious thought was by no means stagnant. Three great sects divided the Jewish mind, viz., the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes. The former of these, the Sadducees, were the religious conservatives of the time, they desired to maintain the Mosaic laws in their integrity and supremacy. The Pharisees, on the other hand, represented a kind of Puritan element, they recognised a mass of subsequent traditions and teachings, which materially modified the old faith, as being of equal and even greater value than the Mosaic institutes. Some of these traditions exaggerated ritual observances, and carried them to an absurd and burdensome extreme. But others of them, following in the line of the prophetic teaching, inculcated personal piety and righteousness as a religious service of even greater value than the sacrifice and offering of the temple-worship. While the Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul, and contented themselves with the belief that the prosperities of this life were ample manifestations of the divine favour, and sufficient rewards of virtue, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead, and a day of future judgment. The name "Pharisee" signifies "separatist," and marks them as deviators from, if not reformers of, the ancient Judaism. The following passages from the Apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus will serve to shew the divergence of Pharisaic teaching from the strict ceremonial of Mosaic Judaism.

"He that keepeth the law (of conduct) bringeth offerings enough. He that taketh heed to the commandment offereth a peace offering. He that requiteth

a good turn offereth fine flour, and he that giveth alms sacrificeth praise. To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord, and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation."—ECCLES. xxxv. 1, 2, 3.†

These teachings, in which the ritual of the priesthood was made to occupy a secondary position, are of a character closely approaching to those uttered by Jesus, and, in truth, the Pharisees of his day were largely in accord with himself. They were, too, the broader party, and were much favoured of the people. The Sadducees were the High Churchmen of Judaism—haughty, exclusive, and intolerant. They regarded the priestly order as a sacred caste, and they repudiated all later teaching that called the Mosaic law in question. The condemnatory terms in which the New Testament speaks of the Pharisees as the enemies of Jesus, betray an opposition to himself which proceeded not from a repudiation of his teaching, for that they often approved, but from the unrecognised and unofficial position which Jesus held, and from the authority which he assumed as a teacher. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and Gamaliel and Paul were Pharisees. The Pharisees exhibited an interest in Jesus, even if it took the form of questioning his authority to teach. The Sadducees treated his ministry with contempt.

Besides these bodies, there was a large sect or order of Jews called Essenes. Of this remarkable sect Josephus records many interesting particulars ("Wars," Book 2, ch. viii.). They were colonies of Jewish monks, who lived ascetic lives of labour, prayer, and fasting, remote from towns and villages. They were pledged by solemn oaths to secrecy, to celibacy, and to poverty. No applicant was received into the community till he had undergone a period of probation lasting three years. In the first year he had to guard against all pollution, in the second he was admitted to the paths of purification, and at the end of the third to the common meal, of

which all the members partook. Before this, however, he took a solemn oath, the only oath which the Essenes considered permissible. By this he bound himself to honour God, to be just towards man, to injure no man of his own accord or by order of others; always to hate the unrighteous, and assist the righteous; to be ever faithful to all, and especially to the chiefs, for no one obtained the government without God's will; ("Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's"—Jesus. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; the powers that be are ordained of God"—Paul). If he exercised authority himself never to abuse his power, nor to excel his subordinates in clothing or ornament; always to love truth and endeavour to put liars to shame; to keep his hands from theft, and his soul from unholy gain; to hide nothing from another member of the order, nor to reveal anything of theirs to others even though he were threatened with death. (See Kuenen's "Religions of Israel," vol. III., page 126 *et seq.*). The Essenes also believed in the immortality of the soul. Holding the name and law of Moses in highest reverence, there were yet many things, such as abstinence from bloody sacrifices, vows of celibacy, and ascetic self-denial, which were not only unsanctioned by this law, but which did violence to its plain injunctions. Essenism was, therefore, due to other teaching, and we can trace in its laws and customs a copious admixture of the religious usages of the East.* The late Dr Inman, in the third volume of his "Ancient Faiths," &c., adduces considerable evidence to show that the Essenes of Judea and the Therapeutæ

* The learned Theophilus Gale (in his "Court of the Gentiles," vol. II., Book 2, ch. 16), has a lengthened dissertation aiming to prove the identity of the Essenes with the sect of the Pythagoreans. He assumes, however, that Pythagoras learned his philosophy from the Jews, an assumption which no scholar who valued his reputation would venture to endorse to-day. As a religious or philosophical sect, Pythagoras has the undoubted priority of centuries over the Essenes, and if the two bear a close and intimate identity, the Essenes must have borrowed from the Pythagoreans; at all events,

of Egypt were virtually communities of Buddhist monks, or of men who had largely mingled the principles of Buddhism with their own religious views.

Be this as it may, our design is to show that the larger portion of the "Sermon on the Mount," which is the keynote of the ministry of Jesus, and the essence of the gospel teaching, was but a reiteration of precepts that had long been accepted by these Essenes as their standard alike of morality and religion. John the Baptist was in all probability an associate of these communities, differing from them only as the preaching monks differ from the cloistered monks of Catholicism. His teaching was largely in accord with the faith which the Essenes held, and he simply proclaimed to the multitude that which they guarded with secrecy and isolation. Jesus, who at the outset of his ministry, made himself John's disciple, by undergoing baptism by him, taught like John *repentance* in place of *sacrifice* for the remission of sin, and reiterated Essenic doctrine divested only of unwise restrictions and absurd extremes. Thus Jesus opposed their ascetic isolation, their oath of initiation, their imposed secrecy. "Swear not at all," he says. Hide not your light, "Let it shine out before men." "What you hear in secret proclaim on the housetops." But apart from these divergences, the coincidence of Essenic doctrine with the teaching of Jesus is far too striking to be the result of accident. Both were the natural development of religious thought, neither have any rightful claim to the character of supernatural revelation. The ministry of Jesus was remarkable for the brevity of its duration, lasting probably under two years. In this short interval his doctrine underwent but slight development, and at his

as Pythagoras drew largely from the learning of the East, this raises a strong presumption as to the Buddhist origin of both. At the present day scholars are being increasingly impressed with the similarity between Buddhism and Christianity, and as Christianity was largely a reproduction of Essenic teaching, this similarity is at once accounted for.

death was virtually the same as at the commencement of his ministry. A belief that he himself was the Messiah of national expectation constituted the only important change his mind experienced. At the crucifixion of Jesus the conception of his religion was little more than that of a Jewish Puritanism. His followers were the *ἀγίοι* or Holy ones. Jews who had devoted themselves to the exercises of personal piety, and who cherished a living trust in God as their heavenly Father. But they were Jews, children of the promise, and to their thought, the chosen and privileged people of God. At the death of Jesus we learn he had twelve chosen apostles, and a vacancy in this number, occasioned by the defection and death of Judas, was filled up by the remaining apostles by the election of Matthias.

Now Paul, who fills so important a place in the history of the early church was *not* one of these Apostles; and never having been a companion of the living Jesus, could not have been chosen to fill any vacancy that might have occurred in their ranks. Moreover, he taught a religion widely divergent in its ecclesiastical character from the reformed Judaism which constituted the gospel of Jesus. Paul repudiated Judaism altogether, and warned his followers against the folly and even the sin of observing its rites or conforming to its law. We ask, how did Paul obtain the Apostleship he claims? we find, in answer, that it was a self-asserted title, that it was not only *not* conferred upon him by the true apostles of Jesus, but that his claim to the office was indignantly repudiated by them.

The religion which for 1800 years has been known as Christianity is not, excepting in those moral exhortations in which all reputable religions agree, at all in agreement with the religion that was held and taught by Jesus. The religion which is known as Christianity deems all Jews to lie outside of its pale, does not recognise them as members of its household of faith on as recipients of salvation. It classes them with Turks and

Infidels, and while in past ages it has sought to crush them with the heavy hand of power, it has hypocritically, at the same time, prayed for their conversion to the true faith.

That faith, although based on the "blood of Jesus," is wholly at issue with the faith that Jesus taught. The Christian religion, as we now know it, was not taught by Jesus at all, it was first preached by Paul, preached by him on his own authority, or what is the same thing, in virtue of a special revelation which he declared he had received. He claimed, it is true, to be a commissioned apostle of Jesus, but then his only interview with Jesus was through *a vision or dream some years after the latter's death !!* The first and most persistent opponents of Paul's new religion were the actual apostles of Jesus. These branded his gospel as false, denied *in toto* his apostleship, and called on all the members of the churches which he founded, if they desired to rank as Jesus' disciples, to make themselves first of all to be Jews, to reverence the Mosaic law and conform to the Mosaic ritual. The life and labours of Paul are thus of prime importance in any inquiry we may make as to the origin of the Christian religion.

Very soon after the death of Jesus, his little band of followers, who had for the most part sought refuge in flight from the dangers which menaced themselves, returned to Jerusalem and constituted a society of which the apostles were the acknowledged head. Their distinctive doctrine was that Jesus, who had recently suffered crucifixion, was in truth the divinely sent Messiah or Christ; that he had already risen from the dead and would shortly return in glory and power to establish his kingdom, to exalt the Jewish nation, and overthrow the Roman rule. Behind these views lay the ordinary teaching of the Essenes or the stricter Pharisaical sects, and in this matter, as fanatical or puritanical Jews, the disciples of Jesus, zealous in their recognition of the Jewish law, attracted but little opposition and but small

enmity. The rulers did not accept their view as to the Messiahship of Jesus, but as Jesus was not living to advance this claim, no real danger could arise from its being advanced by others. Those who made this claim were therefore regarded as simple-minded fanatics, and otherwise as one of the many sects of devout Jews, with which the city teemed. Occasionally, when these claims were too prominently advocated, the authorities interfered, and the apostles were imprisoned as disturbers of the peace, or as suggesting a spirit of sedition. The Acts of the Apostles gives one or two romantic stories of Peter being thus arrested and imprisoned, but we gather from the general record that the apostles continued at Jerusalem without incurring much interference from the authorities. And the thing that saved them was their reverence for the Jewish law, their continuance in the Jewish faith. The new order of views which they held, as followers of Jesus, were largely held or sympathized with by the outlying Jews, termed Hellenists, who had vaguely heard of similar teaching through other channels, and who were favourably inclined, therefore, towards the new sect of which the apostles were the leaders. But these Hellenists differed from the apostles in being very lax in their regard for the Jewish ritual. They were very indifferent Jews. So we find that feuds arose at Jerusalem between the two sections of this early church, and at length a young and energetic Hellenist, named Stephen, fell a martyr in an outburst of persecution that was raised against his teaching. Unhappily the only history that we possess of these times and incidents comes to use in the Acts of the Apostles, and this book gives us not only a very vague and scanty but also a very untrustworthy outline of the proceedings of this period.* We cannot accept

* The "Acts of the Apostles" probably embodies some few of the actual incidents of the history of the apostolic age, they are coupled, however, with very much that is legendary, and with a good deal that was fabricated by the writer to serve a particular purpose; that purpose being to conceal the divisions and strife which existed

the speech of Stephen, which it records, as being an exact report of his language. Yet the fact that Stephen met his death in an outburst of Jewish fanaticism, directed against his teaching, is doubtless historically reliable, also, it is probable that Paul stood by, approving and encouraging the deed. The speech put into Stephen's mouth, when on his trial, though not his actual words, represents, probably, the line of his argument and indicates the nature of his offence. That offence was speaking lightly and even condemnatory of Judaism, and betraying a desire to make the new religion altogether independent of it. This persecution caused

between Paul and the acknowledged apostles of Jesus, especially Peter. Here, as also in the epistle which bears his name, Peter is made to teach Pauline doctrine ! and to have a vision from heaven to teach him that the Gentiles are to be received into the church ! while Paul, who in his epistles most emphatically repudiates the validity of the Jewish ceremonial law, is represented as complying with its requirements and declaring that he never called it in question !! That many portions of the New Testament are untrustworthy is easily shown. Read the last three verses of Matthew's gospel. Here the *risen* (?) Jesus is said to have appeared to his disciples (the eleven apostles), and to have commanded them to "go into all nations, and baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." From the Acts and from Galatians we learn that the apostles, in place of doing this, confined their ministrations to Judea, &c., and as though perfectly unconscious of this command, baptized simply in the name of Jesus ! while Paul, who says that he received his gospel and apostleship direct from Christ in a vision, declares that Christ did *not* send him to baptize but to preach the gospel, and he thanks God that of all his converts he only *baptised three or four* !! Here, then, we think with good reason that the Acts gives the truthful narrative, at all events the probable one, while the gospel statement is wholly false. The record of the Acts as to the miracles wrought by "Peter's shadow" and "Paul's apron," the opening of their prison doors by angelic liberators, and the long speeches put into the mouths alike of Peter and Stephen and Paul, as also very much of the account of the apostolic councils at Jerusalem, we deem with good reason to be largely unreliable as history. Yet, perhaps, in the absence of any other historic record to help us, it is possible by a careful and judicious study of this book, to gather from it some faint outline of the actual history of the early church, and in this we are largely helped by the aid furnished to us by Paul's own writings. But for the check and guidance which these furnish, the entire book of Acts would have to be discarded as a religious romance.

another scattering of the new sect, and yet we find that while Paul, or Saul, as he was then called, was breathing threatenings and slaughter against all belonging to it, and was asking the Sanhedrim to invest him with powers to pursue and arrest the fugitives, especially those who had sought refuge in Damascus, the nearest heathen city; the apostles remained unmolested and apparently unendangered at Jerusalem! An important side-light is thrown upon their proceedings by this fact. The outburst of fanaticism was evidently not directed against the followers of Jesus as such, but only against that portion of them (the Hellenists) who sought to repudiate the Jewish law. Hence the apostles, as zealous Jews, were safe, and it is possible may have taken part against Stephen, may even have incited the persecution beneath which he fell. We know that a dispute existed between the apostolic party and the Hellenists. We know, too, the high hand with which the apostles ruled, from the narrative of Ananias and Sapphira. There is large ground, therefore, for the belief that the apostles of Jesus were, as well as Saul of Tarsus, consenting parties to the death of Stephen. At all events, the fact is recorded that he fell a martyr to a persecution which gave the apostles themselves no cause for alarm! Saul of Tarsus was a born Jew; but his birthplace was a heathen city. He was bred up, therefore, in close contact with Gentile civilisation amid a Greek-speaking population, under circumstances in which his attachment to Judaism would be very greatly weakened. To obviate this, and to confirm him in the faith of his fathers, he was sent by his father to Jerusalem to be educated at the school or college presided over by the Chief Rabbis. Here Paul or Saul sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the grandson of the renowned and liberal Hillel, and one who in the breadth and liberality of his own teaching proved himself a worthy descendant of his eminent ancestor. Saul was thus bred a Pharisee of the strictest kind; in other words, a Jew of broad and

enlightened views, one who wove the later teachings of philosophic thought into the old ceremonial law, and who thought even more of the later than of the earlier literature of his people. At this period, however, Paul (for such we shall call him in future) was hot-headed, impulsive, and blindly zealous, holding what was virtually a liberal theology in a very illiberal spirit. To his rash and fiery nature persecution seemed the fittest argument to silence the opponents of the national faith. Moreover his very presence in Jerusalem was to receive an education that should inspire and strengthen his attachment to Judaism. Hence the presence of a sect who virtually sought to repudiate the exclusive sanctity and authority of the Jewish law excited his fiercest indignation. Interpret Judaism as liberally as you please and Paul would lend his sympathy, but repudiate its authority and value and Paul now will persecute to the death. As a disciple of Gamaliel and as a citizen of Tarsus, Paul must have held views greatly in common with the Hellenist Jews, with Jews that is who had been converted from Heathen faiths, and who received only partial recognition as proselytes of the gate from the strict and born Jews at Jerusalem. As a born Jew, Paul, however, could claim full Jewish privileges, and this, added to the special education he had received, made him feel a warm attachment to the Jewish religion. On his way to Damascus a change occurs which proves that his prejudices in this matter were more active than deep. Paul is struck down by a sudden illness, occasioned, the narrative would seem to indicate, by a sunstroke. In the temporary delirium that resulted, Paul imagined that he saw the risen Jesus, and received a commission from him to preach his gospel. So, reaching Damascus, he fraternises with the very men he was commissioned to arrest. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that he shortly returned to Jerusalem a converted man, that he was cordially received and welcomed by the apostles, going openly in

and out of the city in their company, and disputing publicly with the Hellenists. At length a conspiracy on the part of these against Paul rendered it advisable that he should withdraw from the scene, and retire to his distant home at Tarsus (see Acts ix.).

Now, not only is this account in the highest degree improbable in itself, but it is directly opposed to a statement which Paul has given of his conversion and subsequent procedure in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians. This was written about twenty years after the period of his conversion, but the Acts of the Apostles was not written till a much later period, till the beginning of the second century, some seventy or eighty years after the occurrences it records, when it was compiled from traditions which were freely handled by the compiler and when no living witnesses remained to check the veracity of his record.

Paul himself states that after his conversion in place of returning to Jerusalem, he went for three years into Arabia, that then he visited Jerusalem, but apparently in a very stealthy manner, he saw only Peter and James, residing with the former for fifteen days, and was not known by person to the members of the church over which they ruled. Now, this statement has at least the ring of probability with it. Paul could not have returned openly to Jerusalem very shortly after his conversion. He had been equipped by the ruling priesthood for a very important mission, and to this mission he had proved altogether faithless. Had he ventured within the jurisdiction of this priesthood his offence would have been visited with condign punishment. Imagine the English Government sending an officer to Ireland to make some Fenian arrests, and the officer becoming converted to Fenianism himself, could we imagine him returning to London and openly flaunting his conversion in the face of the authorities, and publicly advocating Fenian principles? Yet it is as easy to conceive of Paul doing what the Acts of the Apostles

records of him. Unfortunately, there is nothing to show us the exact nature of the change which Paul underwent at his conversion other than the recognition of the Messiahship of Jesus, and the belief in his resurrection and the expectation of his second coming. These views were such as a Jew might feel himself warranted to hold. Paul's errand, however, had been to persecute a sect which made light of Jewish requirements, and his conversion implies conversion to their views; the acceptance of Jesus in a sense that boded the supercession of Judaism. Hence when after a lapse of three years Paul ventures to make a stealthy visit to Jerusalem to see Peter, the result is far from being satisfactory to himself. Peter evidently does not sympathise with Paul's new faith, its leanings are too Hellenistic and therefore too anti-Jewish for him. So Peter withholds all official recognition from him; does not even introduce him to the brethren, but suggests his retirement at once to Tarsus, and inactivity, and for a period of six years, Paul went into this virtual exile, and occupied himself probably in the secular pursuit of tent-making.

But during this time the Hellenists largely increased, the new faith had found a footing in several of the great Gentile cities, and here many of the heathen population desired to join the new community and to profess the faith that Jesus had taught—viz., the faith that laid more stress on personal piety than on ceremonial rite. But the requirement to make themselves Jews as the first step of the change was a great stumbling block in their way. So Barnabas, a Hellenist Jew, who had joined the primitive church, went to Tarsus and fetched Paul to join him in a ministry he was commencing in Antioch and the neighbouring towns.

Paul responds to the invitation, and in company with Barnabas, to whom he held at this time a subordinate position, and to whom he was indebted for his recognition by, and introduction to, the early church, commenced

his ministrations at Antioch, receiving from the hands of the elders there a special consecration to the work. At Antioch, however, the Hellenistic element largely prevailed, and a step was soon taken which paved the way for the ultimate severance of the early church and the followers of Jesus from any necessary association with Judaism. Here at Antioch, under the ministration of Barnabas and Paul, the disciples first *took the name of Christians!* (Acts), in other words they virtually ceased to be necessarily Jews, and a large number of the Gentile converts were not Jews at all.* Such a church differed very widely from the churches or societies of Judea, and the apostles naturally took alarm, especially when it was found that Gentile converts were exempted from circumcision. The apostles thereupon sent teachers to Antioch to remedy the mischief, "These taught the brethren, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."—Acts xv.

Let us pause a minute here—the date is about the year 51, that is eighteen years after the crucifixion of

* With regard to the assumption of this title Mons. Renan says, "Hitherto the adherents of the new sect had called themselves 'believers,' 'the faithful,' 'saints,' 'brothers,' 'the disciples,' but the sect had no public or official name. It was at Antioch that the title *Christians* was devised. . . . This is a most important moment. Solemn indeed is the hour when the new creation receives its name, for that is the direct symbol of its existence. It is by its name that a being individual or collectively really becomes itself, and is distinct from others. The formation of the word *Christian* marks thus the precise date of the separation of Judaism from the Church of Jesus. For a long time to come the two religions will still be confounded: but this confusion will only take place in those countries where the spread of Christianity is slow and backward. The sect readily accepted the appellation which was applied to it, and viewed it as a title of honour. Christianity is now completely weaned from its mother's breast, the true sentiments of Jesus have triumphed over the indecision of his first disciples; the Church of Jerusalem is left behind; the Aramaic language in which Jesus spoke is unknown to a portion of his followers; Christianity speaks Greek, and is finally launched into that great vortex of the Greek and Roman world whence it will never depart."—*The Apostles*, ch. xiii.

Jesus, and the religion taught in his name by his own appointed apostles was to the effect that circumcision was essential to salvation !!

If the Christian religion was a special and supernatural religion taught by Jesus, a man approved of God and confirmed by signs and wonders, then it stands on record that one of the essential requisites of that religion was the Jewish rite of circumcision !! Christians who repudiate this to-day, repudiate the authority, and deny the teaching of the Apostolic Church as it existed eighteen years after the crucifixion ! As Jesus was born a Jew, lived in the strict observance of the Jewish law, and died in allegiance to the Jewish faith, this must have been his teaching also.

A great stir prevailed now at Antioch amid the communities that constituted the early church. The Jews opposed the new teaching of Paul with vehemence and bitterness, and many of those Jews who accepted the new teaching were also bitterly opposed to the proposed admission of Gentiles without requiring from them a prior acceptance of Judaism. At length Paul and Barnabas are sent from the society at Antioch as a deputation to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles about this matter. An account of this conference is given in the 15th Chapter of the Acts, in which Peter is made to be the chief spokesman, siding with Paul, and James also too readily concedes the claims of Paul and Barnabas to admit the Gentile converts without requiring of them any recognition of the Mosaic law, further than "that they should abstain from eating meats that had been offered to idols, from things strangled, and from immorality." Paul, however, gives a less favourable account of this interview, he intimates that he imparted his ideas privately to the seeming leaders, and that in return they had nothing important to communicate to him ; at least a sort of agreement was reluctantly arrived at to the effect that

Paul and Barnabas were to continue their ministrations in the heathen cities, and that the apostles were to confine theirs to the brethren in Judea. Indeed, Paul was by this arrangement virtually forbidden to address himself to Jews at all, having to confine his labours to the uncircumcised heathen. It should be noticed here that in assenting to these terms, the apostles virtually stipulated that Paul should *not* conduct his ministry where their power or influence could reach! Outside of Judea their influence diminished, and their power ended, while to preach to heathen communities Paul needed no authority beside his own. The nucleus of the churches was however, everywhere formed first of all from the Jewish communities resident in these cities, and these in accepting the new faith would have doubtless regarded it as a movement ruled and directed by the apostles of Jesus, and would consequently have hesitated to accept the teaching of one who had not due credentials from them, especially when emissaries from Jerusalem should come and call their attention to this fact. These credentials Paul never fairly possessed,—only for a brief period while acting in conjunction with Barnabas at Antioch were Paul's labours duly sanctioned, and even this sanction was conferred by the elders of a Hellenist Society, and not by the apostles themselves. Thus much of favour Paul received through the friendly introduction and patronage of Barnabas, himself a foreign or Hellenised Jew, one, however, who had been among the earliest converts to the new faith, and who, on his conversion had given his patrimony for the use of the church. Barnabas was a man of considerable power as a speaker, and of enthusiastic temperament. Hence the name Barnabas, or son of Prophecy was given to him by the apostles in place of his original name Joseph (Acts iv. 36). Possessing apparently the full confidence of the apostles, he yet seems to have chiefly laboured beyond the boundaries of Judea; the apostles evidently desiring to keep a man of his power and energy of character at a safe distance.

At this era Paul and Barnabas were probably the two most powerful and successful preachers of the early church, and yet they do not seem ever to have been permitted to labour within the boundaries of Judea. Having taken one missionary journey with Barnabas, Paul is alienated from him through a dispute as to who should be the companion of their next journey, Paul objecting to the presence of Barnabas' nephew, Mark. On this the friends separated, and Paul took his journey through the towns of Asia Minor, accompanied by one of the brethren who had returned with him from Jerusalem, Silas or Silvanus, while Barnabas travelled in quite a contrary direction, visiting the isle of Cyprus, his own early home,—both, however, confining their mission to the Gentile world.

In company with Silas, Paul visits the cities of Asia Minor, and after undergoing scourging and imprisonment together at Philippi, where, in the night an earthquake opened their prison doors, and caused the conversion of the gaoler, and induced the magistrates to order their instant liberation, they came to Thessalonica where there was a synagogue of the Jews, to which Paul went, endeavouring to shew them from the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ. An uproar directed against them caused them to leave the city and pass on to Berea. Here also they found a Jewish synagogue, and here Paul's teaching was for a time acceptable, till some of the Jews from Thessalonica came over and stirred up enmity against them. This necessitated Paul's departure for Athens, whither he went leaving Silas and Timotheus behind with orders to join him at Corinth.

We see here that the chief enmity that beset Paul was manifested by Jews, and was directed especially against himself, being due doubtless to the light estimate he set on Judaism. At Athens Paul seems to have addressed himself to the heathen population and to have been heard with some degree of curious interest, but to have produced small effect by his discourse. So he pro-

ceeded to Corinth where an important Jewish colony resided. Here he was again beset with opposition from the Jews, who expelled him from the synagogue, and even accused him before the tribunal of the Roman Deputy Gallio. Paul, however, met with some encouragement, and succeeded after a protracted stay of eighteen months in leaving a small church of those who accepted his teaching.

Paul no longer having Silas as a companion now goes to Ephesus, and finds here a church or society of Jews who had not heard of Jesus, and who had been baptized with John's baptism; in other words, they were Jews who had learned to esteem personal righteousness as of higher value than ceremonial service, and were therefore ripe to receive the special teaching of Paul to the effect that Jesus was the Christ, the anointed of God commissioned to reform and supersede the Mosaic dispensation. Here Paul abode for two years. At length the craftsmen who made silver shrines for Diana's Temple stirred up a strong feeling against him, which necessitated his departure. His success here seems to have been greater than elsewhere, owing doubtless to the absence of the more orthodox and bigoted of the Jews, those Jews who had accepted John's baptism being largely prepared to accept the teaching and messiahship of Jesus. Still Paul feels greatly depressed in spirit and determines to go through Macedonia to collect the alms of the churches for the poor brethren at Jerusalem, and then having carried these to Jerusalem, to go to Rome, having heard of the existence of a society of Jews there, who were already more than half converted to the new faith. At Jerusalem, however, the Jewish opposition again breaks out. He is denounced to the authorities, and saved from death only by his claim as a Roman citizen to appeal to Cæsar. This appeal necessitates his removal as a prisoner to Rome, where reliable history loses all further trace concerning him, leaving the tra-

dition probable which represents him as suffering martyrdom in a persecution directed against the Christians by Nero.

What we desire to call the reader's attention to is the fact that when Paul's life was endangered at Jerusalem, the apostles who resided there were in no peril ! The Jews are represented as being his accusers ; but these Jews do not appear to have borne any special enmity against Peter and James, and the leaders or members of the Apostolic Church. If the history of the Acts is at all reliable in its main outlines, Paul seems to have had great misgivings concerning the issue of his visit to the Jewish metropolis, and yet a church of Jesus was actually existing there in peace and safety ! But Paul had virtually ceased to be a Jew, and hence he dreaded the enmity of the Jews against himself, and doubted perhaps the fidelity of the apostolic leaders. The Book of the Acts relates, however, that at Jerusalem Paul went into the temple and performed the ceremonies essential to the discharge of a vow which he had made, in other words, that he behaved himself as an orthodox Jew, but that his true character was discovered, and he was at once denounced to the authorities.

We shall shortly see, from an examination of Paul's Epistles, that there are grave reasons for doubting the accuracy of this statement of the Acts as to Paul's conformity to the Mosaic law. From the moment of his conversion, the apostolic community had regarded him with suspicion and dislike, because in that conversion Paul lost his former reverence for the Mosaic law, and though on this visit he hoped to conciliate some degree of favour from the leaders of the Apostolic Church by being the bearer of alms to the poor members of the church, who were then suffering the privations of famine, there is a grave suspicion that Paul was betrayed to the Jewish authorities by those who he had hoped would have proved his friends, inasmuch as like himself, they were the disciples and followers of Jesus. Be this as

it may, the fact stands recorded that he is the subject of persecution by the Jewish authorities, while the entire church at Jerusalem is in security and peace, and this fact furnishes convincing evidence that a great divergency must have existed in their teaching, and that the Apostolic Church did not sanction Paul's repudiation of the Jewish law—nay, were even disposed to disown and to persecute him on this account. Again, in letters addressed to the Galatian and Corinthian Churches, Paul had claimed to be an apostle by special and supernatural appointment (not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father), that is, he claimed to have received his apostleship in the vision he declared he had had of Jesus. But the apostles at Jerusalem resented this claim as an infringement of their authority, and this assumption of Paul's added to his repudiation of Judaism, of the proud heritage they had received from their fathers, of the faith their master had died in, was the occasion of a deep-seated animosity on their part towards him, and we should do them no injustice, supposing they had no hand in Paul's betrayal, in believing that they would have regarded his removal as a prisoner to Rome with unfeigned satisfaction. At Rome Paul disappears from view, and though ecclesiastical tradition tells of his deliverance, of his subsequent journey into Spain and even to Britain, of his return to Rome, of his meeting there with Peter, and of the martyrdom of both Paul and Peter on the same day, yet reliable history is altogether wanting. The Apocryphal Epistle of Clement, written professedly about the close of the first century, but bearing indications of a much later date of origin, mentions Paul as having suffered martyrdom, but says nothing about his liberation or his journey to Spain. The Book of the Acts was not written till early in the second century, and this, which gives a copious, though not altogether reliable, biography of Paul, strangely omits to furnish any account of his ultimate fate. Of this fate probably

no record or even tradition existed at that period, the traditions which were eventually current having grown up after this time.

“With Paul’s imprisonment at Rome,” says the late Sir R. Hanson in his ‘*Paul and the Primitive Church*,’ “ends all our knowledge of his life and labours. We know nothing as to his fate. The legend of his martyrdom at Rome is entitled to no weight whatever, for it first appears at a time when numerous apocryphal stories were current, and when no one dreamed of investigating their foundation. His appeal to the Emperor (Nero) may have been unsuccessful, and he may have been sentenced to exile in Sardinia, or in some other penal settlement, or to death. If we were to draw any inference from the silence of the author of the Acts, it would be that he was not set free: for had he finally triumphed over his Jewish accusers, we should expect to find some intimation of the fact. But if he were once liberated, there can be no adequate ground for supposing that he would have returned to Rome. And least of all, can we imagine with a recent writer that he visited Alexandria and other cities, which subsequently became centres of Christian life, and laid the foundation of Gentile Christianity in those places. He passes absolutely from our sight; and all that we can venture to say is, that during the remainder of his life—probably a very brief period—he preached the Gospel wherever he had the opportunity, and that he died in the full belief that he should almost immediately reappear on earth with Christ at his coming.”

Dean Milman in his ‘*History of Christianity*’ says: “If we may judge from the authentic records of the New Testament, the whole Christianity of the west emanated from Paul alone.” But from this Christianity of the west the Christianity of Christendom has sprung. And Paul must therefore be claimed as its founder. Now in surveying the life and labours of Paul, we find that from his conversion to his death, or rather to the

imprisonment with which his history ends, he was never the intimate friend or associate of the Apostles of Jesus, and that he knew as little of their doctrine as he did of themselves. His earliest companion and friend was Barnabas, a Hellenist Jew and a Hellenist follower of Jesus. Paul did not long retain this friendship, and for the most part he preached and travelled through Gentile cities, far away from Jewish territory, a lone and friendless man. Such friends as he had were found among the converts he himself made. The only courtesy that was extended to him by the Apostles of Jesus was a reluctant and temporary sanction of his ministry, given on condition that he should confine his preaching to distant cities and to Gentile peoples: an agreement which Paul did not strictly keep, inasmuch as while he confined his ministry to Gentile cities, he addressed himself to the Jewish communities, whom he found residing there, whereas his credentials only justified him preaching to the "uncircumcised." It was on this account that the Apostolic Church withdrew such sanction as they had previously given, and sent their emissaries to the churches he founded to disown his authority and repudiate his teaching.

What Paul's teaching was we gather from his Epistles to some of the churches which he founded, notably those to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. In writing to the Galatians, Paul claims on his own authority, or rather on his own assertion of a special divine commission—the rank and office of an apostle. And this official character is needed to give authority to his teaching, for this teaching has been called in question by emissaries from the Jerusalem Church. In this Epistle Paul emphatically maintains his own views, and denounces as accursed those who would teach a different Gospel. Then Paul recounts the story of his conversion, and the sparse and scanty intercourse he had had with the actual Apostles of Jesus, whom he found wholly unable to instruct him in any import-

ant matter, and so on his own responsibility he preached the gospel he had received by Divine inspiration. It would appear that many of the converts who had embraced Christianity direct from heathenism had been visited by Judaizing teachers, who had told them that before becoming Christians they must make themselves Jews, and submit to the rite of circumcision. - So Paul writes this letter to them, telling them that Judaism, which was useful as a schoolmaster to prepare the way for Christ, is abolished now that Christ is come. That "if they be Christ's, then are they Abraham's seed also, and heirs according to the promise." "Stand fast therefore," he says, "in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled in the yoke of bondage. Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

In the 3d chapter of the second letter or epistle addressed to the church at Corinth, which these emissaries had visited in Paul's absence, for the purpose of denouncing at once Paul's authority and teaching, displaying their own credentials from the apostolic authorities of the Jerusalem church, we find Paul writing in a similar strain : "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle (of commendation) written in our hearts, known and read of all men;" and then he goes on to show that Judaism is a superseded dispensation. He thanks God that he has made him "a minister of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit, for the letter (or law) killeth, but the spirit (or ministration of righteousness) giveth life." The veil that screened the full vision of God is done away in Christ. But to the Jews, who still heed and reverence the law of Moses, "this veil remains upon their heart." The burden of nearly all Paul's epistles, apart from matters of local or personal interest, is to the effect that Judaism is now a superseded dispensation, and in its stead the

precepts of devoutness towards God, and a high practical morality are taught, as the end of religion and the rule of life.

The doctrinal aspect of Paul's teaching is most clearly and distinctly seen in the Epistle to the Romans. This was written from Corinth just previous to Paul's last and fatal visit to Jerusalem. Unlike his other letters, it was written to a community of whom Paul had no personal knowledge. He had heard that a church of the new faith existed at Rome, and so he writes to this society telling them of his desire to visit them; "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established, that is, that I may be comforted together with you by our mutual faith."—Romans i. 11, 12.

Paul wrote this letter just before starting for Jerusalem on the errand we have already mentioned. The date is about the year 58, twenty-one years subsequent to his conversion, probably about the fourteenth year of his active ministry. That ministry had been chequered with privations and persecutions, it had achieved from time to time considerable success, but it had ended in grievous disappointment. Paul was at this period a solitary, disowned, and disappointed man. The Jewish element of the early church had proved far too powerful an antagonist for him to overthrow. He had dealt it its death-blow, but large vitality still remained with it. We have only to remember the tenacity with which Judaism was and still is cherished by its votaries, to feel assured that it would need much more than a single life-time to destroy it. A generation was however rising up who would shake it off, and hold Christianity without it, but the Jewish Christians of Paul's day were too deeply attached to the faith in which they had been bred, and which for generations before them their fathers had held sacred, to do this. At this season it is new life to Paul to hear that at Rome a society of Jews are living who hold a reformed

faith. This reformed faith, Paul is doubtless aware, very closely corresponds in its ethical teaching, in the importance which it attaches to personal piety and personal righteousness, to Christianity, as he understands it. But Paul is conscious that it lacks something, and this he desires to add to it. This something is the Messiahship of Jesus, the realisation of the Christ office by him. About this period there were societies of Jews rising up in the great cities of the empire in which the old faith was reformed on the basis of the Gentile or Platonic philosophy. A school of this character had been formed at Alexandria by Philo, who had introduced the conception of the Platonic "Logos" into the current of Jewish thought, and had written copious commentaries on the Pentateuch, explaining those passages which spoke of the divine appearance by the aid of this idea. The Jews who, like Philo at Alexandria or the colony settled in the world's metropolis, were surrounded by the schools of Gentile philosophy, found it impossible to read their own scriptures in a literal sense, so gross were the conceptions of God which these scriptures contained.

Philo taught that besides the supreme God there was a most ancient angel or messenger, the divine "Logos" or "Word." This being is often spoken of by Philo as a second God—as the maker of the world—as the first-born of all beings—as sharing the purity and eternity of God, as being the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person, &c., &c. "To this arch-angel, the most ancient Logos," Philo says, "the Father Omnipotent granted the pre-eminent gift to stand on the confines of both (natures) and separate the created from the creator; he is continually a suppliant to the immortal God on behalf of the mortal race, which is exposed to affliction and misery; and is also the ambassador sent by the Ruler of all to the subject race; being neither unbegotten as God, nor begotten as man, but occupying a middle place between the extremes."—

Quis Rerum Div. Hæres, c. 42. Again Philo says, in a fragment of a lost writing preserved by Eusebius, "It was not possible that anything mortal should be formed after the image of the Most High, the Father of the Universe; it could only be formed in the image of the second God, who is his Logos (or Reason)." The works of Philo, some of which were doubtless written when Jesus was but a little child, are happily extant to-day, and they fill in their English translation three thick volumes of Bohn's Classical Library. We have shown how Paul came beneath the influence of these views by being the pupil of Rabbi Gamaliel at Jerusalem. Twenty years before Paul was carried a prisoner to Rome, and eighteen years before he addressed this letter to the Church of God there, of whose excellence and merits he had heard, Philo had visited Rome on an embassy from the Jews of Alexandria to the Emperor Caligula, and on this occasion doubtless stayed some considerable time in the city. Here he would have sought the society of his co-religionists, and have doubtless left a copy of his writings with them. From this contact with Philo may have sprung up a reformed conception of Judaism, which, based on the Logos as the divine Word or Reason, able to enter into the souls of good men, and to make them to be godlike in character, was almost identical with the religion which Paul was teaching, based on Jesus being the Christ or anointed messenger of God, able to dwell by his spirit in the hearts of his disciples, and to make them godlike in the spirit of their lives.

If the reader will run through the epistles of Paul, especially those to the Ephesians and Colossians, he will see that the epithets that are therein used to define the office and nature of Christ are identical with those which were previously used by Philo to define the nature of the Logos,* showing that Paul, who never

* This is shown at greater length in the pamphlet "Plato, Philo, and Paul," published in this series.

knew or saw the man Jesus, was simply adapting his knowledge of the Logos, which he had carried from Philo to the portrayal of the analogous character of the Christ. We venture now a very reasonable suggestion. This society of saints at Rome, to whom Paul wrote, and whose existence has since been a source of perplexity to ecclesiastical historians, seeing that we have no knowledge when or by whom this church had been founded, has been too hastily concluded to have been an early Christian church. Paul was the great missionary of the Christian faith to foreign parts, but far as he had travelled, Rome was still a great distance beyond the extremest point he had reached, viz., Corinth. Three hundred miles of difficult and dangerous journeyings still lay between Corinth and Rome, and yet Paul himself, the daring pioneer who had carried Christianity into Gentile boundaries, hears that a Christian (?) church already exists at Rome! The probable fact is that the society of Jews there who held a reformed faith had adopted the conception of the Philonic Logos, and knew at this time little or nothing of Paul's Christ. Nevertheless, in all but name, the two reforms were identical, and the religions virtually the same. Paul, however, has gone a step beyond Philo. He has identified the speculative Logos with an actual existence. As a Jew, he reasoned first that the Christ and the Logos were one, and then that Jesus, whom his followers believed to be the Christ, was not the military chieftain or the powerful king of ordinary expectation, but the divine Logos sent from God to declare his will, and to subdue the souls of men to virtue and piety and love. He longs, therefore, to go to this church or society. Here he will find, he thinks, enlightened and philosophic minds, who will understand and receive his gospel when he shall tell them that this "Logos" has been realised in the person of Jesus "the Christ," and he feels that here at least he will be safe from the emissaries of James and Peter, who, if

they should follow him, will have but small influence with men who have almost wholly outgrown the grosser forms of Judaism. As followers of Philo, and holding, therefore, religious conceptions of a broad and philosophic character, these men were still Jews, but Jews who had largely spiritualised their faith, and had almost wholly ceased to attach much importance to its ceremonial law. When Paul did reach Rome a prisoner, the "Book of Acts" relates an interview which Paul held with these Jews as follows. At Puteoli, the port at which he landed, it tells us that Paul found *brethren*, and abode with them seven days, and then went on in custody to Rome. The narrative continues—

"And from thence when the *brethren* heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and the Three Taverns ; whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage. 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. And it came to pass that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together, and when they were come together he said unto them, Men and Brethren, *though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers*, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who when they had examined me would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar ; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause, therefore, have I called for you to see you and to speak with you, because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest, for as concerning *this sect* we know that it is everywhere spoken against. And when they had ap-

pointed him a day, there came many to him to his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the Prophets, until the evening. And some believed the things that were spoken and some believed not."

Now it is difficult for any thoughtful mind to accept this narrative as trustworthy history. It was not penned till after the close of the first century, at the earliest fifty years ago after the occurrences of which it treats had happened, and the picture which it gives of Paul is directly antagonistic to that which we should gather from his own description of himself. We have italicised one portion in particular, and we ask, is it possible that Paul after his repeated repudiations of Judaism, whose sacred rites and ceremonies he had called "weak and beggarly elements," Gal. iv. 9, and whose law he had spoken of as a weighty bondage, the observance of which forfeited for those who gave it all interest in the Christian dispensation — is it possible that after a ministry the staple teaching of which had been to denounce Judaism in these unmeasured terms, Paul could have made such a declaration, or have stated that he had done nothing against the law of Moses? Again, so far from being delivered prisoner by the Jews into the hands of the Romans, the previous narrative shows that the Romans had done him the generous service of rescuing him from the violence of a Jewish mob that sought to kill him! The fact is we have no reliable history of this event, what we have may be an outline of actual fact, but the filling in and shading has been done to suit the fancy or settled purpose of the writer.

The "Brethren" of whom this passage speaks were doubtless a society of Philonic Jews, and the purport of Paul's address to these was to show that the "Logos" had been incarnated in the person of Jesus the Christ, and that all this had been foreseen and foretold in the Jewish scriptures.

Now, we get no glimpse of the actual belief and doctrinal character of the Christian Church at Rome till about the middle of the second century, and then we find these pourtrayed in the "Apologies of Justin Martyr," to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. From these "Apologies" we learn that the Church of Rome of this date identified Jesus with the Logos of the Greeks, as well as with the Christ of the Jews—was a Church of the Logos as well as a Church of Christ.

In his second Apology, Justin says that "Socrates knew Christ, in part, for Christ is that 'Logos' (reason) which is in all." Again, in his first "Apology," he several times identifies Christ with "the Logos" thus:—"Jesus Christ alone is properly the son of God as being the 'Logos' and first begotten and power of God, and by his counsel was made man" ("Apology" I. 31).

"The Jews, therefore, for maintaining that it was the Father of the universe who had conference with Moses, when it was the very son of God who had it, and who is styled both angel and apostle, are justly accused both by the prophetic spirit and Christ himself, for knowing neither the Father nor the Son; for they who affirm the Son to be the Father are justly accused of not knowing the Father, and likewise of being ignorant that the Father of the universe has a son, who being the Logos and first-begotten of God, is God" ("Apology" I. 83). Justin even goes so far in thus identifying the Logos of Philo (derived as that was from the Neo Platonic teaching) with the Christ of Paul, as to declare that Plato borrowed the conception from the Jews ("Apol." I. 76). Similar views of the identity of Jesus Christ with the "Logos" or the Divine Word or Wisdom find expression in nearly every writer of the second century—Diognetus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and notably the opening verses of the Gospel attributed to John.*

* For fuller information on this subject, consult Lamson's "Church of the Three First Centuries." Consult also Dean Mil-

The "Brethren at Rome," whose fame Paul says had gone throughout the world, were, there is every reason to suppose, at the time of Paul's writing, a society of Jews holding the religious philosophy of Philo of Alexandria. This, with the exception of the name and personality of Jesus, was as a system of ethics and as a spiritual philosophy almost identical with the Christianity that Paul was teaching, and the Church at Rome was a Church of the "Logos" rather than a Church of Christ. Paul, we may presume, for we know little of actual fact, aimed to carry this Church a step onward, and to substitute Jesus the Christ as the actual personality of the "Logos." But as the Acts says, some believed and some did not, so a hundred years later we find the leading spirit and apologist of this society, Justin Martyr, holding both views and justifying Christianity on the ground that Jesus was the Logos.

It is difficult to read the Epistles of Paul without reaching to the conviction that the purport of religion in his estimation was to reform the moral life of the

man's "History of Christianity," Book 2, chap. v., where the Gnostic theories that so largely infected the Christianity of the first and second centuries are treated at some length. In these theories we have the "Logos" idea which Plato had originally borrowed from the East in its primitive form, and Christ is represented as one and chief of the "Æons," or superior angels of the Great Supreme. Both these systems ultimately led up to the formularies of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds. In these the streams of Eastern and Western philosophic thought met and mingled. After a graphic delineation of these speculative fancies, the Dean says:—"Yet all these theorists preserved some decent show of respect for the Christian faith, and aimed at an amicable reconciliation between their own wild theories and the simpler gospel. It is not improbable that most of their leaders were actuated by the ambition of uniting the higher and more intellectual votaries of the older Paganism with the Christian community; the one by an accommodation with the Egyptian, the others with the Syrian or Chaldean, as in later times the Alexandrian school with the Grecian or Platonic Paganism, and expected to conciliate all who would not scruple to engraft the few tenets of Christianity which they reserved inviolate, upon their former belief. . . . The Jewish character of the Messiah gave way to a purely immaterial notion of a celestial Redeemer and the painful realities of his life and death were softened off into fantastic appearances."

world, was to promote truth and justice, soberness and temperance, piety and holiness in the hearts and lives of men. Exhortations to this new life—to this walking in the light of a divine spirit rather than in the lusts and passions of the flesh, occupy often the chief portions of the Epistles which he wrote, and, as being the most weighty counsels, they occupy the latter portions. The theology of Paul, however, varies with the play of his fancy as he addresses Jew or Greek or deals with men like the residents at Ephesus and Colosse, who are steeped in the fanciful speculations of Eastern philosophy. But the one common message that he speaks to all is the summons to holiness and purity of life.

Now, it was the mission of the "Logos," as Philo delineated it, to infuse a sense of Divine purity into the hearts of those whom it influenced. Philo says "the Logos" is sinless and immortal; this is what Paul claims for the Christ. Philo says that "when the soul strives after its best and noblest life, then the 'Logos' frees it from all corruption and confers upon it the gift of immortality." Moreover, Philo speaks of the "Logos" as being the "Saviour God."

"If, then, men have from their very souls a just contrition and are changed and have humbled themselves for their past errors, acknowledging and confessing their sins, such persons shall find pardon from the Saviour and merciful God, and receive a most choice and great advantage of being made like the Logos of God, who was originally the great archetype after which the soul of man was formed."—*De Exeerationibus*.

Let the reader remember that twenty years before Paul reached Rome, Philo had visited the city, and taught his co-religionists this doctrine of the "Logos," and he will see that Paul had little of value to add when he preached to them concerning Jesus and "the Christ."

We know that the Jewish Christian Church of which

Peter and James were the leaders, became extinct shortly after the downfall of Jerusalem, and but for these wide-spread teachings of the "Logos," Paul's "Christianity" would doubtless have shared a similar fate. The creeds of our modern churches, or rather the dogmas which these creeds embody, were formulated at Alexandria, the home of Philo, where his labours were given and his life spent, and where the influence of his philosophy lingered long after he himself had passed away.

Thus, although Paul's ministry was everywhere thwarted and disowned by those who were recognised as the authorities of the early church, yet the seed of his new gospel took root and flourished, because throughout the cities of the Roman Empire, whether in Italy, Greece, Syria, or Egypt, there were colonies of Jews who, by long and distant residence from Judea, were but feebly attached to Judaism, and largely under the influence of the Gentile philosophies;—these furnished a ready soil for the reception of Paul's gospel. The speculative "Logos" which these societies cherished readily gave way to the more definite conception of a personal "Christ," and so the religion of Jesus, or the religion rather that was founded upon his name and ministry, while it became extinct on purely Jewish territory, grew and flourished in Gentile countries, and furnished the foundation on which the Christian Church that has dominated the western world for so many centuries, reposed.

The true worth of Christianity has been the high morality it has breathed, but this high morality belonged also to the holders of the "Logos" faith. Even Paganism had philosophers, whose works, inculcating a morality identical with that taught in the New Testament, remain to this day. While Paul was a prisoner at Rome, Seneca was a member of the Emperor's household. The imperial city held both at the same time,

one the favoured instructor of royalty, the other a prisoner awaiting judgment.

Seneca who probably knew little if anything of Philo's writings concerning the "Logos," and absolutely nothing of Paul's teaching concerning "the Christ," could yet write in his well-known work on morals, "A good man is not only the friend of God, but the very image, the disciple and the imitator of him, and the true child of his heavenly Father."—"Epis." 26.

Again Seneca taught, "many have pardoned their enemies. Shall not I take them as an example, and forgive a neglect, a little freedom of the tongue? Nay, the patience of but a second thought does the business. But to sum up all in a word, the great lesson of mankind as well in this as in all other cases is to do as we would be done by."

To such teaching as this, neither Paul nor Jesus could find much to add. We cite it to shew that Paul was in his day by no means even in the remote cities of the Gentile world, the only preacher of the gospel of righteousness and love. This teaching by Philo and Gamaliel among the Jews, and by Seneca and the philosophers among the heathen, largely prepared the way for the teachings of Paul to develop into the formation of a Christian Church.

We have now, however, to note the special and peculiar doctrines of Paul's gospel. These are mainly to be found in the Epistle to the Romans. First then, we have the noble declaration that the Jews have no special privilege before God; that they have no favour as his chosen children; that God cares for the Gentile equally with the Jew, loves the good and punishes the bad. This is well brought out in the following passage:—"Who (God) will render to every man according to his deeds. To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indig-

nation and wrath. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For there is no respect of persons with God."

To estimate how this teaching must have sounded in the ears of the Jewish people whom Paul chiefly addressed, we have only to imagine how a teacher would fare to-day in Hindoostan who should teach that a Sudra stood on the same spiritual level with the Brahmin, and that the *twice-born* had by virtue of his high caste no superiority over the lowest Hindoo; or how a Catholic priest would fare at Rome who should venture to declare that the Pope's blessing had not an atom of intrinsic worth, and that the church's sacraments were powerless to cancel the smallest sin. We can now well understand why Paul after his conversion ventured so seldom to Jerusalem, and the secret and stealthy nature of such hasty visits as he did make. We can also understand how the apostles who continued Jews must have regarded as an enemy rather than as a coadjutor, one who thus poured contempt upon Judaism.

Paul continues his argument against Judaism through several chapters. Judaism was an exclusive faith, only those born of the seed of Abraham could rightly share its privileges. Paul had lived in too large a world to share this narrow view. The Christ spirit he felt was as broad as human nature, as wide as human needs. God was the Father of all, and the good man, not the born Jew, was his approved son.

The argument that opposed Paul was to the effect that all men were involved in Adam's sin, were by the inherent vileness of human nature exiled and alienate from God. But the Jew declared that God had made a covenant of mercy with his forefathers, and had chosen one race of men, and given to them a law obedience to which cleansed them from this primal guilt, and justified

them in his sight. Paul argues in return that this law is so strict that none could render it perfect obedience, Rom. iii. v. 10-19, therefore none are justified by it, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." This law of works which none can render with fidelity is therefore useless.

"Where is the boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? The law of works? Nay; but by the law of faith (*i.e.*, personal righteousness). Therefore we conclude that a man is justified (approves himself before God), by faith without the deeds (*i.e.*, the sacrificial ceremonies, circumcision, &c.), of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not the God also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through the faith." (Romans iii. 27-30.)

To Paul is due the credit of breaking down the barrier of Jewish exclusiveness, and placing religion on a universal basis. Of the greatness and value of this work we are hardly able to be fair judges to-day. But Paul is not rightly understood. Few think of him to-day in connection with this noble aspect of his ministry. The church that rightly understands Paul must teach not only that Catholic and Protestant, but that Turk, Jew, and Heathen are alike God's children, and by righteous and loving lives can approve themselves in his sight, and be owned and blessed by him; that the good Brahmin, the good Mahometan will share the same heaven with the good Christian! This is the gospel that those churches must preach who believe with Paul that God is no respecter of persons. But where throughout Christendom are such churches to be found to-day? Eighteen centuries have passed by and the Christian Church still lags far behind the grand universalism that Paul taught.

We shall perhaps be reminded here that in this and other epistles Paul talks about the "blood of Jesus" and its efficacy to save souls, declares that he will know

only "Christ and him crucified." He says too, "God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ *died for us*. Much more then being now justified by *his blood* shall we be saved from wrath through him." (Romans v. 8, 9.)

Of course it will be argued by the advocates of orthodox Christianity that here we have a plain enunciation of the doctrine of the atonement, and that the atonement confines salvation *exclusively* to believers in Christ, and thus makes Christianity an exclusive faith—the one only religion; consequently good Mahometans and good Hindoos have no share in this salvation, and are not justified, either by their religion or their goodness, before God.

Now suppose that this were so, and that Paul did actually teach as a cardinal doctrine of Christianity that "the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin," and that his crucifixion was an *atonement* for the sins of the world, and that belief in this atonement, which the blood of Christ constituted, was the one only way of salvation. We say, suppose that Paul, instead of using this language as a figure of fanciful rhetoric, intended it to be accepted in a crude literal sense, and to be expressive of an actual fact. Why, then our answer would be that Paul was not reproducing the teaching of Jesus, for Jesus taught nothing of the kind,* neither had this teaching the sanction of the Apostolic Church, whose teachers contented themselves with the declaration that Jesus was the Messiah, and who everywhere opposed and denounced the teaching of Paul as being destitute alike of authority and of truth. If, therefore,

* Although as a Jew Jesus took part in the great national feasts, and had some reverence for temple worship, yet as an Essene or one desirous of subjecting the national faith to a fundamental reform, he had outgrown the belief in sacrifices as being useful or acceptable religious rites. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews claims this much for Jesus, and quotes the previously attempted reforms of Prophets and Psalmists as his warrant. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, then said I, lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), *to do thy will, O God!*"

the doctrine of the atonement was Paul's gospel, it most certainly was not the gospel of Jesus or his Apostles. Of course all sensible men will repudiate any reverence for authority which is claimed for the teacher, apart from the intrinsic worth or excellence of the teaching. But surely to those who pride themselves on being orthodox Christians the authority of Jesus will be revered before that of Paul! Speaking individually, I regard Paul's as being by far the grander Gospel; both intellectually and spiritually he teaches from a higher level, and occupies a broader platform. But if it could really be shown that Paul taught this doctrine of the crucifixion of Jesus constituting an atonement for sin, my instant reply would be that he was labouring under a great and fatal error, and that he had mistaken the fancies of his own fertile brain for the eternal truths of God! But Paul taught nothing of the kind. We have seen the greatness of the work he took in hand, the isolation in which he stood, the deep-seated prejudices he had to encounter. One of the chief of these prejudices on the part of the Jewish people was that God was so pure and man so vile, that an impassable gulf intervened between the two, so that of and by himself man could not venture to approach God even in prayer, could not hold communion with the Supreme, was altogether alienated from him, was lost to the divine regard. Out of this vile mass of human depravity sunk in sin before God, it was asserted by the Jews that one favoured nation was chosen, to whom alone of all the peoples of the earth God would consent to be gracious. Abraham by an act of mighty faith came to be accounted righteous before God, and won the promise of blessing to all his seed. Hence the Jews became a chosen people, and by offering the ordained sacrifices of the law were able to cleanse themselves from the innate depravity that attached to them through Adam's sin, and so purified, they were permitted to worship before the Holy of

Holies in the temple, and to rank as the favoured children of God. By this process they were "justified." Observe justification means admission to the offices of public worship—cleansing from the stain of original sin—fitness to hold divine communion; it does not mean what is now meant by the "Salvation of the soul," viz., the assurance of a blessed immortality; it means only the preliminary cleansing of a sinful nature so as to fit it to serve and worship a pure and holy God. It is the rending of the veil, which like that in the temple, screened the Divine presence from the profane gaze.

The gospel of Jesus was at first preached only to Jews, or to those Gentiles who became Jewish proselytes, as alone concerning them. When, however, Paul found Gentiles willing to accept its fundamental teachings, and to reverence Jesus as the great prophet of the new faith, yet staggering at the idea of becoming Jews and submitting to circumcision, Paul, whose mission was chiefly to these outsiders, and whose hope of spreading Christianity lay almost entirely with them, found these requirements to be a serious stumbling-block. The uncircumcised heathen could not offer the necessary sacrifice, nor yet participate by proxy in the daily sacrifice offered by the priests in the Temple at Jerusalem. How then could the favour of God include them? Now, although Paul had come to feel that no sacrifice was needed, he had yet to speak to a people who, whether Jews or heathens, could not conceive of religious acceptance without it, the first and most deep-rooted article of whose religious faith was to the effect that "*without blood there could be no remission of sin.*"* Jesus had taught, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for

* We may form some idea of the extreme tenacity with which this belief was held, and of the impossibility of uprooting it by any assertion of its fallacy, by calling to mind the approving crowds that in this so-called enlightened age gather to listen to a Moody or a Spurgeon, when they teach this doctrine in its crudest and most disgusting form.

they shall see God." As, however, no gospels were written in Paul's day, and Paul knew nothing personally of Jesus, it is doubtful whether he had heard of this teaching. His knowledge of Philo's "Logos," from which he pours his ideal Christ, was, however, to the effect, "that when the soul of man strives after its best and noblest life, then the 'Logos' (acting on behalf of God) frees it from all corruption, and confers upon it the gift of immortality." *De C. Q. Erud. Gratiâ.* Believing the crucified Jesus to be this very "Logos," Paul feels that Jesus, by the influence of his teaching, can "justify" the souls of those who accept it. But Paul has this deep-seated prejudice about the efficacy of "sacrificial blood" to contend with. So preaching Jesus crucified, his ready imagination prompts him to humour a prejudice he cannot hope either to enlighten or destroy—to speak to all men in their own language, in harmony with their own ideas—to be as a Jew while speaking to Jews, and as a Greek while addressing Greeks, and so he boldly uses the familiar conception, and talks of the "blood of Jesus cleansing from all sin;" speaks of Jesus as one "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Here Paul palpably betrays that by *blood* he means *righteousness*, and he implies that the same righteousness which approved Jesus to God will be amply sufficient for every righteous, and trusting, and repentant soul.* The things at issue were the law of sacrificial ceremony instituted by Moses and the law of personal righteousness proclaimed by Jesus. This latter is Paul's gospel, and Paul here asserts that this is able to justify those

* In the Epistle to the Corinthians, where Paul so emphatically states that as the foundation of his teaching he will preach Christ and him crucified, the passage is perhaps more properly rendered "Christ, even him crucified," that is, he will preach Christ, not on account of his crucifixion, but in spite of the infamy and degradation which this had seemed to have cast upon his reputation.

who accept it. John the Baptist preached repentance for the remission of sin. Jesus carried on the teaching, and Paul, under the figurative phrases of the "blood of Jesus" and "faith," teaches justification and salvation, remission, that is, of sin, by that righteousness which is the direct fruit of all true repentance.

It will be needless, after this exposition of Paul's use of figurative language, to notice any other of the numerous passages in his writings which speak of the atoning efficacy of the death of Jesus.*

An acquaintance with the works of Philo suffices to show very clearly and very convincingly that in all the numerous passages which exalt the person, and work, and office of Jesus as "the Christ," to a rank scarcely subordinate to God (for which see the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, &c.), Paul, or the unknown writer of these epistles, if, as many suppose, they were not the product of his authorship, was merely attaching to Jesus, as "the Christ," the attributes and offices that Philo had used to delineate the "Logos."† The really

* Paul virtually says, that the sacrifices of Jews or of Gentiles are of no religious efficacy, and may altogether be dispensed with. If, however, those whom he addresses like the sacrificial idea they may, if they please, consider the death of Jesus as a sacrificial act. Not by any means that it was one, but that the conception may be useful, first to help their thought, and secondly as a means of *spiritualising* the sacrificial idea preparatory to its utter abolition. No sacrifice is really needed. Consider Jesus, he says, as having become a sacrifice through his death, if you cannot divest your mind of the necessity of the rite, or what is better, be yourselves as *living sacrifices* to God. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—(Rom. xii. 1.) And this was to be done by the transformation and renewal of their minds.

† The Epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians, were written from Rome, but grave doubts have been of late entertained as to whether they are genuine epistles of Paul, or whether they were not written at a much later date by a Pauline Christian using Paul's name. The Epistles to Timothy and the Hebrews are most decidedly the products of a later age, and, therefore, though attributed to Paul, are not the product of his pen. So it may have been with the epistles above mentioned. In these epistles the character of the argument is altogether changed, and they are

valuable portion of Paul's writings are the stirring calls which he gives to a newer and higher moral life. These constitute them teachings for all time, and veritable utterances of divine wisdom, yet to be read with understanding and discernment, and their spirit caught and applied to the society, and needs, and circumstances of to-day rather than to be interpreted in a strictly literal sense.

There is, however, in the 8th and 9th chapters of this letter to the Romans, a teaching which has given rise to the most painful perplexities of thought; which has made numbers of simple and devout minds miserable, and which has gone far to furnish madhouses with religious lunatics. It is the teaching which seems to assert the uncontrolled sovereignty of God, for the purpose of raising him above his own great laws of righteousness and love, through which alone we are able justly to conceive of him, and which teaching, asserting the doctrines of election and predestination, opposes the existence of man's freedom of will, and nullifies the merit or value of a good and righteous life.

The following are the passages in question. They constitute the foundation and authority for the Calvinistic* system of religion, which tinges so largely a portion of our Protestant churches, and which finds a place in the articles of the Church of England.

replete with speculative theories as to the relation of Christ to the "powers" and "æons" of the fanciful Gnostic systems of the Eastern philosophies. As, however, we attach no special authority to Paul, the question of actual authorship is immaterial. We read these epistles simply as the adaptation of Christ, as the personification of the Alexandrian Logos, to the "æons," and "powers," and "pleroma" of Gnostic theories.

* We quote here Burns' memorable description of Calvinism, as its doctrines were taught in the Church of Scotland.

"O thou who in the heavens dost dwell,
Who as it pleases best Thyself,
Sends aye to heaven and ten to hell
All for thy glory,
And not for any gude or ill
They've done afore ye!"

“For whom He did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

“Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” chap. viii. 29, and following verses.

Again in the following chapter, though a virtual part of the same argument:—

“As it is written, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated.

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

“For he saith to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’”

“So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who showeth mercy. . . . Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

“Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour?

“What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.

“Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”

Nothing can well exceed the apparent plainness of this language in enunciating doctrines that do violence to any right or sober thought of the righteousness, or justice, or widespread love of God. We have no hesitation in denouncing the doctrines of the Calvinistic theology as being at once brutal and barbarous. They break down the throne of divine justice, and set up the grim idol of divine caprice; they mock the divine love by the

declaration of a divine favouritism, and shock our sense of a God "who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works," by the grim conception of a Moloch who has created the larger portion of humanity to be vessels of everlasting wrath. But we do sad injustice to Paul to make him to be the sanction or authority of such dismal and blasphemous beliefs.

We ask, were Paul writing a statement of religious doctrine to the churches of this nineteenth century, would he, think you, write to them in the strain of the above quoted passages? Or what would be thought of this teaching, if to-day we heard it for the first time?

In the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters of the 2d Book of Esdras (Old Testament Apocrypha), the reader will find a clear and plain enunciation of the doctrine of election or divine favouritism, and of the uncontrolled sovereignty of God as freeing the Eternal from allegiance to his own moral laws.*

*The Apocryphal Books of the Bible are those Jewish scriptures which were written subsequent to the closing of the Old Testament canon, yet prior to the commencement of the Christian era. The second Book of Esdras was one of the later of these scriptures; dating in its original portions just previously to the Christian era, sundry portions of it date from a later period. As these books have now but a limited circulation, and have long ceased to appear as a portion of Protestant Bibles, it will be useful to reproduce a few passages illustrative of the views that were current in Jewish thought before Paul's day, and with which he was doubtless familiar.

Ch. iii. 21.—"For the first Adam (or man) bearing a wicked heart transgressed and was overcome, and so do all they that are born of him!" In ch. vi. we have the doctrine enunciated of Jewish election and Gentile exclusion. "O Lord, thou madest the world for our sakes. As for the other people which also come of Adam, thou hast said that they are nothing but be like unto spittle; and hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel. And now O Lord, behold these heathen which have ever been reputed as nothing have begun to be lords over us, and to devour us. But we, thy people, whom thou hast called thy first-born, thy only begotten, and thy fervent lovers, are given into their hands. If the world now be made for our sakes, why do we not possess an inheritance with the world? How long shall this endure?"

The supreme authority of God is shown in the 19th verse

This, if we may venture to use a term which originated many hundred years subsequently, was the "Calvinistic" teaching of an age just prior to that of Paul.

Another of the remarkable writings of the period just antecedent to the Christian era was the "Book of Enoch.* This was evidently one of the sources whence Paul derived his gospel of Justification by faith or righteousness. The doctrine of *righteousness* by the grace of God, is here exemplified in the life of Enoch, who is called "the scribe of righteousness," and after his translation, "one son of man who is born unto righteousness." "And he (Enoch) spoke with all his children about righteousness, and said . . . My beloved, love righteousness, and walk in the same, and do not approach righteousness with a double heart . . . I swear unto you, ye righteous, that in heaven the angels think of you for good before the glory of the Great One ; that your names are written

of the 7th chapter—"And he said unto me, There is no judge above God, and none that hath understanding above the Highest."

This sovereignty of God is urged mainly for the purpose of showing that notwithstanding this predestination of the Gentiles to divine wrath, God, if he pleases, can include them in his pardoning love, and will do this if they show themselves righteous.

"I answered then and said, I know Lord that the Most High is called merciful in that he hath mercy upon them that are not yet come into the world, and upon them also that turn to his law, and that he is patient and long-suffereth those that have sinned, . . . and that he is of great mercy, and that he multiplieth more and more mercies to them that are present, and that are past, and also to them which are to come. For if he shall not multiply his mercies, the world would not continue with them that inherit therein. And he pardoneth ; for if he did not so of his goodness, that they which have committed iniquities might be eased of them, the ten-thousandth part of men should not remain living, and being judge if he should not forgive them that are cured with his word, there should be very few left, peradventure in an innumerable multitude."—Ch. viii. 62-70.

* A copy of this Book, which had long been lost, was discovered in Abyssinia by the traveller Bruce, and being brought by him to this country, was translated by Archbishop Laurence.

down before the glory of the Great One. Hope, for before ye had shame and misfortune and misery, and now ye shall shine as the lights of heaven, and ye shall be seen, and the gate of heaven shall be opened unto you."—ENOCH civ. 1, 2.

Mr Ernest De Bunsen, from whose interesting work on "The Hidden Wisdom of Christ," the above extract is taken, adds the following comment:—

"*Atonement by Righteousness.*—It is because of the *prayer* and not of the *blood* of the righteous that 'the plant of righteousness and of right shall appear.' Whilst nothing is said in favour of bloody sacrifices, and whilst the sinners are blamed for eating blood, the latter are reminded that an account of their sins is kept in heaven, and that since they do not know any 'ransom,' they will depart and die. It is evident, therefore, that according to Palestinian, as according to Alexandrian Apocryphal tradition, 'to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation,' the 'ransom' needed for sins committed; but that no sacrifice *atones* in the sight of God. Although the blood of the righteous has been shed, it does not *atone*, but *is atoned for* (*i.e.*, *recompensed*) by the Lord of Hosts in the day of judgment.* The writer of the Book of Enoch knows of no other atonement for sin than that by righteousness."

Now, in preaching this doctrine of "justification by righteousness," mistakenly understood, and taught by Protestant Churches in the very opposite sense of being salvation by "blood" and by "belief," Paul was met on the part of the Jews by a powerful and apparently a crushing rejoinder, "On what authority" they would doubtless ask, "do you teach this wide-spread love of God extending to all good men whether they be Gentiles or Jews? We have a law given by God himself to our fathers, teaching the very reverse of this, declaring the efficacy of sacrificial blood to atone for sin, and limiting the divine love and care to us alone, who are

* Enoch, chap. xlvi.

Abraham's children. This law God himself declared should be eternal, 'lasting as the sun and enduring as the days of heaven.' It is blasphemy to say that this covenant is ended, that this law has ceased, that God has broken his sacred promise, that the Unchangeable has changed his purpose!" This was no light difficulty in the way of Paul's ministry. It appealed to the deepest and most heartfelt convictions of every Jew, and it taxed alike the learning and the controversial skill of even such a master-mind as Paul's to give it an effectual answer. But Paul was equal to the occasion. He virtually replies there is no change whatever in the divine purpose. This new covenant was fore-ordained and predestined of God. God foresaw all these myriad peoples of the Gentile world, and in his large mercy designed a plan to save them, a larger covenant which should include them also. God is uncontrolled. He is Sovereign Lord of all, he does what he wills, and what he wills is right. He will have mercy on whom he pleases, and no covenant he has made with you can hinder him. As well might the clay cry out against the potter, as man arraign the doings of God. And this shewing forth of his mercy is no change of his will. When God made this covenant with your fathers, he foresaw and fore-ordained that in the fulness of time Christ should come, and that then the Gentiles should have his mercy extended to them. And this was God's everlasting purpose. He had predestined these Gentiles to this eventual admission to his favour. What seems to you like a broken pledge is to him a faithful, and purposed and beneficent act. Moreover, as Jews there is little for you to complain of in this abolition of your law, seeing that by this law you could never be justified because you could never fully obey it. Hitherto you have been justified not of right, but by God's favour. And this favour was a free gift, and now it is extended to all people. Do you ask "Hath God then cast away his people? God forbid!" In Christ the Jews are not

repudiated, but Jew and Gentile are made one, and the wall of partition is broken down. God's mercy is large enough to embrace alike the disobedient Jew (and all are included in this disobedience) and the alienated Gentile. God, says Paul, had included them all in unbelief, *i.e.* in unfaithfulness, that he might have mercy upon all, "For all have sinned and come short of his glory."—Rom. iii. 23; see also chaps. viii. to x. And as a climax to this declaration of the universal love, Paul bursts out in enthusiastic admiration, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."—Rom. xi. 33.

It may seem a paradox, but it is nevertheless a great fact, that Paul taught this doctrine of "predestination and election," for the sole purpose of effecting its destruction. The Jews already held it and based their exclusive right to the divine favour upon it. They themselves were, they asserted, the elect and predestined favourites of heaven, and all the heathen peoples were vessels of divine wrath. Paul replies that this is perhaps true as regards the past, only God has predestined and elected the Gentile peoples to be his eventual favourites also. In the eternal purposes of his wisdom he has chosen to have mercy upon all men, and the fullness of time has come for this purpose to take effect. And what right have you, he asks, to dispute this? How dare you to say that God is prevented from shewing this mercy by some covenant he has made with you? God is supreme and uncontrolled, "whom he will he pardons, and whom he will he hardeneth." The purpose of Calvinism in framing these doctrines, which Paul thus emphasizes, into a religious system was for the purpose of *limiting* the pardoning mercies of God; was to shew how *few* would be saved, and how *many* would be lost, and the form of words which Paul used was made to be the foundation on which this system rested, yet the whole tenor of Paul's argument was to *enlarge*

the boundaries of the divine love, and to teach that God would have *all men* to be saved. When the Jew says that God had *predestined* his nation to be his elect ones, Paul answers, that God had also *predestined* that his favour should eventually reach and include the Gentiles. We see thus that, when his language is rightly and reasonably understood, Paul neither taught "justification by doctrinal belief," nor "salvation by sacrificial blood," nor yet the capricious choice by God of an elect few to share his mercy and the equally capricious condemnation of the multitude to reprobation and endless torment.

To sum up, we recall the reader's attention to the fact that Paul taught a religion of his own, and that he did not reproduce, except in its moral aspects, the religion which Jesus had taught; that the followers and apostles of Jesus were the bitter opponents and persecutors of Paul; * that Paul's estimate of "Christ" was the idea of a man filled with a divine spirit of goodness; that "justification by faith" meant with him justification by righteousness; that redemption by the "blood of Jesus" meant only redemption by the teaching and spirit of Jesus, in other words, by goodness and

* It is doubtless to Paul that the writer of the Book of Revelation alludes in his message to the church at Ephesus, which Paul founded, and where he resided for two years, but from which he was driven by persecution instigated by the Judaizing members of the church, viz., "I know thy works, and thy labours, and thy patience, and know thou canst not bear them that are evil, and thou hast tried them which say *they are apostles and are not*, and hast found them liars," ch. ii. 2. Again, in the Acts we read, ch. xvi. 14—"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, which *worshipped* God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us." There is good ground for supposing that it is to this female friend of Paul that the writer of the Book of Revelation makes the following coarse allusion, see chap. ii. 18-20: "And unto the angel of the Church in Thyatira write * * * I know thy works and charity and patience * * * Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman 'Jezebel' (a name of infamy from the Old Testament applied by way of re-

righteousness of life. We have shown also that Paul preached no exclusive religion, but proclaimed a universal faith, and so far from teaching any doctrine of atonement he emphatically declares that "God is not mocked, but that as a man sows so shall he also reap." Paul however was no legitimate apostle, yet his teaching is the basis of modern Christianity, and the teaching and church of the actual apostles are alike extinct. Paul is therefore the only so-called apostle from whom any pretence of "*apostolic succession*" can be traced, and a gulf of discordant and divergent doctrine separates him from the society that Jesus formed. In a higher and truer sense, however, Paul was by far the best and bravest and most eminent apostle that Christianity can boast. As he himself declares, "in labours he excelled them all," and in learning, and devotion, and enthusiasm, and zeal he was equally pre-eminent. He is the true founder of the Christian religion, and though he repudiated the Jewish limitation of Jesus' ministry, he was perhaps by far the truest exponent of his teachings, the one most worthy to carry on his work. Blemishes there doubtless were in his character—he was impetuous, overbearing, and hasty—but his many excellences amply suffice to cover these minor and incidental defects. In the religious history alike of the world or of Christendom he occupies no secondary place, and there are few, if any, names that could justly be placed before his. We claim Paul as the first great teacher of Universal Religion, of God's boundless love extending to

proach, see 2 Kings, v. 30), which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornications (a strong figure of speech for religious error), and to eat things sacrificed to idols. (Paul's doctrine, see Corinth. x. 25, *et sequent.*) * * * I will give unto every one of you according to your works * * * But unto you I say and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden." Again, the following passage from the Epistle of James is thought to have direct reference to Paul, "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that *faith* without works is dead." Eph. ii. 20.

all his creatures ; we claim him as the great prophet of Absolute Religion, of religion divested of the trammels of church usages and church rites ; we assert for him the proud privilege of being the first actual founder of Rational Religion, and we claim for him that in so doing, he most truly interpreted the mind of Jesus ; lastly, we claim for Paul that he was the virtual creator and expounder of the "Christ idea," that to him alone this idea owes its continued existence in the Christian Church ; and though for centuries this brave and giant-hearted man has been understood in a false light, and credited with opinions that he as a Christian apostle never held, and with beliefs he would have altogether repudiated, yet the day is dawning when his character will be read in a truer light, his teaching more clearly understood, and himself more highly and more truthfully revered.