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# The Teachings of the Books

Or The Literary Structure and  
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Books of the New Testament

A Work of Collaboration by Herbert  
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## PREFATORY NOTE

This Handbook has been prepared especially for advanced Bible-class work, but it is hoped that it may also be found useful to the pastor and to the general Bible student. It is designed to furnish something more than an introduction to the study of the books of the New Testament. Whatever justification it has to offer for its existence is found in the effort which it makes to examine the several books of the New Testament themselves, so as to get hold of the essential truths which they contain. Special attention is given to the study of the New Testament as literature, but the proper classification and arrangement of literary material is valued only as an aid to the interpretation of spiritual facts. The results of the older and of the newer learning are alike gladly accepted when they can assist in seeing things from the author's standpoint, in giving to his words their appropriate historical setting, and in getting through them to the mind of the Spirit. In a word, the aim of the book is to get through the letter of Scripture to the spirit, through the shell to the kernel, through the bone to the marrow.

In this work of collaboration the sections upon the literary structure and historical background of the separate books are the work of Herbert L. Willett; those upon the spiritual teaching of the books are the work of James M. Campbell.



# THE TEACHINGS OF THE BOOKS

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## THE FOUR GOSPELS

Why *four* gospels? A symbolical meaning has been attached to the number four. It has been taken to refer to the four rivers which went out from the Garden of Eden, and also to the four cherubim of Ezekiel. Another explanation is that it contains a suggestion of God's intention to extend the gospel to the four quarters of the globe. Irenæus compares the four gospels to four pillars on which the Church rests as it covers the earth. Calvin compares them to a chariot drawn by four horses, in which the King of Glory rides forth to receive the triumphal acclamation of all people. It is vain to search for a secret meaning in anything so simple. The four gospels—which are fragmentary memorabilia, and not exhaustive biographies—present a four-fold picture of Him who is the sum and substance of God's revelation to men. Each portrait gives a partial representation, and by changing the angle of vision it presents our Lord in a new aspect. In the separate memoirs there is neither discord nor discrepancy. They exhibit a unity which shows the presence of "a presiding mind who planned the whole."

Strictly speaking there is but one gospel, which is

presented in a four-fold form. It is called "the gospel of God" (Rom. xv. 16), because God is its author; "the gospel of Christ" (I. Thess. i. 8), because Christ is its subject matter; "the gospel of Salvation" (Eph. i. 13), because salvation is its object. The four forms of the one gospel blend as the hues of the rainbow. Taken together they give a complete conception of Christ's unique personality and mission. From their pages looks out a face that the imagination of mortal could not have created. And when that face is seen, the books in which it is sketched are joyfully accepted as a divine revelation. "Men think they believe in Christ," says Dr. R. W. Dale, "because they believe in the Bible; they really believe in the Bible because they believe in Christ." "I hold the gospels genuine through and through," says Goethe, "for there is apparent in them the reflected glory of the majesty which went out from the person of Christ, and which is divine in its nature, as the divine only once was manifested here upon earth."

It is difficult to sum up in a sentence the leading characteristics of the evangelists. In ancient symbolism Matthew has been compared to an *ox*, because he suggests the priestly relations of Christ; Mark to a *lion*, because of the strength and energy of his gospel; Luke to a *man* because he brings to view Christ's human and kingly qualities; John to an *eagle*, because he soars into the heavens and looks with steady eye upon the dazzling brightness of the divine glory. In the cases of Matthew and Luke this order has been sometimes reversed, and Matthew has been compared to a man, and Luke to an ox. The gospel of Matthew is the didactic gospel; that of Mark is the dynamic

gospel; that of Luke, the humanitarian gospel; that of John the spiritual gospel. Or it might be put thus: Matthew records the sayings of Jesus; Mark, His mighty acts; Luke reveals His human heart; John, the secrets of His divine nature. But all of these classifications are necessarily imperfect. Each evangelist was to some extent an independent witness; yet the four separate gospels unite together in forming one stream of historic testimony in behalf of the manifestation of God in human life, which has made glad the waste places of the earth, and has made the wilderness to blossom as the rose.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

### THE WRITER

The man with whose name the first gospel is connected was a collector of customs from merchants crossing the Sea of Galilee. The name given to him by Mark and Luke is Levi. He calls himself by his Christian name "Matthew," but with a touch of humility adds, "the publican," in reference to the unsavory profession which he had abandoned. He was the son of Alphæus (Mark ii. 14); probably not the Alphæus mentioned as the father of James, and a member of the apostolic band (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18). His duties as a publican would bring him into disrepute with his countrymen, who hated all agents of the foreign despotism under which they groaned. The social ostracism from which men of this class usually suffered may have produced, or may have fostered, that rapacity and avarice for which publicans were noted. It was an audacious act to choose a follower from this class. But Jesus, who had probably often marked the man Levi at his post, called him one day to follow Him, and he obeyed. The beginning of the new career was celebrated by the assumption or bestowal of the new name, "Matthew," which signifies "the gift of God," and by a feast which he gave in honor of his new master, and to which many of his former associates were invited (Luke v. 29). Matthew, who is

a modest man, and keeps himself well in the background, veils the fact that the feast of which he makes mention was his farewell to the world, that interesting bit of information being supplied by Mark and Luke. If, like most publicans, he was a wealthy man, the hint that "he forsook all" to follow Jesus is significant. This event, together with the appearance of his name in each of the four lists of apostles, is all that we know of him. From his being named in connection with Thomas "the twin," some have thought that they were brothers. But in the great silence that fell over his life all must be left to conjecture. Had it not been for the connection of his name with the first gospel, he would have passed quite from the notice of the Church. But even this fact is significant as bearing witness to the validity of that connection, for no writer of a spurious record would have thought of naming it after so obscure a member of the apostolic group. Tradition, however, was busy with his name, and it asserted that after remaining in Jerusalem for some fifteen years following the Ascension, he departed for the East, to fulfill the wider ministries of his apostolic office.

#### SOURCES

It is the testimony of the early fathers that Matthew wrote a gospel in Hebrew (or Aramaic).\* It becomes a question, therefore, as to the relation of that gospel to our Greek gospel of Matthew. That the latter is not a direct translation seems clear. It bears evidence of passing through the rounding and smoothing

\*Papias says "Matthew accordingly composed the oracles (logia or 'sayings') in the Hebrew dialect, and each one interpreted them as he was able."  
—*Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* iii. 40.

process of oral use before being committed to writing. Moreover, if, as many suppose, the Aramaic gospel of Matthew is to be identified with the so-called "Gospel according to the Hebrews," of which only a few fragments remain, the obvious differences between these fragments and our gospel further complicate the problem. It is believed that suggestions approaching a solution may be set down as follows: (1) A collection of narratives dealing with the life of Jesus, and put into form by Peter from his own personal knowledge of the facts, circulated as an oral tradition in the earliest circle of believers, and was at a latter time written by Mark in practically the form in which we now possess the second gospel. (2) The apostle Matthew, in the period before he left Jerusalem, taught and wrote down in Aramaic a collection, chiefly sayings or discourses of Jesus, which was soon translated into Greek, either by himself or some of his pupils, and formed, together with the Petrine narrative, the foundation of our first gospel. While it is impossible to decide whether the relation of the apostle Matthew to the gospel is primary or secondary, it is quite clear that the sources are apostolic, as coming from himself and Peter, and are therefore of the highest value.

#### CHARACTERISTICS

The gospel of Matthew is marked by certain characteristics which give it a distinct and impressive individuality. Among the more striking of these may be named:

1. The tendency to group the materials about certain centers or leading ideas. This appears espe-



cially in the massing together of the utterances of our Lord, which in the other gospels are distributed over wide portions of His ministry. An example of this may be observed in the treatment of the Sermon on the Mount (v.-vii.), which Luke scatters through several periods of Jesus' work, and which may be regarded as embodying the most striking utterances of His whole ministry. The collection of Christ's teachings found in Matthew is called "The Sermon on the Mount," and yet the Scriptures nowhere speak of a formal discourse of Jesus by such a name. Indeed, the parallel account given in Luke vi. expressly states that after spending all night in prayer on the mountain, and choosing the Twelve from the larger circle of His disciples, He came down into the plain, and there discoursed to a great multitude, after working certain miracles of healing. We have, therefore, clear indications that at some time in the earlier ministry of Jesus a somewhat formal statement of His purpose was made by Him. Matt. v.-vii. and Luke vi. probably give us the substance of what Jesus was constantly preaching. According to Matthew's fashion of grouping together materials of the same character, we have here gathered a variety of those brief and pithy utterances which formed such an important feature of Jesus' discourses. He was constantly preaching or talking to those whom He met, and His conversation, passing often into discourse as His audience increased, deals continually with such ideas as these chapters contain. One may almost venture to believe that the so-called Sermon on the Mount was the one great sermon of Jesus' life, which He was frequently preaching with variation of material and illus-

tration, but with continued insistence upon its great themes.

The same grouping of material is seen in the instructions to the disciples (x.), which by comparison with Luke will be seen to combine the parting words to both the Twelve and the Seventy (Luke ix. 1, 2; x. 1); the massing of seven parables in one continuous narrative at the first introduction of parabolic teaching (xiii.), and of other groups of parables at later periods (xxi. 28-xxii. 14; xxv.); and the discourse on the Last Things (xxiv.), in which, however, Mark is for the most part closely followed. It is evident that this gospel does not present the events or discourses in their chronological order, but groups the material from different periods about common ideas.

2. On comparing this gospel with Mark it is to be noted that there are both abbreviations and additions. Mark is vivid and detailed in describing events, and his work has in a striking degree the quality which belongs to an eye-witness. In this is seen the Petrine influence. In narratives of events the gospel of Matthew leaves out many of these details, as being less concerned with the accessories of the picture, and as hastening on to the teachings involved. But the first gospel adds to the Petrine material in many instances, for the most part in the region of teaching, and not a few of these additions bear evidence of being the product of the process of oral growth, after the original teaching began to circulate. Some of these additions essentially modify the older statements, and some even interrupt the thought. Examples of this may be seen in such appended phrases as "thy coming and the end of the age" (xxiv. 3),

“neither on the Sabbath” (xxiv. 20), the modification of the statement of Jesus regarding divorce by the additional words “for every cause” (xix. 3), and “except for fornication” (xix. 9), and in such passages as xii. 40, xix. 28, xxvii. 51-53, xxiv. 10-13, 26-28.

3. This gospel is didactic. It has a very decided theological bent.\* Where it supplies information concerning our Lord which is not found in the other gospels, it will be noticed that in most cases such additional material is intended to enforce teachings, not to narrate incidents. Even where the record of events is more elaborate than that of Mark, it will be seen that the events themselves have a direct didactic value, as in the cases of the Temptation, the Plucking of the Grain, or Peter’s Confession. It is especially the gospel of discourses. Such collections of sayings as the Teaching on the Hill, the Instructions to the Twelve, the various groups of parables, and the Discourse on Final Things, are among the most characteristic features of this great book.

4. It is the Jewish gospel. It emphasizes the connection between the past national experiences and the life of Jesus. The first and third gospels contain most of the Petrine narrative, which is given in its simplest form by Mark. In addition to this they record much of that material known as the “utterances of Jesus,” which has been recognized as the second of our original sources. The point in which the gospel of Matthew differs most strikingly from Mark and Luke is in the large national element which it contributes. All the gospels quote the Old Testa-

\* It is worth noting that Matthew is the only one of the synoptists who gives a theological definition of the work of Christ. See xx. 27, 28, which contains the seed of the Pauline theology.

ment to a certain degree, and see in the life of Jesus striking fulfillments of its statements; but the first gospel exhibits this feature to a degree unapproached by the others. The disciples, through Peter, gave expression to their perception of the fact that Jesus was the expected Jewish Messiah (Matt. xvi. 16). This was the keynote of the early preaching among the Jews. No other phase of the gospel was so significant to them as this. Among the Jewish Christians the Old Testament was therefore searched with fresh interest to discover predictions of the Messiah; and wherever such were found they were eagerly seized upon as proofs that Jesus was indeed the Coming One. The gospel of Matthew is the best evidence of this process. Its references to the Old Testament are very numerous. They show not so much that the gospel was addressed to the Jewish people as that it had its origin in a circle of Jewish thought where the final proof of a statement was a quotation from the Old Testament, whose primary or remote applicability to the matter in hand could be shown. No doubt a treatment of the life of Jesus linked so closely with utterances of the Jewish Scriptures was also most effective in dealing with non-Christian Jews, but probably the reason for this feature of the gospel lies in the interest attaching to the discovery of Christ in the Old Testament, rather than in the directly apologetic purpose of the writer. Examples of the more direct Messianic statements quoted may be found in the assertion of Micah (v. 2) that the Messianic deliverer should come forth from Bethlehem (Matt. ii. 6); in the portrait of the Suffering Servant of God, taking upon him our infirmities (Isa. liii. 4, cf.; Matt.

viii. 17); in the description of his quiet yet effective redemptive methods (Isa. xlii. 1-4, cf. ; Matt. xii. 17); in the words of Jesus, "The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of Him" (Matt. xxvi. 24), where the reference is not specific but general, and refers to statements like those of Isaiah liii. concerning the tragic outcome of the Servant's career; and in the language quoted by Jesus from Zech. xiii. 7.

There are also many passages in the Old Testament which refer to events in the time of the writer, or in the past, narrating some episode in national or individual experience, or voicing a prophecy or a hope for the immediate future, in which the early disciples saw statements which seemed to fit admirably into certain events in the life of our Saviour; and moved by the tendency of the religious teachers of the age to discover remote and hidden meanings in the Scripture, or impressed by the profounder truth that the unfulfilled life-work of the nation, Israel, as the Servant of God was taken up and brought to a glorious accomplishment by the greater Servant of God, the Messiah, they did not hesitate to affirm that such Scriptures were "fulfilled" in Jesus; not so much, however, as predictions come to pass, as events in history which find their larger meaning and more significant expression in later events. In this way episodes in the life of the nation were seen to have significant parallels, and to come to their fuller meaning—*i. e.*, to be "fulfilled" in events in the life of Christ. Examples of this may be seen in the departure of Israel from Egypt (Hos. xi. 1, cf. ; Matt. ii. 15); the mourning of Hebrew mothers when their children were carried away to Babylon (Jer. xxxi. 15-17, cf. ;

Matt. ii. 17); and the prediction of Isaiah that Tiglath Pileser would soon retire from the north country (Isa. ix. 1 f; cf. Matt. iv. 14). There is even observable in some cases a disposition to alter slightly the words and sense of the Old Testament statement, in order to make it agree more closely with some particular event in the life of Jesus, as may be seen in the change in Matt. iii. 3, as compared with Isa. xl. 3, where the prophet had spoken of a voice which proclaimed the preparation of a highway in the wilderness on which the exiled Israelites could return home, whereas in the later use the language is made to refer to the voice in the wilderness—i. e., John the Baptist. In Matt. xxi. 4, two animals are named, whereas in the earlier account (Mark xi. 1 f) only one is mentioned—the change seemingly resulting from a desire to make the narrative accord with Zech. ix. 9; for, as the parallelism shows, only one animal is there referred to. A similar instance is given in Matt. xxvii. 9. The statement in Acts i. 18, that Judas purchased with the price of the betrayal a field, which from his mysterious and dreadful death there was known as the Field of Blood, is said to have been a fulfillment of Zech. xi. 12, 13. However, what is there stated is that a shepherd of God's people, upon receiving only an insignificant reward for his service, publicly rejected it, throwing it on the temple floor at the feet of the potter. The story of Matthew that Judas, stricken with remorse, threw the silver on the floor of the temple, and went out to commit suicide, the priests purchasing with the blood money the potter's field—which from that fact was called the Field of Blood—has but slight relevancy to the incident re-

corded by Zechariah. Such changes are hardly to be reckoned as deliberate modifications of facts. They grow naturally out of the process of oral repetition before the material has received a written form; and they occur naturally under the influence of the Old Testament records with which the events connect themselves. The early Christians "searched the Scriptures," and they found Christ everywhere. The profound significance of this fact is apparent to the student of the New Testament. The gospel of Matthew records frequent references to the Hebrew Scriptures in the teaching of Jesus, as shown in such passages as ix. 13; xxi. 13, 16, 42; xxii. 31, 37.

Yet this gospel cannot be called Jewish in any narrow or partisan sense, for it names such foreigners as Ruth and Rahab among the ancestors of our Lord; it records the visit of the Magi to honor Him at His birth (ii. 1-12); it tells of His visit to the regions beyond Palestine, and the healing of the heathen girl (xv. 21), and declares that the evangel of salvation is to be carried to all nations (xxiv. 14, xxviii. 19). Moreover, its translation of such Aramaic words as Immanuel (i. 23), Golgotha (xxvii. 33), and the prayer on the cross (xxvii. 46) shows that it was designed to circulate in non-Jewish communities, where such interpretations were necessary.

5. In this gospel there is a certain element of sternness and severity which does not appear elsewhere in the reported teachings of Jesus. It alone records the parables of judgment—namely, that of the tares, the drag-net, the ten virgins, and the rejection of the goats. It is this gospel which gives the eightfold denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees (xxiii. 13-36), and reports

the only occasion on which Jesus applied to them the terrible words of John, "serpents, offspring of vipers" (xii. 34, xxiii. 33). It also recalls the frightful responsibility for the death of Jesus incurred by the leaders of the nation when they sought to ease the troubled conscience of Pilate with the ominous words, "His blood be on us and on our children" (xxvii. 25).

#### THE SITUATION

The date at which the gospel of Matthew was put into its written form was probably not far from the year 70 A.D. Many of its expressions leave the impression that the fall of Jerusalem may have occurred. But it must be remembered that the material may have taken form some time earlier, before the fall of the city. It will be safe to place the writing in the early part of the seventh decade of the first century.

Growing out of the situation, we have what painters call the atmosphere of the picture. We can see what formative forces were at work in the writer's mind. These were (1) the Messianic hope; (2) the national spirit, which at that time beat strongly in the Jewish breast; (3) the political and religious unrest of the times; (4) The general expectancy that something of stupendous eventfulness was about to happen.

#### DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK

These are five in number. (1) Preparations, including all that lies between the birth of Jesus and His baptism (i.-iv.). (2) His Galilean ministry, which was one of marked success. During this period the Twelve were chosen; miracles were wrought; the Ser-



mon on the Mount delivered (iv.-vii.). (3) The time of opposition (xii.-xvi.). As the opposition deepened the introduction of the parable into His teaching took place, it being adapted to reveal the truth to His disciples, and to conceal it from his opposers. (4) The shadow of the cross (xvi.-xxi.). (5) The final week (xxi.-xxviii.), with the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, the tragedy of Calvary, the resurrection, the final interview with the disciples, and the great commission.

#### ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIALS

The writer of this gospel selects and arranges his materials according to his own subjective conception of Jesus and His work. The order which he observes, while neither strictly logical nor chronological, gives, with an artlessness which is akin to the highest art, a record of the life of Jesus which is characterized by symmetry and unity. Besides central ideas around which events are grouped, there is the grouping of things in twos and sevens. But from the fact that we find seven parables thrown together in one group, we are not to infer that they were spoken at one time. In Matthew's gospel there is no straining after effect. He is natural, unaffected, simple, sublime in his simplicity. If not much of an actor, he was a keen observer. He mused until the fire burned. He does not, like John, weave his own opinions into his narrative. He aims to put things down just as they happened. The personal element is obliterated. The eloquence of the book is the eloquence which belongs not to the writer, but to his theme. He was not a great man, but he had a great subject, and he allowed

himself to be carried along by it. If the gospel of Mark is like a rushing mountain torrent, the gospel of Matthew is like a majestic river, which increases in volume as it sweeps onward. It is not a piece of literary patch-work. Its materials are woven together into one harmonious whole. It has unity, continuity, increase, climax.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

1. *This gospel shows the unity and progressiveness of the revelation which God has given to man in His Word.* It forms the connecting link between the Old Dispensation and the New. Although not the oldest gospel, by a sure instinct—or rather, let us say, by a guiding Providence—it has been placed first in the New Testament canon.\* It is preëminently the gospel of prophetic fulfillment. One of its oft-repeated phrases is, “that it might be fulfilled.” It has upwards of sixty citations from the Old Testament, all of which contain references to things which, whatever may have been their original application, are believed to find their complete fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Christianity is represented as having its roots in the Old Testament. It is the ripened fruit of Judaism; it is Judaism enlarged and spiritualized; it is Messianic hope brought to fruition. In the words of Jesus, “I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (v. 17), we have “a doctrinal epitome of this gospel.” (Farrar.)

2. *This gospel proves that Jesus is the Messiah promised*

\*The word “canon” means primarily a measuring rod, or rule. Its secondary meaning is “that by which things are measured or tested.” In this sense it is applied to the accepted collection of the books of the Bible, which supply the test of truth.

*in the Jewish Scriptures.* It may be putting the matter too strongly to say that this is its fixed and definite aim. Looking into the Jewish Scriptures, Matthew saw what he was prepared to see, and he reported what he saw. His standpoint is Jewish; the flavor of his gospel is Jewish. His gospel is specially adapted to the spiritual needs of his countrymen. Its opening words, "the genealogical roll of Jesus the Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham," connect the subject of the book with the fulfilment of Messianic hopes. Jesus is spoken of six times as "the Son of David"; Jerusalem is "the Holy City," "the City of the Great King"; the God whom Jesus reveals is "Israel's God"; the messengers of Jesus are sent "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The entire setting of the book is Jewish. Its culminating point is the identification of the advent of Jesus of Nazareth with the advent of the Jews' Messiah.\*

3. *In Matthew's gospel the central idea is the kingdom of God,* and the central aim is the exhibition of Jesus Christ as the one by whom the kingdom of God was to be brought in. In Jesus of Nazareth the golden dream of Israel's seers touching that kingdom which is "the true human ideal" was to be realized. Matthew is the only one of the synoptists† who uses the expression "the kingdom of heaven," or more literally, "the kingdom of the heavens"; and with him that expres-

\*The doctrine of the coming of a personal Messiah, says Dr. Felix Adler, the celebrated Hebrew scholar, "is the purple thread which runs through the writings of our prophets and historians." And one of the thirteen articles which every Israelite is enjoined to rehearse daily is, "I believe with a perfect heart that the Messiah will come: and although his coming be delayed, nevertheless will I daily expect him."

†The first three evangelists are called "synoptists," because their gospels can be "seen together," and the common elements which they contain can be systematized and arranged in tabular form. The fourth gospel stands by itself.

sion is an equivalent for "the kingdom of God."\* Inwardly considered the kingdom of heaven is the reign of God in the heart; outwardly considered it is the realm over which He rules as King.

The rule of God on earth is not only a *royal* rule, it is a *heavenly* rule. It is heaven's order brought down into this disordered world; it is the world-end of God's eternal purpose of redemption. Matthew's gospel is the good news of the coming of "a kingdom which is the realization of righteousness in the life of humanity." (Mulford.)

4. *In Matthew's gospel Jesus Christ is set forth as the appointed head of the Messianic kingdom.* The glad evangel proclaimed to the people of Israel was the advent of their king, in whom all their hopes were bound up. (1) Jesus is shown to be of royal descent. He is "the Son of David," "the hero king of Israel," and heir of the promised kingdom (i. 1). (2) His coming is heralded as the coming of a king (ii. 1-12). (3) He is the expected king for whom all the world was anxiously waiting. The Magi, as representatives of the Gentile world, come to Jerusalem, inquiring, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews?" (ii. 2). (4) He is publicly inaugurated by baptism into his Messianic mission (iii. 13-17). (5) He gathers the twelve around Him, constituting them His ambassadors (iv. 17-22). † (6) He preaches "the gospel of the kingdom,"

\*Jesus did not coin the phrases, "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of heaven." He found them in current use, and by adopting them gained the attention of the people. He however put into these familiar words a new content, exalting them above the idealism of the prophets, from which the people of Israel had miserably fallen.

†The method of Jesus was to select and train choice men to be His representatives. His public ministry, which was brief in duration and restricted in area, was a sort of clinic for the special benefit of those who after His departure were to carry his gospel to wider circles. The training of the Twelve to which He particularly devoted Himself reveals His plan for the propagation of His kingdom.

the good news of the speedy establishment of the reign of God on the earth (iv. 23). Jesus did not preach the gospel of salvation; He came that there might be a gospel of salvation to preach. He *is* the gospel of salvation; He *preached* the gospel of the kingdom. (7) He promulgates the laws of His kingdom (v.-vii.). The Sermon on the Hill is the manifesto of the King, "the Magna Charta of the new kingdom" (Tholuck). It is a declaration of the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven in its relation to the new theocracy. (8) He, as the royal Lawgiver, proclaims the law of love to be the generic law of His kingdom. In love the whole law is comprehended (xxii. 40). The apostle James calls love "the royal law." But it is more than a law; it is also the vital root from which the kingdom grows. (9) Under a series of seven parables Jesus describes the nature of the kingdom (xiii.) The parable of the sower shows the seminal principle to be the one by which His kingdom is propagated; the seed being "the word of the kingdom"; that of the tares shows "the gathering out of His kingdom of things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity"; that of the mustard seed shows its outward growth; that of the leaven its secret and expansive power; that of the treasure hid in the field represents it as a prized possession unexpectedly found; that of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls as the highest good eagerly sought after; that of the draw-net as a process of separation and purification which was to take place at the end of the Jewish age. (10) He announces the privileges of His kingdom under the figure of a royal feast (xxii.). Luke says, "A certain *man* made a great supper." Matthew puts it, "The

kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain *king* who made a marriage feast for his son." To this royal feast are all invited. (11) His kingship is unwittingly acknowledged by His enemies. By the soldiers (xxvii. 20); by Pilate (xxvii. 37); by the chief priests (xxvii. 42). (12) As king He judges from His throne of glory: (a) "His own servants," the Jewish people (xxv. 14-30); (b) the Gentile nations (xxv. 31-46). Notice the difference in the criterion of judgment in the two cases. In the judgment of the Jews the criterion consists of fidelity to definite instruction; in the judgment of the Gentiles it consists of fidelity to the inward spirit and principle of benevolence. The latter is the judgment of the present age. (13) He delegates to His disciples the kingly authority with which He is invested (xxviii. 19).

5. *The unfolding of the kingdom.* (1) The kingdom as foretold (ii. 6). (2) As at hand (iii. 2). John the Baptist heralded the coming of a kingdom into which he himself did not enter (xi. 11). (3) As come (xii. 28). It is already in the world, but it is yet to attain more perfect form. (4) As assailed by violent men, who attempt to take it by force (xi. 12).\* (5) As a realized ideal (vi. 10). Jesus certainly believed in the applicability of His teaching, and He now waits for the world to make it the basis of a new society. All hope for the world lies in obedience to the law that fell from His lips. (6) As progressive (xiii), unfolding by the power of its own inherent life. (7) As taken

\*The violence here referred to is not something to be commended, but something to be condemned. We are not to "batter the gate of heaven with storms of prayer" till God capitulates. Heaven's gate is open, not barred. Nor are we to try to advance the kingdom of God by substituting force of arms for force of argument. "It is not apostolical," says Erasmus, "to wield the iron sword." The kingdom of heaven is not to be taken by force, but by the power of truth and love.

from the Jews, "the sons of the kingdom" who are cast into the outer darkness (viii. 12), despoiled of the vineyard which they have neglected (xxi. 43), and blasted with perpetual barrenness (xxi. 19). This rejection is national, not individual. When this is kept in mind, the seeming severity of Jesus in the *acted* parable of the cursing of the barren fig-tree is taken away. (8) As widened to include the Gentiles (xii. 21, xxi. 43). (9) As made visible to those who have spiritual discernment (xvi. 28). (10) As triumphing through judgment. Judgment is sent forth unto victory; that is, by judgment the kingdom is advanced (xii. 20). (11) As spiritual; being founded upon spiritual facts, and built up by spiritual forces.\* Viewed broadly the kingdom is external and internal, individual and social. But its distinguishing quality under all its forms is its spirituality (xiii. 43). The Jews, discerning its spiritual character, would have none of it. The kingdom that they sought was a new political order, not a new social order; the reign of an Israelitish king rather than the reign of God; a reign of outward glory rather than the reign of righteousness. (12) As universal, embracing all men in its final development (viii. 11). The aim of Matthew is to show that the religion of Jesus, which began as a spiritualized Judaism, was destined to burst its Jewish shell and grow into a world-religion. It was to find its embodiment, not in the temple, but in living souls, who should become "the habitation of God in the Spirit." (13) As eternal, a kingdom that shall have no

\*Jesus invariably subordinated physical power to spiritual ends. When, at the time of His baptism, He became fully conscious of the possession of divine power, He was tempted to use it for His own advantage or glory. His triumph over this temptation reveals His determination to depend solely upon spiritual forces for the advancement of His Kingdom.

end. "Prepared from the foundation of the world" (xxv. 34).

6. *Characteristics of those who are members of the kingdom.* (1) A sevenfold beatitude is pronounced upon them because of the kingliness of their character\* (v. 3-12). (2) They are poor in spirit (v. 3). (3) They are peacemakers (v. 9). (4) They endure persecution for righteousness' sake (v. 10). (5) They teach and do the least of Christ's commandments (v. 19)—not with the ceremonial legalism of the Pharisees, who strained out a gnat and swallowed a camel (xxiii. 24), but with a spirit of sweet submissiveness which seeks to know and do all of the Master's will. (6) They pray for the coming of the kingdom (vi. 14), making their life one continuous prayer for its enlargement. (8) They live for the kingdom, making it the primal object of all their effort (vi. 33). In the service of the kingdom their life finds its true end. (9) They are charitable (vii. 1-5). (10) They are self-denying (xvi. 24). (11) They are humble and childlike (xviii. 4). (12) They minister to the needy and distressed because they belong to Christ (xxv. 34). "They are fully subject to God through boundless confidence in Him and unbounded love for their neighbor." (Herrmann). It is like king, like subjects. The greatest in the kingdom are those who most closely resemble their Lord.

7. *Who are excluded from the kingdom?* (1) Formalists (v. 20). (2) The morally worthless (xiii. 47). (3) The unforgiving (xviii. 35). (4) The spiritually slothful (xxv. 26). (5) The unrepentant (xviii. 3). (6) The careless guests who have not on the robe of personal

\*Numerically the beatitudes are nine, topically they are seven.



righteousness (xxii. 13). (7) The unwatchful (xxv. 12). (8) The selfish (xxv. 41). (9) The rich while not necessarily excluded, enter with difficulty (xix. 23). (10) The publicans and the harlots enter before the priests and elders (xxi. 31).

8. *Relations of the subjects of the kingdom to one another.* (1) They acknowledge a common paternity and a common brotherhood. Sons of God, they are brothers one of another (vi. 9). (2) They manifest fraternal interest in each other's welfare. They do not each pray "Give *me* my daily bread, but give *us* our daily bread"—our needful bread, the bread of our necessity, our sustenance for to-day, our bread for the coming day (vi. 11). The Lord's Prayer is throughout a social, not an individualistic prayer. (3) They recognize Christ as Master of the new brotherhood, and themselves as servants one of another under Him (xxiii. 8). (4) Embraced in a spiritual solidarity they feel bound to each other in covenant obligations (xxvi. 28). (5) As members of one brotherhood they are called upon to perform reciprocal duties. They are not to cause one another to stumble (xviii. 6). They are to help one another to glorify God (v. 16). Being brothers, they are to act brotherly.

9. *Conditions of entering the kingdom.* (1) Faith, or confidence in the King. This condition is fundamental, but it is implied rather than expressed. And inasmuch as faith cannot act in the dark, some measure of knowledge is assumed as necessary to its existence. (2) Repentance, or change of mind (iv. 17).\*

\*The call to repentance was urgent. Already was "the axe laid *unto* the root of the tree. (iii. 10.) That is, it was laid up against the root of the tree, while the woodman was getting ready to use it. Soon the stroke of doom would fall and the venerable tree of the Jewish theocracy would come down with a crash. The time of respite was brief.

The Greek term *metanoia* literally means "thinking with"; that is, the act of thinking with God; taking His view of things, thinking His thoughts after Him. The reason why emphasis is here put upon repentance is because the Gospel of Matthew, being addressed to Jews, seeks to re-echo and re-enforce the prophetic call of the Old Testament, which was a call to repentance—a call, in other words, to turn from sin to God. (3) Reformation, or change of life, which is the practical side of repentance (iii. 8). (4) Self-surrender, or submission to the King (xvi. 24). (5) Childlike confidence and simplicity, or humility before the King (xviii. 3).

10. *As touching the King.* (1) He came in disguise. The world rulers did not know Him (ii. 1). (2) His coming stirred the world (ii. 1-9). (3) His life on earth was one of humiliation (xxi. 5). (4) Royal authority belongs to Him by right. The kingdoms of the world which Satan offered to Him in the wilderness were already His (iv. 8). (5) His mediatorial reign has already begun. His kingdom came in spiritual power at the end of the Jewish age. When the Jewish age closed, the Christian age opened. Endless confusion has arisen from translating the expression, "the end of the age," by the words "the end of the world." The crisis that is constantly referred to as imminent is not the end of the world, but the end, or "consummation," of the Jewish age (xiv. 3). Christ came the first time in the flesh "at the end of the age," *i. e.*, of the Jewish age; He came the second time in the presence and power of the Spirit at the beginning of the new age, the age of the kingdom. Of

the new age, which is now running its glorious course, He is King. (6) His promise that some of those who listened to Him would live to see Him coming in His kingdom has been literally fulfilled (xvi. 28). The destruction of Jerusalem was not the second coming of Christ, it was the *sign* of His second coming. The double question, "When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy presence?" (xxiv. 3) implies that the desolating judgments about to fall upon the Jewish nation had their significance as the outward signs of a stupendous spiritual fact. They were the visible tokens of our Lord's Parousia, or spiritual presence. (7) Christ, who is now present in kingly power, is ruling by His Spirit in the empire of the soul (xvii. 20). (8) His throne of power is the cross. He rules the world through sacrifice (xxvi. 37-55). (9) As the world's King He is the world's Judge (xxv. 34). The work of judgment with which His kingdom was ushered in still goes on. The judgment-seat of Christ is already erected. Before it all men are summoned. The ethics of Christ are becoming more and more the recognized standard of judgment for nations and individuals. He is now carrying on a process of judgment which is to end in a crisis. The picture of the age-long judgment of the Jewish nation ending in a day of judgment may be fitted to the larger frame of universal history and the end of the ages. Days of judgment always end in a judgment day. (10) His kingdom is developing throughout the Christian centuries. It grows through its own expansive power—by accretion, and by conquest. Over all opposition it will be finally trium-

phant. The Christ who was crucified is the King of Glory. The Christ who conquered death will conquer all. Before the scepter of His omnipotent love every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

### THE WRITER

Among the Jewish Christians living in Jerusalem in the days following Pentecost was a woman named Mary, whose home was a rendezvous for the members of the Church, including the apostles (Acts xii. 12). She had a son whose Jewish name was John, but who, in accordance with the custom of the time among his people,\* had a Gentile name, Mark or Marcus (Acts xii. 25). He was related to Barnabas as nephew, or more probably cousin (Col. iv. 10), and may have owed his conversion to Peter, who refers to him as a son in the faith (I. Pet. v. 13). For several years Peter was the leading figure in the Jerusalem church, and Mark as a young man of promise would naturally be used by him in Christian work. The work most needed in this period was that of teaching, especially the giving of instruction in the story of Jesus' life. There were no written narratives at first. It is not likely that the Church at this time so much as thought of any other form of narrative than oral recitals of the ministry of our Lord. From no source would such teaching come more naturally than from Peter, and this dissemination

\*The common practice among the Jews was that of giving children one name for use in Jewish circles and another by which they were known among the Gentiles. Cf. Saul and Paul, Cephas and Peter, Levi and Matthew, Joseph and Barnabas.

of the "teaching" of the apostles (Acts ii. 42) was one of the earliest and most important ministries of the Church, as the frequent use of the words "teachers" and "pupils," or "instructed" (literally, "catechised") shows. In this instruction, constantly repeated, the oral narratives of the work of Jesus became a common possession of the Jerusalem Church, and tended, as is usual in the Orient, to preserve their original form. The earliest narrative was probably Aramaic, but its different sections would naturally find translation into Greek, for the benefit of those Hellenistic Jews who before long made a considerable part of the Jerusalem Church (Acts vi. 1). Mark may have been one of the teachers who repeated the gospel message put into form by Peter.

The home of Mark was probably used by the disciples as a place of meeting, and may have been the scene of the Last Supper and of the descent of the Spirit. The effort has been made to identify John Mark as the young man who narrowly escaped arrest in Gethsemane (Mark xiv. 51, 52), but this is mere conjecture. However, he must have had the most favorable opportunities for knowing the leading members of the Church. When Barnabas and Saul visited Jerusalem they may have been guests at his home. The vividness of the narrative in Acts xii. 1-19 suggests that Luke may have learned the facts from Paul, who was in Jerusalem with Barnabas about this time. Certain it is, that Mark left his mother and returned to Antioch with them (Acts xii. 25). If he had been a co-worker and assistant of Peter in the ministry of teaching, his departure for a new work may be explained on the ground of Peter's

withdrawal more and more from Jerusalem to engage in the wider activities of the apostolic office (Acts ix. 32-43). Soon after their arrival at Antioch Barnabas and Paul started on an evangelizing tour, and Mark went with them (Acts xiii. 5); but after they had left Cyprus and reached Perga, on the coast of Asia Minor, he deserted them and returned to Jerusalem (Acts xiii. 13). His motive may be found in the hardships of such a missionary career, or in his fear for his mother's safety in Jerusalem, where the Christians were in danger of frequent persecution; but certain it is that his loss was felt by Paul, who strongly disapproved of his departure, and viewed it as a defection from a sacred work. Mark, no doubt, regretted his conduct, for by the time Paul and Barnabas were ready to undertake their second journey, he was back in Antioch prepared to accompany them. This, however, Paul would not permit, whereupon Barnabas took Mark and departed to the work in Cyprus (Acts xv. 36-39). How long his association with his cousin continued cannot be known, but at the time of Paul's imprisonment in Rome (A. D. 62) he was with the apostle (Col. iv. 10, Phil. 24), and seemingly about to start on a mission to the East, which shows that he had been restored to the favor of Paul, and was one of his trusted helpers. In I. Peter v. 13 the writer speaks of Mark as with him in Babylon, which probably stands for Rome, according to a frequent Christian usage of the first century; and later on Paul requests Timothy to bring Mark from the vicinity of Ephesus to Rome, as being able to assist him there (II. Tim. iv. 11). These hints afford us our only certain information regarding Mark. The writings of

the early fathers declare that he was the interpreter of Peter, that he lived and labored in Rome, and that he went later to Alexandria, where he founded the Egyptian church, and where he was buried. Tradition records the removal of his remains to Venice, where the beautiful church of St. Mark was built in his honor.

#### SOURCES

The direct connection of Mark with the writing of the second gospel is generally accepted. The attempt to show that he is the author of a lost document on which our gospel of Mark is based, rather than the author of the gospel itself, has not proved convincing. That much of the material which Mark has given us is reproduced from Peter's teaching is morally certain. Upon this point, the testimony of Papias, the earliest authority (120 A. D.), is in harmony with that of the Greek and Latin fathers.\* It would seem that Peter gave form to the earliest narrative, made up of accounts of events in Jesus' life which could be used separately or repeated in a continuous recital. That narrative dealt mostly with events in the life of Jesus, and included the report of only a few of his discourses or teachings. It circulated very early in Jerusalem, and had both an Aramaic and a Greek form. Mark, as a teacher of the gospel, was able to put it into writing with few if any changes from the form in which he

\* Papias, on the authority of John the Presbyter, declared that "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him; but afterward, as is said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them, for he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely." *Euseb. H. E.*, III., 39.



received it from Peter. This written version was probably not prepared for some time afterward. One tradition has it that it was written in Rome; another that it was written in Alexandria. It is generally conceded to be the oldest of the gospels, and either in its present form or as an oral narrative it formed one of the sources for both Matthew and Luke.\* Papias affirms that Mark does not preserve the chronological order of events in the life of Christ, but it is probable that he more closely approaches it than any other, since Matthew and Luke in the main follow his arrangement. This explains the fact that all three of the synoptic gospels give special prominence to the Galilean ministry, and record only one Passover, as contrasted with John, who records the Judean ministry of Jesus, together with the fact that three Passovers were celebrated by him. In reading Mark's gospel we are therefore nearer to the acts and words of Jesus than anywhere else, being in possession of a recital of them which must have been put into essentially its present form within a dozen years of the death of our Lord. Nothing could exceed the deep significance of this fact. Whether the Gospel of Mark originally ended abruptly at xvi. 8, or whether the remaining portion was lost, is uncertain. But the section xvi. 9-20 is not regarded as genuine, and it has been rightly separated from the body of the gospel in the Revised Version.

\*The theory which at present is generally accepted by scholars is that advanced by Prof. Bruce in his introduction to the Expositor's Greek Testament, to-wit, that "a book like our canonical Mark, if not identical with it, was the source of narratives common to the three gospels, and another book containing the sayings of Jesus was the source of didactic matter common to Matthew and Luke."

## CHARACTERISTICS

The careful reader will notice certain striking features in this gospel.

1. *It is a gospel of events and actions.* This is what might be expected in the earliest narrative regarding Jesus. The striking deeds are emphasized. The teachings take form later. This explains why in the earliest gospel the Sermon on the Mount and all but six parables are omitted. Those events only which concern the ministry of Jesus are mentioned, the interesting accounts of His birth and childhood being left out. The narrative opens with the work of John, and goes swiftly onward to the close. Rapidity of movement is particularly noticeable. Jesus is described as going from one action to another with tireless energy and enthusiasm. The adverb translated "immediately," "straightway," and "forthwith" is used no fewer than forty times by Mark. The mind is impressed by a series of swiftly moving scenes. Action is the prevailing quality, and closely connected with this is the vividness and realism of the narrative. The entire book bears the characteristics of an eye witness. It has incidents or features which are related nowhere else. It is impossible to believe that we have in this gospel simply a condensation of Matthew and Luke, when it is noticed that it gives far more of those personal and realistic touches than they do. The most casual comparison will disclose numerous instances of this. Take for example the following: The pressing of the multitude upon the little group consisting of Jesus and the disciples, so that they could not eat (iii. 20); Jesus sleeping on

the cushion of the boat (iv. 38); Jesus turning round and discovering the woman who had touched him in the throng (v. 32); the exact reporting of His words (iii. 17, v. 41, vii. 34, xiv. 36, xv. 34); His sighing when He was asked for a sign (viii. 12); His rebuking of Peter (viii. 33); His taking the child in His arms (ix. 36); the disclosure to Peter, James, John, and Andrew of the coming catastrophe (xiii. 3); the bearing of the cross by Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus (xv. 21). The vividness of the picture is further enhanced by the frequent use of the present tense where the other narrators use the historical tenses as being suited to the description of past events. This may be observed in such touches as "There comes to Him a leper" (i. 4); "they come to Him bringing," etc. (ii. 3); "while He was yet speaking there comes to Him Judas" (xiv. 43). Mark has little that is peculiar to himself, as almost all that he records has been used by the other evangelists; but among the things peculiar to his narrative are the parables of the secretly growing seed (iv. 20-29) and of the householder (xiii. 34); two miracles of healing, one being that of the deaf and dumb man (vii. 32-37), the other that of the blind man at Bethsaida (viii. 22-26); also the story of the young man clad in a linen cloth who followed Jesus on His way to the judgment hall (xiv. 51, 52). Mark also gives several additional features, evidencing the value of the narrative as that of an eye witness, and as put into form while the events were still fresh in memory; which quite agrees with the Petrine character of the gospel.

2. *There is a certain air of boldness about the gospel of Mark which does not belong to the other gospels.* The

statements regarding Jesus are sometimes startling in their frankness, and might seem to be in danger of a wrong construction, and yet they are set down without reservation. "The gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God" is the title which Mark gives to his book. The thoughts of Jesus as expressed in His actions are here given as nowhere else. Jesus is represented as looking about with anger (iii. 5); as being filled with indignation (x. 14); as loving the rich young man (x. 21); as marveling at the unbelief of the people (vi. 6); as being suspected of insanity by His friends (iii. 21). This feature is still more evident in the parallel accounts where the other gospels, especially Matthew, modify the statements of Mark so that they are less abrupt. Jesus is the carpenter in Mark (vi. 3), but the son of the carpenter in Matt. xiii. 55. Mark says Jesus was not able to do any mighty work at Nazareth, save to heal a few sick people (vi. 5). Matthew's account simply says He did few mighty works there because of their unbelief (xiii. 58). Mark says the young man who asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life called Him "Good Master," and Jesus responded, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, God" (x. 17, 18). Luke follows this account (xviii. 18, 19), but Matthew's version gives the question in the form, "Master, what good thing shall I do," etc., and the answer, "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good" (xix. 16, 17). Mark says that James and John asked for conspicuous offices in the expected kingdom (x. 35), but in Matthew it is their mother who proffers the request. It is also noticeable that Matthew and Luke omit the two mir-

acles in which Jesus made use of remedial means in accomplishing the result \* (vii. 32-37, viii. 22-26). These facts illustrate the great value of Mark's testimony as uninfluenced by any apologetic purpose to exhibit Jesus only in a favorable light. The result is a portraiture singularly powerful and convincing.

3. *It is the gospel of miraculous power.* One-half of this gospel is devoted to the narration of the miracles of Jesus. Of the thirty-six miracles wrought by Him, one-half are recorded by Mark. The picture of Christ presented is not so much that of a teacher as the mighty master of nature and life. It is significant that the earliest cycle of narrative, which took shape within a few years of the death of our Lord, and which circulated widely among those who knew the events of His life, should concern itself so largely with miracle rather than with teaching. These wonderful events gained earliest attention, and it is only in the second cycle of narrative that the teachings are made prominent; and this is exactly the order we should expect if the gospels are to be trusted as giving us honest and reliable recitals of the work of Jesus.

4. *The gospel of Mark is the Gentile gospel.* It makes almost no reference to the Old Testament,\* such reference being of interest chiefly to Jews or Christians. It adds translations and explanations of such words of the vernacular as the vividness of this narrative made it worth while to preserve. Instances of this are found in such expressions as "Boanerges, that is, Sons of thunder" (iii. 17); "Talitha cumi," which is, being interpreted, "Damsel, I say unto

\* The only exception is in i. 2, 3 where Mal. iii. 1 and Isa. xl. 3 are blended together as if taken from Isaiah xv. 28.

thee, arise" (v. 41); "Corban," that is, "given to God" (vii. 11); "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened" (vii. 34); "Bartimeus, the Son of Timæus" (x. 46); "Abba," that is, "Father" (xiv. 36); "Golgotha," which is, being interpreted, "the place of a skull" (xv. 22); and the cry of Jesus upon the cross (xv. 34). In the same manner Jewish customs are frequently explained, as they would not need to have been for Jews; this may be seen in the explanations given of washing (vii. 3); of fasting (ii. 18); of the beliefs of the Sadducees (xii. 18); and of the Passover (xiv. 12; xv. 6, 42). References to places are more particular than they would have been in a writing addressed to the people of Palestine (e. g., i. 5; xiii. 3). The tradition that Mark wrote in Rome, and that his gospel was intended for people of the Roman type, gains color from the directness, rapidity of movement, and forcefulness of his gospel; from the frequent use of Latin words;\* from the portraiture of Jesus as Master of men, a worker of miracles, and the possessor of more than mortal authority and might.

While in any attempt to fix the date of the present literary form of the gospel many elements of conjecture have to be reckoned with, it is probable that it was written between 65 and 70 A. D. It may therefore be safely regarded as by several years the earliest of the gospels.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

Jesus is set forth in Mark's gospel as the Mighty Son of God, the representative of the Father on the earth. That He was one with the Father; that He

\*Such e. g. as denarius (vi. 37), centurio (xv. 39), census (xii. 14), prætorium (xv. 16), etc.

possessed His essential attributes, is proved by His ability to do the works of the Father. While Matthew enlarges on the words of Jesus, Mark enlarges on His works. In Mark's gospel the Sermon on the Mount is compressed into a few sentences; the miracles are made prominent, and are referred to as a succession of mighty deeds.

We learn from Mark that the conception of Jesus as a teacher must not be allowed to overshadow the conception of Him as a worker. He came to *do* something, and not merely to *say* something. He is more than a teacher, He is a worker. The works that He did bear witness of Him. His miracles were acted parables. The whole of His earthly activity was as truly a divine revelation as the wonderful words that fell from His lips. His death upon the cross, in which His earthly activity culminated, has been rightly designated "the work of Christ," and in that work we have the highest form of divine expression.

All that Mark professes to give is "the *beginning* of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (i. 1). He saw that what he recorded was only the initial point in an endless development; that the works performed were merely the hidings of divine power, the beginnings of a manifestation of ceaseless activity. "My Father worketh even until now," said Jesus, "and I work"—that is, "I am working." Wherever Christ is, He continues to work. He is working in the present as He worked in the days of His flesh. The historical Christ is still making history. His work on its earthward side is never finished. After He was received up, it is said that His disciples "went forth

and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them" (xvi. 20), and He still works with every one who goes forth to help humanity in His name.

The power of Jesus by which the writer of the second gospel was so deeply impressed is represented by him as possessing four distinct qualities. It was:

1. *Almighty power.* As Mark saw Him, Jesus was a man clothed with all the attributes of God; He was human weakness clothed with omnipotence. The amazement which His miracles created is specially noted, their effect being heightened by contrast. When the omnific word was spoken which calmed the raging sea, it is recorded that the beholders "feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who, then, is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (iv. 41). His wonder-working power His friends could not account for upon natural grounds. "Whence hath this man these things; and whence is the wisdom that is given this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by His hands? Is not this the carpenter?" (vi. 2, 3; see, also, ii. 12, iii. 11, vii. 37). The conclusion to which they were irresistibly led was that these miraculous works were the products of one who was endowed with divine power.

The attribute of almightiness which Jesus possessed fitted Him to captivate the Romans, for whom Mark's gospel was especially written. The Romans were worshipers of power. Their word for virtue, "virtus," means power, or prowess. Power was to them the highest excellence; weakness the greatest defect. Here, then, was one possessing divine energy, divine power; one mightier than all the sons of men; one



mightier than Jupiter, mightier than all the gods of Olympus. Surely this was the Son of God!

As Mark exhibits Him, this wonderful being possesses power such as was never approached by any one on this earth before or since. (1) He has power over the unseen world. Demons are subject to Him (i. 21). (2) He has power over disease (i. 29). Whether this power is the fiat of omnipotence, or subjective power working through the law of telepathic suggestion, matters nothing; the important point is that no one else ever possessed such healing power. (3) He has power over nature. The winds and the sea obey him as a servant obeys his master (iv. 41). (4) He has power over death (v. 41). He calls death a sleep out of which He can awaken with a word (v. 39). (5) He has power or authority to absolve from sin (ii. 5). This He claims as His divine prerogative, founding His claim upon His power to heal (ii. 10). This power, which He received from the Father, makes Him the Father's equal. He remits sin on earth with the authority of God. (6) He has power to control the will of man, the power of an imperial personality that speaks the word of authority and is instantly obeyed (ii. 14). (7) He has power over the moral order of things upon which society is founded (ii. 23-28). As "the Lord of the Sabbath" He has the right to interpret and amplify the Sabbatic law, which has been ordained for the benefit of man. (8) He has power to suffer (xv. 22-39). (9) He has power to break the bars of the tomb (xvi. 5-7). (10) He has power to ascend out of the earth-life into the heaven-life from which He had descended (xvi. 19). Every stroke of

Mark's pen describes Jesus as "the Son of God in power," the Son of God existing in the element of power, the Son of God living in the exercise of power.

2. *Beneficent power.* Not bare omnipotence, but omnipotence exercised for beneficent ends. The living energy of Jesus was employed in doing good. His activity was benevolent activity. His miracles were altruistic. They were works of love and mercy.

Never did Jesus use His miraculous power for His own benefit, but always for the benefit of others. When the tempter came to Him in the wilderness he presented to Him in varying forms specious reasons why He should use His power for Himself, but all these subtle temptations He steadfastly resisted. He held His power under the absolute control of an ethical purpose. He did not employ it capriciously, for mere display, or for the injury of any one. This the Roman found it hard to understand. He had often used his power in a selfish and brutal way. The didactic value of the miracles of Jesus lies therefore mainly in the fact that they were peculiar modes of divine manifestation, in which the real character of Jesus was set forth. They were the sign-manuals of His divine sonship, the revelations in deeds of His benevolent heart. As a sample miracle take the raising of the daughter of Jairus (v. 21-43). This miracle was wrought to comfort the heart of a bereaved parent. So with all his miracles. They were performed in response to some pressing need for sympathy and help.

Mark would have Jesus tried by the quality of His work. The supreme test of every man's life is, what kind of work does it bring forth? The life of Jesus

brought forth works of superlative goodness. It furnished a new ideal of power. It showed the way in which power is to be used (x. 43-45).\*

3. *Saving power.* The Roman had been mighty to destroy. Here was One who was mighty to save. He found the world under the oppression of an enemy, and He set Himself to accomplish its deliverance. At the time of His coming the powers of evil had gained a firm hold upon humanity, and were causing great disturbance, both in the physical and in the spiritual spheres. The end for which His power was exercised was that He might restore the world to the divine order. He delivers from bodily disorders (iii. 10), from mental disorders (i. 23), from spiritual disorders (iii. 10.) Study His miracles one by one and they will be found to be works of salvation. Search out the meaning of His earthly mission, and it will be found to be a mission of salvation. He came to save, and to that end He used every particle of His power. He saves human nature from the anarchistic, destructive powers by which it is assailed. He saves men from bondage to evil by bringing them into unqualified submission to the divine will (xii. 17); He saves them from selfishness, which is self-ruin, by securing the supremacy of law through the supremacy of love (xii. 30); and He saves the social whole by saving the separate units of which it is composed.

4. *Conquering power*—power which never knew defeat. From the very first Jesus was opposed. When a babe, Herod the king sought to compass His

\*What has been called "the *unpardonable* sin," but what is in reality the *unpardoned* sin, consists in vilifying the Holy Spirit, in whose power Christ wrought, and attributing His gracious works to the spirit of evil. This is the climax of human iniquity. The man who is possessed of this malign disposition is said to be "held in the grasp of an eternal sin" (iii. 29).

death. No sooner had He entered upon His public work than the religious leaders and the politicians took counsel how they might destroy Him (iv. 6). He was constantly assailed, by the world-powers, and by the powers of darkness. The opposition grew in intensity until it ended in His tragic death.

In every conflict the strong Son of God came off victorious. Every fresh assault was the occasion of a new triumph. "Mark's gospel," says Lange, "presents a series of victorious conflicts." Its events are marshaled together, and march to music as "the Son of God goes forth to war, a kingly crown to gain." The forces which contended against Him were overcome one by one and brought into subjection to His sovereign sway. Everything that militated against the divine order was subdued. There was no disease which He could not cure; cases that baffled human skill He healed with a word or touch (v. 25-34, ix. 18); at every step he foiled the evil designs of His enemies (xii. 28-34); He put the Sanhedrin to confusion; (xv. 1-5); he drove from the temple the sacrilegious huxters who had defiled the holy place (xi. 15-18); He broke the power of Satan, binding the strong man and spoiling his house (iii. 27); He overcame the sharpness of the cross (xv. 39); He conquered Death, by whom all other men are conquered; He broke away from the embrace of the grave in which all other men are held (xvi. 6); and after vanquishing every foe, "He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" (xvi. 19).

Could anything appeal more strongly to the Roman mind than this idea of a mighty conqueror, before whom nothing was able to stand—a conqueror who

was destined to achieve world-wide empire? And in the hour of her weakness what encouragement ought to come to the Church from the reflection that the Mighty Christ whom Mark portrays is moving steadily forward, overcoming all opposition, subduing all things to the will of heaven, and establishing on the earth a kingdom that cannot be shaken!

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

### THE WRITER

Christianity had its origin in the circle of Judaism. The Master Himself was a Jew, and His disciples and earliest followers were all of that people. The first churches were composed entirely of Jewish Christians, and the most difficult problem which confronted the new society was the admission of non-Jewish members. The champion of Gentile privileges in the Church was Paul; and he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. All the literature of the first period of the Church—a period which closed with the last apostle—was written by Jewish Christians, with two notable exceptions, the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

The Gentile origin, therefore, of the two works which relate the story of the earliest activities of the new faith and the life of its founder is not without profound significance to the student of Christian literature. The facts and forces of which Luke was in a manner an outside observer were related by him to the broad life of the world as a Jew could not have done. His was the spirit of the historian rather than of the advocate. Animated by a profound reverence for the Christ whose disciple he had become, and by a sincere affection for the great apostle who had honored him with his friendship, he stood close

enough to the Jerusalem Church to enter largely into the spirit of its earliest experiences, while at the same time he saw as no other writer of the first century the bearings of the new faith upon the life of that world which lay around him, helpless to find redemption, but destined to be quickened into life by that same gospel which met so ungracious a reception at its hands because it was brought by Jewish messengers. This great outlying world upon which the light was beginning to break is surveyed by Luke with the eye of a calm, broad-minded observer. He seems to be watching the outgoings of those significant events in which both Jew and Gentile soon took lively interest.

Without mentioning his own name, Luke dedicates both of his books to a certain Theophilus, probably a Gentile. Internal evidence, and the testimony of early Christian writers, afford ample proof that their authorship is to be ascribed to Luke, the friend and companion of Paul. Of Luke's life little is known. It has been thought by some that his home was in Antioch,\* by others that it was in Philippi.† That he was a Gentile is shown by Paul's allusion to him as not "of the circumcision" (Col. iv. 4); that he was a Greek is shown by his pure Greek style. Paul refers to him as a physician, and evidences of his professional bent are found in his use of technical terms in describing disease.‡ He lingers over the miracles

\*Eusebius and Jerome say that he was a Syrian of Antioch. This is suggested by the fact that Antioch was for some time the residence of Paul and one of the earliest centers of his missionary operations. Luke also gives special information regarding the Church in Antioch. See Acts xi. 19-30, xiii. 1-3, xv. 1-3.

† Proof of this is sought in the fact that the narrative in Acts records his arrival in Philippi with Paul, and his departure with him from that city several years later. (Acts xvi. 11-15, xvii. 1, xx. 6.)

‡ Cf. Chaps. iv. 23-43, xxii. 44, Acts iii. 7, 9, 18, xii. 23, xxviii. 5. Consult also Hobart on *The Medical Language of St. Luke*.

of healing, and notices such a trivial event as the healing of Malchus' ear. The affliction from which Paul himself suffered may have been the occasion of an acquaintance which proved so eventful to both. Luke also makes use of nautical terms, and he is careful to mention the names of the harbors at which Paul landed, even when this information is not essential to the story of his work.\*

### STYLE

The writings of Luke show him to have been a man of culture and leisure, a keen observer of men and things, an ideal traveler and historian. He writes with a grace of style, in pure classical Greek.† His careful collation of facts gathered from every source, from contemporary documents, from oral tradition, from eye-witnesses, and from observation; his systematic arrangement of material covering the entire earthly life of Jesus from His birth to His ascension; his philosophical spirit, which inquires into the meaning of events, all mark him out as the ripe, broad-minded scholar.

### A MOLDING INFLUENCE

The supreme influence in the molding of Luke's life was his association with Paul. Where they first met we do not certainly know; possibly at Antioch, or more likely still, at Troas. As the western limit of Asia, Troas was evidently a point beyond which it was not originally the intention of the apostle to go.

\* Neapolis, Attalia, Assos, Mitylene, Samos, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, etc.

† Of the New Testament writings in general it has been aptly said that they have "a Greek body, a Hebrew soul, and a Christian spirit." In an emphatic sense this characterization is true of the gospel of Luke.



Behind him lay all the interests of the new faith he was proclaiming, and his programme seems to have included as yet no more than the evangelization of the chief cities of the Levant. His meeting with Luke appears, however, to have changed his plan. In this intelligent Greek, whom he had led into a knowledge of the Christian faith, he saw the representative of an interesting class that lay beyond the bounds of Asia. Although Greek ideas and language had spread widely outside of Hellas, still they were there represented at their best, and Paul, whose early manhood had been spent in a university city where Greek culture must have found some expression, would naturally long for the privilege of carrying the gospel into the heart of that circle of culture and power. So when the divine call came in the vision of the man of Macedonia—whether or not the man of Macedonia was Luke himself, as Professor Ramsay suggests\*—Paul was enabled by his association with this real man of Macedonia to give to the cry for help which reached him through the vision an immediate and hearty response.

#### THE MOTIVE OF THE WRITER

Luke's motive for writing the two books that bear his name is found in his relation to Paul. The book of Acts bears every evidence of having been written to set forth the work of that apostle. But back of that lay the supreme motive of setting forth that larger movement of divine power in which Paul was only one of a number of actors. The natural starting-

\*The theory of Professor Ramsay is that Paul met Luke for the first time at Troas, whither he had been led against his own judgment and intention, and afterward he recognized him in a vision as the Man of Macedonia who was beckoning to his own country. *St. Paul the Traveller, and the Roman Citizen.* P. 198.

point of that movement was the life of Jesus, and to that narrative Luke accordingly first addressed himself. And although Paul had no personal acquaintance with Jesus, yet his residence in Jerusalem and his contact with the leaders of the new movement must have furnished him with a fairly full knowledge of the life of our Lord. Besides, the story of that life was already passing freely about in oral form; and at least one of the sayings of Jesus, unrecorded by any of the evangelists, has been preserved by Paul. (See Acts xx. 35). The subsequent visit of Luke to Jerusalem, and his intimate connection with Paul during the two years of his imprisonment in Cæsarea, afforded him exceptional opportunities of gathering information from those who had been companions of the Lord. From Cæsarea it was a journey of but a few hours to the scenes of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and Perea, and it may be regarded as certain that when Luke left Palestine for Rome with Paul, in the autumn of 60 A.D., he carried with him all the important data connected with the planting of Christianity; so that afterward, when in the interest of the growing church he was impelled to put into literary form the leading events of the life of Paul, he was able to supply from materials at hand the necessary prelude to such a work in his life of Jesus. That the writings of Luke, while dedicated to an individual, were intended by their author for circulation in the Christian community, appears evident from their elaboration.

## SOURCES

It is clear that the gospel of Luke was not written as an independent work. There is "something secondary about it." (Denny.) The preface states clearly the indebtedness of the author to earlier sources. These sources were, as he informs us, of two kinds, written and oral. Many hands were already at work writing down the teachings of Jesus and the leading events of His life. It may be that the gospel of Mark was already in circulation. It is too much, however, to affirm that Luke ever saw this gospel, yet no inconsiderable portion of his material is clearly drawn from that gospel, in its oral form at least. Moreover the early forms of Christian worship seem to have embodied narrative elements taken from the story of Jesus' life.\* As already stated, the indebtedness of Matthew and Luke to Mark alike for the substance, form, and order of events is clear; but there are elements common to both which are omitted by Mark. These pertain, for the most part, to the teachings of Jesus. Matthew shows a tendency to gather these teachings into discourses, while Luke preserves them in their original setting of events. Matthew's method is that of a preacher; Luke's that of a historian. The leading examples of this use of common material are the Sermon on the Mount (vi. 20-49); the charge to the Twelve (ix. 1-6); the sending forth of the seventy (x. 1-24): the latter two of which Matthew combines into one. Only a careful comparison of all the synoptical gospels can give an

\*In his account of the institution of the Lord's Supper Luke evidently was influenced by liturgical forms of the early church, as was also Paul. Comp. xxii. 19-20, with I. Cor. xi. 24, 25.

adequate idea of the large number of correspondences. But in many of its essential features the gospel of Luke is independent of that of Mark.

#### CHARACTERISTICS

A distinct class of passages appears in Luke for which no parallels exist in the other gospels. The most notable example of this class is to be found in the record of the Perea ministry of Jesus (ix. 51-xviii. 14), where a whole cycle of teaching and activity is preserved by this writer alone. This section includes some of the most precious portions of this gospel, such, for example, as the stories of the good Samaritan, of the rich man and Lazarus, and of the rich fool; the parables of the barren fig-tree, the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the prodigal son; the two parables of prayer, viz., that of the importunate friend and that of the unjust steward; the manifestation of intolerance by James and John, the characterization of Martha and Mary, and the healing of the ten lepers. Other notable narratives of an independent sort are those relating to Zacchæus, to the penitent thief, and to the interview between the risen Lord and two of His disciples on the way to Emmaus. These all bear evidence of having been oral narratives, to which Luke gave literary form, preserving them to us in his smooth and correct Greek style.

Another point worthy of mention is that the account of the birth and early life of Jesus, which is different from that of the first gospel, bears internal evidence of having been translated from Aramaic originals, which were probably secured by Luke in Palestine. The same characteristics appear in the songs pre-

served by Luke in the opening chapters of his book.

As might be expected in one standing outside the circle of Judaism, especially of one who had been influenced by Paul's larger conception of the gospel, Luke connects the work of Jesus with the world at large, and shows that it had no geographical limitations, save those which were necessary to its final success. He is careful to supply the political background to the picture, by references to the rulers of the time, both imperial and provincial. He also preserves those facts in the life of Jesus which show His interest in those outside the circle of the Jewish people. He presents Jesus as the lover of humanity, the friend of the out-cast, the forgiver of the sinful, the consoler of the sorrowful, the Saviour of all men.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

Compared with Mark, this gospel is idealistic rather than realistic. It is distinguished for the sweetness and loftiness of its spirit. It opens with an outburst of song. It alone gives to us the hymns of the nativity—the Ave Maria (i. 28-33); the Magnificat (i. 46-55); the Benedictus (i. 67-79); the Gloria in Excelsis (ii. 14); the Nunc Dimittis (ii. 29, 30)—glorious lyrics, in which the praise of the Church has throughout the ages been expressed. To it we are indebted for certain exquisite touches of spiritual suggestiveness which have been given to the picture of the peerless life. For instance, it tells us that it was as Jesus was praying at the time of His baptism that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him (iii. 21). In describing His transfiguration, it says that "as He

was praying, the fashion of His countenance was altered" (ix. 28). It also tells us that Jesus on the cross exemplified His hardest lesson, "Love your enemies," by praying for the murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (xxiii. 34). The charm of the book, to which even Renan confesses, is due quite as much to the beauty of its spirit as to the beauty of its literary form.

1. *Luke's central conception of Jesus is that He is the friend and brother of man—the representative of universal humanity.* Whereas Matthew traces His genealogy back to Abraham, Luke traces it back to Adam. The title which Luke delights to apply to Jesus, or rather the title which he represents Jesus as applying to Himself, is "the Son of Man." That title was not original with Jesus. He found it in current use, but in adopting it He breathed into it a deeper meaning than it had ever contained. Jesus was not merely a son of man; he was *the* son of man, the ideal man, in whom all human perfectibility is summed up. He is "the realized ideal" (Neander), who furnishes in Himself a new model for mankind. He is also kinsman of all the race, the head of a new humanity.

(1) *The humanity of Jesus is exhibited by Luke in all its phases.* (a) His entrance into the world by the common gateway of birth (ii. 6, 7). (b) His dedication by his parents in the temple (ii. 42). (c) His discovery of Himself and His mission (ii. 49). (d) His human development (ii. 40). (e) His manward preparation for His work (ii. 51, iv. 1-13). (f) The growth of His divine consciousness (ii. 52). (g) The breaking of the seal of silence when His divine consciousness became full grown (iv. 18). (h) His

struggle with temptation (iv. 1). His temptations were the generic temptations of the race. (i) His constant dependence upon the Father (vi. 12, 13). (j) His cry of loneliness, as a homeless wanderer who had no place to lay his head or his heart (ix. 58). (k) His shame and suffering as He bore the indignities of those He came to bless and save, at the very time He was drinking to the dregs the cup of their curse (xxiii. 14-49).

His humanity was real and not assumed. He incorporated Himself into our common human life, becoming "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." There was no human weakness or limitation in which He did not share. He was one with us in everything but sin.

(2) *As the true world-man, the man Christ Jesus is possessed of universal sympathy.* Every page of Luke's gospel is suffused with the glow of His human compassion. Some of the sterner features of His teaching are toned down. He touches life on every side in a friendly, helpful way. He shares in the social pleasures of men; He is the consoler of the sorrowful; He has a heart of tenderest love that responds to every appeal for sympathy and help. His mission is defined to be "to heal the broken-hearted and preach deliverance to the captives" (iv. 18). He cared for those whom the society of His own day neglected or spurned. (a) For children (xviii. 17). (b) For women (x. 38-42). (c) For the poor and despised (xvi. 19-22). (d) For the socially obnoxious (xix. 5). (e) For social outcasts (xv. 1). (f) For those who are accounted to be least (xxii. 27). (g) For the weak and tempted (xxii. 31). (h) For those who had upon them the brand

of public infamy (vii. 37-50). (i) For sinners (xv. 1), that is, sinners in an intensified sense. That He received sinners and ate with them was a gracious testimony ungraciously given.

The breadth of the ministry of Jesus was as wide as human need. The more pressing the need, the greater was the outflow of His sympathetic help. His ministry extended to the whole man, to the body as well as to the soul. He eased the burdens of the present, He inspired hope for the morrow. He sought to redeem man from all evil, present and future.

2. *The mission of Jesus is to universal humanity.* Related to all, He loves all, and seeks the recovery of all. In Matthew's gospel the Son of Man is come to gather to Himself the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." In Luke's gospel "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save *that which is lost*" (xix. 10). The angel of the Annunciation proclaimed "good tidings of great joy, which shall be *to all the people*" (ii. 10). The aged Simeon saw in the child Jesus, as He was presented to the Lord in the temple, "a light for revelation *to the Gentiles*" (ii. 32). John the Baptist heralded the coming Messiah as one through whom "*all flesh* shall see the salvation of God" (iii. 6). And the commission of the risen Lord to His disciples ran "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name *unto all the nations*, beginning from Jerusalem" (xxiv. 47).

The bold universalism of Luke, which represents the grace of God as overflowing every barrier, is essentially Pauline. Nowhere do we trace more distinctly the molding influence that came from his intimate intercourse with that master-mind than in



the reproduction of Paul's thought regarding the universality of divine grace. The words "grace," "salvation," and "Saviour," which are favorite words with Paul, occur frequently in this gospel, and always in an unlimited sense.

3. *Luke's gospel is characterized by a spirit of catholicity and toleration.* It has appropriately been called "the catholic gospel." (1) It discovers elect persons among a non-elect people (iv. 27). (2) It finds greater faith in a heathen than in God's Israel (vii. 9). (3) It inculcates a neighborly love unbounded by race or religion (x. 37). (4) It rebukes sectarian bigotry (ix. 50). (5) It shames the thankless Jews by the example of a thankful Samaritan (xvii. 16). (6) It founds divine acceptance upon personal character rather than upon national privilege (xiii. 28-30). Jesus is no respecter of persons. Although a Jew by birth, He was in spirit cosmopolitan—a citizen of the world. His ministrations were for all alike. His gospel is for all alike. The broad charity which He manifested He requires of His followers.

4. *The universality of Christ's sacrifice.* The Son of Man dies for man. He brings redemption to all whose nature He wears. (1) His incarnation in our common humanity implies the universality of His redeeming purpose (ix. 56.) (2) The remedy which He provides is co-extensive with the disease (xix. 10). Human sin is the background upon which His saving power is displayed. (3) His saving purpose was veiled at first; even His disciples did not discern it (ix. 22). (4) It was unveiled gradually as they were able to understand it (xviii. 3). (5) It was openly declared in the hour of supreme revealing, at the Last Supper

(xxii. 19-20). (6) The sacrifice of Christ was an essential element in human redemption. It was necessary that Christ should suffer that He might "enter into His glory" (xxiv. 26). His glory is the satisfaction of seeing that he has not suffered in vain.

5. *The breadth of His personal evangelism.* (1) The circle of His evangelistic operations widens until it embraces the whole world. It begins in the synagogue (iv. 16); the Twelve go forth "preaching the gospel and healing everywhere" (ix. 1-6);\* the seventy are sent to evangelize the Gentiles (x. 1). (2) It includes all classes. Sinners are called to repentance (v. 32); the worst of men are saved (xxiii. 43). (3) Patience is shown with men in their childish perverseness (vii. 32). (4) The degraded, the ignorant, and the needy are urgently entreated to receive the blessings of the gospel; the veriest outcasts camping along the highways and under the hedge-rows being constrained to come to the great supper (xiv. 15-24).† (5) The penitent publican is accepted, while the self-applauding Pharisee is rejected (xviii. 14). (6) The unlimited mercy of God is set forth in three parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son (xv.). In these parables, which constitute the heart of Luke's gospel, the central thought is that in the work of human salvation God takes the initiative. He seeks man; He seeks him unremittingly. He thinks him worth seeking and saving. And when out of his degradation lost man seeks the Father, he is welcomed home.

\*The Twelve were endowed with "power and right." "Power," says Prof. Bruce *in loco* "implies right. The man who can cast out devils and heal diseases is entitled to do so, nay, bound."

†As a contrast to the gospel spirit take the words of Voltaire to d'Alembert, "We have never pretended to enlighten the cobblers and the maid-servants. We leave that to the Apostles."

The joy in heaven over his return is the joy which radiates from the heart of God. The cold, selfish legalist, who wants justice and not mercy, refuses to enter into the Father's joy, and excludes himself from an experience of heaven anticipated.

6. *An enlarged conception of God.* In the divine-humanity of Jesus the fullness and freeness of God's fatherly love is revealed. (1) God is the All-Father, whose relation to man cannot be sundered by sin (xv. 24). (2) He knows and anticipates all our wants (xii. 30). (3) His providence is particular, as well as general (xii. 7). (4) He is responsive to every cry for help (xi. 5-13). (5) "He is kind toward the unthankful and evil" (vi. 35). (6) He is merciful to the sinful (vi. 35). (7) He forgives the forgiving (xi. 4). The prayer for forgiveness which he puts into our lips we are warranted in turning into a promise of forgiveness. (8) He justifies the penitent (xviii. 14). All that God is, His children are to be. They are to be merciful even as their Father is merciful (vi. 36). They are to be God-like in everything.

7. *A broad interpretation of the law's requirements.* The disciple of Christ is brought into a wide place. He reads the law in a new light. He is taught to look at it on the ethical rather than on the ceremonial side. (1) Good doing is Sabbath-keeping (vi. 9, xiii. 10-17). (2) Clean hearts are more important than clean hands (xi. 39). (3) The best alms consist of "the within things" (xi. 41). Judgment and love are more vital than the tithing of pot-herbs (xi. 42). Jesus came to introduce a new conception of righteousness. If forms and ceremonies could have saved the world, Judaism would have sufficed. His disregard of the

established religious customs and social landmarks of the time was the greatest shock that could have been experienced in such an age, and occasioned serious disquietude on the part of both His friends and foes. His insistence upon essence rather than upon form, upon reality rather than upon appearance, could have had no other issue than that of bringing upon his head the opposition of those whose religion was in the letter rather than in the spirit, and whose praise was not of God, but of men.

8. *A new conception of the kingdom of God.* Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God cometh, Jesus answered them and said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," it is not an outward and visible, but an inward and spiritual kingdom; "neither shall men say, Lo here! or There! for lo, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (xvii. 21, 22). The kingdom of God is not a localized center, nor is it a dim and distant ideal; it is a present reality, a potential force in the life of the world. "The kingdom of God is *among* you," not "*within* you." It is within *Him*, embodied in His person, propagated by His power, and hence "in your midst." Of God's universal, spiritual kingdom Christ is the appointed head. By His personal influence over men it is being established.

(1) *In the development of this conception of the kingdom there is an appreciation of the organic oneness of the race.* The expression "the people" is frequently used by Luke, instead of "the multitude." This new phrase indicates the sense of social solidarity. Men are not a mass of unrelated units, but a vitally related whole.

(2) *There is a recognition of social problems.* (a)

Wealth is a trust to be held and used in the behoof of others. The man who has more than he needs should pour his surplus into the lap of poverty; he should get a larger heart, not build larger barns (xii. 15-21). (b) A man becomes rich towards God by laying *out*, not by laying *up* (xii. 21). The feasts of the rich are to be part of an unselfish social ministry (xiv. 12-14). (c) Wealth is called "the mammon of, unrighteousness," because it is often unrighteously gotten or unrighteously retained (xvi. 9). (d) Those who make a selfish use of the unrighteous mammon act wisely for a day; those who make an unselfish use of it act wisely forever (xvi. 9). (e) The supreme test of Christian discipleship is found not in the renunciation, but in the consecration of riches (xviii. 22-27). (f) The greatest in the kingdom are those who best serve their fellow-men (xxii. 26). In this age of the kingdom the possession or non-possession of benevolence as a principle of social service is the criterion by which men are judged. (See Matt. xxv.)

(3) *Love is looked upon as a social force*—the mightiest and most aggressive force in social life, the main-spring of all reformatory activity. The good Samaritan, moved with compassion, *did* something for the wounded Jew. His compassion was not a mere effervescence of sentiment; it was a dynamic, driving force, active and practical. It moved to merciful deeds. The new age is ruled by the new commandment of Jesus, "Love one another as I have loved you." Every Christian is a philanthropist.

9. *An optimistic outlook upon the world.* Men are lost, but they can be saved. The Jesus of Luke believed in human recoverability. He despaired of no

man (vi. 35, R. V. marginal reading). He believed that the exile could be restored to fellowship with God, that the most degraded could be transformed by grace into the divine image, that a glorious destiny was possible for all men.

Luke has also a bright, prophetic vision of what is coming to the world. His gospel has been called "the gospel of the future," because it opens up an enchanting view of what the future is to bring. It sees close at hand "the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (xxi. 22). The days of vengeance are to usher in the day of salvation; the day of tribulation is to usher in the day of glory. A transforming power has already been lodged in humanity, which is to make all things new. Better lives are to bring a better social order, better citizens are to bring a better city, better men are to bring a better world. The world into which Christ has put Himself has its salvation assured. The words of Old Testament prophecy quoted at the beginning of this book, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God," sound its triumphant keynote. Into an appreciation of this evangel of hope the thought of the Church is slowly but surely growing.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

The three representative apostles were Peter, Paul, and John. Peter, the leader of the Twelve, was the exponent of primitive Jewish Christianity. Paul, the late-chosen apostle, had for his special mission the proclamation of the gospel among the Gentiles. John, the latest survivor of the apostles, faced the second century with a still broader and deeper spiritual conception of a universal Christianity. The center of Peter's operations was Jerusalem, that of Paul was Antioch, that of John was Ephesus. From Ephesus came the latest words of the New Testament.

### THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The Johannine authorship of the fourth gospel may be safely assumed. The pendulum of opinion has recently swung to the side of the early date of this book. It is generally conceded to have been written about the close of the first century. The book itself possesses internal evidence of belonging to the apostolic age. It is evidently the work of a Palestinian Jew who was familiar with Jewish feasts and customs, and hence accurate in all his topographical and geographical references. Confirmatory evidence of its Johannine authorship is found in the recurrence of words and phrases found in the Apocalypse and in the Epistles of John. It is just such a work as we might expect John to produce. By his intimate association

with Jesus, by his participation in all the changing phases of Christian thought and activity, he was providentially prepared to confirm and complete the records of the synoptists. Whether the final verdict of criticism shall be that the work is the product of the pen of St. John, with slight additions by later hands, or that it was produced in the circle of his disciples and embodies his customary teachings, the Johannine character of the work is accepted with few dissenting voices. The claims made in behalf of the Presbyter John, as the author of this and the other related New Testament works, are far from convincing.

#### TIME AND PLACE

Writing at the close of the first century from Ephesus, the center of Asiatic culture, John felt the atmosphere of time and place. He sought to supply an antidote to the prevailing Gnostic philosophy, which, by denying the divinity and preëxistence of Christ was imperiling the faith of the Church in a divine revelation; and to the Docetic heresy, which by denying the reality of the humanity of Christ, was imperiling the faith of the Church in a divine revelation in a human life. His gospel, however, is not polemical. It rises above the clouds of controversy, and presents constructively the true Christian gnosis, as realized in the knowledge of the Incarnate Word.

#### THE WRITER

John was a Jew, a Galilean, and a disciple of John the Baptist. The name bestowed upon James and John by Jesus, Boanerges, gives an index to their char-



acter. He had the tropical, volcanic temperament which belongs to poetic natures. That he was very human is seen in his intolerance, his outbursts of anger, and in his worldly ambition (Luke ix. 49-56, Mark x. 35). The discipline of life wrought great changes in him, and before his life came to a close the rushing torrent had changed into a calm, majestic river, the son of thunder into the apostle of love. John, from the first, was one of the inner circle of disciples whom the Master gathered around Him. He speaks of himself with veiled modesty as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He was present at the transfiguration, and also at the trial and crucifixion. To his loving care Jesus committed his mother. He was with the disciples after the resurrection, was for a time the companion of Peter, and although less prominent after Pentecost than before it, he was a potent factor in the life of the early Church. Long after the other disciples had passed away he lived a life of quiet usefulness, bringing forth fruit in old age. Of that fruit, so rich and ripe, the fourth gospel forms no meager part.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE GOSPEL

The striking differences in point of view, structure, and atmosphere between this gospel and the synoptics impress the most casual reader. They dwell upon the Galilean ministry of Jesus; this upon the work in Judea. They follow in general a chronological plan based on the outline presented in Mark; John's method is rather logical than chronological, illustrating the development of both faith and unbelief in the circle about Jesus. On the other hand, the

synoptic gospels are almost entirely lacking in references to Jewish feasts, by means of which some estimate of the length of Jesus' ministry may be formed, while in the fourth gospel such allusions are numerous. The earlier gospels tell the story of Christ in simple narrative form, without attempting explanations; John's gospel is reflective, theological, at times argumentative. The main divisions of the book are as follows: I. Witnesses to Christ (Chaps. i-iv). After the Prologue (i. 1-18), in which the eternal character of the Logos is stated, the testimony of various witnesses to the identity of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, the incarnation of the divine life, is presented. These include the witness of John the Baptist (i. 19-34), of Andrew (i. 40, 41), of Philip (i. 45), of Nathaniel (i. 49), of Nicodemus (iii. 1, 2), of John the Baptist again (iii. 22-36), of the Samaritan woman (iv. 39), and of the Samaritans (iv. 41, 42). II. The development of unbelief (Chaps. v-xii). Hand in hand with the acceptance of Jesus by some of the people, went his rejection by others, and this rejection constitutes the second section of the book. There are still presented certain manifestations of faith, as in the case of the multitude (vi. 14), of the disciples (vi. 68, 69), of the people at the feast (vii. 31-40), of the man who was healed of blindness (i. 17, 38), of Martha (ix. 27), of some of the Jews at Bethany (xi. 45), the joyous demonstration of the people at the triumphal entry (xii. 12-19), and the request of certain Greeks (xii. 20, 21). But these instances of faith are presented rather as contrasts to the growing unbelief and opposition, indicated in the persecution of Jesus for healing on the Sabbath

(v. 16), the departure of many disciples from further association with Him (vi. 66), the attempt upon His life, necessitating His retirement to Galilee (vii. 1), the unbelief of His own brothers (vii. 5), doubt and opposition in Jerusalem (vii. 12, 25, 30, 32, 43, 44), the attempt to involve Him regarding the law (vii. 3-6), the charge of possessing a demon (viii. 48-52), the attempt upon His life (viii. 59), the cruel treatment of the man who confessed Him as the one who had healed him (ix. 34), His retirement to Perea for safety (x. 39, 40), the feeling of the disciples that it was dangerous for Him to visit the vicinity of Jerusalem (xi. 8, 16), and the fixed purpose of the Jews to put Him to death (xi. 47-57). This final resolution of the authorities marks the approach of the "hour" to which Jesus had been looking forward as the culmination of His work. When the end is thus clearly brought into view, and Jesus recognizes it by permitting that outburst of popular applause which marked Palm Sunday, and which he had hitherto restrained, the evangelist pauses, and sums up in the closing paragraphs of this section with the fact and the significance of the national rejection of the one to whom so many witnesses had borne testimony, as the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world (xiii. 36-50). III. Jesus and the Twelve (Chaps. xiii.-xvii). Thus rejected by the world, Jesus retired into the bosom of that inner circle of disciples whose training had constituted the chief purpose of His ministry. These chapters include some of the most precious teachings of our Lord. IV. Final manifestation and victory through the passion and the resurrection (Chaps. xviii.-xxi.).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

1. *The presence of the personal equation.* John professes to give a record of the things of Christ which he had "seen and heard" (i. 14). He does something more. He gives a statement of what he thinks about the things concerning Christ which he had seen and heard. It is often difficult to tell where the words of Jesus end and the commentary of John begins. Take, e. g., the third chapter of his gospel, and try to find out the dividing line. The method of John, as compared with that of the other evangelists, throws a flood of light upon the subject of inspiration. Whatever else it is, inspiration is not divine dictation. It assumes a great variety of forms. Matthew's gospel is "the child of memory"; Mark's gospel is largely the work of an amanuensis; Luke's gospel is the production of a painstaking collector of oral and written data; John's gospel is the result of the brooding of a philosophic mind over the deep things involved in the historical facts narrated by the other evangelists. The Spirit of God makes use of all kinds of instruments, but how He operates upon them and through them we can never know. In ordinary Christian experience "we do not know how our spirits are acted upon by the Eternal Spirit, though we do not question the fact." (Liddon.) So with regard to the writers of the New Testament, we know not how they were acted upon by the Eternal Spirit, but we do not question the fact. And there we may safely rest the case of the doctrine of inspiration.

2. *John is a seer.* He sees truth in the concrete, not in the abstract. Spiritual realities are to him

real things. He sees things in their wholeness, and not as mere fragments. Not without reason has he been called "St. John the divine." He is the theologian among the apostles. He makes the historical facts which the synoptists record "the objects of theological meditation." He is no less intellectual than mystical; no less logical than intuitive. His theology is not judicial and forensic like that of Paul, but natural and vital. The mind of the apostle seems to see all things in their principles and essential ideas.

"All forces of goodness are comprehended by him under some general idea like light or truth, while all the forms of evil are summed up as darkness and falsehood." (Stevens.)

3. *Religion is presented in John's gospel as the progressive attainment of the perfect life by the inworking of divine power.* This life is part of the eternal life; it is not broken by death, but is one and continuous forever.

4. *This gospel is not the gospel of the coming kingdom, but the gospel of the kingdom that has come.* It begins in heaven, opening with the declaration of Christ's pre-existence. Omitting all reference to His birth, it passes on from His manifestation in the flesh to His second advent in spiritual power. In the spiritual presence of Christ it finds the realization of the kingdom of God. Outward signs of His presence are no longer necessary. His presence is now a subjective reality in Christian experience. The eschatological discourses, so fully recorded in the synoptical gospels, are entirely omitted. And why? Because they have passed into history. If these discourses had referred to events still lying in the future, there is no reason

why John should have passed them over in silence. Their omission is intelligible only on the assumption that their prophetic utterances had already been fulfilled.

5. *John's theology is in accordance with his personal development.* It is bound to control the thought of the coming years. Peter occupied a place of power in the Roman Church down to the Reformation. Since the Reformation Paul's theology has been dominant. The theology of the future, while combining in one harmonious whole all that is vital in Peter, Paul, and John, will give prominence to the thought of John. The impress of ultimate utterances which is upon John's words marks them as the final words in an age-long process of revelation.

6. *There is in John's gospel a suggestion of the infinite.* It deals with the divine side of Christ's life, and with the heaven side of religion. Its point of view is exalted. Matthias Claudius, writing a century ago, says: "I have from my youth up read the Bible with delight, but most of all I love to read St. John. In him is something altogether marvelous; dim twilight and the darkness of night, and through them now and again the swiftly flashing lightning; the soft evening cloud, the quiet full moon, bodily, in all her glory; something so grandly somber and lofty and soul-searching that one can never be satisfied. I cannot at once understand all I read. Often it is as if what John meant hovered about me in the distance; but even when I look far into a wholly obscure place, I have still a foreshadowing of a great, majestic meaning which some time I shall comprehend. Therefore, I seize eagerly upon every fresh interpretation of John,

though for the most part they only ruffle the edges of the evening cloud, while the moon behind holds on her tranquil way."

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

During the forty years which stretch between the first gospel and the fourth there is a marked development of Christian truth. Years of growing Christian experience throw light upon the sayings and doings of Jesus. He has become larger in the thought of His people. John's gospel is a watermark which indicates how high the tide of Christological thought had risen about the close of the first century of the Christian age.

The value of this gospel cannot be overestimated. "The gospels are the crown of the sacred writings," says Origen; "that of John is the crown of the gospels." "Written by the hand of an angel," is the enthusiastic language of Herder. With all sobriety it may be said to have been written by the hand of an angelic man. Every line shows keen spiritual instinct and mature intellectual power. The writer is an idealist. He has the gift of sight rather than of logic. He sees things in the concrete. His pictures have no shadings. He deals in unqualified contrasts. A sharply defined dualism runs through his writings; light is contrasted with darkness, good with evil, Christ with Satan, the kingdom of God's enemy with the kingdom of His Son. Between these contrasted sides of things there is uncompromising antagonism. A conflict is on which is to end at last in victory for the heaven side.

John's gospel is said to be supplemental to the

writings of the synoptists. And so it is, but not by fixed design. John is himself. He writes out of the depths of his own experience. His central aim is to reveal the glory of his Lord. He soars high. He gives "the echo of the older gospels in the upper choirs" (Herder). The distinctive characteristic of his gospel is its *sublimity*. It gives:

1. *A sublime conception of Christ*; presenting Him, not as an ideal man, but as the divine Son who is one with the Father, and in whom dwells all "the fullness of the Godhead bodily." No one was better qualified to write the inner or spiritual biography of Jesus than the disciple whom He loved and who enjoyed His closest intimacy. No one ever dropped a deeper plummet-line into the depths of His divine nature. "The heart of Christ" is the name which Ernesti gives the fourth gospel.

The proem of this gospel sounds its lofty keynote. These five verses contain a general statement of the subject of the gospel. They set forth: (1) The deity of Christ. In the opening sentence, "In the beginning was the Word," there is a suggestion of the opening words of Genesis, "In the beginning God." The expression "The Word was God" closes the writer's argument for the deity of Christ. (2) His preëxistence. "The Word was with God," dwelling in heaven eternally before He came to earth. (3) His creatorship. "All things were made by Him." He was the medium of creative activity. (4) His mediatorship. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men." He was a chosen vessel to convey to men the life and light of God.

The assertion of His deity is followed by the asser-



tion of His humanity. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us" (i. 14). The divine Logos became the incarnate Logos. He became the revealer of the Father. His "revelation-value" lay in this, that by Him divine love was made audible and visible. The Father struggling to express Himself found utterance in Jesus. Jesus was to the mind of the Father what a word is to the mind of man—the vehicle of expression and communication. He was the goal of divine revelation. This is John's central thought; and hence his gospel has been called the gospel of the incarnation. John speaks of himself as an eye-witness of the manifested glory of the incarnate Word. "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father" (i. 14).\* The vision of which he writes was not received at second-hand. It was one which his own eyes had beheld.

With John the divine glory of Christ is always bursting through its earthly guise. This takes place in small things as well as in great. It is John who tells us that when Judas came with a cohort of soldiers to arrest Jesus there was a sudden outflashing of His glory, and "they went backward and fell to the ground" (xviii. 6). And yet the Eternal Word, whose effulgent glory is "too bright for human eyes, is subject to human infirmities; He is hungry (iv. 31); He is wearied (iv. 6); He is troubled in spirit (xi. 33); He is sorrowful (xi. 36). He is very man and very God.

2. *A sublime conception of the teachings of Jesus.* Jesus speaks as a man, but He speaks with the accent of God. He speaks the absolute, final, authoritative

\* "We *theatrized* His glory" would be a more exact rendering. It is suggested that His glory was gazed upon with the same rapturous delight with which men gaze upon the scenes in a theatre. See *The Expository Times*, Vol. X., p. 473.

word from which there is no appeal. John the Baptist was a voice dying away in the wilderness (i. 23); Jesus was the living Eternal Word (i. 1). John was a hand-lamp, shining for a season and going out (v. 35); Jesus was the unsetting sun of eternal truth, "the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world" (i. 9). (1) John reports the profound, mysterious sayings which Jesus speaks concerning Himself, and in which He gives a glimpse into the hidden depths of His divine consciousness. In these seven "I am's" Jesus tells us something of what He is. He says, "I am the bread of life" (vi. 35), the living and life-giving bread by which the world is fed; "I am the light of the world" (viii. 12), the sun and center of the moral universe; "I am the door" (x. 9), the only entrance into the divine fold; "I am the good shepherd" (x. 14), the guide and deliverer of humanity; "I am the resurrection and the life" (xi. 25), the vanquisher of death, the quickener of the spiritual nature of man; "I am the way and the truth and the life" (xiv. 6), the way to the Father, the revelation of truth, the opened fountain of life; "I am the true vine" (xv. 1), from which every holy and fruitful life is nourished.\* In these seven self-appellations Jesus in effect says, "All that humanity needs, that I am." (2) He gives the conversations of Jesus with individuals, of which there are fifteen—viz., with Andrew and another of John the Baptist's disciples (i. 39); with Simon Peter (i. 42); with Nathanael (i. 45-51); with an officer of Herod (iv. 46-54); with Nicodemus (iii. 1-15); with a woman of Samaria (iv. 1-30); with a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda (v. 5-18); with a

\* The synoptists tell us *what* Christ is; they reveal the man in his deeds. John tells us *who* Christ is; he reveals His inner essential nature.

man born blind (v. 1-12); with Mary and Martha (xi. 20-48); with Judas Iscariot (xiii. 17-30); with Philip (xiv. 8-11); with Pilate (xviii. 33-40); with Thomas (xx. 26-29); with Peter by the lake (xxi. 15-18). In all these personal conversations soul speaks to soul. The Good Physician deals with each case separately, suiting His treatment to special circumstances and needs. (3) The final discourses of Jesus in chapters xiv., xv., and xvi. In these allegorical, mystical discourses Jesus speaks His inmost thoughts, unfolding the doctrine of His personal spiritual presence, which is the leading characteristic of the new age—the age now current. His words are a great deep; but there is no mystery in His words that is not in Himself, as there is no mystery in Himself that is not in His words. (4) The farewell prayer of Jesus (xvii.), in which as the great High Priest of humanity He pours out His soul, praying for Himself that He might be glorified in the accomplishment of His work (1-6), for His disciples that they might be kept in His name (6-9), for His people that they might be one (20, 21), for the world that it might be saved (21-23).

These final words of Jesus are freely reported by John from memory. They may not be always exact in their outward form, but the spirit of the Master is in them. "The mouth of John," says Ewald, "is the mouth of the glorified Christ."

3. *A sublime conception of the religion of Jesus.* The evangelist, who emphasizes the spiritual side of the life of Jesus, emphasizes the spiritual side of religion. Religion is with him ethical and inward. He perhaps has too little regard for "the form of godliness." Of

institutional religion he has little to say. Even the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is passed over without a word.\*

His one undeviating aim is to set forth what is central and essential in religion. This he finds in the life of God manifested in Christ, and by Him communicated to man. With the synoptists the kingdom of God is the highest good; with John the kingdom has come, and the highest good is the eternal, absolute, perfect life possessed by Christ in fullness and imparted to all who, by coming into union with Him, have entered into the kingdom. (1) This life comes by birth (iii. 3). (2) It is produced by the inworking of the Holy Spirit (iii. 5). (3) It is the result of faith in a crucified Savior objectively revealed (iii. 14, 15). Through the revelation of Christ the Spirit operates. (4) It is qualitative rather than quantitative—not eternal *existence*, but “eternal *life*” (iii. 16). (5) It is self-developing. It develops from within, continuously and progressively (x. 10). (6) It is a present possession, existing germinally in the believer (v. 24). (7) It is derived from Christ (iii. 15). (8) It is conditioned upon faith. Faith begets spiritual life. It has life-giving power because it appropriates the life of Christ (vi. 51-54). (9) It is realized in the knowledge of God—not in knowing *about* God, but in knowing *God*. “This is life eternal that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ” (xvii. 3). The knowledge of God is not merely the way to eternal life; in it

\*While John makes nothing of liturgy, his gospel forms, as Resch, a modern German scholar has shown, the foundation of the earliest liturgical literature in the Christian Church. Echoes of his gospel are found in the liturgical forms of *The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles*.

eternal life consists. In the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of the true God, and the Christ through whom He is made known, is realized the eternal, ideal life, which is appropriately represented as "the life that is life indeed" (I. Tim. vi. 19). From this new, divine life all moral goodness springs.

4. *A sublime conception of the human activity of Jesus.* His human activity is not only an expression of divine power, it is a manifestation of divine glory. In His first miracle, which was a foreshadowing of His earthly work, "Jesus manifested His glory (ii. 11). The resuscitation of Lazarus was to the end "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (xi. 4). His entire life, in all its varied activities, was the outshining of His hidden glory.

5. *A sublime conception of the death of Jesus.* (1) He was not robbed of life; he laid it down (x. 11). (2) His death was not so much humiliation as it was glorification (xii. 23). (3) It is the source of life—a buried seed, which by dying becomes fruitful (xii. 24). (4) The source of power; by it Christ draws all men unto Himself (xii. 32). (5) The means by which He secures "authority over all flesh" (xvii. 1, 2). By His humiliation comes exaltation; by His death comes life. The cross of sacrifice is the throne of power.

6. *A sublime conception of the Christian life.* John's gospel deals with the deep, spiritual truths of the inner life. In it there is an absence of the objective ground of forgiveness which is so prominent in the writings of Paul. It is preëminently the gospel for Christians. (1) It represents Christians as sustaining a vital, mystical relation to Christ, being one with Him as the branch is one with the vine. (xv. 5). (2)

They are one with Him in service (xx. 21). (3) They are one with Him in suffering (xv. 20). (4) They are to be one with Him in glory (xvii. 24). (5) They are governed by "the law of Christ" (xiii. 34, xiv. 21). (6) They are "sons of light" (xii. 36). (7) They are illumined and led by the Holy Spirit (xiv. 16-26, xvi. 7). (8) They are spiritually one, belonging to different folds, but constituting one *flock* (x. 16). (9) They are to become visibly and organically one that the world may believe in Christ as the head of a new, world-wide order (xvii. 23). With John the kingdom of Jesus "is not of this world" (xvii. 10). It is a spiritual, interior thing, established first of all in the Christian heart, and from that center working out into every ramification of social life. One of the grave dangers of the present day lies in losing sight of the inner side of the kingdom.

7. *A sublime conception of the operation of spiritual law.* (1) The miracles of Jesus are the natural works of a supernatural being. They are not sudden irruptions of power overturning natural law. The *supernatural* is not the *unnatural*. At bottom the natural and the supernatural are one. Take for illustration the miracle of changing water into wine, which was the shortening of a natural process (ii. 1-12). (2) Penalty is not something arbitrarily imposed. It grows out of the nature of sin, which is a power unto disintegration and ruin. (3) Rewards are spiritual. They are the harvests of the past. (4) The coming of Christ is not a literal, outward coming, as in the synoptic gospels; but a spiritual presence, pervasive and universal, taking its place in the new order of things, and operating under the ordinary laws of spiritual

influence. (5) Worship is not a thing of times and places. It is unlocalized, spiritual, universal (iv. 1).

8. *A sublime conception of the unseen realm.* (1) Heaven is the Father's house, the heavenly, the archetypal home, (xiv. 2). (2) Into that upper home Christ brings His own (xiv. 3, 4). (3) By calling one back who had entered it He showed that the unseen world is not far away (xi. 43, 44). (4) By appearing to His disciples in His spiritual and glorified body He linked together the earthly and heavenly states (xx. 21). At the beginning of His ministry He promised to open heaven to His disciples (i. 51). This may be taken as a definition of His earthly work. He brings to view the glory of the invisible and eternal world, in the light of which He ever walked. To reveal this supermundane sphere of things, of which we catch but fleeting glimpses, is the province of John's gospel.

At the close of this gospel its object is definitely stated. "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye may have life in His name" (xx. 31). The message of this book is emphatically needed today to confirm the faith of the Church in Christ the Uncreated Life, that from Him there may flow into it in larger measure those vital forces which make for righteousness, personal and social.

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

This treatise, like Luke's gospel—of which it is a continuation—is dedicated by its author to his friend Theophilus. Theophilus was in all probability a Gentile Christian. The title "excellent" used in addressing him seems to be a term of respect generally applied to officers. It may therefore indicate that Theophilus was a man of rank. We are not to suppose that this "treatise" was written by Luke merely for private perusal of his friend. It was evidently meant to be given through him to a wide circle of readers.

### MOTIVE FOR WRITING THE BOOK

The book of Acts bears every evidence of having been written to exploit the work of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and its earlier chapters record events which constitute the material and necessary introduction to his main task. The acquaintance between Luke and Paul, which began at Troas, or possibly earlier, at Antioch, bound the two men together in a life-long friendship.

Luke was a member of the party which accompanied Paul on his voyage to Macedonia. He was also his close companion during his stay in Philippi (xvi. 10-16), although he did not share in the ill-treatment which Paul received, probably on account of his Greek dress and bearing. That he did not accompany



the apostle on his departure from Philippi is shown by the change in the narrative from the use of the first person plural to the third (xvi. 40). He does not come into view again in connection with Paul until some years later, when he joined him at Philippi in the course of his land journey from Corinth through Macedonia toward Jerusalem. From this time the two men were never separated during all the subsequent experiences recorded in the Acts.

Of Luke's work during the years that intervened between Paul's departure from Philippi (xv. 40) and his return to that city (xx. 3-6) only two rather questionable hints are afforded. In II. Cor. viii. 18 the apostle speaks of an unnamed brother whom he sent as the companion of Titus to Corinth, probably on the occasion of his transmission of his second letter to the Church in that place, and he refers to him as one whose praise in the gospel\* is spread throughout all the churches. The other instance is that of his taking this same unnamed party as his companion in his journeys among the churches to receive their offerings for the poor saints at Jerusalem. This brother has been by some identified as Luke. And the subscription to II. Corinthians in the Authorized Version states distinctly that that epistle "was written from Philippi," a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas." If these guesses could be verified, they would afford presumptive proof that Luke had spent the interval between Paul's visits in ministries directly connected with the advancement of Christianity. Be that as it may, the narrative of the final journey of Paul from Philippi to

\*The expression "in the gospel" cannot of course refer to the written gospel of Luke as some have fancied, but to the general propagation of the faith.

Jerusalem bears all the marks of an observant eye-witness. The incidents of the voyage are set down with care, and the interviews with James in Jerusalem are described as could have been done only by one who was present. Of the subsequent events, the assault upon Paul, his rescue by the Roman troops, his hearing in Jerusalem, his speedy removal to Cæsarea for safety, and his imprisonment there, Luke speaks as one who was always close at hand, although he is careful not to mention himself. He again appears in the graphic description of the voyage to Rome, with its shipwreck scene; a narrative whose vividness, and archæological accuracy could hardly be surpassed. During the two years of Paul's imprisonment—certainly at one time in that period—Luke was with the apostle as one of his helpers, and his salutation was joined with those of the other companions of Paul in the epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (Col. iv. 14, Phil. 24). Still later, at the moment when Paul felt that the end was fast approaching, and when he was dispatching a message to Timothy to take John Mark with him and hasten to his side, Luke alone was with him, others of his fellow-workers having gone on distant missions, and some having forsaken him. The friendship begun in Troas in A.D. 51 had grown steadily through the years, till at the close of the apostle's career in A.D. 66 or 67, Luke, if not the most conspicuous of Paul's helpers, was at least one of the most faithful, and his name will ever be held in loving remembrance by the Church as the sympathetic biographer of the great apostle, and incidentally the earliest historian of the Christian Church.

## STRUCTURE OF ACTS

The book falls naturally into two sections, the line between which is drawn at the opening of chapter xiii. It is not difficult to perceive that the interest of the writer lies with the second of these sections, that dealing with the ministry of the apostle Paul. The principal source for this division of the book is found in the so-called "we" passages (xvi. 10-17, xx. 5-16, xxi. 1-18, xxvii. 1 to xxviii. 16), *i. e.*, those in which the first person plural is used in describing the journeys of the apostle and his companions. We are here unquestionably following the personal journal of an intimate friend of Paul, who traveled with him at various times. Whether the other portions of the second section are by the same hand is still a question for criticism to determine, though it may be said that there seems to be a growing disposition to regard the author of the "we" sections as the writer of the whole. This decision would go far toward placing the Lukan authorship beyond question. It is highly probable that Luke kept a journal of his travels with Paul, and later supplemented the material therein contained with the personal recollections of the apostle, which would afford sufficient data for the contents of xiii.-xxviii. Of the earlier section, i.-xii., the records would naturally be found in Judea, and largely in the Jerusalem church, and the residence of Luke in Palestine for some two years would afford ample opportunity for the collection of these valuable memoirs, to be supplemented once more by the personal recollections of Paul in those narratives involving his own experiences, such as his conversion and

the journey to Jerusalem in company with Barnabas. Thus the two divisions of the book have to do with the leading figures of Peter and Paul respectively, and present inestimably precious memorials of the beginnings of Christianity.

#### VALUE OF THIS BOOK

The book of Acts is the background of all the epistles. It gives us a picture of New Testament Christianity which if not ideal, is real. Hence it is the most reliable missionary handbook. It shows the relation of Christianity to the political parties of the apostolic times, and to the common life of the people. It also supplies illuminating side-lights upon the social and political condition, not only of Palestine, but of the Roman world. But above all, it shows that the programme which Jesus set out to accomplish stood the test of experience, and that by His method of training the Twelve His influence was reduplicated. Although success came slowly, it came surely. The emancipation of Christianity from Judaism came as the transition of winter into spring. With the coming in of Gentile Christianity the Church entered upon its work of world-wide conquest.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

In this book Luke continues his record of the work of Christ. He sets before his friend Theophilus an account of the things which Jesus *continued* to do and teach from the time when he was taken up. He shows that the work of the risen, ascended, living, and reigning Christ is not ended, but that it goes on with augmented power.

This treatise is our only source of information regarding the origins of Christianity. "It is the best as well as the first manual of Church history." (Schaff.) It covers a period of about thirty years, a formative, epochal period, into which are crowded many stirring and far-reaching events.

Chief among the things which it describes are the following:

1. *A manifestation of divine power.* This is perhaps the leading characteristic of the book. In the words, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses" (i. 8), we have the germ of all that follows.

The hopes of the disciples had been frustrated. They were mourning a lost leader and a lost cause, when something happened which revolutionized them, and through them revolutionized the world. As "they all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer" (i. 14), the Holy Spirit was outpoured. Instantly they were transformed. Common men became mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds. Into the hearts of that small and feeble band had come a power which was to shake the earth. Little did the world-rulers dream that in an obscure room in Jerusalem the mightiest movement of all time was being inaugurated. It was a day of small things, but God was in it. It was the birth in weakness of God's greatest work—the re-creation of a ruined world.

In this book the Holy Spirit is the principal actor. He is referred to upward of seventy times. The book itself ought to be entitled "The Acts of the Holy Spirit," or "Acts of the Spirit wrought by

Apostolic Hands." As a record of His deeds it furnishes a sample of His general work.\*

2. *The human factors.* The acts of the Spirit are performed by the agency of redeemed men working in His power, employing the instrumentality of the gospel of Christ. (1) *Specimens are given of apostolic preaching.* Peter's Pentecostal sermon (ii. 14), his sermon in Solomon's porch (iii. 12), Philip's discourse to the Ethiopian eunuch (vii. 1), Paul's sermon before the Jews of Damascus (ix. 22), his sermon in Thessalonica (xvii. 3), his sermon in Corinth (xvii. 5), his sermon in the Areopagus of Athens (xvii. 22), are all reported. And in all the theme is the same. While showing wonderful adaptation to their respective audiences, the one aim which they have in common is to prove that Jesus is the Messiah.

Peter had the honor of preaching the first Christian sermon. As the Spirit's mouthpiece he preached with divine power. The people were astonished at his boldness, and that of John, seeing they were "unlearned and ignorant men" (iv. 13)—that is, men unlearned in Rabinnical lore; obscure men destitute of official rank—"and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus," and had been taught of Him, and inspired by Him. Their power could be accounted for only by connecting them with the spirit of power in the prophet of Nazareth. (2) *Specimens are given of apostolic conversions.* These are eight in number, viz.: those of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost (ii. 36-47); those of the Samaritans (viii. 12); that of the Ethiopian eunuch (viii. 27-40); that

\*In the Acts the Holy Spirit is connected with physical manifestations, in Paul's epistles mainly with the inner life. This is in harmony with the law of development.

of Saul (ix. 1-19); those of Cornelius and his household (x. 1-48); that of Lydia (xvi. 14-16); that of the jailer at Philippi (xvi. 25-34); those of Crispus and many of the Corinthians. These first fruits of a future harvest serve to illustrate with what fidelity the great commission of Jesus was fulfilled. They are typical cases, and show also how people were received into the new Christian society under apostolic administration.

3. *The founding of the Church.* In the upper room the disciples "stood by the cradle of the infant Church." The Church was not formally organized; it grew out of the common life of the believers as naturally as the flower grows from the seed.

(1) *It had a regenerate membership.* "The Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved" (ii. 47). He joined together in one fellowship those in whom the saving process had begun. The early Church was not composed of those who had attained complete sainthood, but of those who had started in a course, those who had begun a warfare, those who had turned to the light, those who had acknowledged Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master. As soon as any one had started in the new life the Lord led him into the Church, and the Church received him with open arms. The Church had not yet begun to establish a system of quarantine, it had not yet begun to use doctrinal passwords, nor had it dreamt of excluding from its sheltering fold any one whom the Lord had received. (2) *The early Apostolic Church was a self-governing body.* It was subject to no human authority. It acknowledged no headship save that of Christ. It ap-

pointed its own officers (i. 26, vi. 3), deacons to look after the temporalities of the Church, and elders to minister in spiritual things. This subdivision of labor was made on the ground of fitness; and those who "served tables," and those who "gave themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word" were all alike the servants of Christ and His kingdom. (3) *It was the center of a spiritual empire.* As soon as the idea of a political theocracy was abandoned by the followers of Jesus, the Church took the place of the kingdom. To the Church which was they looked as the agency by which the rule of Christ was to be established in the earth. *For* the Church and *through* the Church they worked, believing that by its enlargement the kingdom was to come.

4. *The first attempt to realize the Christian ideal socially.* The newly awakened sense of brotherhood led to the formation of a Christian commune, in which every one contributed to the common stock according to ability and drew out according to need (iv. 32-35). This community of goods was not an enforced rule; it was a free and spontaneous movement. It never became general, nor was it long continued. The world was not ripe for such a lofty ideal. It was an anticipation of the millennium, and had its value as a prophetic foreshadowing of the divine social order yet to be. The case of Ananias and Sapphira (v. 1-11) shows how mixed were the motives of some who professed to conform to the principles of this new social compact. The outbreak of jealousy on the part of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because the former thought that their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations (vi. 2) shows how difficult it



was to make distributions from the common store to the satisfaction of everybody. But because the Christian social ideal is too high for weak human nature in its present unsanctified state to attain unto, must it therefore be abandoned? By no means. It is the appointed goal toward which humanity must eagerly and steadily press.

5. *New leaders.* Carlyle says that the history of the world is the history of its great men. This is largely true of the Church. Behind the great movement which led to the planting of Christianity were great men who were providentially raised up as leaders. Up to this time Peter had been the most conspicuous figure. Not far behind him were, James the Lord's brother, who was bishop of the Church in Jerusalem (xv. 13); Philip the Evangelist, who went outside the pale of Judaism, bringing many Samaritans into the kingdom (viii. 25-40); Stephen, "a man full of grace and power," whose preaching set Jerusalem in a blaze (v. 5-15, vii.). In every great crisis, when there has been special work to do, God has found men to do it.

6. *Growth by persecution.* As the immediate result of the preaching of Stephen, the first persecution broke out. Stephen himself had the honor of being the first Christian martyr (vii. 59). His blood was the seed of the Church. The impression which his triumphant death made upon the mind of the young man Saul, who stood by holding the outer garments of those who stoned him to death, was in all likelihood an important link in the chain of events which led him to Christ. A Spanish painter represents Saul as having upon his face the shadow of his coming repentance,

and one of the ancient Fathers expressly declares "the Church owes Paul to Stephen."

Not long after, a second persecution broke out, when James, the brother of John, was beheaded by Herod (xii. 1, 2), and Peter was imprisoned, but was miraculously delivered (xii. 3-19).

By these persecutions the Christians were sifted. Their dispersion led to the spread of Christianity, for "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (viii. 4-11, 19). The wind of persecution wafted the seed of the gospel into distant lands. Christianity spread not by organization, but by diffusion. The seed was lost in the soil, the leaven was lost in the meal.

7. *A new conception of Christianity.* About this time a new name was coined to express the new idea concerning the religion of Jesus which was beginning to be held. It was called "the Way," or "that Way." Evidently it had come to be looked at as a mode of life, and not as a philosophy or creed or scheme of thought. Saul, the persecutor, went to Damascus with the avowed purpose that "if he found any that were of *the Way* he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (ix. 2). The people of that way of life were obnoxious to him. After his conversion, when Paul preached in Ephesus, it is said that "divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of *the Way* before the multitude" (xix. 9). Prejudice against that way of life darkened their minds against the truth. When Paul preached in Asia "there arose no small stir concerning *the Way*" (xix. 23). Practical religion stirs men up, excites them, antagonizes them, divides them. Paul admits with sorrow that he had

“persecuted *this Way* unto the death” (xxii. 4)—that is, those who walked in it. Now he had come to love this way. Felix listened to Paul’s plea with respect, “having perfect knowledge concerning *the Way*” (xxiv. 22). He knew the manner of life which Christians lived, he knew the principles of their religion, and hence he knew that the charges made against them were false. It was this ethical aspect of Christianity which gave it its power. It was a new conception of life, a new way of living.

8. *Liberalizing tendencies.* The tendency of Christianity to burst its Jewish shell is illustrated in the liberalizing of Peter, “the apostle of the circumcision.”\* We find him in Joppa, lodging “with one Simon, a tanner” (ix. 43). That in itself was a bold thing for him to do, inasmuch as it involved social ostracism by the strict Jews. A tanner was an unclean person. For a Jew to be a tanner was deemed sufficient ground for divorce. Having relinquished his narrow Jewish prejudices so as to recognize a man in a tanner, he was on the way to still greater enlargement. His emancipation was completed by a vision which taught him that no part of the human whole was to be despised, that God is no respecter of persons, and that His mercy is free to all (x. 9-23). It was on the roof of the tanner’s house that this wider vision came to him.

Later on, when he went to Antioch, Peter laid aside his Jewish scruples and lived for a time as did the Gentiles, but the liberty which he had in Christ he did

\*All the first Jewish Christians adhered tenaciously to the law. They made no change in the practice of ceremonial observances. They kept the Jewish Sabbath, they attended the temple, they fulfilled ceremonial righteousness. Jesus Himself was a conforming Jew. Gentiles were recognized only as proselytes coming through the portal of Judaism into the Church.

not always consistently maintain (Gal. ii. 1-4). Having come in sight of the land of liberty he retired into the background, and allowed the new Joshua who had appeared to lead the people into it. In spite of occasional ebbings of the tide, the cause of liberty kept moving forward. Limited views of God's mercy melted away as the scope and spirit of Christianity became understood. By its expanding life Christianity began to give proof that instead of being a Jewish sect, it was a world-wide religion.

9. *Paul*. "Paul the incomparable" (Stalker) now comes into view, standing head and shoulders above the apostles. The three outstanding points in his religious life are: (1) *His conversion*. This was the most important event in the history of the early Church. As narrated in Chapters IX., XXII., and XXVI., his conversion is intensely dramatic. Miraculous elements were present, but these were merely incidental. There was an instantaneous change in the aims and purposes of life. This change came from a revelation of the glorified Christ; which was not a subjective experience, but an objective appearance. The volitional element is brought out in Paul's subsequent declaration, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (xxvi. 19).

The conversion of Paul contains the germ of all his theology. Never was theology more firmly rooted in personal experience. The line of his Christological development, like that of the early Church, was from the divine Christ to the human Jesus. It is no accident that the one who more than any other has given shape to Christian theology never saw Christ in the flesh, but knew Him only as the spiritual, indwelling

Christ who is present to the consciousness of the Church to-day. (2) *His call to the apostleship.* He was inwardly and divinely called to this high office (Gal. i. 11-17). He was the last of the old order of apostles chosen directly by Christ, and the first of a new order who receive their commission not from man but from God, and are consecrated not by official hands, but by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. His claim to the apostleship is based upon the fact that he had seen the Lord, that his vision of Christ was real, and that therefore, he could testify to His resurrection.

The old order of apostles is gone. The vacancies in their ranks were not filled up. Apostolic succession is an ecclesiastic figment; the successors of the apostles in the present day are those who possess the apostolic spirit, and witness in their lives to Christ's resurrection power.

(3) *His mission to the Gentiles.* He was a chosen vessel to bear the gospel to the Gentiles (ix. 15). For that work he was eminently qualified. His residence in a university city brought him into touch with Greek culture. He had been a distinguished pupil of Gamaliel, "the beauty of the law." His ripe scholarship, combined with his catholic spirit, fitted him in a peculiar degree to be the apostle of the educated class. God makes no mistakes in the selection of His instruments. A man's mental and spiritual outfit indicates the divine ordainment in life.

10. *The first Christian Council.* See Chapter XV. This Council, which was held in Jerusalem, was not an ecclesiastical court, but a gathering for mutual conference. The subject discussed before it was the limits of Christian liberty. Circumcision had been

imposed upon Gentile converts as a condition of church membership. This bondage to the law was felt to be irksome. It was also held to be wrong, and was heartily denounced by Paul as inconsistent with the freedom granted under the gospel. The crisis was serious. It seemed as if nothing could prevent disruption. Happily schism was averted by the triumph of the broader policy. Differences of opinion were recognized and respected; the principles of unity in things fundamental, and liberty in things non-essential, were affirmed. The declaration of spiritual independence was proclaimed, and the Church was saved. The influence of James, the bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, was perhaps the most potent factor in securing this happy result (v. 13-21).

The catholicity of Paul, "the apostle of the uncircumcision," is seen in the fact that while he plead for the largest liberty, he himself was subject to the law (xxi. 26). His spirit of conciliation was carried almost to the point of compromise by his agreeing to the circumcision of Timothy (xvi. 1-3).

11. *A new center of operation.* The center of operation is now transferred from Jerusalem to Antioch. Here the disciples were first called Christians (xi. 26)—not in derision, but as indicating that they were now regarded as something more than a Jewish sect. The first Gentile Church was founded in Antioch by some obscure disciples who had been driven hither by persecution (xi. 19-21). This center of Greek culture was soon seized upon as a strategic point in the world-wide evangelism upon which the Church had entered. From it Christian heralds went forth to conquer the world for Christ.

Paul and Barnabas, separated by the Holy Spirit to the work of converting the Gentiles, set out on their first missionary journey into Asia Minor (xiii. 2-5).\* They proved to be true yoke-fellows. Is there not a hint of practical suggestiveness in the pairing of the disciples? Two are not only better than one, but two united are better than two separate and apart.

Owing to a disagreement, Paul and Barnabas "parted asunder one from the other" (xv. 37-39), Paul choosing Silas for his companion, and Barnabas cleaving to Mark. Following their separate ways they went forth to preach the gospel, extending their labors into Europe. This period has been called "the Christian Odyssey." It was a period of unparalleled missionary conquest. The rapid progress which Christianity made in the first twenty years after the death of its founder presents a strong argument for its heavenly origin. The younger Pliny, who died as early as A.D. 113, writing from his distant provinces of Pontus and Bithynia, says that "the Christians filled all towns and market-places."

When everything is most auspicious, suddenly the work is interrupted. As the result of a public furor which fanatical Jews from Asia Minor had raised against him, Paul was arrested. He defended himself before the people, and before the Sanhedrin, but without avail. His trial dragged through various weary stages. Finally he made his appeal to Cæsar, and was sent under a guard to Rome.

It had been the burning desire of Paul's heart to

\* As the result of this mission it is said that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (xiii. 48). The word "ordained" means "set in order." As many as set themselves in order to eternal life—being determined to obtain it—believed.

visit Rome. Strange was the way in which Providence granted his request. Not in this fashion had he thought of entering the City of the Seven Hills. But instead of moping over his unjust imprisonment, this "ambassador in bonds" made the most of the situation. He adjusted himself to his environment. For two years, while under military surveillance, "he dwelt in his own hired house, receiving all that went unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ" (xxviii. 31). Largely through his influence, the gospel spread in the imperial city. During this time of enforced seclusion four of his epistles were written. He evidently came to see that

"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform;"

for writing to his friends at Philippi, he says, "the things that happened unto me have fallen out unto the progress of the gospel, so that my bonds became manifest in Christ in the whole Prætorium, and to all the rest" (Phil. i. 12, 13). His letter to the Philippians he closes with the words, "All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Cæsar's household." Under the roof-tree of Nero, Christianity had found a place.

There was a rift in the clouds. Paul seems to have obtained a temporary release, which he improved by making a missionary tour into Spain; but in the persecution which arose under Nero, after the burning of Rome, he was suddenly arrested, brought back to Rome, and put to death. Five years at most after his martyrdom Jerusalem fell before Titus, and when the



awful storm in which it fell had spent its force the Jewish nationality was destroyed, the old religious order had passed away, and the mother Church was scattered to the winds. Meanwhile Christianity had become established in the world's political center. One mightier than all the Cæsars sat upon the throne, holding in His nail-pierced hand the scepter of universal dominion.

## THE PAULINE EPISTLES

Before taking up these epistles in detail a few introductory words are called for on the life and letters of St. Paul.

### HIS LIFE

Paul stood in the same relation to early Christianity that Luther did to the Reformation. He was the foremost man in the apostolic Church. He was equally distinguished as a thinker and a worker. In the range of his thought and in the sweep of his missionary sympathy and effort he was the least provincial of all the apostles. As the apostle of the Gentiles, he stands forth as the first representative of universal Christianity.

The place of his birth was Tarsus, the chief town of Cilicia; the date of his birth is somewhat uncertain, but he must have been about thirty years of age at the death of Stephen. His parents, who were pious Jews of the Pharisaic party, had probably migrated from Jerusalem to Tarsus. His father was a Roman citizen, who had probably secured his freedom by service in the civil wars. Tarsus, the place of his birth, was the seat of a famous university, but it is doubtful whether Saul as the son of a Pharisee would be allowed to attend a heathen institution of learning.\* Yet he must have come into touch with its life

\*The Jewish spirit was opposed to the study of Greek literature and philosophy. When a young Rabbi asked his teacher if he might not study

and felt its influence. His rabbinical education he received at Jerusalem under Gamaliel, the grandson of Hillel. This great rabbi, who was a fair-minded man (Acts v. 34), had won the title "the beauty of the law." His instruction must have been valuable; but still more important as a preparation for his future work was the committing of the law to memory, which was the method pursued in this theological school.

During his student life the great struggle in his soul began. His personal life was pure; he had kept himself unstained by the temptations of the city. Yet his heart had not found its center of rest. With all the ardor of his strong nature he took up the work of a defender of the faith of his fathers. After attending school for probably eight or ten years, he was sent back to take charge of a synagogue in one of the provinces. At least he seems not to have been in Jerusalem during the closing scenes in the life of Christ, or there would have been some reflection of those events in his epistles. The success of the new sect of Christians, however, demanded a capable and zealous defender of Judaism in Jerusalem, and we soon find Paul back in that religious center and probably in charge of the synagogue of the Cilicians. From this time he is recognized as a leader in the persecution of the Christians. The Jews felt and Paul felt that if this new sect was to triumph, all the hope of Judaism had perished. It was while engaged in this work of harrying the Christians that he came in contact with Stephen for the first time. Paul was doubtless one of those who

Greek philosophy, seeing he had fully mastered the law, the reply, in consonance with an absurd literalistic reading of Joshua i. 8, was, "If you can find one hour not day or night, then study it."

could not withstand the wisdom with which Stephen spoke. Yet he was not willing to yield to his reasoning. That last threatening, fiery speech of Stephen evidently made a great impression on him. The echoes from it are constantly ringing through his subsequent utterances. The upturned face of Stephen, shining with heavenly light, as he prayed that the sin of his cruel death might not be laid to the charge of his murderers, also deeply moved Paul's great heart. Yet he felt that the things affirmed by Stephen could not be true. The teachings of his parents, and of the rabbis, could not be false. This accursed sect must be blotted out. The work in Jerusalem was almost completed when he obtained letters to Damascus that he might go there and finish the work of destruction. This was the beginning of the end of his opposition to Christianity. Henceforth he entered upon a new experience. For the first time perhaps in weeks he stood face to face with himself, with his thoughts as his only companions. During that journey of six days, with no associates but a temple guard, with whom he had nothing in common, he was compelled to go over the experiences of the past, review the arguments, and ponder on the lives of those he had so actively persecuted. That Paul was immensely wrought upon by these things is shown by the fact that he was pressing on at midday in order to get into the midst of his work in Damascus. No sane man travels at midday in the Orient. While this conflict was going on in the mind of Paul, a light flashed out from heaven. Paul fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goads"—*i. e.*, against the prompt-

ings of your better nature. In the work of persecuting the Christians he had hoped to do something to satisfy his conscience, and to bring rest to his troubled heart. But when red-handed in the act of hunting down the followers of Jesus, persecuting them even to strange cities, Jesus met him on the way, revealing Himself to his spiritual nature, and bringing overwhelming conviction of his Messiahship, this proud young Pharisee no longer kicked against the goads, but yielding to the power of a conscience through which Christ spoke, he fell down at the feet of his glorified Lord in humility and contrition, making an absolute and unconditional surrender to His will. Henceforth his one aim in life was to do whatsoever the Lord would have him do.

Then follows his baptism by Ananias (Acts ix. 17), and after that his retirement into Arabia (Gal. i. 17). It was too violent a change to begin to preach at once. It was necessary to retreat into solitude to think out the meaning of the past, and to prepare his programme for the future. The name of the place to which he retired, Arabia, is somewhat vague. In all probability it was some place not far remote on the borders of Arabia, where one of the Jewish colonies from Babylon had settled. The time spent in retirement was at least a year. Measuring from his conversion to the time of his journey to Jerusalem, it was three years (Gal. i. 18). In its far-reaching results no period in the life of Paul was more important than this period of enforced solitude and silence.

From this point onward the life of Paul is bound up in the fortunes of the Christian Church, of which he became an acknowledged leader. Although for a

time he was looked upon with suspicion, yet he gradually won the confidence of the Christian brotherhood. And while his broader views of Christianity were often bitterly assailed by the Jewish party, the purity of his motives is unquestioned. It is safe to say that no other man has left such a deep and enduring mark upon Christian life and thought.

The epistles of Paul, which were written not in the quiet of the study, but on the drum-head in the field of battle, were "tracts for the times," called forth by local necessities. In all probability Paul himself had not the most distant dream that his fugitive writings would be preserved and studied in future ages. He builded better than he knew; but the worth of his work was not unknown to Him who by His Spirit moved upon his heart and directed his hand. He was the Spirit's chosen instrument in giving to the world a practical philosophy of the religion of Jesus the Christ.

#### HIS EPISTLES

The epistles of Paul give us a spiritual interpretation of the teaching and life of Jesus. They were in no sense formal documents prepared for the purpose of giving exact and precise expression to Christian thought after the manner of systematic treatises, but were rather the personal and friendly utterances of the missionary and evangelist, concerned in the special problems of individuals and churches. Where they give expression to the great principles of Christianity they do so in terms which met the demands of particular audiences. Every page of these writings glows with personal earnestness and fervor. The style is

often hurried and headlong. The writer throws himself into his theme with the passion of one who believes that the particular crisis to which he addresses himself is of the first importance, and that defection from his teachings constitutes the danger most to be feared in the churches. Where he could not go in person he could send a written message, thus duplicating his influence and supplementing his missionary work. His personality being perhaps the most conspicuous and impressive among the apostles, his writings were eagerly sought for, and were soon gathered into collections more or less complete. That all his epistles have been preserved is highly improbable; indeed, he refers in explicit terms to certain which have not survived (Col. iv. 16, I. Cor. v. 9; perhaps, also, Phil. iii. 1.) It is scarcely probable that a ministry as full and laborious as his, and covering so long a period, should have produced only some dozen writings of this character; but we may believe that in the providence of God those epistles which were of most importance to the welfare of the churches have survived.

The epistles of Paul are distributed over a period of more than a score of years, the earliest of them dating from a time well on in his missionary career. They may be divided into four groups, the first containing the two epistles written from Corinth (52-53 A.D.) to the Church at Thessalonica, only two or three months after its planting by Paul himself. These two epistles, which were separated by only a short interval, have been called the Eschatological Epistles, as dealing particularly with the second advent—or in other words, the end of the Jewish

age and the victorious coming of the kingdom of heaven.

The second group embraces four epistles—Galatians, I. Corinthians, II. Corinthians, and Romans—which deal with the controversy regarding the relation of Christianity to Judaism, and may be called the Polemical Epistles, though their tone is not that of the mere controversialist, but rather of one who is seeking to emphasize the immeasurable superiority of the new faith to the old. They were written during the third missionary journey of the apostle (54-58 A. D.), beginning with his residence at Ephesus, from which city the first of them was probably sent, and closing with his short stay in Corinth, where it is believed the Epistle to the Romans was written.

The third group comprises the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians, written during the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome, from 62 to 64 A. D. These center about the character and work of Jesus, and are Christological, ethical, and personal.

The fourth group which includes I. Timothy, Titus, and II. Timothy, have generally been called the "Pastoral Epistles." They deal with church organization and government, and contain practical hints for the selection and guidance of evangelists, pastors, or bishops, and other Christian leaders. They appear to date from the closing years of the apostle's life, the first two from the period following his first Roman imprisonment, and the last from the closing days of his second imprisonment, just preceding his martyrdom.

In all of these epistles a uniform plan of arrange-



ment seems to be followed, though probably unconsciously, on the part of the writer. The framework into which they fall is substantially as follows:

1. A salutation, giving the superscription, in which are included the names of those who happened to be with Paul at the time as co-workers.

2. Thanksgiving for any qualities in the readers which the apostle feels moved to commend.

3. The general theme of the epistle, which is usually some phase of Christian teaching which needed particular emphasis in the case of the church or individual addressed.

4. A practical section, in which is given the application of the principles just set forth to the life of the church.

5. Personal messages to friends in the church.

6. Closing words and benediction. In some cases, the closing part of the epistle is written by Paul with his own hand, but in most cases the letter is dictated to an amanuensis. This order is, however, not invariable, but it serves in a measure to identify the apostle's writings.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

This epistle was written by Paul at Corinth in A. D. 58, at the close of his Macedonian tour. (Compare Acts xxi. 1-4, with Rom. xv. 25-27, xvi. 21).

The similarity of ideas in the epistles to the Romans and the Galatians strengthens the probability of but a brief interval of time between the dates of their composition. The epistle to the Galatians was written first, and all its ideas were still fresh in the mind of the apostle when he wrote to Rome. No fewer than twenty parallels of thought and expression are noted by the commentators, most of which can be easily traced by the most casual student. Another interesting study is Paul's use of the Old Testament in both epistles. In the Roman letter alone there are more than sixty quotations from the Old Testament.

### THE CHURCH ADDRESSED

This letter is addressed to a church which Paul had neither planted nor visited. Hence it is free from all the disturbing influences which come from the discussion of local questions and issues. It gives a calm and conciliatory forthsetting of the doctrines of grace as they appeared from the standpoint of the writer.

Regarding the origin of the Church of Rome nothing is positively known. The claim that it was founded by Peter lacks historical support. There is, however, every reason to believe that Peter visited

Rome in the latter part of his life, and that he did much to strengthen and develop the life of the Church. The tradition that he there suffered martyrdom appears to be well authenticated. The early history of the Church in Rome is shrouded in uncertainty. It is generally supposed to have been founded by Pentecostal Christians on their return from Jerusalem (Acts ii. 10), or possibly by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts xviii. 2); but these are mere conjectures. It seems to have been composed largely of Gentiles, with a goodly sprinkling of Jews and Jewish proselytes. By some it is thought that there were two separate congregations, a Jewish congregation within the precincts of the Ghetto, and a Gentile congregation hard by the royal palace. But of this division there is no convincing evidence. One thing is certain, the character of the members of this church was eminently satisfactory (i. 8, xv. 14). Those who in these sifting days espoused the cause of the Nazarene in Rome must have been men of heroic mold.

#### MOTIVE FOR WRITING IT

Paul's natural interest in Rome as the capital of the Roman empire, and as a strategic point in the extension of the kingdom of Christ, furnished a sufficient motive for writing this epistle. To conquer the world for Christ, Rome must be taken. In order, then, to prevent the disaster which had befallen the churches of Galatia, through false teachers, from overtaking the Church in that important center of influence, he desired beforehand to set before its members the truth of the gospel and its relations to the law.

## THE SITUATION

The picture of the Roman world at this time was anything but a bright one. The zenith of prosperity and power had been reached, and disintegrating forces were at work. The life, the glory, the power, and the vice of the Roman empire were all focalized in Rome. Rome was the vital heart of the empire. In it all lines of power centered. Between it and the most distant provinces intimate connection was maintained. Through its military prowess it had brought the whole world to its feet. But with prosperity had come deterioration of character. The old Roman virtues had become well-nigh extinct. Social corruption was bottomless. Government was despotic. One-half of the population were slaves. All labor was looked upon as servile and vulgar. Marriage was a voluntary compact, to be broken at will. Religion was an empty form, or at best a mere state utility. The temples were schools of vice. There was no longer any conservative middle class; on the one hand there was grinding poverty, on the other hand luxurious self-indulgence. Such a condition of things presaged ruin utter and irremediable.

Into this moral cesspool the apostle threw his gospel message, much in the same way as the ancient prophet threw a branch into the bitter waters to sweeten them. In the Church planted in this center of life Paul saw potentialities of reform. In it were influences which might yet stay the work of decay and change pagan Rome into the New Jerusalem. To help in the accomplishment of that result this letter was written.

## DOCTRINAL AIMS OF THE EPISTLE

The doctrinal aims of the epistle were to set forth the nature of the gospel in its relation to the law; the common heritage possessed by Jew and Gentile in the blessings of the gospel; and the obligations to Christian living springing from the fullness and freeness of God's grace to men. This epistle, which was the fountainhead of the reformation theology, was called by Luther "the chief book of the New Testament and the purest gospel."

The argument of this epistle is: (a) That all men, Jew and Gentile alike, are sinners, and stand in need of pardon. (b) That the only advantage possessed by the Jew over the Gentile was in the choice which God made of him as the custodian of His revelation to man. (c) That man as a sinner is unable of himself to attain salvation. (d) That the law is powerless to save. (e) That the salvation revealed in Christ is appropriated by faith, and not by works of law. (f) That by faith the sinner is justified, being brought into new relation to God and into possession of a new life. (g) That the believer being married to Christ is dead to the law. (h) That the people of Israel are not cast off forever—their temporary rejection being the opportunity of the Gentiles, their final acceptance the culmination of God's redemptive plan. (i) That no ground exists for boasting. (j) That all men are under the same obligation to accept Christ and bring forth the practical fruits of righteousness.

## UNITY OF THE EPISTLE

There seems to be evidence that the epistle existed under a variety of forms. It was sometimes used as a general treatise on theology with its epistolary features stripped off. Renan found evidence of four different endings, and gathered therefrom the conclusion that the body of the epistle was sent to four churches—namely, Rome, Ephesus, Thessalonica, and an unknown church—each letter bearing one of the terminations now thrown together in Chapters XV. and XVI. Dr. Lightfoot held, on the contrary, that the letter was written to Rome in nearly its present form, and was at a later time shortened by the apostle for the purpose of more general distribution among the churches, closing in this form with the benediction.\*

## SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

This is an "epistolary treatise" (Moulton), and not an inspired system of theology. It was written in the first lull of an active and tempestuous life to set forth to the Christians in Rome the cardinal principles of the Christian faith. Full of human interest, instinct with the life of the writer, and saturated with the

\*The relation of chapter xvi. to the rest of the *Épistle* has been the theme of much discussion. 1. One view is that xvi. 1-16, if not the whole chapter, was a separate ending, added to a copy of the letter which was sent to the Church in Ephesus, the original Roman letter closing with the benediction at xv. 33. In favor of this view is urged (1) The improbability of Priscilla and Aquila being in Rome, from which place they had come to Ephesus *via* Corinth (Acts xviii. 2, 18, 19), and especially since later on they are still in Ephesus (II. Tim. iv. 19), and (2) The difficulty of supposing that Paul knew thirty or more members of the Roman Church which he had never visited, while if these persons lived in Ephesus where he had labored long, the matter becomes simple. The unity of the letter is defended by many who urge that Priscilla and Aquila, called by their business to various cities, might easily have been at Rome at the date of the epistle, and that the other persons saluted might have gone from the various places in which Paul had met them, to Rome, the center to which all things good and bad made their way.

thought of the times, it deals profoundly and personally with vital questions which are for all times. While giving expression and shape to ideas which were struggling to the birth in the early Church, it also explains many doctrines from the writer's own personal point of view. Paul is not afraid to use the phrase "according to *my* gospel" (i. 16). He declared the gospel as it was revealed to him. Upon every part of his divine message his personal mark is visible.

The aim of the apostle is less to supply a corrective of the false teachers who sought to subvert the doctrine of salvation by grace than to give a prophetic forecast of the age-long conflict just opening between spiritual and legalistic Christianity, and to answer in advance some of the questions involved, thus anticipating many of the problems of a later day. Analyzing the contents of this weighty epistle, we find: (1) The thesis stated (i. 16, 17). (2) The universality of sin affirmed (i. 18, iii. 20). The sinfulness of the Gentiles is declared; then of the Jews. The conclusion reached is, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (iii. 10). All men are thus shut up to salvation through Christ. (3) The universality of grace. The Jews had advantage over the Gentiles in one respect—namely, in having been chosen as the depositaries of the oracles of God (iii. 2), but within the sphere of gospel privilege Jew and Gentile are alike. The gospel of the grace of God is for all mankind. (4) Salvation is by faith; and it is by faith that it might be by grace (iv. 16). The justification or adjustment of man by faith is the fundamental doctrine of the book. This doctrine is illustrated in the case of Abraham (iv. 1-5). (5) The ruin wrought by Adam, the first

head of the race, is repaired by Christ, the second Adam (v. 15-21). (6) The objection that free grace tends to laxity of morals is answered (vii. 1, 6). (7) The objection that it weakens the power of law is refuted (iii. 31, v. 15). (8) Justification involves spiritual incorporation. A justified soul is "in Christ" (viii. 1). He is united to Him; he lives in Him. (9) Marks of a justified man are pointed out (viii. 5-17). (10) Universality of grace does not contravene the promises of God to His ancient people (ix.-xi.). The door of mercy, open to the Gentiles, is also open to the Jews. (11) Spiritual sonship is not determined by natural descent (ix. 6-9). (12) The rejection of Israel is temporary (xi. 1). It will last only as long as unbelief and disobedience last (xi. 23). (13) The sovereignty of God is asserted in connection with the bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles (ix.-xi.). The calling of the Gentiles was in accordance with God's eternal purpose. It was no after-thought. The predestined plan of God included the possibility of salvation to all, and the certainty of salvation to all who believe in Christ. (14) Practical application of the doctrine of salvation by grace (xii.-xv.). Salvation is shown to consist of renewed character (xvi).

#### KEY-WORDS

The leading points in this masterly defense of evangelical Christianity may perhaps be best brought out by a study of the apostle's key-words. Of these the most important are:

1. *Power*. The word he uses is *dunamis*, from which comes our word dynamite. What an attractive word this must have been to the Romans, with



whom power was the supreme excellence, their word *virtus*, from which comes our word "virtue," meaning power or prowess. The reason for his readiness to preach the gospel in Rome, Paul gives in the words, "I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (i. 16). (1) The gospel is *power*. As a spiritual dynamic it is in striking contrast with the law, which is a thing of weakness (viii. 2-4). (2) It is *divine* power. "The power of God," the moral omnipotence of God lies within it. (3) It is *saving* power, "the power of God unto salvation." It has power to deliver man from the dominion of sin. (4) It is *universal* in its sweep, extending its saving operations not to an elect race only, but "to every one that believeth." (5) It is *adapted to all* classes and conditions of men, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Here was a weapon mightier than the sword of Cæsar. With this weapon the world is to be conquered for King Immanuel.

2. *Sin*. Paul has deep views of sin. The word which he generally uses denotes "error," or "a missing of the mark." A sinner is one who misses the true end of life. (1) Sin is not a malign power reigning over man, but an enemy dwelling in man (vii. 17). This enemy he has with his own hand admitted within the castle gate. (2) Sin is a man's free act. It is his spiritual child, conceived by him in the womb of his own mind. It is a spiritual creation for which he is solely responsible (ii. 6). (3) The sin-principle works through man's fleshly nature. In his flesh dwelleth no good thing (vii. 18). Through it come the motions of sin. The flesh and the spirit are antagonistic.

Holiness is the conquering of the flesh by the spirit (viii. 13). (4) The knowledge of sin comes by the law (iii. 20). (5) Abounding sin is overtopped by superabounding grace (v. 20). (6) Whereas the unbeliever is dead *in* sin, the Christian is dead *to* sin (vi. 2). Being dead to sin, he is freed from its curse and power (vii. 23).

3. *Righteousness.* That which renders the gospel the power of God unto salvation is that "therein is revealed God's righteousness" (i. 17). God's righteousness is at once the righteousness which inheres in His moral character, the righteousness which He requires of a man as a moral being, and the righteousness which He bestows upon unrighteous men. It is not something fictitious; it is not something which takes the place of personal righteousness as a title to everlasting life; it is not a robe which covers up moral deformity and defilement, making the sinner appear to be what he is not, but a divinely originated righteousness which he has made his own (iii. 22).

It was the plaint of the apostle that his kinsmen according to the flesh did not bring themselves into possession of the righteousness which God has provided for sinful men; "For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to God's righteousness (x. 3); that is, they did not seek "the kingdom of God and His righteousness"; they did not yield themselves to the only power that could make them righteous.

Law cannot produce righteousness. It cannot change the nature of man. It cannot give *enabling* power. But Christ, through whom God's righteous-

ness is mediated, is "the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth" (x. 4). He imparts to all who unite themselves to Him a power capable of producing righteousness. He is "the Lord our righteousness," the sole and efficient cause of holy character.

4. *Justification.* The primary meaning of the term justification is undoubtedly the act of rightening or making right with respect to the law. That it is generally used in a legal or forensic sense there cannot be a shadow of a doubt. Justification is not, in the first instance, a change of character, but a change of relation. It consists in putting a man right in respect to sin. But it consists, also, in the complete adjustment of man in all his relations Godward, manward, heavenward, and earthward. When a sinner is justified he is adjusted, rightened, or put right in the whole circle of his relationships. He is put right in his relation to God, and to God's law, pardon restoring the harmony between him and God which sin had disturbed; he is put right in relation to himself, his conscience being fully satisfied with the way in which pardon has come; he is put right in relation to his fellowmen, selfishness being replaced by love; he is put right in relation to his surroundings, his wishes being brought into harmony with God's appointments. In all his inner and outer relations he is completely adjusted. The change wrought is not objective, but subjective. It is the man himself who is rightened or adjusted. This is Paul's thought. The mold in which it is cast may be forensic, but the essential thing is not the form of the figure, but the ethical core which lies at the heart of it; and that ethical

core is the spiritual adjustment of man.\* Justification is no legal fiction. It is not the making out of a man to be righteous in the sense of making him out to be what he is not, still less the making of him to be righteous on the ground of the righteousness of another. When a man is justified he is put right with regard to the law which he has broken; he is put right also with respect to the law which he strives to obey. He is inwardly rectified. He is declared righteous because he is righteous. He is incipiently, germinally righteous. The fountain of a new life has been opened within him.

In Paul's scheme of thought, pardon or deliverance from condemnation is ascribed to the sufferings and death of Christ (iii. 25), while justification, or the inward adjustment of the soul, is ascribed to the impartation of the righteousness of Christ (iii. 22). Compare, also, Gal. iii. 13 with Rom. x. 3, and Eph. i. 7 with II. Cor. 5, 21.

5. *Faith*. "Faith" is with Paul a comprehensive word. (1) It is a faculty of the soul. "God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith" (xii. 3). He has endowed every man with a measure of the faith-faculty, which he can develop by use, or extirpate by disuse. (2) It is a law of life. Paul speaks of "the law of faith" (iii. 27) as something which is binding on all men. Obedience to this law is the only way in which man can be saved. (3) It is a moral act or state. In this sense it is equivalent to faithfulness. See iii. 2, where "the faith of God" is spoken of. By

\* An interesting use of the word "justify" is found in connection with type-setting. A compositor is said to "justify" a line or column of type when he spaces it properly or fills it out exactly so as to adjust it or make it even. In this use of the word there is a suggestion of its true ethical import—a justified person being one who has been brought into proper alignment.

the faith of God is meant His faithfulness. Faith and faithfulness are always conjoined. A man who has faith will be faithful in the discharge of duty. (4) It is the condition of justification, "the portal into the kingdom of God." We are "adjusted by faith" (v. 1)—that is, by faith as opposed to works of law; by faith that has Christ for its object. The saving element in justifying faith is objective, not subjective. "The just by faith shall live" (i. 7)—that is, those who are made just or righteous by faith shall live. Righteousness is always traced to faith, and never to works of law. God is the "justifier," the "*enrighteouser*" (Morison) "of him who is of the faith of Jesus" (iii. 26)—that is, of him who has faith of which Jesus is the object.\* (5) It is a power unto righteousness. It is no mere hand grasping a benefit, but a vital energy, an operative power, which working by love leads to righteousness. Paul's doctrine is that from inward faith and not from outward works righteousness proceeds. Faith is the root of righteousness. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (x. 10). Luther, while contending for the doctrine of justification by faith alone, did not overlook the ethical value of faith, for he maintains that the righteousness revealed in the gospel is at once "wrought in us by God and apprehended by the faith which holdeth it enclosed, as the ring the precious stone." Faith is said to be "imputed," or "reckoned" for righteousness (iv. 6). God, who sees what faith will ultimately produce,

\*A strong argument might be made for the subjective view of the expression "the faith of Jesus." That Jesus lived in the exercise of faith, and that He furnishes an inspiring example of a life rooted in faith, is a truth which has been too greatly overlooked; but in the New Testament teaching "the faith of Jesus" is without doubt the faith which He awakens and creates, the faith which terminates in Him as its living and life-giving object.

counts it for righteousness. He counts the implanted seed for the waving harvest. And He does this because righteousness is potentially in faith as the harvest is potentially in the seed. Faith is seminal righteousness; it is initial sanctification; it is the root principle of a godly life. In the last analysis faith and righteousness are one.

6. *Atonement.* The word atonement occurs only once in the Authorized Version of the New Testament—viz., in Rom. v. 11, where it is the equivalent of "reconciliation," and in the Revised Version it is so translated. (1) The reconciliation referred to is not the reconciliation of God to man, but of man to God. Christ did not appease the wrath of an angry God; He reconciled rebellious man to His loving Father. It is man who "*receives* the at-one-ment." (See, also, II. Cor. v. 18, 19.) (2) Men are "reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (v. 10). The cross, as the revelation of suffering, atoning love slays human enmity, awakens true repentance, and brings man into loving submission to God. (3) The reconciliation of man to God is looked at as something more than an individual thing. It embraces the entire race. Jesus is the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, with whom those who were aliens have a common sonship and a common inheritance. All who are united to Him come into a common participation of benefits which He has secured for them as their representative and head (v. 12-19).

7. *Adoption.* "To whom pertaineth the adoption" (ix. 4). With Paul adoption is a legal process, but it is a legal process which is accompanied by a moral change. Those whom God places among His chil-

dren "receive the spirit of adoption" (viii. 15). They live in filial relation with God; they have ascended from the natural to the spiritual plane of sonship. The natural sonship, which is set forth in the parable of the prodigal son as the basis of spiritual sonship, is ignored by Paul. Very slowly did the doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God, which is so prominent in the teaching of Jesus, gain a dominant place in the Church. Spiritual fatherhood obscured natural fatherhood, when it ought to have explained it. Spiritual sonship was made to exclude natural sonship, when it ought to have included it. The natural is the door to the spiritual. A natural son may become a spiritual son, and thus become an adopted son.

8. *Redemption.* "The redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (iii. 24) does not mean simple deliverance, but deliverance on the ground of a ransom. Christ is represented as giving Himself "a ransom for all," and the result of His sacrifice is the redemption of mankind. There is, however, a wider use of the term redemption. The root verb of the Greek word for redemption means "to loose," or "to release," without any reference to a ransom; and the corresponding term in Hebrew signifies deliverance by cutting or dividing. In several instances in the New Testament the idea of ransom is dropped from the word redemption, as for example, in viii. 23, where the reference is to "the redemption of the body"; but in its common use the word has unquestionably the meaning of deliverance by a purchase price which meets all legitimate and recognized claims. But here we stop, fearing lest we petrify one of the flowers of

poetry into a lifeless dogma. The question, To whom was the ransom paid? is an idle one. To the devil, is the answer which some theologians have ventured to give. To God, say others. Locke felt moved to ask, "Would it not be incongruous to pay the ransom to the party who receives the parties redeemed?" These difficulties arise from taking the word literally. The figure contained in the word must not be overstretched. All human analogies give at best a faint suggestion of divine realities. The truth at the heart of this word is that the soul of man is loosed or released from sin by means of the sacrifice of Christ.

9. *Propitiation.* "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation, through faith in His blood" (iii. 25). The marginal reading of the Revised Version has "propitiatory" for "propitiation," which is probably the correct rendering. There is evidently wrapped up in the word a reference to the mercy-seat, the golden covering of the ark of the covenant. Luther translates the word "the throne of grace"; Tyndale, "a seat of mercy."

The doctrinal import of the word seems to be that in the sacrifice of Christ we have the explanation of God's forbearance with the sinful. Christ was set forth by His atoning sacrifice as a propitiatory covering, protecting the law as the lid of the ark protected the two tables of stone on which the law was written. His sacrifice was not a propitiation offered unto God, but was the supreme act of divine self-propitiation. It came from the depths of the divine nature, and was the natural outgoing of essential love and righteousness. It is not to be looked upon as



the procuring cause of love, but as its outward manifestation. It is not to be looked upon as a means of softening the heart of the judge, but as the means of laying bare the heart of the Father. It is not to be looked upon as a satisfaction *to* divine justice, but as a satisfaction *of* divine justice. God would not have been just to Himself, He would not have been just to His sinful children, if He had not sacrificed Himself for their redemption. In the death of Christ we have not only an expression of God's love, we have also an expression of His righteousness. He was set forth "to proclaim God's *righteousness*, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime." The cross reveals God as "a *just* God, and a Saviour."

10. *Election.* "The purpose of God according to election" (ix. 11). Election is twofold—viz., election to salvation, and election to service. Election to salvation rests upon divine prevision with regard to faith; election to service rests upon divine prevision with regard to fitness. God elects to salvation those who fall in with His purpose in their lives; He elects to special office and work the individuals and nations that best suit His purpose. He put aside Esau and selected Jacob, because Jacob answered His purpose better (ix. 11). From among the apostles He chose Paul as "a vessel of election" to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, because he was the best instrument upon whom He could lay His hands. Election is thus conditional. It is by faith that it might be by choice. Those who are chosen to salvation are chosen in Christ; those who are chosen to service are chosen because they have qualified themselves, or are ready to qualify themselves for the work. The purpose of

election is eternal; the act of election relates to time, it takes place when the condition is supplied.

11. *Predestination.* "Predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (viii. 29). Predestination is a law of nature. In all things there is evidence of a prearranged plan. As an intelligent being, God has a plan according to which He works. (1) The end of the divine purpose in every life is a redeemed manhood. The expression "Foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son" means that moral goodness is the end of the divine purpose in every life. (2) All the activities of God converge to the accomplishment of His plan in human life. The end of the educational and disciplinary processes of life is to make men Christ-like. Character, not happiness is the end of life. The sufferings of the present are meant to contribute to moral well-being (viii. 28, 29). (3) The coöperation of man with God is necessary to the working out of His predestined plan in his life. The divine plan he must work out freely and intelligently, "giving all diligence to make his calling and election sure."

#### PRACTICAL SUMMARY

(1) The word "therefore" in Chapter xii. 1, forms the nexus between the doctrinal and practical parts of this epistle. "It gathers up the whole of the doctrinal part, and includes the whole of the practical part." It has eleven chapters lying behind it, and four lying before it, and it sums them all up. (a) The relation of this word to its contextual setting shows the vital connection that exists between doctrine and life. Doctrine is that which gives enforcement to duty; it

is that which furnishes motive for service. Creed and conduct are inseparably connected. (b) This word contains the reason for Christian living. Because!—*therefore!* Every therefore is preceded by a because. Because of what has gone before something ought to follow. There is a backward glance over the whole of Paul's statement regarding the fullness and freedom of God's grace. Privilege implies obligation. (c) This word is an appeal, "I beseech you, therefore." Religion is the response of the human to the divine, of human love to divine love, of human sacrifice to divine sacrifice. It is by the manifestation of God's mercy that man is moved to grateful service.

(2) Exhortation to specific duties. (a) To separation from the world, to humility, to the right use of gifts, to brotherly love, to love for enemies (xii.). (b) To subjection to civil authority, to love of neighbor, to watchfulness (xiii.). (c) To Christian forbearance and liberality (xiv.). (d) To the edifying of others, and to patience in Christian work (xv.). (e) Salutations and final blessings (xvi).

## THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS

After a period of almost unparalleled prosperity, in which Corinth won for herself the name of "the star of Hellas," she was totally destroyed by Mummius, in 146 B. C., and her inhabitants sold into slavery. The beauty and commercial value of her site attracted the notice of Julius Cæsar, who rebuilt the city, settling it with a colony of Greek and Roman freemen, and making it the seat of government in the province of Achaia. It was not long before a large measure of its former glory returned. It again became the maritime and trading center of Greece. It was an emporium for the world's commerce. Into it poured a heterogeneous population from all quarters of the globe. Wealth and luxury brought laxity of morals. The debasing worship of Aphrodite added to the general corruption, so that with its large commerce, its progress in the arts, especially its splendid architecture, its temples and shrines, it presented an exhibition of gilded iniquity.

Into this social maelstrom Paul came unheralded and unnoted, seeking to bring its lawless, turbulent life under the sway of the Prince of Peace. The work before him was one which might well have dismayed the sturdiest heart; but while weak in himself, he had supreme faith in the regenerating power of the gospel

of Christ, which it was given him to proclaim. He went quietly to work, delivering his message as opportunity presented, and laboring with his hands for his own support (iv. 11, 12); being assisted in part by contributions from the Church at Philippi (Phil. iv. 15, II. Cor. xv. 9). As was his wont, he made his way to the Jewish synagogue, and there preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed, and all his house, and were baptized (I. Cor. i. 2). The Jews were incensed. An open rupture took place. Paul was arrested and brought before Gallio, the brother of Seneca and uncle of Lucan, an amiable and fair-minded man, but one who had no interest whatever in what he regarded as a Jewish religious quarrel. He "cared for none of these things." "No man is as sweet to any one as Gallio is to all," exclaims his brother Seneca. What might have happened if he had understood the merits of the case! In his impatience he drove the fanatical Jews from his presence. The mob, delighted at the discomfiture of the Jews, were encouraged to resort to lynch law. They seized Sosthenes and beat him, under the very eyes of the proconsul.

Paul thereafter left the synagogue and went to a house near by owned by Justus, and there preached to the Gentiles. Many of them believed his word, and were baptized, among them Erastus, the city chamberlain. But most of the converts were from "the poor of this world."

Paul was much heartened in his work in Corinth by the presence and coöperation of Aquila and Priscilla, who had been expelled from Rome by Claudius. And when he left Corinth, he appointed as his successor

Apollos, an eloquent man, who had known only John's baptism, until instructed by this Christian couple more fully in the way of life, so that he became an efficient pastor of that struggling church. Referring to his work of confirmation, Paul says, "I planted, Apollos watered" (I. Cor. iii. 6). Apollos returned to Ephesus, where he met Paul, and told him of the condition of the Church. Things were in a bad way. The Church was like a ship among the breakers. A skillful hand was needed at the helm to steer it into the open sea. A letter, which unfortunately has been lost, was sent by Paul to the Corinthian Church (I. Cor. v. 9). In this letter they were admonished to separate themselves from their old heathen life as the only means of moral sanitation. Their reply was sent by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (I. Cor. vii. 1, xvi. 17), who told him in greater detail the whole sad story of the Church's backsliding. The tone of their letter was itself a revelation of the state of things. They maintained that it was impossible for them to avoid intercourse with the ungodly or to live out the Christian ideal. They had many questions to ask touching things moral, questions which showed that they were trying to see how close they could walk to the brink of the precipice without toppling over. They made no attempt to shun the very appearance of evil. They dallied with temptation. Paul was shocked to hear of the corruptions and disorders which had crept in among them, and he was still more shocked to find that these things were tolerated and defended. To answer their questions and to remedy the evils which had arisen the first epistle was written.

## SECOND EPISTLE

The second epistle, which may be styled Paul's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, was written soon after the first. It is intensely personal, and shows the agitation of a great soul tossed upon the waves of contending emotions. For those who by undermining his influence were breaking down the faith and morals of his converts, he has stinging words of reproof; for the signs of repentance and amendment which had been reported by Titus, who had been sent to make personal investigation into the state of affairs, he has words of satisfaction and praise. The growth of the Jewish faction alarmed him. Their denial of his apostolic authority he resented, not on his own account alone, but because it discounted all his teachings. The malignant slanders which they circulated against him he indignantly repudiated. An enumeration of the sufferings he had endured for Christ is wrung from him in self-defense. His rebukes, withering as they are, are given in a hesitant and regretful manner. Tearful tenderness is mingled with severity, and a gracious purpose suffuses the whole.

From the picture which these letters present, of a fickle, factious, wayward Church, we can understand something of the care of the churches which rested so heavily upon the heart of Paul. We can understand, also, something of the condition of society, and of church life in that early day. The "local coloring" is put on with a realistic touch. The portraiture of Corinthian society has great historical value. The portraiture of the Church set in the midst of the luxury and licentiousness of "the Vanity Fair of the

Roman Empire" suggests many important lessons. And above all, there are practical suggestions for the leaders of the Church in all time; for as Steir so well says, we have in these epistles "a pathology, a materia medica for all that are designed to be physicians in a larger or lesser circle." Paul's heartaches are the churches' health.

## SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

### FIRST EPISTLE

Nothing could be clearer than the purpose of this epistle. It was written to correct abuses and to straighten out difficulties which had arisen in the Church in Corinth. Its sagacious pastoral counsels throw light upon many of the practical problems with which the Church of to-day is confronted.

1. *The spirit of faction rebuked.* In the Corinthian Church there were four distinct parties—the Paul party, the Apollos party, the Peter party, and the Christ party (i. 12).\* The Christ party, which consisted of Jews who had seen the Lord, was the narrowest and bitterest of all. It was a rankling thorn in the apostle's side, and was frequently denounced by him for its arrogant claims. (See II. Cor. xi. 5, 13.)

Paul sought to shame the Corinthian converts out of their sectarian spirit, and out of their use of party names, by reminding them of their oneness in Christ. And although it was far from him to cast a slight upon the divine ordinance of baptism, yet in view of their unseemly division and strife, he was thankful

\* There is no evidence that the four factions in the Corinthian Church were fully organized parties, but they were sufficiently distinct to form elements of division and discord.



that as the founder of the Church he had baptized but few of them, lest they should say that he had baptized into his own name (i. 15).

2. *The method of apostolic preaching defended.* In Corinth, the focus of Greek culture, flourished the sophists, literary peacocks, who made an ostentatious display of their learning and eloquence. When Paul was compared with these oratorical experts fault was found with the simplicity of his preaching. His defense was that he made no pretension to "excellency of speech or of wisdom" (ii. 1). The power of his message lay not in his manner of telling it, but in the nature of the facts which it contained. Preached with simplicity "the word of the cross is to them that are perishing, foolishness; but unto us who are being saved it is the power of God" (i. 18). (1) The true preacher is the agent of a higher power. He is divinely chosen (i. 26). Hence he is not to magnify himself to the obscuring of Him whom he represents (i. 31). (2) He is a builder whose work is to be tested by fire (iii. 13). (3) He is an agriculturist, expending his effort upon God's "tilled land" (iii. 9). He labors on God's building that it may grow up into a holy temple for God's indwelling. He labors on God's tilled land that it may be made productive. (4) The seal of his divine commission is the spirit of consecration which he puts into the work (iv. 9-16).

3. *A wound probed.* Planted in the center of Oriental luxury and licentiousness, the Church in Corinth, instead of continuing to convert the sin-sodden heathenism by which it was surrounded, was in danger of being dragged back into the mire of sensuality from which it had been rescued. So low had it

become in moral tone that within its fellowship was retained a man guilty of incest. Against the shameless conduct of this offender, who flaunted his sin before the public gaze, not a single word of protest was raised. A case so notorious required to be handled boldly and skillfully. To save the life of the Church the gangrened limb had to be cut off. To save the soul of the offender himself it was necessary to make him feel that henceforth he could not be treated as a Christian brother, but as "a heathen man and a publican"—an object of Christian pity and reforming effort. (Compare v. 13 with Matt. xviii. 17.) Church discipline ought to have for its object "the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of Jesus" (v. 5). In turning the white light of Christian truth upon this dark deed which had brought reproach upon the Church of Christ in Corinth, Paul appealed with confidence to the new conscience which Christianity awakens (v. 8). Nor did he appeal in vain.

4. *Litigation condemned* (vi. 1-8). The Corinthians, with their sensitive Greek temperament, were excitable and quarrelsome. It needed a very small spark of provocation to kindle them into a blaze of resentment. Carried away by their turbulent passions, they obtruded their differences before an unbelieving world, and even prosecuted one another before heathen courts. Little disagreements, which as members of a common spiritual household they ought to have settled among themselves, became matters of public scandal. For such unseemly conduct they receive merited reproof. Lawsuits are not forbidden in every instance; but they are always condemned where

mutual forbearance and conciliation might heal the breach. A litigious spirit is an unchristian spirit. Christians are to submit to one another in the Lord. They are to test each other's conduct by the law of Christ. The saints who are to judge the world may be trusted to judge one another. And if there should be mistakes in judgment, "Why not rather take wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?" (vi. 8.) It is better to be wronged than to do wrong. And something must always be left over for the day of judgment.

5. *A spiritual diagnosis* (vi. 9-20). Like a skillful physician Paul "struck his finger on the place, and said, Thou ailest here! and here!" He knew what was wrong, and he knew the proper remedy to prescribe. The atmosphere of Corinth was morally enervating, and a tonic was needed to brace up the spiritual nature and give it power to resist evil of every kind. No soft apologies were made for human weakness. No attempt was made to palliate immorality by laying the blame of it on environment, although Corinth was in very truth "a vast Pandemonium" (Renan). None but the deepest motives are appealed to. Those who had been washed in the laver of regeneration are asked why they should wallow again in the mire of pollution (vi. 11). Those who are members of the body of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit are asked what they have to do with anything unclean (vi. 15). Those who are not their own are asked what right they have to dispose of themselves as they please, unless they please to dispose of themselves to the glory of their Lord and Master (vi. 20).

6. *Marriage and divorce* (vii.). The Corinthian

Church, in its letter to Paul, had asked some hard questions touching these delicate subjects. Paul was placed in a difficult position. Besides the Jewish party, with their strict ideas, and the Greek party, with their lax ideas concerning marriage, there was in Corinth a party that looked upon marriage as an impure thing, or at least inferior to celibacy. Paul took the ground that marriage is not only unforbidden, but that it is "a high and holy estate" conducive to chastity; albeit, in view of the impending distress, it was advisable for the followers of Christ to keep themselves as free as possible from the entanglements of domestic cares (vii. 1-7). Voluntary separation on account of difference in religion is strictly forbidden (vii. 10); but if the believing partner should be deserted by the unbelieving partner, the marriage relation would be practically dissolved (vii. 15). In mixed marriages divine grace is the controlling element, the unbelieving husband being "sanctified in the wife," and the unbelieving wife "sanctified in the husband" (vii. 14). But seeing that the end of all things was near, earthly ties were to be held loosely. "The time is shortened that henceforth those that have wives be as if they had none" (vii. 29).

7. *A question in casuistry* (viii.-x.). One of the burning questions in the Church at Corinth was, Is it right for a Christian to eat things sacrificed to idols? There were those who answered this question with a decided No! They affirmed that a Christian ought to be completely separated from his old life, that he ought to keep his hands clean of all complicity with the things which he has openly forsworn. There were others who reasoned that inasmuch as an idol is

nothing, the fact that meat has been offered to it makes no difference whatever with the meat; hence it may be partaken of without a single scruple. Paul took middle ground. While emphasizing the necessity of separation from the world, and recognizing the principle of liberty in things non-essential, he found in altruism the true principle of social action.\* A thing might be lawful and yet not be expedient (x. 23). For any one to sacrifice for the good of others that to which he has a lawful right is a Christly thing. No man liveth unto himself in everything, and no Christian ought to try to live unto himself in anything. His life ought to be one of self-dénial. He ought not to be always asking, Have I liberty to do this? but, Is it best for me to do it? How will the doing of it affect others? He ought to take the highest ground, not seeking his own profit in anything, but the profit of many that they may be saved (x. 33). (a) Altruism as a principle of social action is enforced by personal example (ix. 1-14). (2) In the contests of life self-denial is shown to be the price of self-mastery, and self-mastery the condition of success (ix. 26). (3) The position is taken that the Christian, although in the world, is not of it, but is as completely separated from it as the Israelites were separated from the Egyptians when baptized unto Moses in passing between the watery walls of the divided sea (x. 2). (4) The glory of God is made the final end to which the smallest things in life are to be subordinated (x. 31).

\*In this fact will be discerned a departure from the terms of the agreement reached between Paul and the stricter Jews at the Jerusalem conference (Acts xv. 20-29). That compact was broken almost immediately by the Judaizers, and its observance was probably soon abandoned by Paul.

8. *Rules of social decorum* (xi. 1-16). Such a small matter as whether women should veil or unveil their heads in public meetings for worship created a conflagration among the inflammable Corinthians. The settlement of the question might have been left to the sanctified common sense of the people themselves, but in the discussion which arose certain moral issues were involved, upon which Paul was glad to get the opportunity of making a pronouncement. The four things which he lays down as guiding principles in the matter of deportment are: (1) That the strictest propriety ought to be observed in the smallest details of outward conduct. For the Corinthian women to pray with heads uncovered was to run counter to the prevailing custom among Eastern women and to violate the prevailing ideas of modesty. They were to have "a sign of authority on their head because of the angels" (xi. 10). The meaning of this obscure text seems to be that they were to keep their heads veiled because of the spectators who might come into their assemblies to spy out the liberty which they had in Christ. They were to do nothing that would expose themselves, as Christians, to the scorn and ridicule of the world. They were, as Paul had said, "to give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews or to Greeks or to the Church of God" (x. 32). (2) That the veiled head is a sign of the subjection of women to the power of man; not, however, of a subjection that implies inferiority, but of a subjection which is in harmony with the equality of the sexes and the democracy of Christianity (xi. 12). (3) That the headship of humanity belongs to Christ, and that therefore the relation of the sexes to each other is to

be understood in connection with their common relation to Him (xi. 3).

9. *The Lord's Supper* (xi. 17-34). The Lord's Supper, which in that early day had become a recognized Christian institution, was an adjunct to the Agape, or love feast, at which the rich and the poor partook of a common repast. But alas! a sacrificial meal had been turned into a scene of gluttony; what was meant to be a spiritual rite had degenerated into a social function; what was appointed to minister to the soul was employed to minister to appetite. To such a sad pass had things come that when the Lord's Supper came to be celebrated at the end of the Agape, many of the participants were in a state of intoxication. Burning with shame, Paul rebukes them for their unseemly conduct. Upon all who profane the holy ordinance of the Eucharist he pronounces a curse. "Whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." This curse alights not upon those who are personally unworthy, but upon those who partake of the Supper without realizing its spiritual significance. "For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body." Self-examination ought, therefore, to turn not upon the question of personal worthiness, but upon the question of discerning the nature of this holy ordinance, and making it the medium of communication with the living, present Christ.

10. *Spiritual gifts* (xii., xiii., xiv.). The Corinthians were a gifted people. When they became Christians they coveted the new gifts of the Spirit. These

gifts they were tempted to use for display. Paul shows them that gifts are graded, and that the best are not the showiest, but those that are the most useful. He discriminates between gifts as follows: (1) *A common gift*, namely, the enlightenment by the Spirit in the knowledge of Christ. "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Spirit" (xii. 3); that is, no one can have a spiritual understanding of Jesus as Lord unless taught of the Spirit. (See Matt. xvi. 16, 17). This is a fundamental gift, and belongs to all Christians. (2) *Special gifts*, such as those enumerated in xii. 8-11. This list of gifts would require to be revised to suit present-day demands; for the gifts of the Spirit are always given according to existing conditions. Some gifts pass out of use, and others take their place. As new circumstances arise gifts are modified. Means are adapted to ends. Gifts exist for man. (3) *Greater and lesser gifts*. (a) Some gifts are bestowed for conspicuous work, others for work that is humble and obscure. (b) All gifts are from one source (xii. 4). (c) All gifts are designed to serve some useful end. They are "services of help" (xii. 28). (d) All gifts are supplemental one to another (xii. 12-27). The Church as the body of Christ is the myriad-handed agency through which His gifts are ministered. (4) *The greatest gifts*. The greatest gifts are those which are spiritual (xiv. 1). Miraculous gifts, such as those of healing or of tongues, may possess no spiritual value whatever; spiritual gifts are spiritually profitable; hence they are to be earnestly desired and eagerly sought after. (5) *The greatest gift*—love (xiii.). The queen of the graces, love is also the queen of the Spirit's gifts. It



is the crown and glory of the Christian life. Without it every form of service is empty and vain. It is greater than all other spiritual gifts, greater than faith or hope (xiii. 13). It has well been called "the greatest thing in the world." It is the all-inclusive, all-enduring gift, by which every other gift is sanctified. Miraculous gifts were, from their very nature, temporary. Spiritual gifts alone are permanent (xiii. 8). (6) The value of every gift is determined by the measure of good which it accomplishes (xiv. 19). The best gift is that which renders the highest service to the Church and to the world.\*

11. *The gospel defined* (xv. 1-11). In the midst of the controversial storm which had arisen the fundamental facts upon which Christianity is based are reaffirmed. A divinely inspired definition of the gospel is given. The gospel which Paul declares is the same as that which he preached to the Corinthians almost two years before. The gospel does not vary. It may be presented in a great variety of forms, but it is always the same in its subject-matter. (1) The gospel consists of positive facts. It is not a scheme or theory. It is not something of man's invention. It is the declaration of certain historical facts; which facts constitute Christianity a historical religion. (2) These facts, which are three in number, relate to a person. They are, that Christ died, was buried, and rose again—his incarnation being assumed: Upon this tri-factual gospel the apostle stood. Upon it the Corinthians had begun to build. By holding it fast they would be saved, "unless their faith was a delusion

\*The words of Paul, "Let the women keep silence in the churches," (xiv. 34), are not an absolute prohibition. They are simply an inculcation of modesty of deportment in a time of outbrealking lawlessness.

and a snare. (3) The value of these facts lies in their spiritual significance. The good news concerning Christ is that "He died *for our sins*." This is an uncommon expression. Generally it is said that Jesus died "for us." The vicarious nature of His death is brought sharply out. He died on account of our sins, to secure deliverance from their guilt and power. (4) These facts took place "according to the Scriptures"; not according to the New Testament Scriptures, for these were not yet written, but according to the Old Testament Scriptures, of whose prophetic foreshadowings they formed the consummation.

12. *The resurrection* (xv. 5-58). Some of the Corinthians doubted, others denied, the doctrine of the resurrection. Paul takes pains to show that this doctrine is the foundation upon which the whole fabric of Christianity rests. There are two little words upon which he hangs all his reasonings, to-wit, the words "if" and "now." (1) *A dreadful supposition*. "If Christ hath not been raised" — what follows? Let Paul answer. (a) Preaching is void (xv. 14). (b) Faith is void (xv. 14). (c) The apostles are convicted of being false witnesses (xv. 15). (d) Believers are still "in their sins" (xv. 17); *i. e.*, they are not delivered out of them. (e) Those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished (xv. 18). (f) Christians are of all men most pitiable, because they persist in clinging to a blasted hope. The misgivings which that dreadful "if" awakens are instantly dispelled. The resurrection of Christ is set forth as a historical fact which rests upon solid proof. No event in history has such a weight of evidence to support it. Against the cumulative proof which Paul here ad-

duces the gates of Hades cannot prevail (xv. 5-19).

(2) *A reasonable inquiry.* "How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?" (xv. 35.)

"Evidently, doubt as to the reality of the resurrection was due to difficulties as to its method" (McGiffert).

The inquiry is not denounced. Reason and the analogy of nature are appealed to in the effort to answer it. (a) The resurrection is literally "the upstanding" of the dead.

There is no break, no interruption in the continuity of their life. (b) The resurrection is not a condition of naked spirit.

The dead are "not thin ghosts blown about on wandering winds"; they stand up in bodies that have definite form.

The resurrection body is plainly declared to be "a spiritual body," but what a spiritual body is we have no means of knowing. (c) The resurrection body is evolved from within.

It grows within the mortal body, from which it emerges at death; it grows out of the spiritual life as a flower grows out of a seed. (d) The spiritual body is adapted to the spiritual state.

It will not clog nor hamper the development of the soul as the fleshly body often does. It will not be like an ill-fitting garment, but will match the spirit perfectly, forming a perfect organ for its expression and action.

It will not be subject to decay, but will retain the vigor of everlasting youth. In a word, it will be "made in the image of the heavenly," fashioned like unto the body of Christ's glory.

How was *Christ* raised up? and with what body did *He* come? In that way shall we be raised up. His resurrection is not only the pledge of ours, it is the archetype of ours. Because He rose we shall rise, and in the same way that He rose we shall rise.

(e) This transformation is accomplished by the power of Christ. It is by Him that we have the victory over sin and death; it is by Him that life is brought out of death. The risen Christ is to all His people "a life-giving spirit."

13. *Practical applications.* (1) General. Because you believe in a glorious future abound in the Lord's work in the present (xv. 58). Between doctrine and practice there is an intimate connection. Those who believe in the reality of the life to come will try to live well now. (2) Special. "Now concerning the collection for the saints" (xvi. 1). The unfortunate break between the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters has completely destroyed the force of the apostle's appeal. His plea is this, "You as Christians believe in a glorious resurrection, you believe that you are heirs of all the ages; then show the influence of your faith upon your works when you come to take the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem."

The practical bearing of the future upon the present lies in this, that it furnishes a right motive to social action. Materialism takes away all incentive to good doing. It selfishly says "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Belief in a future life tends to the elevation of the life that now is, by furnishing a motive to self-sacrifice. The man who feels most deeply the powers of the world to come will take the greatest interest in others.

14. *Benediction and malediction.* To those who love and serve the Lord Jesus, blessing; but "if any loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema!" "Maranatha!" the Lord is coming! Let all prepare to meet Him!

## SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

## SECOND EPISTLE

Nowhere do we get so close to the human heart of the great apostle as in this epistle. There is in it that personal element that gives to all true biography its abiding interest. The hidden motives of the soul are laid bare.

Having dispatched his first letter to the Corinthians by the hand of Titus, Paul had awaited the news of its reception with the greatest anxiety. The report of Titus was upon the whole satisfactory. Fruits meet for repentance had begun to appear, but many roots of bitterness yet remained. Influences were in operation which might nip the work of reformation in the bud. The Jewish party were trying to subvert Paul's influence by throwing aspersions upon his motives and making light of his claims. The very things he had done for conciliation were attributed to cowardice or fickleness. He was put upon the defensive, and his second epistle is, in the main, a personal vindication of his conduct. There is no systematic arrangement of material in this epistle. It is the outpouring of a soul quivering with emotion and stung to the quick with a sense of wrong.

1. *A lofty keynote.* Although born in trouble, this epistle is not in a minor key. It opens with an ascription of praise. Whatever the outlook might be, the uplook was bright. God was sure. Special grounds for thankfulness are given. (1) For comfort in affliction, comfort so abounding that out of it he was able to comfort others (i. 3-7). (2) The testimony of a

conscience void of offense (i. 12-22, ii. 1-4). Paul had promised to visit the Corinthians. Why had his promise not been redeemed? For two reasons: He wished to spare them the shame and pain of open rebuke. He wished also to stand back and see what they would do of their own accord to rectify the abuses which he had pointed out. Satisfactory reasons, both of them!

(3) The continued favor of God attested by continued usefulness. In Troas and elsewhere wide doors of opportunity were opened (ii. 12). (4) Triumph over every difficulty (ii. 14). God led him forth as a victorious soldier, causing him to triumph in the power of Christ, that the savor of his Master's name might be made manifest in every place.

2. *The Christian ministry exalted.* (1) Its power. It has the keys of the kingdom. The gospel which it proclaims has power to ban or bless, to blight or save, to give life or death. It is the touchstone of character (ii. 15, 16). (2) Its credentials. These are souls that have been redeemed by its power from the power of sin. Such souls are living letters, letters of commendation for those by whom they have been ministered, letters written by Christ Himself by the hand of His amanuenses (iii. 1-6). (3) Its glorious character. It is a ministry, not of condemnation, but of righteousness; not of bondage, but of liberty; not of the letter which passeth away, but of the spirit which endureth (iii. 4-17). (4) Its transforming influence. This transformation is not by beholding, but by reflecting (ii. 18, R. V.). The reflecting is the result of the beholding. As a mirror catches and reflects the image placed before it, so do our lives reflect the image of Christ. We are transformed progressively

into the likeness of Christ, not by retiring from the world and meditating upon His character, but by reflecting His image openly in the world. (5) Its rejection (iv. 1-6). The common reason for its rejection is clearly indicated in the words, "If our gospel be veiled, it is veiled by the things that are perishing" (suggested reading). The things of this world hypnotize the minds of men and blind them to spiritual things. Upon the soul immersed in material things the light of truth shines in vain. In spite of every effort to make the gospel plain, he may perish in darkness.

3. *Reasons for hope and courage.* (1) Divine power triumphing over human weakness. The heavenly treasure is put into an earthly vessel, "that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves" (iv. 7-15). The Christian life is a paradox. Its very infirmities give occasion for the display of divine grace. (2) The influence of things unseen (iv. 16-18). Paul stood by the gate which opens into the Beyond. The vision which he saw was an incentive to present duty. Earth's light afflictions, which are for the moment, were seen to be "working for him more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." The decay of the outward man meant the growth of the inward man; the fading out of the temporal meant the coming into sight of the eternal. With such a vision of the future filling the soul, all the trials and temptations of life were as the small dust on the balance. (3) An enchanting view of death (v. 1-7). The dissolution of the bodily frame exposes to view a building from God, eternal in the heavens. The tent gives place to the mansion,

the mortal body to the spiritual body. There is a body within a body; as the one decays the other grows. At death the spiritual emerges from the physical. The spirit does not pass out in utter nakedness, but clothed upon with the heavenly body. The mortal is swallowed up of life; it is absorbed into the higher life, as the seed is absorbed into the life of the plant. (4) Certainty of righteous recompense (v. 6-10). The judgment of Christians is a judgment of service. With regard to standing they have been judged already. The self-manifestation of motive before the judgment seat of Christ is to the end "that each one may receive the things done through the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Therefore, when motive is maligned, the Christian can calmly await that verdict which no one may dispute and against which there is no appeal.

4. *Motives, means, and ends.* (1) Fear as a motive. "Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men" (v. 11). Nothing is here said about preaching "the terror of the Lord." The reference is to the subjective effect of a vision of coming judgment upon those who see it. Moved with the fear of the Lord, they persuade men. Whether they appear sober-minded or fanatical their one absorbing passion is to persuade men to turn from sin to God. (2) Love as a motive. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (v. 14). Nothing puts upon any one a stronger pressure than love, and no love has a stronger pressure than the love of Christ. It is the mightiest force by which the heart of man can be moved. The power of that love is felt when the sacrifice in which it is expressed is



understood. "The love of Christ puts a strain upon us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, therefore all died"—the death of the one being in some valid sense the death of the all—"and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again" (v. 14, 15). (3) A new estimate of human value (v. 16). No man is known any longer after the flesh. Race and rank are lost sight of; moral worth is alone considered. "In the case of the rich man we lose sight of his riches, in that of the learned of his learning, in that of the slave of his servitude." Even Christ is known no longer after the flesh. The outward conditions of His life are forgotten, and the essential glory of His inner life is the absorbing object of contemplation. In the revelation of his sacrificial love the humanity *in* which He suffered, and the humanity *for* which He suffered, becomes invested with a new glory. (4) A new sphere of creative power. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation" (v. 17); that is, if any man gets into Christ by knowing Him as He is revealed in His sacrificial death; if he voluntarily comes within the circle of His influence; if he enters into the thoughts and feelings of His infinite heart, he is created anew. Chaos is changed to cosmos in his life. (5) The gospel ministry an embassy of peace. Its end is the reconciliation of man to God. The preacher of the gospel is not a prosecuting attorney of the high court of heaven. He is "an ambassador on behalf of Christ" (v. 20). He goes forth proclaiming "the word of reconciliation" (v. 19). The substance of his message is "that God was in Christ, reconciling the

world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses" (v. 19). The barriers that stand in the way of reconciliation are all on man's side; therefore, it is to man that all suasive effort has to be directed. It is man who has to be persuaded to be reconciled to God, not God who has to be persuaded to be reconciled to man. The mission of Christ was not to appease the Sovereign's wrath, but to reveal the Father's love. And when those whom sin has estranged from God see Him as He is revealed in Christ, standing with outstretched hands pleading with them to be at one with Him, enmity is changed to love, and they become His friends.

5. *The fruits of reconciliation* (vi. vii.). (1) Coöperation with God (v. 1-11). The reconciling grace of God is operative and coöperative. It is received in vain unless it brings all the activities of the life into oneness with the activity of God in the work of human redemption. The reconciliation of the soul to God is not the ultimate end of religion. We are united to God that we may work out His will. Fellowship with God is fellowship in service. Encouragement to "work together with Him" is found in the certainty that He will at once accept and bless the service that is rendered. "Pray, for now is the time of acceptance; work, for now is the day when God is working for salvation!" Paul was anxious that the grace of God might have free course among the Corinthians, and bring forth its proper fruit, that his ministry might not be blamed for their shortcomings. (2) Enlargement (vi. 11-13). The soul that has been reconciled to God is to seek enlargement in all the elements of moral manhood. Paul himself seems to

have come into a larger place in Christian experience; and so, in spite of all that the Corinthians had said and done to grieve him, his affection kept enlarging toward them, and wishing them to come into the same rich experience as that into which he had been brought, he entreats them, "Be ye also enlarged." Enlarged conceptions of God, an enlarged vision of truth, enlargement of heart, enlargement of the aims and purposes of life, are among the things which those who live in union with God ought eagerly to seek after. (3) Separation from the world (vi. 14-18). The lines of separation drawn by Christianity are moral, not social; they mark distinctions not of rank, but of character. The social leper is to be shunned, let him be never so wealthy or talented or renowned. For what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity?" Christians are not to be "unequally yoked with unbelievers." They are to act toward them with the utmost courtesy and kindness; but they are not to meet them on terms of intimate fellowship, or form close alliances with them. In giving up fascinating friendships of an unholy sort, they gain more than they lose. The Lord receives them unto Himself and counts them His friends.

6. *Signs of promise* (vii.). From the report of Titus, Paul learned with joy that the Corinthians were endeavoring to reform. Every indication of amendment was regarded with interest. He was careful not to quench the feeblest aspirations after higher things. No longer did he regret that his former letter had given them pain, because he saw that their sorrow was having a reformatory effect, working in them "a repentance which bringeth no regret." They had

sought to clear their skirts as a church of participation in wrong-doing by excommunicating the unworthy member who had brought them trouble. This work of purification augured well for the future. It showed that the Church possessed the power of recuperation; and the subsequent restoration of the penitent offender showed also that the Church possessed something of her Lord's divine forgiveness.

7. *An object lesson* (viii., ix.). The churches of Macedonia are held up to the Corinthians as an example of benevolence. They had given from a right motive, they had given cheerfully, they had given freely, and they had given liberally. Moved by the grace of God, they had given up to their power—yea, beyond their power. They had given until it pinched. First of all, they gave themselves, then they gave of their substance. In the gift of self every other gift was included. The Corinthians had many excellencies, for which Paul praised them; but benevolence, that consummate flower of Christianity, was not one of them. Anxious "that they abound in this grace also," after holding up for their emulation the example of the Macedonians, he reminds them of "the grace of the Lord Jesus, who although rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich." For the sake of Him through whose self-emptying had come their enrichment they were to pour unstintedly their costliest treasure into the laps of those who were in need. Touched with the generosity of Christ, they were to manifest sensitiveness to every appeal for help, and readiness to respond to the full measure of their ability.

8. *An abrupt change* (x.-xiii.). So complete is the change of tone from the beginning of the tenth chapter to the close of the epistle that some have regarded these four chapters as constituting a distinct epistle, which in order of time precedes the second. There is, however, no good reason for calling in question the unity of the epistle. The change of tone can readily be accounted for on the supposition that Paul had just received fresh news from Corinth touching the pernicious influence of the Jewish party, who were sowing seeds of dissension and endeavoring to subvert his authority. What more natural than that his indignation should flame up as he is once more compelled to assume the defensive? The base calumnies by which he had been assailed he repels one by one. Then he turns the tables upon the false teachers themselves, charging them with employing a low standard of moral measurement, in "measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves with themselves," instead of testing themselves by the divine ideal furnished in the one perfect life. The jealousy which he had for his spiritual children was "a godly jealousy," which could be satisfied with nothing short of the best. The authority which he claimed over them was not official, but spiritual. His abundant labors gave proof of his sincerity, the special revelations which were granted to him gave proof of divine favor. With such credentials to show, not for a moment would he allow his good to be evil spoken of. The soundness of his teaching, the purity of his purposes, and the unselfishness of his deeds he stoutly asserted in the face of adverse criticism.

From the attitude of Paul toward his detractors we learn:

*a. That manly self-defense is a duty.* There are times when silence is a virtue; but when the wrong done is not simply a matter of personal hurt, but something that injures wide interests, it is a duty to speak out in self-defense. In such a case self-defense is really defense of the cause itself.

*b. That an egoist is not necessarily an egotist.* A Christian man, when compelled to speak of himself, may do so with becoming modesty. His boasting may not be so much boasting of what he has done as boasting of what the Lord has done for him and by him. There is no harm in glorying when the admonition is obeyed, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

*c. That a Christian is not a stoic.* Christianity develops natural sensibility; it gives to every feeling keenness of edge. When Paul was reproached for the name of Christ, he did not burn with resentment; he did not bewail his hard fate; he triumphed over personal feeling; he suffered and endured, as Christ did, and as every Christian ought to do.

*d. That steadfastness brings its sure reward.* Out of a life torn and rent by opposing forces may come the most blessed results. With no one is success unbroken. The foundations upon which others build are laid in the blood of sacrifice. The seed from which future harvests spring are sown in tears. A sacrificial life is never lived in vain.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

The twin questions of the identity of the Galatian churches and of Paul's relation to them are still somewhat open. It seems probable, in view of recent investigations,\* that these churches are to be identified with the earliest congregations organized by Paul and Barnabas, viz.: Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium and Lystra. Paul avers (Gal. iv. 12-13) that he first preached to them owing to an infirmity. This hints at a change of plan on the first missionary journey in company with Barnabas, necessitated by his illness, which caused the party to leave the coast for the highlands, in consequence of which the gospel was preached in these cities (Acts xiii. 13-53). Paul visited these churches again on his second missionary journey (Acts xvi. 6), and once more on his way to Ephesus (Acts xviii. 23), from which city he probably dispatched the epistle soon after his arrival, having observed disquieting conditions prevalent in the churches, for which he felt it necessary to deal sharply, as the tone of the epistle witnesses.

Galatia, a district of Asia Minor, was settled in the third century B.C. by Celtic invaders, and constituted a Roman province in 25 B.C. The population, which was originally Phrygian, was overpowered by the invading Celts, who gave their names to the district,

\*See Ramsay's works, especially *St. Paul, the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, and his numerous articles on the subject.

and became the predominant element in its mixed population, which included Greeks, Romans, and Jews. The character of the people was much like that of the Celts in Europe—genial, impulsive, hospitable, ardent, fickle. They were ready to accept a new teaching, but were easily induced to forsake it.

The prophet is generally followed by the priest; so after Paul's departure from Galatia his old enemies, the Judaizing teachers, came and tried to bring his converts under the bondage of legalism. Seeds of disaffection were sown. The charge was made that Paul was a pretender, and not a real apostle; that he had received all he knew of the gospel from Peter, James, and John at Jerusalem (Gal. i. 12); that these were the pillar apostles who alone were to be followed (Gal. ii. 6-9). It was boldly asserted by these false teachers that it was necessary to keep the law as well as to be obedient to the Christian faith (Gal. v. 18); that the gospel apart from the law was insufficient to save (Gal. iii. 23-26). The result of this teaching was a rapid defection of the Galatians to Judaistic legalism, the surrender of the cardinal truths which Paul had taught them, a weakening of confidence in his apostolic authority, a growing spirit of dissension in the churches, and a letting down from the high ideals of the gospel morality.

This letter, written under the pressure of great anxiety and strong feeling, aims to refute the charges of Jewish zealots, to check the tendency to apostatize from the true faith, and to exhort all to continue in the liberty of the gospel and the duties of the Christian life. In its literary style it is impassioned, agitated, rapid, broken, elliptical, and compressed. It is



the production of one who is put upon his mettle to defend the faith against wily antagonists. The tone is controversial, but the motive is spiritual. Over the question of circumcision a larger battle is fought—namely, the battle of religious freedom.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

After Paul's departure from Galatia his old enemies, the Judaistic teachers, crept in and tried to bring his converts under the bondage of legalism. They said, "Paul is an innovator and a heretic; he is subverting the teaching of Moses. Will you stand by Moses or by Paul?" What they ought to have asked was, "Will you stand by Moses or by Christ?"—for Paul was an interpreter of Christ. In the swift reply which Paul made the sledge-hammer blows which he rained upon the arguments of his unknown antagonists shattered their influence and put a check for the time upon Pharisaic and ritualistic tendencies in the infant church.

The ground plan of this epistle is very simple. In Chapters I. and II. Paul defends his claim to apostolic authority, by showing that his message was from God; in Chapters III. and IV., he declares the spiritual independence of the believer—especially his freedom from the yoke of ceremonialism; in Chapters V. and VI. he exhorts Christians to hold fast the liberty which they have in Christ, not abusing it, but using it for the highest ends.

Part I. *His defense.* After expressing amazement that the Galatians, who had received the gospel with so much enthusiasm, should have fallen such an easy prey to false teachers, and should have shifted ground

so quickly, he launches a thunderbolt against those who "pervert the gospel of Christ." Let the preacher of "a different gospel" be anathema! What sublime dogmatism!

Upon what did he base the conviction that he was right, and that consequently all who differed from him were wrong? (1) Upon the originality of his authority. The gospel which he preached was not a matter of opinion, but of revelation. He did not think it out; he did not receive it from man; it was directly revealed *to* him and *in* him (i. 12). With the inward revelation of the gospel came his commission to the work for which, in the divine purpose, he had been separated from his birth. The call was instantly obeyed. No human counsel was sought; the message that was received he hastened to declare, for he was sure that it was true. (2) The other disciples had nothing whatever to do with the shaping of his course. As he had not received his commission from them, neither was he indebted to them for further enlightenment. The gospel which he preached was his own, in the sense that it was the one which God gave to him personally (i. 16-19, ii. 1, 2). (3) The pillars of the Church, Peter, James, and John, had recognized the value of his message, and had given indorsement to his work, "glorifying God in him"—that is, glorifying God for what he had done in Him and by Him (i. 24)—and giving to him the right hand of fellowship (ii. 9). (4) His authority had even been unchallenged by a member of the apostolic brotherhood whom he rebuked. Peter, "the apostle of the circumcision," he "resisted to the face because he stood condemned," on account of his inconsistency in eating

with uncircumcised Gentiles at Antioch, "until certain came from James, when he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision" (ii. 11-14). An apostle who could rebuke an apostle must have felt very sure of his ground. (5) His gospel had all the authority of truth. It was in conformity with reason and experience. It did not require that a Gentile should live as a Jew; it did not make Judaism the portal to the Church; it proclaimed the justification of Jew and Gentile alike, not by works of law, but "through faith in Jesus Christ," thus providing power for the production of the righteousness which it demanded (ii. 16), and demonstrating the necessity for the sacrifice of Christ (ii. 21).

Part II. *The doctrinal thesis*—Christian liberty. The occasion demanded that this vital doctrine receive special emphasis. The Galatians had become bewitched by the plausible reasonings of the Judaizing teachers, who tried to convince them that the ceremonial law was of binding force, and that circumcision was necessary to Christian discipleship. To deliver their souls Paul seeks: (1) To awaken sacred memories. Had not the crucified Christ been set forth before their eyes, and had they not rejoiced in Him as all their salvation and all their desire? "Who, then, could have bewitched them by his gaze when they had only to fix their eyes upon Christ to escape the fascination" (Ellicott). (2) He appeals to their inner consciousness. Had they not received the Spirit "by the message of faith," rather than by works of law? (iii. 2.) What the false teachers called progress was really retrogression. (3) He sets before them the case of Abraham, whose faith was "reckoned

unto him for righteousness" (iii. 6), thus showing that before the law was given righteousness was attained by the way of faith. (4) He shows that the Abrahamic covenant, which was founded upon faith, had not been repealed by the Mosaic law (iii. 8-20). It was not a man's covenant. It came from God, and was ratified by His promise (iii. 17). It was fulfilled in Christ, the promised seed (iii. 15). It was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator (iii. 19). (5) He declares that the function of the law was to prepare the way for the gospel. The law was a "pedagogue," or "tutor," or "usher," or "child-leader," to give preliminary teaching and hand the pupil over to Christ (iii. 24). The law\* gave merely the alphabet of religion; it contained "weak and beggarly elements" (iv. 19), which were utterly inadequate in themselves to secure the end sought, and were valuable only as introductory to something higher. (6) The goal to which Paul leads up is Christ. In Him believers are justified (iii. 24); into Him they are baptized (iii. 27); in His life their lives are enveloped (iii. 27); in Him they are all made one (iii. 28); in Him they are brought from under the law into the glorious liberty of the children of God, "that they might receive the adoption of sons" (iv. 5). This is the climax. In Christ the spiritual emancipation of the race is proclaimed. Into the freedom of divine sonship all men are called. Those who are Christ's are freed from the law's slavery, from bondage to its irksome enactments, from thralldom to rules and

\*The term "law" is used by Paul in a twofold sense, as denoting the divinely authoritative instruction given to the Jew as a Jew; and the divinely authoritative instruction laid down as man to man. Here it is used in its restricted sense. In other words it is used to denote the ceremonial law rather than the moral law.

pledges and ceremonies. They are said to have been delivered from "the present evil age" (i. 4), the age then current, of whose hollow formalism the world had grown sick. They had been brought into a new age of freedom. They are free-born children (iv. 23); they are not under the law, but under grace; they are governed from within, and not from without; their religion is more concerned about the cleaning of the inside than of the outside of the platter; it is less concerned about externalities than about the possession of an inward spirit and principle of spiritual life. Their place is not in the Jerusalem below, which is in bondage, but in the Jerusalem above, which is free, and which is "our Mother" (iv. 26).

Part III. *Practical applications.* (1) *The necessity of maintaining spiritual independence.* "With freedom did Christ make us free; stand, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage" (v. 1). There is a tendency to relapse into spiritual bondage. The battle for freedom has to be often refought.

(2) *The danger of falling from grace.* The much abused phrase "fallen away from grace" (v. 4) does not refer to a state of apostacy, but to a change of spiritual base. Those who slide back from "the liberty wherewith Christ maketh free" into slavish legalism, fall from grace. By making circumcision essential to salvation, they stand under the law and fall from the plane of grace. If any Christian makes anything of his own, be it moral or ceremonial, essential to salvation, he transfers his trust from Christ to works, and falls from grace; and falling from grace, he comes under condemnation.

(3) *The impossibility of compromise.* Paul reasons

that if he preached salvation by circumcision, instead of salvation by faith, then would "the stumbling block of the cross have been done away" (v. 11). The persecution to which he was subjected showed that he was not trying to make the gospel palatable by mixing it with works of merit. The doctrine of the cross was offensive, because it represented salvation as coming through the sacrifice of another. Human pride is always offended when self-born deeds are made to count for nothing, and "faith working through love" (v. 6) to a life of self-renunciation is made "the one thing needful."

(4) *The right use of liberty.* Liberty is not license. "Ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another" (v. 13). Liberty is a great blessing, but it is not the greatest blessing. It is not an end, but only a mean to an end. Whether it prove a blessing at all depends upon the manner in which it is used. Liberty opens the way to new possibilities. When a nation is enslaved it cannot develop its powers; when its shackles are struck off it is free to grow. It is not any better for being free, but it has the opportunity to be better. So with a Christian. He is set free that he may attain higher ends—that he may, through love, be the servant of his fellowmen. His liberty is not to be used in a selfish, sinful way, but in brotherly service. As a free man he can serve his fellowmen or let them alone; he is under no outward compulsion to help them; but as a Christian man who has the love of Christ in his heart he is under an inward impulsion to use his freedom for high and noble ends.

(5) *Salvation by displacement.* "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (v. 16). Fleshly desires are displaced by cultivating the Spirit's presence. Two bodies cannot occupy the same place at the same time. The one will displace the other. Darkness is displaced by letting in the light, evil is supplanted with good, temptation is overcome by cultivating the opposing grace, relish for sinful things is destroyed by occupying the mind with lofty thoughts. By walking in the Spirit's power the bondage of the flesh is broken, and the lower self is brought into dominion to the higher self.

(6) *The law of Christ.* The law of Christ is the law of love which He promulgated and exemplified, the royal law in which all duty is comprehended. This law is fulfilled in bearing one another's burdens (vi. 2). Contrasted with it is the law of obligation to self, expressed in the words, "Every man shall bear his own burden" (vi. 5). These two laws, although different, are not antagonistic. Both are obligatory. Every man must bear his own burden of personality, of responsibility, of weakness, and of guilt. He must also bear the burdens of others; their burdens of poverty, of sin, and of trouble. It is his duty to transmute burden-bearing into burden-sharing. The law of love by which he is ruled is to be in him not only a social energy—the heart and life of social righteousness—but the source of free and joyous sacrifice for others.

(7) *Sowing and reaping.* The life of the flesh and the life of the spirit are contrasted as to their results. From the one we reap corruption, from the other eternal life (vi. 7, 8). There is given (a) a needed caution. "Let us not be weary in good doing." We

are apt to become faint-hearted and discouraged from the difficulties of the Christian life, from the small progress made, and from false ideas as to the results to be expected. (b) A suitable encouragement; "In due season"—that is, at the proper time, "we shall reap if we faint not." For the best things we have to wait the longest.

(8) *Glorying in the cross.* Glorying in it because of its moral power, and glorying in nothing else (v. 14). Nothing but the cross can effect that inward crucifixion by which sinful man is identified with Christ in the object of His death; and nothing that does not touch the inner life is worth glorying in, "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (vi. 15).

(9) *A holy indifference to the "mint and anise and cummin" of ceremonial religion.* "From henceforth let no man trouble me" (that is, about the mere externalities of religion), "for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus (vi. 17). The marks of Jesus are the wounds received in the service of the Master. A religion that has no marks of hardship or of sacrifice lacks the best credential of genuineness. Suffering for Jesus is a better sign of the Christian spirit than the most painstaking performance of outward religious acts. And because all outward acts derive their value from their inward motive, therefore the benediction—"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with your *spirit*, brethren, Amen." If the spirit is right all is right.



## THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

It is easy to perceive from even a cursory reading of the four epistles of the imprisonment that the great theme of Romans and Galatians—to-wit, justification by faith, no longer occupies the apostle's chief attention. New heresies begin to appear. Gnosticism is the particular form of error which receives attention in the present group. The effect of this error was to drag Christ down from His preëminence. In the letter to the Colossians a ringing declaration of the universal lordship of the Master is made in answer to all who would degrade the gospel. In this letter which is supplemental to Colossians, the main object is to show that the Church of which Christ is Lord is one; that Gentile and Jew are united in one purpose of redemption, that they enjoy alike the privileges and blessings of the new covenant, and that they are to unite together in working for the consummation of the kingdom through the Church. It is through this union of Gentile and Jew that the first step is taken in the summing up of all things in Christ. The fullness of Christ cannot be reached until Gentile and Jew alike come into possession of the fullness of His indwelling life. This view harmonizes with the fact that the Gentiles are addressed in this letter. Every building is to form part of one holy temple (ii. 21); every family is to be named after the one heavenly Father (iii. 14,

15). One Lord, hence one Church; and one redemption for all the world, and for all worlds.

This letter has by some been identified with the lost letter referred to in I. Cor. v. 9; by others with that referred to in Col. iv. 10. It has also been identified with "the letter to Laodicea" (Col. iv. 16)—that is, the letter sent to the Asiatic churches, copies of which were distributed to them from Laodicea. The difficulty in the case lies in the words "to the saints at Ephesus" (i. 1). These words are omitted from some of the most important manuscripts, and seem to be an interpolation. The probability is that an encyclical letter was addressed to the Ephesian churches—that is, to the churches in the district of Ephesus—and that this letter was sent to Laodicea as a distributing center, and afterward the name of the metropolitan church of the district was inserted as the church particularly addressed. But that the epistle was not meant for this church exclusively appears to be borne out by the absence of all local coloring. If the position be accepted that it was written especially for the Gentiles in the Ephesian churches, every difficulty is removed, and the teaching of the epistle becomes clear.

Paul certainly must have had interest enough in the Church in Ephesus to write a letter to it. His stay in Ephesus was longer than in any other city which he visited in his missionary tours. His work there was full of difficulties. Ephesus was an ancient city of great wealth and refinement. It was one of the leading seaports and markets of Asia Minor. Its two great attractions were its immense theater, capable of seating fifty thousand people, and its world-

renowned temple of Artemis, or Diana, which was one of the seven wonders of the world. The population, which was mostly Greek with a strong Asiatic mixture, was addicted to the practice of the black art. And one of the results of the preaching of the gospel by Paul was that expensive books on magic were collected and burned in the public square (Acts xix. 18, 19). Another result of his preaching was the diminishing of the revenues of the craftsmen who made silver shrines of Diana and sold them to the multitudes who gathered at the great festival held in honor of the goddess. These men, headed by Demetrius, raised a tumult, and organizing a mob, rushed to the theater. Here they indulged in an indescribable uproar, crying out by the space of two hours, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! The rabble was finally quieted and dispersed by the town clerk, but the incident convinced Paul that his work was done for the time; so he left the city and departed into Macedonia.

Afterward, when on his way to Jerusalem, Paul had a touching interview with the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts xx. 17-38).

Ephesus became one of the important centers of Christian influence. It became as intimately associated with the ministry of John as Jerusalem was with the ministry of James. It was also one of the seven churches to which a special message was sent. The letter in Revelation reveals something of the condition of the Church a few years after Paul's departure. "The merits and faults are alike those of a highly enlightened and mature community, deeply taught in divine truth and jealous for its purity, but allowing the chill to which a traditional faith, how-

ever exalted in its creed and theory, is liable, to infect their love of Christ" (Moule).

Under the chief theme of Christ and His Church, the principal points discussed in this epistle are,—the gospel an eternal plan and not an episode in the divine government; the permanent place of the Church in the outworking of the divine purpose in the world; the dependence of the Church upon Christ for its life; the glory of the redeemed; the oneness of Jew and Gentile in participation of the blessings of the gospel; the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer the pledge or seal of the sufficiency of the supply of divine life for growth into the fullness of the life of Christ; the dropping of the old life by the development of the new; the victory over sin by crucifixion with Christ rather than by self-crucifixion; the sanctifying of life's relationships by representing them as ties between the human and divine.

When looked upon as a sequel or supplement to the epistle to the Colossians, to be read to the same congregations, this epistle becomes luminous in meaning. It enforces truths already stated and defended, and carries them out to their practical conclusions as factors in the life of the Church.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

Written "to set forth the ground, the course, the aim and end of the Church of the faithful in Christ" (Alford). Written for the purpose of unfolding the doctrine of "the social or organic character of Christianity" (Canon Gore).

In the epistles to the Romans and Galatians faith is individualistic; it admits the soul who possesses it

into fellowship with God. Here it is social; it admits the soul who possesses it into the body of Christ, so that he becomes part of a living organism, a member of a holy brotherhood of fellowship and service.

This union of the believer with the body of Christ forms the basis of a Christian socialism. Out of union with Christ comes union into a Christian fellowship, and out of union into a Christian fellowship comes union into a world-wide brotherhood. The Church is the nucleus of that new social order which lies at the end of Christ's redemptive effort, and it is also the means of its realization.

1. *Development of the idea of the organic nature of Christianity.* (1) The purpose of God is defined to be, "to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth" (i. 10). This is the final end which God has in view—to bring all things in heaven and earth into one perfect unity, so that in all His universe there may be heard no note of discord.

(2) This purpose of reconciliation, hid for ages, has now been made known (i. 9, iii. 5-9). Paul prays that "a spirit of wisdom and revelation" may be given that it may be understood (i. 17, iii. 9).

(3) This purpose of unity is brought to fulfillment in Christ. How? (a) By uniting men to Himself. This is the starting point. Believers are chosen in Christ (i. 4); they have their sonship in Him (i. 5); they have redemption in Him (i. 7); in Him they are "made a heritage" (i. 11); in Him they are "created for good works," becoming "God's workmanship," a thing of God's making, a poem in which the divine goodness and beauty are expressed (ii. 10). The

reconstruction of humanity through the union of the individual soul with Christ is in harmony with God's predestined plan (i. 11, ii. 10). (b) This new unity comes through the impartation by Christ of new life (ii. 1). Life comes first, then organism. Life will take on some outward form. It will gather into itself everything it can utilize for its development. Paul prays that Christians may be "filled unto all the fullness of God" (iii. 19) with the life of love which Christ bestows, that being pervaded by one life-principle they may grow into one organic whole. (c) This new unity, of which Christ is the vital center, found its first visible expression in the union of Jew and Gentile (ii. 13-22). In Christ, Jew and Gentile were made nigh; the bitter enmity that existed between them was destroyed; so completely were they joined together that out of the twain one new man was said to have been created (ii. 15). The power that welded them into one was the sacrificial love of the cross (ii. 16). Their union was "in Christ." Christ is set forth in this epistle as the bond of spiritual union. The pregnant expression, "in Christ," which occurs in Paul's epistles one hundred and seventy-six times, is found in this epistle thirty-six times. The general scope of its meaning is, that within the zone of Christ's influence we have a new man, a man with a new nature and with new characteristics, and also a new mankind, a reconstructed humanity in which the incarnation of Christ is completed. (d) This new unity, of which Christ is the center, is realized in and through the Church. Jew and Gentile having been made "one new man" in Christ, form one body, in which the Spirit of the ascended Christ is operant, and

in which His fullness resides as "the fullness," "the brimmed receptacle" (Farrar), "of Him that filleth all in all," or "of Him who filleth all things with all things" (i. 23). The risen Christ fills the Church with His plenary fullness, that through it might be made known "the richly variegated wisdom of God" (iii. 10). He fills every member with gifts and graces suited to his circumstances, that in coöperation with his fellow members he may fill up that which remains of the service of Christ to the world. (e) The Church itself is the center of a wider unity. The divine life with which it is filled is destined to expand until it fills "all things" (iv. 10). The end for which Christ "ascended far above the heavens" was that He might empower the Church for her sublime mission of filling the world with His reconciling spirit. With this great ideal of a world filled with the Spirit of Christ the mind of Paul was haunted. He saw the Church in which Jew and Gentile were united widening beyond her boundaries, and growing into a spiritual temple more glorious than the temple of Diana; he saw the Church losing herself in the life of the world, until humanity itself became a spirit-filled temple, "a habitation of God in the Spirit" (ii. 22).

2. *Ways in which the unity in Christ of redeemed humanity may be promoted.*

(1) By keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (iv. 3). All true union is spiritual. Those who are indwelt and moved by the Spirit are bound together in the girdle of peace; their differences are harmonized; their aims and purposes are unified; they possess and express a true communal life. In so

far as people are truly Christian they are already united.

(2) By maintaining the unity of the faith (iv. 5). "There is one body," the universal Church, "and one Spirit," the Spirit of the ascended Christ; "one Lord," acknowledged by all Christians; "one faith," by which all are united to Christ; "one baptism," in which the Lord is confessed. Union is upon the essentials. Where there is difference of opinion, there may be oneness of faith.

(3) By putting the individual life into the life of the Church (iv. 16). Christ put Himself in fullness into the life of the Church. He lost His life that He might find it again. A life of social isolation is a life void of power. A life that is poured into the general life of the Church or community comes to the fullness of its power.

(4) By working for the same ends, sustaining towards each other harmonious relations, and being mutually helpful one to another (iv. 11-16). The same unity is to exist between Christians that exists between the various parts of the body. They are to grow up together into all things, developing progressively and proportionately through the constructive power of a common life, that they may cooperate in the accomplishment of common results.

(5) By cultivating the graces that make for social unity. (1) Putting away the things that alienate from the life of God (iv. 17-24). (2) Putting away the things that lead to social disruption, such as falsehood, anger, and malice (iv. 25-31). (3) Being "kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other" (iv. 32). (4) Seeking in everything to promote social



harmony. Walking in love (v. 8), walking with careful steps (v. 15), living in every particular so as to actualize the oneness of humanity in Christ. (5) Diffusing a spirit of social joyousness. "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody with the heart to the Lord" (v. 18, 19). This spirit of holy hilarity, which says, "I rejoice, do ye rejoice, is the sum of this epistle" (Bengel).

(6) By the performance of reciprocal duties. Husbands are to love their wives and wives their husbands, that living in mutual love they may render each other mutual submission and service (v. 22-31). Their union is to form a type of the union of Christ and His Church. The life of Christ is to pervade and regulate all social relations: the relation of children to parents and parents to children (vi. 4), the relation of masters to servants and servants to masters (vi. 5-9).

(7) By uniting forces in a common warfare against "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (vi. 12-20). The Church is not an end in itself; it is an instrumentality, an aggressive agency by which all the alien powers in the spiritual realm that fight against the divine order are to be overcome. The Christian is a soldier. He is to put on the whole of the God-provided armor, that he may fight for the vanquishment of the powers of evil and for the establishment of righteousness and truth. Armor is for earth, robes for heaven. Here we wear a helmet, there a crown; here we wield a sword, there we wave a palm; here we fight, there we rest. The battle is not to be given up until every rebellious power is put down, and the whole round world brought into harmony with the will of heaven.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

This is the first of a group of four epistles written by Paul during the first Roman imprisonment, A. D. 61-63 (Acts xxviii. 30). The view of Meyer and others, that these epistles were written during Paul's imprisonment in Cæsarea, is not convincing.

Philippi, because of its strategic position as the gateway to Macedonia, was enlarged by Philip, the father of Alexander, from an obscure place to an important military outpost. Its population consisted mainly of Roman veterans. The Jews being too few in number to support a synagogue, met in a proseucha or prayer-house on the river bank, outside the town. Among the women who resorted hither honorable mention is made of Lydia of Thyatira, who belonged to the guild of dyers. As she listened to the words of Paul and Silas one Sabbath morning, as they told that little company of the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy in the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord opened her heart. The truth entered into her inmost being, she accepted Jesus as her Saviour, and was baptized in His name. She was the first European convert. Paul felt free to accept the hospitality which Lydia pressed upon him, as she was in all likelihood well-to-do. Gratitude for spiritual blessings was the motive of her unstinted ministry to the Lord's servants. When Paul wrote this epistle Lydia must either have been dead,

or have removed from Philippi, otherwise there would most certainly have been mention made of her name; unless, as some have supposed, the reference to an unnamed "yoke fellow" points to Lydia, the seller of purple.

In Philippi occurred one of the most striking incidents in Paul's remarkable career—namely his miraculous deliverance from prison, and the conversion of the jailer. The whole scene is dramatically described by Luke in Acts xvi. 19-34.

The circumstance which drew from Paul this letter was the arrival of the evangelist Epaphroditus with a gift of money from his thoughtful Christian friends at Philippi. It gladdened Paul's heart to be remembered in his solitude. The deep interest of the Philippians in his welfare filled him with grateful joy. It has been suggested that there must have been a great deal of wealth in the Philippian Church, but that does not agree with the statement that the depth of their poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality (II. Cor. viii. 2). Never was the spirit of Christian altruism more beautifully illustrated than by this struggling church. And it may be that their sacrificial love led Paul's thoughts from the lower to the higher, and suggested to him those wonderful words about the self-emptying of Christ (ii. 5-7), in which we have perhaps the finest expression of the Christology of Paul.

For other reasons the Church at Philippi was peculiarly dear to the apostle. Besides being the first European church, it was on the whole a satisfactory church. It had not fallen into any serious errors in doctrine, like the Church at Colossæ; it had not

grown lax in discipline, like the Church in Corinth. Its good name had not been smirched. Its members had on the whole manifested a godly deportment. Yet the leaven of evil was hid in the meal, and was beginning to work. A spirit of estrangement and disunion was beginning to show itself. For the immediate healing of this breach Paul tenderly pleaded, that in all things the Church might fulfill her testimony for Christ and His righteousness.

In this epistle there is no systematic arrangement of thought. The gold of truth is not found in veins, but in pockets. The personal element is almost as marked as in Second Corinthians, but the tone is more tender. The change at the beginning of the third chapter is so abrupt that some have thought that the second section gives evidence of being a new letter. But sudden changes were common with the apostle. Sunshine and cloud, calm and storm, followed each other in rapid succession. Warning, entreaty, instruction, invective, irony, reproof, are all employed in turn; but all are sanctified by the holy motive expressed in the motto, "for Christ and His Church."

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

This letter, which was meant to be a simple note of thanks for a timely gift sent from the Church at Philippi to Paul during his imprisonment in Rome, forms a thread upon which are strung many priceless pearls of Christian thought. Important truth is taught incidentally, and a letter to a particular church becomes a message to the Church universal.

1. *There is generous recognition of goodness in others.*

"I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you" (i. 3). His thankfulness for what he had received from them is for the time swallowed up in his thankfulness for what they had received from God. Paul found much to praise and little to blame in his beloved Philippians. His letter to them is remarkably free from rebuke. The thing for which he was specially thankful was "their fellowship in furtherance of the gospel" (i. 5), and yet it is about this very matter of union in gospel work that he is specially solicitous. There had been a little "rift within the lute." General harmony prevailed. Two Christian sisters, however, had become estranged. To them is sent the special message, "I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord" (iv. 2). Fearing lest this disaffection should spread, he enforces the necessity of maintaining a spirit of unity (i. 27, ii. 2, 3, 14). Paul was hopeful. His hopefulness was founded in part upon their past unity of spirit, but still more upon the conviction that the good work begun in them was only in its incipiency, and that God would carry it on until it was perfected in the day of Christ. "God," says a German philosopher, "makes no half hinges." The work He begins He finishes. It will not be His fault if any one should fail. Coöperation with Him is demanded that the work begun may go on unto perfection, so that love may abound yet more and more, and life be filled with the fruits of righteousness (i. 9-11).

The use of the word "all" has been often noted. This letter itself is addressed "to all the saints that are at Philippi." Prayer is made for them all; confidence is expressed in them all; after them all Paul

longs "in the tender mercies of Jesus Christ." Among the things to be sought after are, "all discernment," "all boldness," "all might," "all patience," "all fullness." By Christ and for Christ "all things were created." The object of His earthly mission is explained to be "to reconcile all things unto Himself."

2. *A providential ordering of life* (i. 12-20). While a prisoner in Rome Paul seized the opportunity presented of preaching the gospel to the soldiers who were detailed to keep guard over him, and to whom he was successively chained. In this way his "bonds (literally, coupling-chain) became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Prætorian Guard" (i. 13), and even in Cæsar's household converts were won to Christ (iv. 22). Thus the very things that seemed calculated to hinder the gospel redounded to its progress. Seeing the success which attended this personal work among a class which as a rule is not easily reached, the zeal of others was stirred up, and although this zeal was not always pure, Paul magnanimously rejoiced in any good that might be done through the truth which these factional preachers might proclaim.

3. *Life at its best.* (1) A lofty aim. To magnify Christ, whether by life or by death (i. 20). Christ was the inspiration and pattern of Paul's life. Love to Christ was his dominant motive; the reproduction in his life of the life of Christ his constant aim. For him to live was for Christ to live over again in him (i. 21). (2) A sublime view of death, "To die is gain." All the garnered experiences of the present are carried into the future. Nothing is lost. Death

is the birth into a higher life. (3) Drawn in opposite directions. In a strait betwixt departing to be with Christ or remaining at work (i. 23). Had Paul's mind undergone a change? Is he now thinking of death rather than of the coming of Christ? Is he thinking of going to be with Christ rather than of Christ coming to be with him? In his outlook there is no change whatever, but death and the coming of Christ blend into one, both being alike near. Death is at hand, "and the Lord is at hand" (iv. 5), hence death is looked upon as coincident with Christ's coming. There is to be no period of waiting after death, but instant enjoyment of the Lord's presence, and instant transfiguration into His glory. (4) As between living and dying there is no choice. The matter is left at God's disposal. The only object in continued life is continued usefulness (i. 22-30).

4. *Necessity of cultivating unselfishness.* A man's interests begin with himself, but they do not end with himself. (1) Paul enjoins the Philippians to look upon their own things, to make progress in faith, to "behave as citizens worthily," to be united in spirit, to keep cool under the fire of the enemy, to be ready to suffer in the behalf of Christ. (2) He enjoins them to look not only to their own things, but "also to the things of others" (ii. 4). Self-love must not degenerate into selfishness. Self-love is right, selfishness is wrong; it is utterly opposed to the spirit of Christ. "Love your neighbor as yourself"; look upon the things of others as upon your own, look upon them thoughtfully, intelligently, sympathetically; look upon them through Christ's eyes.

Christianity is unselfish in spirit. It widens a

man's interests. It gives to his love a threefold direction; up to God, in to self, and out to his fellowmen. It gives value to his life by exalting the nature and multiplying the number of its interests.

5. *The power of Christ's example.* In the famous passage extending from the fifth to the eleventh verse of the second chapter of the epistle an argument for a life of self-denial is drawn from the incarnation. The method of the incarnation is suggested. Christ Jesus, who "originally existed "in the form of God," "counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, being made in the likeness of man." (1) The self-emptying of Christ, which is held up for imitation, is the essential thing in His incarnation. It implies "an emptying as to use and manifestation, and not as to possession" (Bruce). In becoming man He emptied Himself of His divine glory, not of His essential Godhead. He submitted to the limitations of human life. He manifested Himself in the flesh as far as it was possible for the Infinite to manifest Himself through the finite. He came down to man's level that He might lift him up into union with Himself. "He clothed Himself with a body like ours that He might clothe us with a glory like His." (2) The self-emptying of Christ was completed in His death. He emptied Himself in becoming man, he emptied Himself still further in taking the form of a servant; he emptied Himself yet more by "becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross." This was the climax of His self-humiliation. His death was the supreme act of self-surrendering love; it was the completion of the gift of



Himself to the world. The motive of His death was love, its purpose redemption. He became man, was subject to human conditions, that he might die; He died that He might redeem. When the divine likeness in man was waxing dim and was ready to vanish away, Christ came in the likeness of man and died in the likeness of man to restore in man the fading likeness of God. (3) The humiliation of Christ, which began with His birth, ended with His death. His exaltation began with His resurrection, and never ends. He was exalted to the right hand of power by His sacrifice, and unto Him has been given "the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus"—the name he bore in His humiliation—"every knee should bow" (ii. 9, 10). The lesson taught is this: Through humiliation comes exaltation, through self-emptying comes self-enrichment, through the cross of sacrifice comes the throne of power.

6. *Divine and human factors.* (1) The constant inworking of divine power an argument for personal activity. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (ii. 13). Work, for God is at work on your behalf. Coöperate with Him in securing the things which are embraced in the divine plan. Let your only fear be that of failing to avail yourself of the help of your mighty ally. (2) Reinforcements. To strengthen them in the faith, Paul purposed to send Timothy unto them shortly, for, says he, "I have no man like-minded who will care genuinely for your state" (ii. 19-24). He also sent back Epaphroditus, by whose hand the Philippians had sent their gift. Epaphroditus had

endeared himself to Paul. So ardently had he thrown himself into the work at Rome that he had been prostrated by a dangerous illness. Paul would fain have retained him, but he unselfishly gave him up to the Church which needed his service and which longed for his return. In sending him back he put into his hands this letter, fragrant with affection; with it richly repaying all their benefactions.

7. *A digression.* The flow of Paul's thought is arrested. He thinks of those false teachers who are sowing seeds of evil, and he exclaims, "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil-workers, beware of the concision" (iii. 2)—that is, beware of dog-like men who are contentious and malicious; beware of those who work from evil motives; beware of the amputators, the dividers, as he ironically calls those who substitute the cutting off of the flesh for the circumcision of the heart. Having uttered his warning, the thunder cloud rolls past, and the sun again breaks out.

8. *Self-confidence renounced.* Paul felt that he had as much reason as any one to have confidence in the flesh. He enumerates the points in his favor (iii. 4-6). All the things in which he once prided himself he now tosses overboard (iii. 7). In comparison with the excellent knowledge of Christ everything else was mere "refuse." One desire he had, and that was to be found in Christ, not having a self-originated righteousness, but one which came from Christ through faith (iii. 9). With his life rooted in Christ, he sought to come into conformity with Him in His death and resurrection (iii. 10, 11). The death and resurrection were not to him doctrines to be believed, but things to be experienced. To know the power of Christ's death

we must die with Him; to know the power of His resurrection we must rise with Him and become transfigured into His likeness.

9. *Conditions of progress.* (1) Dissatisfaction with the present (iii. 13). Satisfaction with present attainment puts a fatal arrest upon all progress. (2) Forgetfulness of past successes and failures, remembering only their lessons and making use of them in the improvement of the present. (3) Concentration of effort upon one thing. The prize of life is lost when energy is squandered upon a multitude of objects. (4) Discerning the purpose for which Christ seeks to influence us and seeking to realize it. By taking hold of that for which Christ has taken hold of us, the goal of life is reached (iii. 13, 14). (5) By copying the best human models (iii. 17). (6) By minding heavenly things (iii. 19, 20). The man whose citizenship is in heaven will make the best citizen on earth.

10. *Things emphasized.* (1) The ground of steadfastness. "Stand fast in the Lord" (iv. 1). (2) The ground of joy. "Rejoice in the Lord alway" (v. 1). Joy is the undertone of this epistle. It is not possible to have abiding joy in ourselves, in our surroundings or in our prospects; but it is possible to have abiding joy in Christ. There is something in Him which when known is fitted to fill the heart of man with joy unspeakable and everlasting. (2) Thankfulness for coming mercies. "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (xv. 6). Anticipate God's goodness, sing in the dark of the coming light, give thanks for the promised blessing which is already on its way. (3) The cultivation of companionship with noble thoughts (iv. 8). Look at the good side of

things, keep in a pure spiritual atmosphere, cherish lofty ideals. Thought is generative of deed. (4) The secret of contentment learned. "I have been initiated into the secret of contentment" (iv. 11). Where? In the school of Christ. Contentment does not come by nature. It is implied that much effort is required to master this hard lesson. (5) The source of strength. "I can do all things"—that is, all things that I am called upon to do—"in Him who 'strengtheneth me'" (iv. 13). "I can do" expresses a sense of power, "in Christ" points to the source of power. Power is present and continuous; it comes through Christ who "strengthens," or "is strengthening" all who are in union with Him. And since from Him is the power, to Him be the glory. "Let your boast be in the Lord" (iii. 1).

11. *A closing word of personal thanks.* Paul, in closing, comes to the subject which was the occasion of his writing this letter. He rejoices in the generosity of his Philippian converts. Their thought for him had "revived" or "blossomed" once more (iv. 10). This was at least the fourth time that they had ministered to his necessities. All that their thoughtful kindness needed to make it bloom anew was a fresh opportunity. But Paul cared less about the gift itself than about the benefit which came to them in the giving of it. He could have done without it, they could not. What He sought for them was fruit which increased to their account (iv. 18). As for himself he says, "I have all things and abound." Yet he knew how to receive a gift gracefully; he knew also how to make the giving of a gift minister to grace rather than pander to pride. The things that came from

them he speaks of as “an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God” (iv. 19); and he assured them that into their bosoms God would pour choicer gifts than those which they had bestowed upon His servant. “My God shall fulfill every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (iv. 19). The liberal soul shall be made fat.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

This letter is addressed to a church which Paul had not planted (i. 2). It was written about the same time as the Epistle to the Ephesians, upon the occasion of the visit of Epaphras, a presbyter of the Church of Colossæ, to Rome. Upon what mission Epaphras came to visit Paul we are not told. One thing is certain, he must have informed him of the condition of the church of which he was an officer. Paul's sympathy was at once enlisted for a church in the danger of being beguiled by a destructive heresy which was masquerading under the form of an advanced philosophy. The subtle enemy had already gained a foothold within the gates of the Church, and that was reason sufficient why Paul, upon whose heart lay the welfare of all the churches, should write, turning the white light of the gospel upon this new error, exposing its nature and its tendencies, and delivering the Colossians from its destructive power.

Colossæ at this time was not a very important place. Its glory had departed. It was overshadowed by the neighboring towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis. It gradually dwindled in size, until it finally disappeared, its very site being a matter of uncertainty. When Christianity was introduced into that decaying town on the banks of the Lycus, in the valley of Phrygia, the new life forces which it evoked finding

but few practical outlets, the people busied themselves with unprofitable speculations. The Jewish element was the prominent one in the Colossian Church, and the peculiar form of heresy which they embraced was a strange compound of Jewish legalism and Gnostic philosophy. This Judæo-Gnostic heresy plucked from the head of Christ His crown of glory by regarding Him as a mere emanation from God, the eternal God represented in terms of flesh. Hence the main object of Paul's letter is to show that Christ is the universal Lord, that His incomparable greatness and glory must not be dimmed by giving to Him a subordinate place within the scheme of creation or of redemption. And as the corollary drawn from that position, Christians are complete in Christ. Not in meat or drink, not in outward ordinances do they find completeness, but in the indwelling life of Christ. In His grace all life is transfigured. And since to Him is the power, to Him should be given the glory.

This epistle is closely related to the Epistle to the Ephesians; nearly forty parallels of language and thought may be traced between them. Yet this epistle contains much that is peculiar to itself. It is more polemical in tone than Ephesians; it gives a more sharply defined conception of the doctrine of the person of Christ, and sets itself more definitely to correct certain errors of teaching. It was probably written before Ephesians, and lays down the thesis of which Ephesians is an amplification and application. Its style is not as free and flowing as Ephesians, but it is none the less forceful. Evidently the apostle is upon new ground, and while he is absolutely sure of

himself, he shows that he is dealing with an unfamiliar subject. Some of the words which he uses, such as *æon* and *pleroma*, are not used by him elsewhere.

The letter itself was sent by the hand of Tychicus on his departure from Rome for the East, he stopping at Colossæ by the way to fulfill the commission of Paul (Col. v. 7). The salutations at the close of the epistle come in naturally enough from the circumstance that Paul had met several of the members of the Colossian Church. The Church was probably organized by disciples from Ephesus during Paul's ministry there (Acts xix. 10); and although he had not visited it personally he had known of its origin, and the revival of interest awakened by the report of Epaphras was the revival of an interest which had never ceased to exist.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

This epistle is twin to the Epistle to the Ephesians. It was written about the same time, has the same general atmosphere of thought, the same ethical aim, and the same exalted conception of Christ and the Church. The central thoughts, however, of the two epistles are different, that of Ephesians being the union of Christ and His Church, that of Colossians being the preëminent glory of Christ as the agent of creation and the author of salvation.

From the epistle itself we are able to gain a clear conception of the object for which it was written. Seeds of Oriental mysticism had taken root within the Church of Colossæ, and were spreading so rapidly that the pure doctrine of Christ was in danger of being choked. A heretical movement which received its



initial impulse from the Alexandrine school of philosophy was showing itself in two directions, one speculative, the other ethical. Matter was looked upon as evil, and the source of evil. Being evil, it could not, of course, have come directly from God, nor could it be governed directly by Him. In the effort to remove God as far as possible from contact with things evil, the creation and government of the world were relegated to a graded order of intermediate beings. And since in matter, and not in the perverted will, was found the source of evil, deliverance from sin was sought, not in the life of God imparted to the soul, but in the mortification of the flesh. Hence arose an ascetic tendency; abstinence from certain kinds of food was enjoined; the observance of certain days was insisted upon, and the attainment of the higher life was made dependent upon the performance of occult rites and ceremonies. Out of this grew an esoteric class whose claim to sanctity lay in abstraction from the world and contempt for the body. The descendants of this class were the unkempt, unwashed pillar saints of the Middle Ages. This esoteric class did not go the length of affirming that those who failed to adopt their ascetic practices were not Christians; all they affirmed was that they were Christians of a lower grade than themselves. The place of the uninitiated was in the outer court of the temple of Christian experience; the initiated alone were privileged to tread its inner courts.

Peculiar interest attaches to the study of this epistle from the circumstance that the very heresies which threatened the faith of the Colossian Church are being revived in the present day. There is nothing new

under the sun. Old tendencies reappear; old errors survive under changed forms. Streams which run underground and are lost to sight come after a time to the surface. And the charm of this letter, written to an obscure church in a sleepy, decaying town in the heart of Asia Minor, is that it reads like a modern production, supplying as it does an antidote to certain tendencies common to every age, and containing something of the essential, eternal truth which speaks to the universal heart.

How did Paul seek to counteract this subtle Oriental mysticism which threatened to sap the very foundations of the Christian faith? How did he attempt to neutralize its influence? What truth did he oppose to it? The answer is clear. He set in contrast to it the doctrine that Christ is the sole medium of creative and redemptive activity; that by Him the world was made, and by Him the world is being redeemed. To unfold that doctrine is the object of this epistle. Among the things made prominent are:

1. *The importance of faith in Jesus Christ as a spiritual center.* The thing for which Paul thanked God on behalf of the Colossians was that they anchored in this faith (i. 4), a faith which was founded upon "the word of the truth of the gospel" (i. 5), a faith which was "bearing fruit and increasing" (i. 6), a faith which was growing in enlightenment and power (i. 10, 11), a faith which was producing moral meekness for "the inheritance of the saints in light" (i. 13). Although in danger of drifting out into the shoreless sea of a dreamy, unpractical mysticism, they had not yet slipped their cable. They still held to Christ and

His teaching. By showing them that they had everything to lose and nothing to gain by renouncing Christ, Paul sought to confirm them in the faith.

2. *The exalted nature of Christ.* "The image of the invisible God" (i. 15). Christ was the supreme and sufficient manifestation of God, the connecting link between God and the world, and between God and man. The need of a series of intermediate beings to connect an evil world with a holy God is ruled out by the incarnation, in which the divine and human are united. God manifest in flesh means a personal God made visible, intelligible, and accessible. It means a God whom we can know, with whom we can hold intercourse, and in whom we can find the fountain of love and holiness. In a word, it means love made visible, for God is love.

3. *The creatorship of Christ.* "In Him were all things created" (i. 16). "In Him all things consist"—that is, "hold together" (i. 18. margin R. V.). Here we have the Christian theory of the origin of the universe. The fact that Christ is the creator of all things establishes: (1) The doctrine of his Godhood. (2) It gives a new meaning to nature, making it the outbirth of the redemptive principle. The work of creation is the work of Him who died on the cross. Creative activity is as much a necessity of the divine nature as redemptive activity. (3) The end of creation is discovered. "All things have been created through Him and unto Him" (i. 17). In Him the purpose of creation is at once expressed and fulfilled. (4) It shows our absolute dependence upon Christ. To Him we trace all we have or hope to have. And since to Him we owe everything, for Him we ought to use

everything. We ourselves belong to Him. He made us for Himself. We answer the end of our creation only when we live "unto Him."

4. *His headship over the Church.* "He is the head of the body, the Church" (i. 18). This position He has taken "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (i. 18), His place of supremacy in the world's affairs coming through the agency of the Church, whose movements He controls. To enable the Church to extend her sway, He brings her into possession of "the fullness of God" (i. 19).

5. *The union of all things in Him.* This union is accomplished through the cementing power of the blood of His cross (i. 20). It works out from an individual center, beginning with the reconciliation of the alienated soul (i. 21, 22), and ending with the reconciliation of an alienated world.

6. *Christ the hidden source of spiritual life.* The explanation of all goodness found in man is given in the words, "Christ in you the hope of glory" (i. 27). To unfold to the Gentiles the mystery hid from ages past that Christ is the secret root from which every holy life is nourished, was looked upon by Paul as his peculiar mission. What need of angels or emanations when Christ Himself is in every man helping him to live a better life? Christ is man's good angel.

But while Christ is in every man, Christians are "in Christ"; they derive their life consciously from Him; they are "rooted and built up in Him" (ii. 7). He is a flowing fountain which pours itself into their lives. They exchange their own emptiness for His fullness. In Him "dwelleth the fullness—or total-ity—of the Godhead bodily," and in Him they are

made complete (ii. 9, 10), receiving from Him a full complement of spiritual supplies.

The fullness of divine life enjoyed by those who come into union with Christ is available for all. There is nothing here of intellectual or spiritual exclusiveness. The benefits brought to man are not for an initiated few. Of the indwelling Christ, who is the root of righteousness, Paul says, "whom we proclaim, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ" (i. 28)—that is, perfect after the ideal presented in Christ, perfect through the power supplied in Christ. Perfection in Christ is attainable by all.

7. *Christ the sovereign of the unseen realm*—"the head of all principality and power" (ii. 10). The world of spirits is under His control. There is therefore no need to conciliate bad angels or to court the favor of good angels. The Lord, in whom we trust, has all authority in heaven and on earth. Having been buried with Him to the world in baptism, and having been "raised with Him through faith in the working of God" (ii. 12), we are to live the heavenly life, triumphing over the principalities and the powers in His name, being delivered from all fear touching that which lies beyond our mortal ken (ii. 15).

8. *Practical conclusions.* From a false philosophy come false ethical standards; from the application of false ethical standards comes a type of religious life marked by the absence of humility, having "a show of wisdom" which leads its possessor to be "vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind" (ii. 18). The Christian

who is satisfied with his attainments has too low a standard of moral measurement.

(1) Things to be avoided. (a) Christians are not to allow themselves to be judged by outward observances (ii. 16). (b) They are not to allow themselves to be robbed of the heavenly prize by having their dependence upon Christ weakened, or their allegiance to Christ divided (ii. 18, 19). Christ will have all our confidence and all our allegiance, or none. (c) They are not to "subject themselves to ordinances" which restrain their liberty by saying to them, "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch"\* (ii. 20, 21). In the entire regulation of their lives they are to assert their spiritual freedom under Christ. (d) They are to eschew all ascetic practices, for the good reason that there is in them no spiritual value whatsoever. They put no real check upon "the indulgence of the flesh" (ii. 23). A mad plunge is often taken from asceticism into animalism. The washed sow returns to her wallowing in the mire; the sow that has been transformed into a sheep prefers the green pastures. The body is kept under by keeping the spirit on the top.

(2) The one thing essential. "Holding fast the Head" (ii. 19). Recognizing Christ as "all in all" (iii. 12). It is not enough that Christ be not denied, He must not be put in a secondary place. He is not merely one of the world's great teachers, He is the world's greatest teacher. He stands alone. All that is good in other systems is found in its purity and completeness in His teaching. He is the only teacher whom it is safe to follow in all things. He

\* This text is generally misapplied. It is looked upon as an exhortation to abstinence. Instead of that it is really a warning against slavish restraint.

will not be patronized as good enough to start from. He is the Omega as well as the Alpha of God's revelation to man. His word is final. Nor is He merely one of the world's saviors; He is the world's only Savior. The world has many helpers; it has but one Savior. Nor is He merely something in the life of the Christian; He is everything. No higher life is possible than the life which comes from Him. That life is here represented as (a) something received. "Christ is our life" (iii. 4); He stirs within us as a resurrection power (iii. 1, 4); His will blends with ours (iii. 9, 10); His word "dwells in us [literally, keeps house within us] richly" (iii. 16). He is the life of our life. (b) Something outwardly expressed. Inflow is followed by outflow. "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (iii. 17). This command is all-inclusive. It comprehends every possible duty. Let Christ control the inward life, and He will be supreme in the outward life; live in Him and with Him, and you will live for Him; live for Him, and all life's duties will fall into their proper place in the divine order.

## THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS

These two books are the earliest of Paul's writings, having been written about 52 A. D., during his stay in Corinth. Not only are they the earliest of Paul's writings; they are also, with one possible exception, the earliest books of the New Testament, preceding the gospels by several years. As the first fruits of an ever-enlarging Christian literature they claim special attention and interest. What a vast amount the world has found in Christianity worth writing about! No one has ever stirred the intellectual and spiritual life of the world so profoundly as the Man of Nazareth.

### HISTORICAL SETTING

The Church addressed was in Thessalonica, an important city of Macedonia, situated on the north-west coast of the Ægean Sea. It stands in full view of Peleon and Olympus. It was the residence of a Roman proconsul, and a military station on one of the great highways of travel between Rome and the East. It is to-day one of the leading towns of European Turkey. Its population numbers about one hundred thousand. Its present name is Salonica.

Christianity was introduced into Thessalonica by Paul on his second missionary journey. He had just been liberated from the prison of Philippi, where he



and Silas had been beaten with rods. A wayworn traveler, he arrived at Thessalonica, along with Silas and Timothy, at a time of famine. The means received at Philippi had been exhausted, so he worked day and night at his trade of tent-maker to procure the necessaries of life. During his stay in Thessalonica he sojourned with one Jason, who afterward became a devoted co-worker.

For three Sabbath days he preached in the synagogue, but with little result. The Jews were suspicious and unresponsive. Then he turned to the Gentiles, among whom he had many converts; one of whom, Aristarchus, became a sharer with him in his later trials (Col. iv. 10).

The Jews, filled with jealousy because of the success of this new sect, stirred up a mob, who assaulted the house of Jason, where the apostle and his friends were thought to be concealed. Warned of the danger, they had taken refuge elsewhere, but Jason himself was seized and dragged before the magistrates,\* being released on condition that he would no longer harbor the followers of the Nazarene. To avoid further peril to Jason, Paul and his companions departed under cover of night to Berea.

#### THE OCCASION

Paul had been anxious to visit the church which he had planted, and which he had been forced to leave before his work of instruction and confirmation had been completed, but the way for doing so had not

\*The word used by Luke in his narrative for magistrates is "politarchs"; a word not found in ancient literature. Did Luke make a mistake? Confirmation of the accuracy of his narrative is found in the circumstance that this word which was used to designate the seven magistrates who ruled the city, is found inscribed on one of the stones taken from an arch in Thessalonica, and now in the British museum.

opened. When he came to Corinth he sent Timothy to inquire after their welfare. A good report was brought back concerning their spiritual condition.\* Two things, however, troubled Paul about them; they were encircled by the fires of persecution, and they were disturbed from within touching the death of some of their numbers. Their point of difficulty was this: Would those who had fallen asleep in death be shut out from a share in the Messianic blessings which were to be enjoyed at the coming of the Lord?

Unable to visit them in person, Paul sat down, and in the fullness of his heart wrote to them a letter with the twofold object of exhorting them to continued steadfastness in the midst of their afflictions, and to dissipate their fears regarding those who had died before the Lord's second advent. While emphasizing the immediacy of the Lord's return he assures them that the living would have no advantage over the dead. He encourages them to be faithful, warning them to beware of the wiles of the evil one, whose rage was fierce because his time was short, and holding up before them the hope of their speedy deliverance.

Commenting on this epistle, Professor Jowett says, "It does not detract from its value to say that it is without an object." Never had an epistle a more definite object.

#### SECOND EPISTLE

The second epistle was written a few months after the first, to correct certain wrong impressions that had been formed regarding the second advent. The

\* It is held by some that a letter was sent by the Thessalonians to Paul stating their difficulties. Professor J. Rendel Harris has attempted the reconstruction of a letter from the Thessalonians out of expressions which appear to be quotations from the Thessalonian letter.

Thessalonians had been thrown into the wildest excitement; their faith had become morbid; disorders had sprung up among them; they had become inattentive to the practical duties of life.\* To check the fire of fanaticism, Paul assured them that while the Lord's return was indeed imminent, they had entirely misunderstood its real character, and had drawn from his teachings upon the subject most unwarrantable conclusions. Before the Lord's return certain signs were to appear. "The lawless one," who opposed God and usurped His place, was yet to be revealed. And at the time of the greatest darkness the Son of Man was to come, destroying His enemies and bringing deliverance to His oppressed Church.

A true conception of the second advent, instead of paralyzing them with fear, was fitted by quickening hope to lead them to increased activity and courage in the performance of the duties of the present.

#### DOCTRINAL VALUE

These two epistles bring us into close touch with the generation in which our Lord lived. They show what ideas were agitating the minds of his disciples immediately after his departure. Their thoughts were all of their absent Lord. They held to the simple faith which had been the theme of Paul's preaching when he was among them, and was now the theme of his letter written a month or two after his enforced retreat. That faith was historical and Christological.

\*It has been maintained by some that the emotional conflagration among the Thessalonians can be explained only on the assumption that an incendiary letter purporting to come from Paul had reached them—reference to this spurious letter being found in Chaps. ii. 2, iii. 7. But their mistake concerning Paul's teaching in his first letter was in itself sufficient to account for their perturbation.

Simple as it was, in it were the germs of thought developed by Paul in his later writings. The advanced views of the person and work of Christ found in Ephesians and Colossians had not yet been worked out. Nor had the great question of justification by faith, discussed in Romans and Galatians, come into sight. The fundamental truths to which the Church in its infancy clung were that Jesus died and rose again, and that He was about to return in power and glory, to be forever present with His people.

## SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

### FIRST EPISTLE

In this letter there are no formal divisions, yet its contents may be grouped under three heads—namely, things personal, things doctrinal, and things practical. The first division, which is preliminary to the second, is the overture to the main piece, for as Dr. Farrar so well says, the second part contains “the doctrinal kernel and chief motive of the epistle;” the third division is the epilogue, in which the teaching of the whole is gathered up and applied.

#### 1. *Things personal.*

This part is largely reminiscent, and is marked by tenderness of spirit, gentleness of touch, and sweetness of tone. Only once does the indignation of Paul break forth, and that is when he thinks of the hindrance put upon his work by the bigoted opposition of the Jews (ii. 14-16). These few hot words form only a momentary digression. False teachers had not yet appeared to vex his righteous soul by their tare-sowing. The churches had not been moved from the

simplicity that is in Christ. The questions that agitated them, if not strictly ethical, are looked at from an ethical standpoint. It is therefore as a spiritual teacher, and not as a dialectician, that Paul speaks in this epistle.

(1) *There is a word of thanks to God* for their "work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (i. 3). Their faith was no "pauper grace," but brought forth the fruit of holy deeds; their love was no mere sentiment, but was the spring of beneficent activity; their patience was not the patience of hopelessness which faces the future with dumb, stolid indifference, but the patience of hope, which is sweet and sunny, enduring and courageous.

(2) *The way in which the gospel came to them.* "Not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (i. 5). Behind the word as an outward symbol they saw the thought of God, and felt its quickening touch. Hence came inward conviction of its truth and experience of its power.

(3) *How the gospel was received.* (1) In much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit (i. 6). In the joy born of the Holy Spirit all the trouble of the moment was swallowed up. (2) It was "accepted not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (ii. 13). (3) With practical effect. When they heard it they "turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven" (i. 9, 10). Waiting did not hinder working. While waiting for the deliverer they served the living God, by whom He was to be sent.

(4) *How the gospel was preached* (ii. 1-16). (1) With holy boldness (ii. 2). (2) With godly sincerity (ii. 3).

(3) Without flattery (ii. 5). (4) Without self-seeking (ii. 6). (5) With gentleness and tenderness (ii. 7). (6) With labor and travail (ii. 9)—two things without which no great undertaking was ever accomplished. (7) With a practical aim (ii. 12). This kind of preaching was not in vain (ii. 1). It never is. Upon those who received it, it had an encouraging and saving effect (ii. 11, 12). Upon those who opposed it, it brought wrath to the uttermost (ii. 16).

(5) *Pastoral longings.* "Bereaved" of his Thessalonian converts "for a season of an hour" (ii. 17), Paul desired to be with them, to the end that he might establish their hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, at the presence of our Lord Jesus with all His saints (iii. 13). Unable to visit them in person, he sent Timothy from Athens (iii. 1-5), to instruct them more fully in "the Way." As a young church, emerging from a life of heathenism, they needed guidance. Evil is often done through inexperience. A church without a teacher and leader is always in the gravest peril.

(6) *The ethical kernel of the epistle.* This is contained in the threefold exhortation;—please God, renounce sin, love the brethren; or to make it one exhortation, please God by renouncing sin and loving the brethren. (a) Please God. "Ye ought to walk and to please God" (iv. 1), that is, ye ought to live so as to please God. It is possible to please Him; it is easy to please Him; it is obligatory to please Him. Duty demands it. Gratitude demands it. (b) Renounce sin (iv. 1-8). The Thessalonian Church was composed almost entirely of Gentiles who had been delivered from an abyss of corruption. They were

in constant danger of returning to the pollution of heathenism. Hence the need of constant and strenuous striving after purity. It is implied that it is possible for Christian virtues to grow in heathen soil. Christianity is adapted to every social condition. (c) Brotherly love (iv. 9, 10). This was a new grace, and under such uncongenial skies it required careful nurturing. It is a grace that is always hard to grow; but it is the consummate flower of Christianity.

2. *Things doctrinal* (iv. 13-18, v. 1-11).

(1) *A heart-aching question.* The question which disturbed the Thessalonian was this: If Christ was coming soon to set up His kingdom and to gather His elect into it, what of those who had died before His coming? Would they share in the glories of His Messianic reign, or would they be left out on account of the mere accident of death? Paul's answer was that those who remained and were alive when Christ returned would not go before, or get any advantage of, those who had fallen asleep (or were "falling asleep," R. V.) in Christ; for the Lord would deliver them from the region of the dead, and would unite them in one everlasting fellowship with those who were on earth at His coming.

(2) *A glorious hope.* That Paul expected he would live to see the second advent is evident from the words, "*we* that are alive and remain." And had he not good ground for this expectation in the promise of Christ, "There be some of them that stand here which shall in nowise taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 28). Did the Lord "come as He had promised?" He certainly did not come as His followers expected.

Does He ever come in the manner in which He is expected to come?

(3) *The object of this hope.* Not "the coming" of Christ, but His "presence." The word "coming" is not used at all. The word so rendered is in the margin of the Revised Version rendered "presence." It means presence, and nothing but presence. Endless confusion has arisen from forcing another meaning upon it. There are four instances in this epistle in which the word occurs, in all of which it has the same meaning.

(a) The Thessalonians were to be Paul's crown of rejoicing "before the Lord Jesus Christ *at His presence*" (ii. 19). (b) The aim of Paul was to present his converts blameless "*at the presence* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (iii. 13). (c) They that were left *unto the presence* of the Lord were in nowise to precede them that had fallen asleep (iv. 15). (d) Paul prays that the spirit and soul and body of his readers might be preserved entire *at the presence* of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 23). The real object of Paul's hope, then, was not the approach or the arrival of Christ, but His presence.

(4) *The ground of this hope*—the resurrection (iv. 14). The resurrection gives a living Christ, who vanquishes death, ascends to heaven, and returns to earth to dwell forever with His people. Apart from the resurrection, the spiritual and abiding presence of Christ could not be realized. The resurrection showed that the Messianic hopes centered on Him were not vain, and that by being present in the very heart of the world's life He had power to set up His kingdom.

(5) *The way in which that hope was to be realized.* (a) Christ was to come suddenly and secretly "as a thief in the night." Signs were to appear, but His



coming itself being spiritual would be unobserved, as is the case with all spiritual changes. How seldom do the people of any age discern the epoch-making spiritual movements passing before their very eyes! (b) His coming was not to be a miraculous event, but the coming "*in His kingdom.*" It was to be dispensational. (c) It was to be accompanied with judgment (v. 1-11). Upon the heedless disbeliever sudden destruction was to fall. The deliverer was to be the destroyer.

(7) *What the teaching of Paul implies.* It implies that the Lord, who promised to return soon, kept His promise, and is now here. This is the age of His presence. We are the people of His presence. Our comfort in tribulation is to know that the Lord is with us "all the days." This is the consoling truth enshrined in the doctrine of the second advent for those who go through the *coming* to the *presence*.

(8) *The aspect of Christ which the doctrine of the presence presents*—His resurrection power and kingly glory. It is not without significance that He is spoken of as Lord twenty-five times in this epistle. He is represented as coming in majesty, descending from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (iv. 16). The strongest possible imagery is employed to show that He who died in weakness was to return in power; that He who came the first time as a lonely sufferer was to come again as a conquering king. The absorbing thought in the minds of the early Christians was the coming of Christ in kingly power to establish His sovereignty on the earth.

(9) *The final goal.* "That whether we wake or

sleep, we should live together with Him" (v. 10). Those who were alive at the presence of the Lord were to be caught up together in the clouds with the saints who had been raised from the dead, and meeting the Lord in the air were henceforth to be forever with Him (iv. 17). In the one transfiguration of the earthly into the heavenly, and in the one life of unending fellowship with their Lord, the dead and the living were to share together. Whether any one lived or died made no difference. If he lived, he was to be raised up with Christ and made to sit with Him in heavenly places. If he died, he was not to go *down* to the clods of the valley; or to go *out* to wander, a disembodied spirit, in the pale realms of shade; but he was to go *up* out of the earth-life into the *heaven-life*.

But the comforting word to the Thessalonians had special reference to the departed. No longer was there to be a term of waiting in the underworld. To be absent from body was to be present with the Lord. Death was virtually abolished. At the girdle of the risen Christ hang the keys of death and of Hades. When He closed Hades he opened Heaven. He emptied the underworld, leading its captives captive. Having prepared a better place, He comes to take us directly to it when we close our eyes upon these earthly scenes. Instant death is now instant glory. With these words comfort one another.

3. *Things practical.* The last two chapters are hortatory. Prominent among the things enjoined are:

(1) Vigilance. Because of the suddenness of Christ's appearing the proper attitude of His people was that of watchfulness. They were to live as if they expected

at any moment to be ushered into the Lord's immediate presence, yea they were to live continually as in His sight.

(2) Hopefulness. They were to watch and wait for a glorious future, in which Christ was to be supreme. The glowing vision which opened before them was to inspire with courage in the conflict of the present. (3) Carefulness in the details of daily conduct. Avoiding idleness and disorder and "always following that which is good" (v. 15). There is a cluster of wise counsels put in the tersest form (v. 17-22). "Rejoice always," if not in self or in surroundings, then in God; "Pray without ceasing," not only in the sense of making the whole of life one continuous prayer, but also in the sense of cherishing such unbroken confidence in God that all the separate acts of prayer shall be bound in one continuous chain of faith; "in everything give thanks," not in things agreeable only, but in those experiences which wring the heart with agony, for all of them are shot through with love, and work for redemption; "quench not the Spirit" by failing to obey His inward promptings; "despise not prophesyings," from whomsoever they may come; "prove all things," throwing away the spurious and keeping the genuine; "abstain from every form of evil," however plausible and seductive it may appear.

Exhortation ends in prayer. "And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be presented entire, without blame at the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 23). In the present day, for "*at* the presence" we should read "*in* the presence."

## SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

## SECOND EPISTLE

This epistle was written to clear up certain wrong conceptions regarding the second advent. The former teachings are reëmphasized; not a single modification of view is made nor needs to be made. The point of the epistle is to show that wrong conclusions had been drawn from a correct premise.

In what direction lay the mistake of the Thessalonians? It lay in taking Paul's words too literally, as many in the present day are still doing. He had promised a *personal* coming; they looked for a *physical* coming. What they failed to see was that the coming of Christ might be both personal and spiritual.

What a sad travesty of Paul's teaching it makes to imagine that the coming which he looked for *speedily*, and which he taught the Thessalonians to prepare for, has not yet been realized, and that after long centuries of deferred hope which have made the heart sick, the Church is still to look for the return of her absent Lord. Is the promise "a little while and ye shall see Me" to be stretched over more than eighteen hundred years? This is to impugn the honesty of Christ's promise, which the teaching of Paul reëchoes.

And what a sad travesty of the doctrine of apostolic inspiration it makes to say that Paul was mistaken; and that he afterward changed his opinion upon the question, relinquishing his hope of seeing the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

The things which Paul makes clear "touching the

presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him" (ii. 1) are the following:

1. *That the Thessalonians were not deluded.* They had merely thrown the truth of the second advent out of its proper perspective, and things had thereby become distorted and confused. The day of the Lord had not actually begun to dawn, as they supposed, but it was on the way, and was not far distant. If Paul, in his second epistle speaks more guardedly, he does not speak less definitely. He has no need to correct himself, nor has he any need to explain himself, save for the benefit of those who had misunderstood the bearing of his words.\* But the central and essential truth—to-wit, that the presence of the Lord was imminent—had taken hold of the Thessalonians with an overmastering grip.

2. *That while there was to be no postponement of the second advent, certain signs were to appear before it transpired.* "These things must needs come to pass first," said Jesus, "but the end is not immediately" (Luke xxi. 9). Here the same caution is thrown in, "Let no man beguile you in any wise; for it will not be, except the falling away come first and the man of sin be revealed" (ii. 3). Here, then, were two signs which were to precede the second advent—the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin. (1) *The apostasy.* "The apostasy represents a multitude, the man of sin an individual. They may exist contemporaneously, but they are not identical." (J. Stuart Russell). † Was not a defection from the faith one

\*Says Dr. Denny, "When Paul wrote this epistle I do not doubt that this was his hope, and it does not impugn his authority in the least that it was a hope destined not to be fulfilled." (*The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 176.) Why impose upon apostolic authority the unnecessary burden of responsibility for a mistake upon a point so vital?

† *The Parousia*, p. 178.

of the things which Jesus had foretold as a sign of His second advent? "When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8). The persecution about to break out would winnow the chaff from the wheat. (2) "*The man of sin,*" or more literally "the man of lawlessness." Who was he? He is not named, but the Thessalonians probably understood to whom the reference was made. Reasons of prudence kept the apostle from being more explicit. (a) He is described as "the son of perdition" (ii. 3)—a monster of iniquity. (b) As opposing and exalting himself against all that is divine (ii. 4). (c) As assuming divine prerogatives—sitting in the temple of God and giving himself forth as God (ii. 4). (d) As having already come into power (ii. 7). (e) As restrained for a season (ii. 7). (f) As having a diabolical parousia—his presence being as the working of Satan (ii. 9). It may not be necessary to clothe this arch-enemy with historical attributes. The description may stand for a personification of pagan Rome. Yet the description seems exactly to fit the Emperor Nero, who was generally regarded by the early fathers as the veritable anti-christ.

But the main point to be kept in view is that before the parousia the evil which was working was to come to a climax. At the darkest hour the dawn of the new day was to break. As a matter of fact, several years did elapse before the parousia took place. The Thessalonians evidently thought it might be within that very year. The lesson taught is the necessity of carefulness in reading prophecy, that we may discern

the signs of the times and mark the stages of God's unfolding purpose.

3. *That it is "rather the suddenness than the immediacy of Christ's coming that is urged"* (Marcus Dods). Paul sought to tranquilize the Thessalonians by assuring them that they had no need to be "shaken in their mind, nor yet troubled, as that the day of the Lord was now present" (ii. 1, 2). The storm was indeed brewing, the clouds were rolling up, the distant muttering of the thunder could be heard, and however long or short the time of respite, the storm would break suddenly; therefore the need of constant watchfulness.

4. *That judgment was imminent.* The day of the Lord was to be both a day of salvation and of judgment. (1) There was to be a "revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them who know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (i. 7, 8). This is the language of poetry. It describes a dramatic scene of deep spiritual significance. (2) This righteous judgment of God, which was to fall first upon the Jewish persecutors, was to consist of "an age-long destruction from the presence (literally, from the face) of the Lord and from the glory of His might when He shall come to be glorified in His saints" (i. 9, 10). (3) It was to fall upon "the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His presence" (ii. 8, 9). The power of the pagan oppressor was not to be destroyed by a display of outward glory, but by the

life-giving breath of Christ, and by the manifestation of His spiritual presence. It is in this way that the power of evil is now being broken. (4) It was to fall as a moral blight upon those who "received not the love of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (ii. 11, 12). Judicial blindness was to be their fate. God was to send them "a working of error that they should believe a lie" (ii. 11). They were to become blind to moral distinctions. This judicial result is not inconsistent with benevolence or justice. It is simply the carrying out of character to its legitimate end, and that surely is both benevolent and right.

5. *That redemption was near.* The revelation of Christ in judgment was to bring them rest from affliction (i. 7). While Christ's enemies were to be banished from His presence, His people were to be gathered together unto Him (ii. 1).\* They were to be "counted worthy of the kingdom of God" (i. 5), and were to obtain "the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ii. 14). With such hopes before them well might they lift up their heads with joy.

6. *That the blessed hope upon which the Church is now to lay hold is not "the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven," but the revelation of the unseen Lord, who is ever and everywhere present.* His presence is to be more and more realized; His kingdom is to become more and more visible. All the world is yet to acknowledge Him as king. A new and more powerful evangelism is to be founded upon the twin truths—Christ is pres-

\*"Christ is coming," says a modern commentator, "there *will be* a gathering together of all His people unto Him." Ought we not rather to say, "Christ has come; there *is* a gathering of the people unto Him. He is the center of a new spiritual and social reconstruction."



ent, and in mighty works of saving power His presence is to be increasingly manifested.

7. *That a correct view of the doctrine of the presence will have a healthful moral effect.* (1) It will hush fear rather than awaken it. Those who believe that relief has come will have comfort in tribulation. (2) It will "stablish the heart in every good word and work" (ii. 17). (3) It will fill the heart with "the patience of Christ" (iii. 5), the patience that not only endures, but that endures without repining. In the sunshine of Christ's presence the flower of patience grows to perfection. (4) It will put a check upon all idle and disorderly conduct. Those who expect the Lord's presence, and much more, those who realize it, "will with quietness work, and eat their own bread." The best preparation for the Lord's coming is the faithful performance of our ordinary business. The way to make ready for the Lord's appearing is not to put on ascension robes, or to maintain a certain posture, or to make prophetic calculations as to the day and the hour, but to do our daily duty as it comes to us. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing," and equally blessed is that servant whom his Lord who has come finds so doing.

## THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY AND THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

These three epistles form a group by themselves. Much of the instruction they contain is *ad clerum*. They have been called the pastoral epistles. Incidentally they throw a flood of light upon the development of the Church. They present the Church in the making, as the raw material upon which Christ is at work. They also present the Church as the visible embodiment of redemptive agencies, the instrument which Christ is preparing for the out working of His plan.

The organization of the Church is of the very simplest character. In it there is no hierarchy or priestly class. There are bishops, elders, or presbyters to look after spiritual affairs, and deacons to look after temporal affairs, such as the support of the Church and the care of the poor. In most churches there was a plurality of elders, as was the case in the Jewish synagogue, from which the name of the office of elder seems to have been borrowed (Luke vii. 3). The apostles were a class by themselves. They were appointed directly by Christ, and when they died they left no successors (Acts xi. 30, xv. 2). The earliest ecclesiastical gathering was a council, which as the name imports, was for the

mutual conference, and not for the exercise of judicial authority (Acts xv. 1-29).

The question of the authorship of these epistles is surrounded with great difficulties, but the weight of probability lies on the side of their Pauline authorship. It is not improbable that in their present form they are the work of a later hand, based, however, upon Pauline writings of the latest period. The first epistle seems to have been written immediately after the apostle was freed from his first imprisonment, about 64 A. D. (Acts xxviii. 30). After two years of missionary service were completed, and Paul was again arrested and imprisoned, the letter to Titus and also the second letter to Timothy were written.

Timothy, to whom two of the pastoral epistles are addressed, was a native of Lystra. His father was a Greek and his mother a Jewess. When he was a child his father died, and he was brought up by his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, both of whom were Christian disciples. Paul had from the first a very tender regard for Timothy. He virtually adopted him. To him he never grew old; he always called him his son.

Timothy's conversion took place when he was quite young, probably not more than sixteen or seventeen years of age. Of his religious life it is said: (1) That he "confessed the good confession before many witnesses" (I. Tim. vi. 12). His confession of Christ was manly and open. (2) He was set apart to the work of an evangelist by the laying on of the hands (I. Tim. iv. 14). (3) He received special gifts to qualify him for the work (II. Tim. i. 6). (4) He was sent on important missions; to Macedonia (Acts

xix. 22), to Corinth (xvi. 10), to Ephesus (I. Tim. i. 3). (5) He was with Paul in Rome (Phil. ii. 19-20). Paul also mentions him in the superscriptions of five of his epistles. He took him along with him on his second missionary journey, when, to prevent trouble and in deference to Jewish sentiment, he had him circumcised. From this time onward he was his almost constant companion. The apostle's estimate of his worth is given in the words, "As a child serveth a father, so he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel" (Phil. ii. 22).

The first letter which Paul wrote to Timothy after his liberation from his first imprisonment was sent to him at Ephesus, where he had been left in charge of the Church. The condition of the Church was such that it required delicate handling. Timothy was naturally timid and sensitive. He needed a reinforcement of courage to help him take hold of the problems before him, and he needed advice as to how to take hold of them.

The second letter was in all likelihood written after Paul's arrest at Troas and his reimprisonment at Rome. As he felt that the time of his departure was at hand he longed to have Timothy beside him. In the gathering shadows he wanted to feel the touch of that gentle hand. His main object in writing was to urge Timothy to hasten to his side. Apart from other reasons, this epistle possesses special interest because it shows how the great apostle regarded his approaching end. In it are some of the farewell words in which he poured out his soul.

In these epistles there are marked peculiarities of language; words are used which are not found in any

other of Paul's writings; there is also an absence of his most familiar turns of expression; the style is also different. It is didactic and discursive. Instead of the usual rush of thought which characterizes Paul's writings, the thought moves on from point to point in a quiet and leisurely fashion. From this difference in phraseology and style some have inferred that Paul could not have been the author of these epistles. But Paul was not confined to a limited vocabulary; he possessed great versatility, and could move easily from one sphere of thought to another, adapting his language to the new realm of things into which he entered. When addressing a preacher and giving to him instruction in doctrine and directions for the government of the Church, he of necessity used a different set of terms from those employed when he was addressing a Church. Nor is there the slightest doctrinal discrepancy involved in his altered presentation of the doctrine of faith. When pointing out to a brother minister what ought to be preached, he would naturally dwell more upon the objective than upon the subjective side of things. Let due consideration be given to the new range of thought embraced in these epistles, and any departure from Paul's usual forms of expression which they indicate can be readily accounted for.

The letter to Titus comes in between the two letters to Timothy. It was written from some unknown resting-place about the end of the first year of Paul's missionary labor after his release. He had left Titus at Crete to complete the work which he had begun. The post was a difficult one, but Paul knew that his trusted and tried companion in arms would do his best

to hold it for the Master. Titus had been with him in many a well-fought battle. He had accompanied him on his second visit to Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 1-5); he had comforted him in his loneliness (II. Cor. vii. 6); when he did not meet him at Troas as he had expected, "he had no relief for his spirit" (II. Cor. ii. 12, 13). And now he asks Titus to rejoin him at Nicopolis, where he hoped to spend the winter. To convey this wish was the primary object of his letter; but he could not proffer his request without adding words of counsel and encouragement, and all the more because he felt that the hour of their final separation was drawing nigh. His interest in Titus and in all his fellow-laborers was unabated to the last.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS.

Fortunately the spiritual teaching of the pastoral epistles is not affected by the question of authorship. They possess special value as reflecting the latest and ripest thoughts of Paul. (1) They show his growing confidence in the destiny of the Church. He was not afraid for the safety of the ark. The Church was now an organized body. It had an institutional life which required shaping and directing. (2) They show also his growth in toleration. Age had mellowed his spirit. Error is condemned as vigorously as ever, but with less severity. The iron hand is encased in the velvet glove. (3) They show his growing appreciation of the essential truth in Christian doctrine and of the essential things in Christian character. They go down to the bed-rock of essential Christianity.

## FIRST EPISTLE

1. *This letter opens with counsel as to teaching and teachers.* "The end of the charge" which Paul gives to Timothy, his "child in faith," and which he exhorts Timothy to give to others, is, "Love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned" (i. 5). This is not only the main point in Paul's charge, it is the main point in his epistle. It is the end of all that he has to say.

2. *"The sound doctrine," or more literally, "the wholesome teaching," committed to his trust, was in danger of being perverted* (i. 11). Some having missed the mark, had already turned aside unto vain and empty talking (i. 6). And worse than all, they had become morally corrupt. Their lives were stained with things which were "contrary to wholesome teaching" (i. 10); which shows that doctrine and conduct are intimately connected. Whatever is "contrary to sound doctrine" is morally bad.

3. *The charge of Paul to Timothy came out of the depths of his own experience.* (1) He testifies to the enabling power which he had received for the service to which he was appointed (i. 12). (2) He lays bare the secret motive of his self-denying ministry. "I was compassionated; I, who had been a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious, I obtained mercy (i. 13); therefore I serve my Lord, whose debtor I am." (3) He magnifies the grace which abounded to him exceedingly (i. 14). In the faithful saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," he found hope and comfort as a sinful man. Others might call him the chief of saints; he called himself the chief of

sinner (i. 15). (4) In him the long suffering of Jesus Christ found a most conspicuous example (i. 16). (5) The Lord, in whom he trusted as Saviour, he exalted in his thought as "the king of the ages, to whom belongs honor and glory unto the ages of the ages" (i. 17).

4. *In keeping this charge Timothy would be fulfilling the love-born prophecies which had been made regarding his future* (i. 18). The child is father to the man. Prophecy leads the way to the ideal which it reveals.

5. *Regulations for the household of faith.* Directions for worship. Not specific rules so much as principles that are to guide in all acts of worship. (1) A spirit of wide human sympathy in prayer. Prayer was to be offered for all sorts and conditions of men, for the following reasons: (a) Because there is one God who stands in the same relation to all men, and who, therefore has one redeeming purpose that embraces all alike. (b) Because there is one mediator through whom God is known, and through whom men are reconciled to Him. (c) Because one ransom price has been paid for the deliverance of all (ii. 1-7). Divine universality puts human narrowness to shame. We are to pray for all because God is seeking the salvation of all. (2) Specific directions as to deportment, in all of which there is an application of the gospel to the new society. (a) Holy hands are in every place to be lifted up to heaven in prayer (ii. 8). (b) Women are to make their adornment consist not in costly jewels, but in "beautiful works" (ii. 9). Motherhood is to be honored. The woman being "saved through child-bearing" (ii. 15); her greatest curse being through grace turned into her greatest



blessing. (3) Directions as to the duties of Church officers (iii. 1-13). Official requirements are specified. (a) The bishop, or overseer, is to be "without reproach" (iii. 2). (b) Deacons are to be "blameless" (iii. 10). A high standard of character is demanded of the officers of the Church because by them the Church is represented, and largely through their agency its influence is propagated. (c) The necessity for the highest official excellence is urged, on the ground of the dignity of the Church, which is "the house of God, the assembly of the living God, the pillar and stay of the truth" (iii. 15). The Church conserves the truth, and is in its turn conserved by the truth.

6. *Dangerous elements in the Church.* As had been foretold, in these later times there was a falling away "from the faith" (iv. 1). A flood of error had swept into the Church. (1) Turning from the Holy Spirit, they had given heed to "seducing spirits" (iv. 1). (2) Turning from the truth of God, they had accepted "doctrines of demons" (iv. 1), attributing to demoniac agency what should have been attributed to God. (3) Marriage had been forbidden, the marriage state being looked upon as impure (iv. 3). (4) Abstinence was enjoined from meats, which as God's "good creatures" ought to have been received with thanksgiving (iv. 3,4). All of these ascetic practices are unsparingly condemned. They imply an abuse of God's gifts. They make self-conquest consist in self-repression, rather than in self-control. They exalt the soul by despising the body. The soul is above the body, but the body, as the soul's instrument and as God's workmanship, is to be revered and cared for.

“Bodily exercise profiteth for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things” (iv. 8).

7. *Rules for personal conduct.* (1) Care for the body, so as to keep it healthy and efficient. Timothy, for his stomach’s sake, was to substitute the use of wine for water (v. 23). (2) The duty of soul culture, “Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching” (iv. 13). Reading comes first, because the mind must be stored with knowledge that there may be something to draw from. “Reading maketh a full man,” and all the knowledge that is garnered is for practical use. (3) The duty of cultivating divine gifts (iv. 14). Power, when neglected, shrinks. (4) Personal culture a preparation for public service. “Take heed to *thyself* and to thy *teaching*” (iv. 15). Preaching being the communication of truth through personality, the power of a message lies in the man behind it.

8. *The sanctification of life’s relationships.* (1) Age and official position are to be respected (v. 1-3). (2) Those who are relieved from home cares are to give themselves to work of piety (v. 4-6). (3) Christian fathers are to provide for their households (v. 8)—not bread and butter merely, but all that is necessary to the highest welfare of the home. (4) Care for widows inculcated (v. 9, 10). (5) For elders who labor in word and doctrine (v. 17). The ministries of Christian benevolence are to be rendered to all classes according to their special needs.

9. *Lapses in conduct traced to errors in doctrine* (vi. 3-6). (1) The words of the Lord Jesus which are renounced are “healthful” and healthgiving (vi. 3). They are “according to godliness” (vi. 3). (2) The

words of the errorists are empty frothings (vi. 4). They deceive by declaring that "godliness is a gainful trade" (vi. 5). In contrast to this false teaching, Paul asserts that godliness, when connected with contentment with God and with the orderings of His providence, is great gain (vi. 6).

10. *A common heresy.* This heresy consists in regarding the pitiful passion of the accumulation of wealth as justifiable. "They that desire to be rich," they that are determined to be rich, expose themselves to peril. "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (vi. 10). Not money itself, but the love of it. Money may be a power for good or a power for evil; but when money is loved for its own sake it eats the soul as doth a canker. It is a prolific source of all kinds of evil. There is no sin in the calendar of which it has not been the occasion. In view of life's seductive temptations the Christian is to *flee*, to *follow*, and to *fight*; he is to flee from sin, to follow righteousness, and to fight the good fight of faith (vi. 11, 12).

11. *The good confession.* The Christian is not to profess religion; he is to "witness the good confession" (vi. 12, 13)—that is, the confession of Christ. He is to confess his need of Christ, his absolute dependence upon Him; his faith in His cleansing blood and reigning power. The good confession is distinct and distinctive. It is the supreme act of the soul. Never is man so noble as when he bows before the scepter of the cross, acknowledging love and loyalty to the thorn-crowned king, and endeavoring to keep His commandments without reproach, living ever as "in the great Taskmaster's eye."

12. *The prize*—"the life that is life indeed" (vi. 19)—that is, the only life that is worthy of the name of life. The life that is life indeed does not consist in the attainment of worldly ends, or in the gratifying of earth-born desires, but in the development of what is inward and spiritual, and in the pursuit of high and unselfish aims. This life is something to be laid hold of. We do not float into it. Effort must be made to win it and to keep it.

13. *Guarding the deposit*. "O Timothy, guard the deposit," the treasure of God's truth. (vi. 20). The Church has a deposit of truth which every Christian is required to guard. He is to be a custodian of "the faith." Here we trace doctrinal growth. The word "faith," which in Paul's earlier writings was used in a subjective and ethical sense, is here used in an objective and dogmatic sense. Faith as an individual conviction and experience has grown into "the faith," in which the collective conviction and experience of the Church is expressed. Already we find in the Church the rudiments of a confession or creed, which was in all probability recited or chanted in concert in their public assemblies. This creed antedates the so-called Apostles' Creed. So far as can be discovered it is the first formal statement of Christian doctrine. Starting with Christ's incarnation and ending with His ascension, it includes all that is essential in historic Christianity. That it was generally accepted is evident from Paul's statement that it was held "without controversy." The creed itself, together with the introduction affixed to it by Paul, runs thus:

“And without controversy  
 Great is the mystery of godliness; \*  
 ‘He who was manifested in the flesh,  
 Justified in the spirit,  
 Seen of angels,  
 Preached among the nations,  
 Believed on in the world,  
 Received up in glory.’ ” (iii. 16).

This is the deposit of truth which the Church is still to guard.

## SECOND EPISTLE

In these final words Paul puts the emphasis upon the inward life of the spirit. It is the application of doctrine, rather than its development, that occupies his mind. When errors are referred to it is because of their moral blight. When well-known summaries of doctrine are rehearsed, it is not that they may be defended, but that they may be enforced. The chief aim of the epistle was to exhort Timothy to courage and faithfulness in the discharge of his duties, personal and official. In his last hours Paul was absorbed in thought of others. No more sublime spectacle can be imagined than that of this worn-out veteran, sitting down in the presence of his impending martyrdom, and with manacled hand writing a letter of consolation and encouragement to one whom he was about to leave behind him.

1. *Friendship upon a high plane.* Paul had a joyful remembrance of Timothy's spiritual possessions. (1)

\* The word mystery in the New Testament does not mean that which is occult or hidden, but that which has been revealed to the initiated. “Behold I tell you a mystery” (I. Cor. xv. 51) is the way in which St. Paul introduces his unfolding of the doctrine of the resurrection.

Of his faith (i. 5). (2) Of his pious ancestry (i. 5). His faith was his own, but it came to him naturally in accordance with the law of heredity. A tendency was inherited, not a moral state. (3) Of the special gift he had received by the laying on of Paul's hands. This divine gift he was to "stir into flame" (i. 6), keeping it in exercise that it might burn with a clear and steady light.

2. *A farewell testimony.* "I know Him whom I have believed" (i. 12). I know Him as the one who has saved me "according to His own purpose and grace"; I know Him as the one who has "abolished death"; and "I am persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit against that day." Paul the aged speaks out of long experience of Christ. He knew the depositary in whose hands he had placed the keeping of his life, and he had a feeling of perfect security that nothing could harm him in the day of fiery tribulation which he saw approaching. Paul had exhorted Timothy to guard the Lord's deposit—the deposit of His truth (I. Ep. vi. 20); here he assures him that the Lord will guard his deposit, the deposit of his soul.

3. *The source of help pointed out.* (1) Of inward strength. "My child, be strengthened in the grace which is in Christ Jesus" (ii. 1). "Take thy part in suffering hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," sustained by the grace which He bestows. (2) Of power as a preacher. The preacher's power is in the living, mighty word which he proclaims. Men may bind the preacher, but "the word of God is not bound" (ii. 9). It has an inherent life which no civil power can fetter. To be an approved workman the

preacher must "handle the word of truth aright"; he must "hold a straight course in the word of truth" (ii. 15, marginal reading, R. V.), hewing to the line, allowing the truth to speak for itself and accomplish its blessed purpose. The best defense of the truth is its correct interpretation.

4. *Varied forms of service.* There is an enlarged conception of the Church. It is "a great house," which contains different kinds of vessels, some to greater honor, and some to less honor (ii. 20). The essential thing about these vessels is that they are all to be set apart, made meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work (ii. 21). That is, they are to be kept clean; they are not to be out of reach when needed; they are not to be filled with something which they were not meant to hold. They are to be consecrated, prepared, and ready for use. "Have your tools ready," says Charles Kingsley, "and God will find your work."

5. *Outriding the storm.* The last days were to witness an outbreaking of lawlessness and wickedness (iii. 1-9). Those who were "reprobate concerning the faith" (iii. 18) would become "unto every good work reprobate" (Titus i. 16). The two anchors which would be able to bear the strain of the storm were (1) Faith in God (iii. 2); (2) Faith in God's Word (iii. 14-16). Timothy was exhorted to hold to the things in which he had been *catechised* from infancy, and which he had proved in his own experience. The sacred writings by which his spiritual life had been nourished gave evidence of their inspiration in their spiritual profitableness. The moral value of any writing is said to be the true test of its

inspiration. "Every writing God-breathed is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness" (iii. 16). The sacred writings of the Old Testament, to which Timothy was to cling stood this test. The fact that they were profitable for moral ends was evidence that they were from God.

6. *A solemn charge.* "I adjure thee, preach the word" (iv. 1), the pure, unadulterated word, unmixed with human opinion or speculation. Preach it with holy urgency, being "instant in season, out of season"; preach it persuasively, fearlessly, and tenderly, reproving (literally, bringing to the proof), rebuking, exhorting, "with all long-suffering and teaching" (iv. 2). This may be said to be Paul's last will and testimony to his son Timothy. Fidelity to the truth in times of defection demands the highest form of courage.

7. *A shout of victory* (iv. 6-8). In the presence of death Paul was calm and undisturbed. There was no break-down in his faith. The ruling principles of his life remained unchanged to the last. (1) He was now unloosing from the present. "I am already being offered—my life is already being poured out as a libation upon God's altar. The time of my release, the time for the unfastening of the ship preparatory to the departure from harbor, has come." Dying grace comes when death has to be faced. It is easy for the acorn to leave the cup when the time for leaving it has come. (2) He had a blessed retrospect. Leaning upon his battered shield, Paul looks back upon the scene of his conflict, exclaiming, "I have fought the good fight." He speaks of the



conflict as virtually over. "I have fought the battle out, the struggle is behind me." There is no tinge of boastfulness in his words. He does not say, "I have fought *a* good fight, I have been a good fighter, I have acquitted myself well in the conflict of life." Such a sentiment is utterly foreign to the spirit of the apostle. What he says is, "I have fought *the* good fight, the good fight of faith which all Christians wage. I have fought life's battle in the Christian way." He says further, "I have finished the course, I have gone round the prescribed course which all Christians have to run." "I have kept the faith," the faith which is the common heritage of all saints. There is no claim to special merit. Paul takes his stand upon the rock of a common Christian experience. (3) A glorious prospect. An enchanting vision broke upon his sight. "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness." (a) Before him was the highest reward, "the crown of righteousness"; not so much the crown righteously given, as the crown which consists of righteousness. (b) The highest reward was to be given by the highest judge, "which the Lord the righteous judge shall give to me." (c) It was to be given upon the greatest occasion "at that day"—the day when I stand in the presence of the Lord. (d) It was to be given to him in common with all the faithful, "and not only to me," he says, "but also to all them that have loved His appearing." Those who participate in the same spiritual experience are to share in the same spiritual reward.

8. *A touch of the human.* "The cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments" (iv. 13). Paul

showed his interest in life in the presence of death. His wants were threefold: (1) Physical. He cared for the body; and now that winter was coming on, he felt the need of the warm, traveling cloak which he had left with his friend at Troas. (2) Social. "When thou comest." Paul longed for fellowship; he longed in his solitude when summer friends were fleeing, for the touch of a friendly hand. (3) Intellectual and spiritual. "The books, especially the parchments." The parchments were evidently some valued treasure trove. Whatever was left behind, they must not be forgotten. The things of the spirit-life were of supreme value. A man's true character is seen by his scale of values.

9. *In God's hands* (iv. 16-18). (1) Toward those who injured him he cherished no feeling of personal revenge. "Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil; the Lord will render to him according to his works" (iv. 4). Not "the Lord reward him," as in the Authorized Version, but "the Lord will reward him." With this mischief-maker the Lord would deal justly, and in His hands he could safely leave him. (2) When at his first trial before Cæsar his friends deserted him, the Lord stood by him, giving him power (iv. 17). The grace that had availed in that trying hour would still avail. (3) Faith in future deliverance was founded upon the experience of the past. The Lord who has delivered, will deliver. Compare iii. 11 with iv. 18. (4) Heaven anticipated. "The Lord will save me unto His heavenly kingdom" (iv. 18). Through God's assisting grace the goal of life would be surely and swiftly reached. Heaven comes at last to every storm-tossed saint.

## TITUS

When Paul and Titus visited Crete together Titus was left behind in charge of the churches of that island. He found himself in a hard field. The Cretans had a bad name, and they apparently lived up to it. Their character as sketched by the poet Epimenides, whom Paul designates "a prophet of their own," is that of an untruthful and sensual people. And Paul adds "this testimony is true." Their vices had become ingrained into their national character, and were therefore difficult to eradicate. Paul, knowing the poor material with which Titus had to work, shows him how to make the most of it. At the time that he wrote he was about to recall him, and send Artemas or Tychicus in his place, so that what he could do in the way of giving the finishing touches to his work had to be done quickly.

The work of Titus, which may be taken as the type of the work of the true Christian leader, was:

1. *A constructive work.* Unlike Timothy, who was mild and timid, Titus was bold and aggressive. He was a man of robust character, a man of great practical efficiency. Upon his strong arm Paul leaned in times of emergency. Because of these very qualities he had been sent to this difficult post. "For this cause," says Paul, "I left thee in Crete that thou shouldst set in order the things that were wanting" (i. 5). In point of importance the first thing to be done was the appointing of "elders in every city." Good officers are necessary to the efficiency of the Church. Paul, in describing the kind of men to be selected, shows first what they ought not to be, then

what they ought to be (i. 6-9). The standard is certainly high.

2. *A work of doctrinal instruction.* This is the foundation of the whole. Paul, who styles himself an apostle "according to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness" (i. 1) exhorts Titus, "the child after a common faith" (i. 4), to see to it that those under his charge were "healthy in the faith" (i. 13), and that the elders held "to the faithful word which is according to the teaching," that they might "be able both to exhort in the healthful teaching, and to convict the gainsayers" (i. 9). Fidelity to "the doctrine of God" (ii. 10) is essential to the usefulness of the Church.

3. *A work of repression.* There were "many unruly men" (i. 10), disturbers of the peace of the Church, destroyers of homes (i. 11); self-seeking men who pandered to fleshly indulgence, "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (i. 11). These evil workers were to be repressed with a strong hand. Their mouths were to be stopped (i. 11); they were to be reproved sharply (i. 13), and with "all authority" (ii. 15). The presence of such vile men in the Church speaks volumes for the moral condition of the times. But to this general description there must have been many notable exceptions, or where could Titus have found suitable timber for elders?

4. *A work of adornment.* The spiritual edifice was not only to be strong, but beautiful. "Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary." Bond-servants were to be well pleasing to their masters in all things. By

their "good fidelity" they were to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (ii. 10). Consistency of life makes religion attractive. Those who manifest the beauty of holiness commend the doctrines which they exemplify.

5. *A work of home-building.* The relationships of life afford opportunities for the exercise of Christian graces. When home virtues flourish, the Church will flourish. Consecrated hearthstones are the strongest foundations of the Church. The aged men and aged women; the younger men and the younger women; and the slaves in the household are all in turn exhorted to godly living (ii. 1-8).

In a passage of great warmth and beauty the true motive to domestic purity is dwelt upon. (See ii. 11-14.) (1) Reference is here made to what the grace of God has brought. It has brought "salvation to all men." (2) To what the grace of God leads. It leads to sober, righteous, and godly living. (3) To the appearing of the grace of God as being followed by the appearing of His glory. (4) To the double end which these two appearings unite in securing—the release or cutting loose from all iniquity, the purifying unto Christ of a people peculiarly his own; a people for his own possession, zealous not of *great* works, but of *good* works.

6. *A work of social reconstruction.* (1) Cultivating respect for authority, that there may be "subjection to rulers" (iii. 1). Respect for law and order is essential to social well-being. (2) Awakenning a right principle of social action, so that instead of "living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one

another" (iii. 3), they shall engage in "honest occupations" (iii. 8) "for necessary wants" (iii. 14). In this way the social ideal is to be attained.

7. *A work of personal regeneration.* This is the source and spring of all possible improvement. "The reformation of the soul is the soul of all reformation" (Horace Bushnell). Christianity works from within outward. It makes the fruit good by making the tree good; it cleanses the stream by cleansing the fountain from which it flows. (1) Salvation is not self-originated. We are saved by the mercy of God our Saviour, and not by works in the sphere of righteousness "which we did ourselves" (iii. 5). (2) Salvation is "through the laver of regeneration, and through the renewing of the Holy Spirit"—the laver of regeneration referring in all probability to the receptacle containing the water of baptism, and the Holy Spirit being without doubt the divine agent by whose coöperation the baptismal act is made efficacious (iii. 5). It is the result of the operation of a divine power. (3) The regenerating Spirit is poured upon men richly "through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (iii. 6). (4) Regeneration leads to reformation. The new heart produces new works. The renewed soul is "ready unto every good work" (iii. 1). He is "careful to maintain good works" (iii. 8, 14)—that is, fair or beautiful works. Good works are the necessary outcome of faith.

## THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

This epistle to Philemon is the most private and personal of all the letters of the apostle. It is a mere pendant to the Epistle to the Colossians, being addressed to a member of that church.

The circumstance which called it forth was this: One of the slaves of Philemon, Onesimus by name, had committed an act of crime—probably he had stolen some of his master's property—and had run away. In course of time he drifted to Rome, where he fell in with the apostle, and was converted. He attached himself to his benefactor, and became serviceable to him in many ways. According to Roman law he was still the property of Philemon; so, much as Paul would like to have retained him, he returns him to his master, sending with him this letter, the object of which was to lead Philemon to receive him back in the spirit of Christian forgiveness and of fraternal regard (v. 16).

This epistle reveals clearly the native courtesy and politeness of Paul, as well as the wealth of his affection for those about him. He was not only a profound thinker and writer; he was an ideal gentleman. By this letter a blow was struck at slavery, not by assaulting it as an institution, but by the recognition of the equal brotherhood of all men in the gospel of the Son of God. Class distinctions are not leveled by

the gospel, but they cease to be walls of caste separation. In Christ there is neither bond nor free, but in Him all are one.

The briefest of Paul's extant epistles has been called "an idyl of domestic life." The *dramatis personæ* are:

1. Philemon, a leading member of the Church at Colossæ, at whose house the church assembled (vv. 1, 2).

2. Apphia, "the sister," probably the wife of Philemon (v. 2), and helper with him in the gospel.

3. Archippus, commonly supposed to be the son of Philemon and Apphia (v. 2); a helper with them in the work, a prominent member of the church, presumably a deacon or presbyter (Col. iv. 17).

4. Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, who absconded and fled to Rome, where he was discovered by Paul and converted to Christ. He was sent back to his master, bearing this letter (v. 12).

5. Epaphras, an evangelist, and perhaps the founder of the Church in Colossæ (v. 23). He was with Paul in Rome at the time when Paul gave asylum to Onesimus. On his return to Colossæ he took back the runaway slave to his master.

6. Minor characters, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, followers of Paul, who join with him in his salutation to Philemon, his family, and the church in his house. Most, if not all of these earnest Christian workers had probably a hand in the reclamation of Onesimus.



## SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

Into this brief note, saved from a large correspondence, how much that is spiritually suggestive has been packed.

1. *It affords us a glimpse into one of the earliest Christian homes.* An entire household are united together in Christian fellowship and service. Philemon was a convert of Paul (v. 19). From the circumstance of his owning slaves we infer that he was a man of opulence. Paul refers to him as his "fellow-worker"; to Apphia, his wife, as his "sister" in Christ; and to Archipus, his son, as his "fellow-soldier" (vv. 1, 2). Under the roof-tree of this Christian family the Church in Colossæ found its meeting-place. Upon the hospitality of this family Paul felt that he could confidently reckon in the event of his securing his pardon and visiting Colossæ (v. 22). As showing the influence of Christianity upon the home, this short letter is of special interest.

2. *It shows the tact of the apostle in dealing with men.* Every touch is full of delicate considerateness. Everything that might awaken prejudice is avoided. The right thing is said in the right way.

To condone the offense of Onesimus was in all probability a hard thing for Philemon to do. He may not have had any conviction of the wrongfulness of slavery. Like many Christian people in the South before the war he may have accepted slavery as a social institution founded upon the nature of things, and thus of divine sanction. How, then, could he overlook the grave offense which Onesimus had committed? To do so would be to take

the underpinning out of the whole social structure. How did Paul meet the case? By making light of the offense of Onesimus? No. But by applying to the case a higher law than civil law—namely, the law of Christ by which Philemon professed to be governed.

3. *It shows the Christian method of dealing with social wrongs.* Slavery is a great evil. It is an infringement of natural rights, and a violation of the principle of brotherhood upon which Christianity is based. To slavery in every form Christianity is uncompromisingly opposed. Born in a state of things in which slavery had a place, how did it proceed to destroy this evil? By direct assault? No; but by indirection. It softened evils which it could not at once eradicate. It taught slaves to be obedient, masters to be kind and considerate. It helped men to serve God and to live well with one another in imperfect social conditions.

The silence of Paul regarding the sin of slavery must not be understood as an indorsement of it. Paul was no revolutionist. He did not fulminate against the evil of slavery. He did not ask Philemon to set Onesimus free. He did not try to abolish the institution of slavery, directly and immediately. He knew better. A quixotic movement for the abolition of slavery would have produced a social earthquake in which the infant Church, with all its reformatory influences, would have been engulfed. Nor would it have brought relief to the slaves themselves. It would rather have increased the bitterness of their lot, and would have bound their fetters upon them all the more tightly. It would have been a Harper's Ferry without an Appomattox following it.

Yet Paul well knew that the gospel of love which he preached would gradually undermine slavery and every other wrong. He trusted to moral means. He sought to alter social conditions by altering human character. He believed that in the gospel of Christ was lodged a moral force sufficient unto the reconstruction of society.

4. *The power of personal influence.* (1) As seen in the conversion of Onesimus. When Onesimus was hiding in Rome it is more than likely that he met Epaphras, a presbyter of the church that gathered for worship in his master's house at Colossæ; for Epaphras was at this time on a visit to Paul. Epaphras must have known Onesimus by sight, and when he met him he would naturally inquire into the cause of his running away from his master. Onesimus happened in Rome at a time when the slaves were being harshly treated, and no doubt he was having a hard time of it. He was, therefore, just in the mood to respond to a touch of sympathy. Epaphras took him along with him to Paul's lodging, with the result that under the influence of those two Christian men he was won to Christ. (2) As seen in the nature of Paul's plea to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus. There is no assumption of official authority. It is a brother pleading with a brother. No advantage is taken of the privileges of intimate friendship. What Philemon might do was to be done freely, and not by constraint (v. 14). Nor did Paul trespass unduly upon Philemon's generosity. "If he has defrauded you, put that to my account" (v. 18). There is even in his plea a touch of playfulness. The name Onesimus, which means "profitable," had

become a sad misnomer; so Paul says "Onesimus, who was in time past unprofitable, but now profitable to me and thee" (v. 11). Then he adds, "Yea, brother, let me be profited by thee in the Lord" (v. 20). Be thou my true Onesimus. What a brotherly plea!

5. *We see the socializing power of the religion of Christ.* Master and slave were united in one fellowship. At the table of their common Lord they were known as brethren, and not as bond and free. No color line was known. The Phrygian slave Onesimus, was equal before the Lord with the noblest Roman patrician. Slaves were even permitted to occupy the highest offices in the Church. Thus within the Church were planted the seeds of a true socialism, a socialism which if it did not lead to an obliteration of social distinctions, led to the recognition of moral worth as the basis of that ideal social union after which the world has always been striving.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

The uniqueness of this book lies in the fact that it is the only document of the New Testament which constitutes a formal and systematic defense of Christianity. Certain of Paul's epistles contain apologetic elements, but the sole purpose of this epistle appears to be the vindication of the gospel against objections which were sure to arise in thoughtful Jewish minds. It has the distinction of being the first Christian apologetic.

### HISTORICAL SETTING

The earliest form in which the title to this book appears is, "To the Hebrews." It was addressed, not to the Hebrew race, but to Hebrew Christians, and in particular to Hebrew Christians who were in danger of drifting back into the legalism of the older faith from which they had been delivered.\* These Hebrew Christians were assailed by disquieting suggestions regarding the wisdom of the change which they had made. The faith which they had renounced reached back into an illustrious past, bright with the glories of prophet and sage, whereas Christianity was a novelty, a thing of yesterday, with no historic mem-

\* The contention that this book was intended for Gentile rather than for Jewish readers is not convincing, although urged by able scholars like von Soden and Pfeiderer. The reference to "the fathers" (i. 1) and to "the seed of Abraham" (ii. 16) are among the clear hints that the writer had Jewish readers in mind.

ories nor ancestral sanctions. They were also embarrassed by the fact that the founder of the new faith had passed through a career of humiliation and reproach, and had at last met an ignominious death. This fact touched Jewish pride at a sensitive spot, for the cross of Christ was to the Jews a stumbling block. They were still further influenced by the consideration that the new faith, unlike Judaism, possessed no elaborate and gorgeous ritual with which to impress the imagination. On its ceremonial side Christianity seemed bare and unattractive in comparison with Judaism. For these reasons the danger of apostasy was great. Now, it was to a church made up largely of Jewish Christians—a church from whose membership some had already lapsed into Judaism—that this letter was addressed. That it was written to some particular church or community of Hebrew Christians, and not to the broad circle of Hebrew Christians throughout the world, is evident from references of a personal character in the epistle itself.\* At the same time the arguments urged were such as to meet the needs of similar believers everywhere and to give it an encyclical value. To what particular body of believers it was addressed we have no means of knowing. Upon this question the work itself does not contain the most distant hint. Speculation has been rife, but with the data at present at command no certainty can be reached.

\*Such, for example, as the words of rebuke in v. 11, of command in vi. 9, 10; reference to their immunity from severe persecution xii. 4; the allusion to their former teachers xiii. 7; the request for their prayers, and the hope of the writer to be restored to them, xiii. 18, 19; the statement regarding the release of Timothy, who must have been known both to the writer and to his readers, xiii. 27; and the salutation of the Italian believers which is coupled with that of the writer, xiii. 24.

## AUTHORSHIP

The question of authorship is shrouded in an obscurity equally deep. "The truth on this matter," says Origen, "is known to God alone." One tradition, floating down by way of Africa, ascribes its authorship to Barnabas; another, by way of Egypt, ascribes it to Paul. This latter tradition, which received a well-nigh unquestioned acceptance in the earlier centuries, has been perpetuated in the title affixed to the epistle by the King James translators and by the Revisers of 1881; but among recent scholars there is an almost unanimous consensus of opinion that the Pauline authorship must be abandoned. The reasons for this conclusion appear upon a careful comparison of the book with the unquestioned writings of the apostle. It is true that there are certain superficial resemblances to Paul's work, but these signify little more than a possible acquaintance of the author with some of the Pauline documents, notably the epistle to the Romans. They also show a sympathy with his point of view, amounting perhaps to a desire to carry the message of the apostle into a circle of Jewish Christians, who were unlikely to accept at first hand the teachings of the apostle to the Gentiles. That the writer shared the views of Paul in many particulars is too obvious to be called in question. He is in substantial agreement with him in all his doctrinal contentions. So close is this agreement that some have maintained that if Paul was not the actual writer of this epistle, it was written under his inspiration, if not under his direct supervision. There are, however, certain marked features

which differentiate this epistle from the writings of Paul. Its ground plan is different from that to which the epistles of Paul—probably without design on his part—conform. The author plunges at once into the heart of his theme and mingles apologetic and hortatory material in a manner quite foreign to the apostle. His style, too, is different from the rapid, abrupt, and impassioned style of Paul. It is calm, measured, stately, rhythmical. With a sure oratorical instinct, words are chosen for their euphony of sound, as well as for their definiteness of expression. The general effect is that of the even flow of a broad, majestic river.

#### STANDPOINT OCCUPIED

There is also a marked difference from Paul in the theological standpoint which is occupied. A totally fresh view of Christianity is given, especially with regard to its relation to Judaism. The attitude of this book toward the ceremonial law and the temple worship is altogether a sympathetic one. Jewish questions are discussed in a conciliatory spirit. The polemical temper is absent. The tone is apologetic. The law is shown to have been good in its place; it marked a stage in the divine plan for the spiritual education of the race. In God's method of instruction there is continuity; one lesson follows another according to a system of gradation. But the law, while filling a necessary place, was imperfect and transitory. It was not sufficient for spiritual blessing. It was only a shadow of the ideal and abiding. Hence it was deposed from its place of preëminence, and was supplanted by the gospel. The superiority of the gospel to the law, therefore, becomes the theme of the book.



## SOURCES

In taking still further inventory of the ideas presented by this epistle, we discover many traces of the Alexandrian mode of thought. At this time Alexandria was one of the world's great thought centers. It was the meeting-place of Greek culture and Hebrew faith. Under the shadow of its great university and library there had grown up a type of Jewish thought more friendly to Greek culture than that which existed in Jerusalem under the conservative influence of Pharisaism. Of this Hellenistic cult, with its dream of favorably influencing the Gentile world toward the Jewish faith, Philo was the most conspicuous representative. He belonged to a priestly family, and occupied a high social position, being brother to Alexander the alabarch, whose immense wealth had helped to beautify the temple. He devoted himself to philosophy for the purpose of vindicating Hebrew history at the bar of Greek thought, realizing that the Jewish religion, with its insistence upon circumcision and its endless scruples regarding such things as food and dress, was in danger of being brought into ridicule. In his interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures, which had recently been translated into Greek for the great library, he followed the analogical method. The central idea of his system was the doctrine of the Logos. The Logos was the revealer of God, His agent in creation and providence; under him were subordinate agencies, designated the logoi, corresponding to the angels of the Old Testament, or to the natural forces of the Greek philosophy. This amalgam of Greek and Hebrew thought met with wide

acceptance, especially in Jewish circles outside of Palestine. For more than two centuries it was propagated with missionary zeal, and from it sprung up a vocabulary which became current in certain parts of the Christian Church. That this vocabulary was made the vehicle of ideas quite different from those of the Alexandrine school is seen from the use which is made of it in the prologue to the fourth gospel, where the thought moves upon levels far above those of Philo. The frequent recurrence in this epistle of the thoughts and words of Philo,\* which were in the air, has led many to conclude that the writer must have been a pupil of that famous Jewish teacher; but this is an unwarranted conclusion.† This feature of the epistle tends, however, to prove that Paul could not have been its author, inasmuch as his mind reflected the spirit and methods of the Jewish schools prevalent in the conservative atmosphere of Jerusalem, rather than that of the Diaspora, with its center of culture at Alexandria.

All these considerations have a bearing upon the question of authorship, and appear to lend support to the view of Luther, that Apollos was in all probability the author. Apollos was an Alexandrine Jew; he was learned and eloquent; he was mighty in the Scriptures; he was also intimately associated with St. Paul, by whose molding influence his ideas of Christianity

\* Among the marks of this school of thought are the use of parable and allegory; quotation from the Alexandrine version of the Hebrew Scriptures; the employment of the Philonian argument that the silences of Scripture are as significant and authoritative as its direct statements. Of this latter mark there is an instance in the mention of the priest-king Melchizedek, who, because his father or mother are not mentioned in Gen. xiv. 19, is assumed to have neither.

† "There is nothing to prove conscious borrowing, and it is probable that the resemblances are due to the general conditions of religious culture among the Jews." (Introduction to Philo Jud., p. 12—quoted by Professor Bruce; *Hebrews*, p. 167.)

must have been more or less shaped. Moreover, he was a man of marked modesty, and it would be natural for him to hide behind his work.

#### TIME OF WRITING

The date of the book can be judged only approximately. The reference in ix. 8 to the first tabernacle as "yet standing," seems to import that the temple had not yet been destroyed, and that the Jewish system of worship was still extant. It was, however, on the eve of vanishing away, and the very point and purpose of the book is to show that although that venerated system was doomed to speedy destruction, the Hebrew Christians had no reason to be dismayed, because it was the plan of God that it was to pass away that it might be succeeded by something better—to-wit, by that which is spiritual and eternal.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

This epistle has for its subject the same great event which is set forth in the Book of Revelation—viz., the passing away of the old dispensation and the coming in of the new; but whereas in Revelation that stupendous change is described dramatically, in Hebrews it is described from a doctrinal point of view. The aim of the epistle is, however, intensely practical. Doctrine is used to give enforcement to duty. The writer characterizes his message as "a word of exhortation" (xiii. 22). To those who were standing on the edge of a great catastrophe, and who already felt the ground giving way beneath their feet, a word of heartening was sorely needed. They were

assured that if the old order was breaking up, a new order was coming; if the Jewish age then current was waxing old and was ready to perish, the Christian age was about to dawn. The death throes of the old would be followed by the birth pangs of the new. "The age to come," or more literally, "the age about to come," "whereof," says our author, "we speak" (ii. 5), was to be one of transcendent glory. It was to mark the beginning of an era of spiritual power. Its introduction was to be contemporaneous with the coming of the Lord. And the coming of the Lord being imminent, the coming age was imminent also. And because the new order was about to be brought in, the Hebrew Christians, who are here specially addressed—and upon whom the very possibility of the overthrow of the ancient Jewish system must have had the effect of a premonitory earthquake shock in destroying their confidence in the stability of things terrestrial—were enjoined to lift up their heads with joy. "For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come and shall not tarry" (x. 37). The argument used is this: The great day of the Lord is approaching; let His suffering saints be hopeful. The presence of the Lord is near; let His servants be faithful. The day of judgment is impending; let the rebellious be warned. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts," is the constant refrain of this epistle.

1. *The revelation of God to man is brought to fulfillment in Christ.* "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath in the end of these days spoken to us in His Son," are the opening words of

this epistle. The revelation of God to man was gradual. It was not given, it could not be received, all at once. In old time God spake to the ancestors of these Jewish Christians, "*in the prophets,*" and hence *through* them; His word was inspoken before it was outspoken; it was an inward illumination before it became an outward light. It was given "in divers portions," "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there much." It was given in a fragmentary way "in divers modes" or forms; in visions, in dreams, in symbols, by the mediumship of angels, by direct communication. But now, "at the end of these days"—that is, at the close of the current historic cycle—God spake "in His Son," or more correctly, "in *a* Son." He spake not in human words, but in a human life. Christ is not merely a revelator, He is a revelation; He does not merely speak the word of God, He *is* the Word of God. In Him the mind and will of God are expressed.

2. *The government of the world is committed to Christ.* He is "appointed heir of all things" (i. 2). The nations are given to Him for His inheritance. His power to mold the future is proved by His power to mold the past. Through Him God "made the ages" (i. 2). He has always been the controlling power in the world's history. In the new age about to dawn He was to get a firmer hold upon the world than ever before. He was to be its acknowledged sovereign. After making "purification for sins," he was to "sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," wielding the scepter of righteousness as the scepter of His kingdom, and uniting angelic and earthly agencies in the accomplishment of His redeeming pur-

pose (i. 7, 8). In this new age, which is under the sole authority of Christ, and in which His sovereign will is to be realized, the brightest dream of social reform will become a concrete reality. It may have to come through toil and tears and blood, but come it will. For He must reign until He hath "put all things in subjection under His feet" (ii. 8).

3. *The superiority of Christ is the ground of His supremacy.* (1) *He is superior to prophets;* the message of a Son being of more value than any prophetic utterance (i. 1). (2) *He is superior to angels.* He is higher than they in nature (i. 4). He is higher in dignity and power. They are servants, He is king (i. 8). He is the object of angelic worship (i. 6). Angels bow before His footstool, waiting to obey His behests (i. 13, 14). And yet, "for a little while He was made lower than the angels" that He might bring redemption to the race (ii. 7). (3) *He is superior to Moses,* by whom the law was ministered. And Moses to the Jew was the greatest of men. He stood as the representative of the highest religious system that had as yet been given to the world. The one whose greatness transcended that of Moses must be more than man. To show that the superiority of Jesus was not a thing of official rank, but a thing of elevation of character, it is stated that while Moses was faithful over God's house as a servant, Christ was faithful as a Son (iii. 1-6). (4) *He is superior to Joshua,* the deliverer of Israel, who could lead his people into the land of promise, but could not give them rest in it. Jesus brings His people into the true Sabbatic rest (iv. 9). And into that rest He will yet bring this weary, heavy-laden world. (5) *He is superior to Aaron,*

the founder of a priestly line which for centuries mediated between Jehovah and His people, Israel. He is above Aaron, because He is a heavenly, not an earthly priest; because His priesthood is not merely for a short lifetime, but forever; and because it confers benefits incalculably greater than those conferred by the priesthood of Aaron. (6) *He is superior to Melchizedek*, the king of Salem and priest of the most high God, who was idealized by the Jews because he combined the kingly and priestly functions. The reference to Melchizedek is obscure. All that pertains to His person has been merged into His symbolic character. He stands for what is highest and purest and most abiding in the earthly priesthood. But even the mysterious Melchizedek must yield to Christ. For what is He but a dim type of that of which Christ is the true and glorious archetype?

4. *The new age which the coming of Christ introduces is an improvement upon the old.* In other words, Christianity is an improvement upon Judaism.

The religious development here described agrees with the principle of evolution by which an increasing purpose of redemption is seen to run through the ages. In transition there is progress. The law is displaced by the gospel, the offering of beasts by the offering of self, the priesthood of Aaron by the priesthood of Christ, the Passover by the Lord's Supper, a gorgeous temple ritual by the simple worship of the Church, a ceremonial religion by one that is spiritual and practical.

One of the key-words in this epistle is the word "better." The new age gives (1) "A better hope"

(vii. 19), a hope that holds out something better than a material Canaan, or a sensuous heaven. (2) "A better covenant" (viii. 6), one that cannot be annulled. (3) "Better promises" (viii. 6), upon which the better covenant is established. (4) "A better and more perfect tabernacle" (ix. 11), one that is spiritual and eternal. (5) "Better sacrifices" (ix. 23), not figures of the reality, but the reality itself. (6) "A better possession, and an abiding one" (x. 34 R. V.). (7) "A better country" (xi. 10), that is, a country better than Canaan. (8) "A better resurrection" (xi. 35), not a resuscitation—not a calling back to the old life, as in the case of the son of the Shunamite, but the passing out of the old life into one of supernal glory. (9) "Some better thing" (xi. 40). That better thing which was withheld from the Old Testament saints being the promise of the heavenly inheritance. Promises they had, but not *the* promise. Canaan was not heaven. The promise, however, which is given to us has now been fulfilled to them. They have entered upon that at the end which we enter upon at the beginning. Our inheritance and theirs is one, so that they apart from us, or we apart from them, are not made perfect (xi. 40).

And this is ever God's way. In the work of redemption there is unity and continuity. The new grows out of the old. Some better thing is always kept in reserve for the coming ages. The best wine is kept until the last of the feast. We ask, Can God excel this? Can He give a brighter gem, a sweeter cup? The manifestations of His power and grace are ever upon an ascending scale. He rises higher and higher. For brass He gives gold, and for iron silver,



and for wood brass, and for stones iron (Isa. lxi. 17). God is behind all progress. It is His hand that provides the better things for us. Men attribute to evolution what they ought to attribute to God. For what is evolution but one of the ascertained methods according to which God works? In this new moral evolution not only is the good displaced by the better, the temporary is displaced by the eternal. In the pregnant words of Professor Bruce, "by everything connected with Christianity eternity is predicated. The salvation it provides is *eternal*, its priesthood is *forever*, the High Priest of humanity possesses an *endless life*, and the offering up of Himself through the *eternal* Spirit has obtained *eternal* redemption for man. Those who believe in Him have the promise of an *eternal* inheritance. The new covenant is *everlasting*."\*

Progress in God's plan calls for progress in the individual Christian. "Let us cease," says our author, "to speak of the first principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection" (vi. 1). Some things are to be left behind on our onward march. We are to grow out of them into something better. We are to leave them as the bird leaves the shell, as the flower leaves the seed, as the walls leave the foundation, as the child leaves the alphabet. What need have we for the scaffolding when the building is completed? The past is useful as a foundation upon which to build, the present is useful as a starting point from which to "go on unto full growth" (vi. 1 R. V. marginal reading).

In this pursuit after perfection we follow a

\*"The Epistle to the Hebrews," p. 17.

heavenly ideal. Like Moses, we build our temple "according to the pattern shown to us in the mount" (viii. 5). The law of correspondence explains the relation of heavenly to earthly things. The heavenly vision reveals the perfect ideal which we seek to realize here on the earth.

5. *The high priesthood of Christ is the medium through which the transcendent blessings of the new dispensation are ministered.* This is the central thought of the epistle. (1) *To fulfill His high-priestly office Christ became man.* "It behoved him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God" (ii. 17). He took upon Him "the seed of Abraham," identifying Himself with man, entering into the race struggle; suffering for the sins of those whose nature He wore, and becoming "perfect through suffering," that He as the author of salvation might bring many sons unto glory (ii. 10). So complete is His identification with man that "he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" (ii. 11)—one lump, one brotherhood. Their interests are bound up in one bundle. Having community of nature, they have also community of destiny. The ends for which Christ assumed our common humanity were: (a) That He might be our priestly representative, sympathizing with us, bearing us on His heart, and helping us in all our infirmities (iv. 15). (b) "That He might bring to nought him that had the power of death," and deliver us from bondage to the fear of death (ii. 14, 15). (c) That He might "make propitiation for the sins of the people" (ii. 17), not in the sense that He might appease

God's wrath on account of sin, but in the sense that He might express God's righteous love in covering it up, blotting it out, and putting it forever away. (d) That he might succor us in temptation. He suffered the generic temptations of the race, "being in all points tempted like as we are," that out of His own experience He might be able to bring us comfort and help. (e) That He might open the way to fellowship with God (iv. 16).

(2) *Our great High Priest is more than man.* He has qualities that no mere man possesses. (a) He is morally perfect. He is not a priest "having infirmity," but is "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens" (vii. 26). (b) He is not hindered from continuing in His priestly office by death. Other priests are mortal; He is immortal. Other priesthoods are changeable; His is unchangeable (vii. 24, 25). (c) His priestly intercession goes continually on. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (vii. 25). This describes His present activity on our behalf. His connection with us is indissoluble. He is constituted our great High Priest, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (vii. 19)—a life that goes on forever.

(3) *The perfect High Priest offers a perfect sacrifice.* The idea that Christ is both priest and victim is peculiar to this writer. Paul speaks of Christ's sacrifice, but not of His priestly act in offering it. (a) The sacrifice of Christ is unique. It is a new kind of sacrifice, not an outward offering, but the offering of self. Other priests offered *something*, Christ offered *Himself* (vii. 27). (b) It is complete, and hence it

did not require to be repeated (x. 14). (c) Its virtue lies in the spirit in which it was offered. It was offered through an eternal or timeless spirit (ix. 14).\*

(d) It is effectual to secure the ends for which it was offered. It brings to man complete and "eternal redemption" (ix. 12). It obtains for him forgiveness and cleansing. It "puts away sin" (ix. 25); disannuls it, blots it out of existence. Its purifying power goes to the heart, "cleansing the conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (ix. 14). This the Jewish sacrifices could not do. There were offenses for which they made no provision; such for example, were sins of murder, idolatry, and adultery. These were capital offenses. For them no atonement was made, nor could the offender, however penitent, escape from their penalty. Where the Jewish sacrifice failed the sacrifice of Christ succeeds. It takes away sin's stain; it breaks sin's power, delivering man completely from its curse and dominion.†

6. *The new age is administered by Christ under a new covenant.* Christians are not heirs of the old covenant which at the time when the epistle was written was becoming old and waxing aged, and was nigh unto vanishing away and which has since been abolished (viii. 13). They are possessors of a new cove-

\*The expression, "an eternal spirit" may refer to Christ's essential or eternal spirit; or it may refer to the Holy Spirit which was given to Him "without measure," anointing Him to the work of human redemption and upholding Him until it was accomplished. In either case the spiritual quality of His sacrifice is the prominent idea.

†Prof. A. B. Bruce points out five aspects under which the death of Christ is set forth in this epistle; (a) As coming under the common law of mortality (xx. 27). (b) As necessary to the execution of His will bequeathing an inheritance (ix. 16). (c) As the climax of a disciplinary process by which He was fitted to be the spiritual leader of men (ii. 10). (d) As reversing the law that sin and death are necessarily connected; His death being that of a sinless man (ii. 14, 15). (e) As a priestly act of sacrifice (x. 14). This is the cardinal point.

nant; a covenant which has placed the world upon a new footing of grace and privilege; a covenant adapted to the new conditions of the Christian age. What the old covenant expressed in part, the new covenant expresses in full. It makes known in a broader and deeper sense than ever before the will of God to man. The inward spiritual nature of the new covenant is set forth under four particulars. (1) It is written on the heart, and not on tables of stone, which means that it is not arbitrarily imposed, but appeals to reason and conscience. (2) It declares oneness between God and His people. (3) It gives the immediate knowledge of God. (4) It pronounces the forgiveness of sin. (See viii. 10-12).

The word "covenant" has in this epistle a double meaning. It denotes both a bond and testament or will. As a bond, it involves the blood of sacrifice; as a testament or will, it involves the death of the testator (ix. 15-17). This double meaning brings before us a twofold blessing. As "the surety of a better covenant" (vii. 23), sealed and ratified in His blood (I. Cor. xi. 25), our great High Priest purifies us from guilt and seals us for our inheritance. As the testator of the divine will He brings us now into possession of the riches of our inheritance, as far as we are prepared to receive them, and holds secure for us the fullness of eternal glory.

7. *Privileges of the new age.* These are called "the good things about to come" (ix. 11). *Things*, not pictures; realities, not shadows (x. 1). These good things have now come. They are the heritage of this gospel age. What are they? (1) *Forgiveness and cleansing.* The Christ, who at the end of the ages

appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (ix. 27), and who entered heaven itself to appear before the face of God for us (ix. 24), hath appeared a second time apart from sin, to make His salvation real unto them who count as a present reality that hope, for the fulfillment of which these Hebrew Christians waited (ix. 27). His saving, cleansing power is now a matter of conscious experience.

(2) *Access to God to all His believers.* The middle wall of partition has been broken down that Jew and Gentile alike may enter into the holy place and offer spiritual sacrifices. Every Christian is constituted a priest, under Christ his great High Priest, and has the right to enter with boldness through the blood of Jesus into the holy of holies of the divine presence (x. 19). Judaism was a religion of separation. It denied to men free access to God. "The grand distinctive merit of the Christian religion for the writer of this epistle is that it brings man near to God. It is a religion of free access and intimate fellowship" (Bruce).

(3) *New power.* Christians of that early age "tasted the powers of the age to come" (viii. 5). They had foretastes of what was coming. They felt the first thrills of new hope and inspiration. They were not like the Old Testament saints, who "received not the promises," but saw them and "greeted them from afar" (xi. 13). They had earnestness of their inheritance. How much more of this power ought we to experience who are living in the new age of spiritual fullness and completeness?

(4) *A better resurrection*" (xi. 35). Not only a resurrection to a better life, but a resurrection better in itself, because it implies the instant passing at death from earth to

heaven. (5) *A new city*—the symbol of order and government. The author says to the Hebrew Christians, to whom he sent this letter, "Ye seek the city which is about to come" (xiii. 14). Visions of an earthly Jerusalem whose glory was to be restored had faded. The earthly Jerusalem was about to fall with a crash, and the New Jerusalem which was to take its place, was about to descend from heaven. To that heavenly Jerusalem we in this age are come (xii. 22). (6) *A kingdom that cannot be shaken*. In those dark days, when the earth and the heaven trembled, and many things which were deemed firm and stable were shaken and removed, the kingdom was secure. Nothing could move it from its base (xii. 28). Unlike the kingdoms of the earth, it is an everlasting kingdom, the everlasting possession of God's Son, the everlasting heritage of God's people.

8. *Duties of the new age*. Every privilege has a duty annexed to it. The transcendent privileges of the new age impose upon men new and greater responsibilities. (1) *The duty of taking hold and keeping hold of the great salvation which Christ has purchased and provided*. There is danger of drifting away from the things concerning Christ which have been heard (ii. 1), danger of neglecting the great salvation (ii. 3.) If Christ be surrendered, there is no possibility of redemption. When He is abandoned hope is gone, for there remaineth "no more a sacrifice for sins" (x. 26). It is not said that there remaineth no sacrifice, but that there remaineth no *other* sacrifice than the divinely provided sacrifice of Calvary. If that is renounced, hope there is none. The Esau who sell their heavenly birthright for the world's pottage,

may find when too late that the bartered birthright cannot be won back (xii. 17). (2) *The duty of cultivating faith.* A list is given of ancient worthies who were men of spiritual vision, and who lived valiant and noble lives through the power of the invisible (xi. 1-40). Men of faith are faithful men; men of vision are men of practical efficiency. (3) *The duty of enduring suffering heroically and hopefully.* The sufferings of the present are chastisements, not punishments. Out of them the loving Father seeks to bring forth "the peaceable fruits of righteousness" (xii. 11). (4) *The duty of exercising patience.* "Run with patience the race set before you," the race which begins at the place where you now stand (xii. 1). Let the thought of the Lord's sustaining grace inspire you with "the patience of hope" in the midst of the trials of the present. (5) *The duty of laboring to secure the promised blessing.* The rest is promised; labor to enter into it (iv. 11). The promised land is before you; fear lest you come short of it (iv. 1). The better day comes not without effort. (6) *The duty of following Christ fully.* "Going forth with Him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (xiii. 12), ever making Him the model of imitation; not being carried away with divers and strange teachings, but abiding in Him who is "the same yesterday and to-day—yea, and forever" (xiii. 9), and in the midst of the wreck of religious systems, and the crash of earthly kingdoms "holding fast the confidence of faith that it waver not" (xi. 23). Those who trustingly follow their Lord in the testing day of persecution will rejoice before Him in the day of His manifestation.



## THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

A circular letter addressed to "the twelve tribes of the Dispersion"—that is, to the Christian Jews who were scattered over every land. The epistle assumes that a Christian is an ideal Jew, and that Christianity is the efflorescence of Judaism. James is the representative of Christian Judaism. To him "the gospel of Christ was simply the true Judaism—Judaism fulfilled and transfigured" (Samuel Cox).

### THE WRITER

His name was James. Three important characters in the New Testament history are known by that name: (1) James, the son of Zebedee, one of the apostles. His mother was Salome, and his brother, John, the beloved disciple. He formed one of the trio, Peter, James, and John. He was the first of the apostles that gained the crown of martyrdom, having been beheaded by Herod 44 A.D. (2) James, the son of Alphæus, called "James the Less," or "the Little James," in allusion to his stature, and to distinguish him from the son of Zebedee. From the fact that nothing is said of him in the gospel records, he would seem to have been as little in importance as in stature. (3) James, the Lord's brother, bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, who was undoubtedly the author of this epistle. To buttress up the doctrine

of the Perpetual Virginity of Mary, the Roman Catholic Church has tried to make it appear that James was merely the cousin of Jesus, or His stepbrother. But this is torturing words to suit a theory.

#### CHARACTER OF JAMES

1. *He was a liberal-conservative in theology.* He adhered to old forms, was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He never broke away from the temple. But while clinging to the old he showed a spirit of toleration towards the new. Standing between two extreme parties in the Church, and being in sympathy with both, he helped to unite them. His liberal-mindedness is seen in the position which he took in the first Christian council at Jerusalem, over which he presided. Wise, temperate, self-poised, he did not allow himself to be carried away with the passion of the hour, and when Peter's fiery speech was in danger of rending the Church in twain, it was James who prevented the catastrophe. He plead for liberty, and would have no unnecessary burdens imposed upon the Gentile converts. Somewhat narrow in his *views*, he was broad in his *sympathies*, and that helped him to do justice to both sides of every question.

2. *He was rationalistic in spirit.* He was slow to believe in the claims of Jesus, and withheld his allegiance from Him at first. For a time the chasm between them seemed to widen. He stood with the world of orthodox Judaism by which Jesus was opposed. When Jesus was popular he was silent. When disciples were flocking around Him, James "did not believe." He was not with Jesus in the last days of His passion. He was too much pained and

embarrassed to know what to do. After His resurrection Jesus "was seen of James," and that interview put all his doubts to rest. Henceforth he became a loyal follower of Jesus, and by his great influence drew the entire household of Jesus after him. The faith of such a man is of great value. The evidence that satisfied him must have been all-compelling.

3. *Great beauty and purity of life.* He was revered by the Jews, and because of the sanctity of his character earned the title of James the Just. He combined Old Testament righteousness with evangelical faith. He resembled John the Baptist, or one of the older prophets. As a Nazarite he was "holy from the womb," and did not drink wine nor eat animal food. He lived a life of austerity and self-denial, and was said to resemble the ancient saints even in outward aspect, wearing a linen ephod, with bare feet, long locks, and unshaven head.

One of his marked characteristics was his spirit of devotion. He was said to have prayed constantly in the temple for the forgiveness of the people, spending whole nights in his devotions, until his knees were as hard as a camel's.

His great influence did not come from his official position so much as from his strength of character. Paul speaks of him as a "pillar of the Church," a tower of strength. And yet outwardly his life seemed to be a narrow one, more provincial than cosmopolitan. He stayed at Jerusalem, never traveling on evangelistic missions. The feasts to which the people gathered from all parts of the world in the holy city gave him, however, a wide opportunity, and made his position one of power. His death was

tragedical. When testifying for Jesus during an outbreak of fanatical zeal he was thrown from a pinnacle of the temple, and afterward was felled by a fuller's club. Horror and remorse seized the people when they saw what had been done, and the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred seven years afterward, was regarded by many as a visitation of God for this crime. So died, as he had lived, a faithful "servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ."

#### STRUCTURE AND STYLE

This epistle is written in pure classical Greek. In style it is sharp and incisive, like the writings of the Hebrew prophets. It has no opening blessing, no closing benediction. The writer, if not a man of wide reading, had a thorough acquaintance with the masterpieces of literature. His spirit was steeped in the writings of the Old Testament, from which he frequently quoted. To the wisdom literature, to which his epistle is closely allied, he makes frequent reference—namely, six times to Job, ten to Proverbs, five to Wisdom, and fifteen to Ecclesiastes. He also frequently alludes to the Apochrypha. He was somewhat akin to the writers of the wisdom literature, in the possession of a practical and prudential spirit.

The date of the epistle has been fixed as early as 52 A.D. By some it has been regarded as the earliest book in the New Testament. The absence of all reference in its pages to the Judaistic party shows that it was written before the controversy which they instigated arose.

## SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

Luther thought lightly of this epistle. He called it "an epistle of straw," because he fancied that it did not appeal to the deepest evangelical motives. It is an epistle of gold. It inculcates the loftiest morality. It is emphatically a message for the present day. "The application of this epistle in the region of economy is that which alone can save our civilization" (R. D. Hitchcock).

The epistle has an attractive beginning. The modesty of the writer is seen in its inscription. James does not assume authority; he does not speak of himself as an apostle; he does not refer to his relationship to our Lord. The simple title which he adopts is, "bond-servant of Jesus Christ." To be the bond-servant of Jesus Christ was his highest honor.

The salutation, "my brethren," is attractive. James does not assume the attitude of "a high priest wearing the golden mitre." He claims community of faith and fellowship with those whom he addresses. "The Cato among the disciples" has a warm heart. Beneath austerity of manner brotherly affection lies hidden. Among the things presented in this epistle are:

1. *A Christian standard of ethics.* The "bond-servant of Jesus Christ" writes in his Master's name; He lays down his law (ii. 12); he looks at things from His standpoint (ii. 1); he urges his readers to the instant performance of duty because His presence was at hand (v. 8). According to James, Christianity is the perfect law. His epistle is an echo of the Sermon on the Mount, from which it quotes fourteen times.

The duty of living according to Christ, the duty of conforming to His standard of ethics, is the central thought which it sets forth. "It presents essentially the teaching of Christ, and hence there is little teaching about Christ" (Beyschlag).

2. *The Christian view of life's trials* (i. 2-4). Trials belong to the normal order of things; they are included in the scheme of life. No life is free from them; hence the Christian is not to be surprised when they come to him. He is to consider (1) Their unexpectedness. They often come suddenly. We "fall into them" as a traveler might fall into a pit. We do not always bring them upon ourselves. The sharpest reach us through the affections. (2) Their variety. They are of "all sorts," literally, "many-colored," or variegated. In form different, in essence the same. (3) Their purpose. They furnish a needful test of faith. They try it as gold is tried in the fire. They also develop it by stripping from us the things which obscure the vision of the soul. Great faith is generally the product of great trial. (4) How are they to be met? Sweetly and bravely, hopefully. We are to "count it all joy" when we fall into them. This is a hard saying. To rejoice in trials for their own sake is impossible; we can rejoice in them only in view of their purpose and result.

3. *The true wisdom* (i. 5-8, iii. 13-18). That is the wisdom that is needed for the purpose of making proper adjustment to life's trials and duties. (1) This wisdom is "from above," and is to be distinguished from that which is from below (iii. 17). It does not come by inheritance; it is not learned at the feet of any earthly teacher. It comes from heaven.

(2) It is spiritual, and has to do with things in the spiritual sphere. The wisdom that is from below, on the other hand, is "earthy, sensual, devilish" (iii. 15), and has to do exclusively with things of the animal life. (3) It is obtained by asking it from God the giver (i. 5). How? (1) With unshaken faith that rests in God and staggers not at His promise. (2) With a single mind, and not with two minds in conflict with each other. A double-minded man is like a wind-tossed wave. He is the sport of his own divided desires. (4) It is given: (a) "To all men"—that is, to all men who seek it. (b) "Liberally,"—with open hand. (c) Graciously—without upbraiding. (d) Indirectly. It is not poured into the soul as water into a vessel. The ability to make practical application of knowledge comes by experience; none the less does it come from God.

4. *The Christian view of poverty.* "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in his high estate" (i. 9). These words have been called "the beatitude of poverty." "Prosperity," says Lord Bacon, "is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity the blessing of the New." But poverty is no blessing in itself. It may curse or bless; it may lower or exalt. When poverty comes from adherence to principle it is a badge of honor. Any one who becomes poor for righteousness' sake obtains a high degree, being admitted into fellowship with the suffering Christ.

5. *The Christian view of wealth* (i. 9-11, v. 1-6). Let the rich man rejoice "in that he was made low"—rejoice not in humbling providences, but in a humble disposition that has learned how to abound and how to be abased. A man has no reason to rejoice in

wealth, if wealth is all that he possesses; but he has reason to rejoice in it if he has come to estimate it at its real value, and to use it for right ends. The man to whom wealth is a blessing recognizes: (1) That wealth is accidental, and not essential. A true life may be lived without it. (2) That wealth has its dangers as well as poverty. A full cup is not easily carried. It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom because it is hard to administer wealth in Christ's way. How seldom does benevolence keep pace with accumulation! (3) That wealth is perishable. The rich man has little reason to be lifted up when he sees that in the full flowering of prosperity a scorching wind may wither everything up. The most carefully planned projects may fail, and the man who is rich to-day may be poor to-morrow. The tenure of wealth is proverbially uncertain. (4) That wealth may be a curse rather than a blessing (v. 1-6). And a curse it is: (a) When gotten unjustly; that is, when it represents wages "kept back by fraud." If it is coined out of the life blood of human souls, it is tainted, corrupted. It will rust and rot. It will eat as fire the "bloated bodies" of those who have wrung it from the hands of the poor. (b) When it is put to a selfish and sinful use; being used merely for animal gratification. The rich people who are using their wealth in this wicked way are told to "weep and howl" for the miseries that are coming upon them. They are nourishing their hearts in a day of slaughter, "like cattle grazing in rich pastures on the day they are doomed to bleed." (5) That the possession of wealth involves great responsibilities, because it brings great opportunities. Wealth is often held without a sense of stewardship.



Of all talents that men possess that of money-making is perhaps the least consecrated.

6. *The Christian view of temptation* (i. 12-15). When the New Testament was written the word temptation was used in a double sense, as meaning "test," and "solicitation to evil." It is now used exclusively in the latter sense. The double meaning of the word explains the teaching of James. Temptation in the form of a test of virtue is from God; temptation to sin is not from God, but is from the devil. (1) No man is "tempted of God to evil." When God tempts any man, as He tempted Abraham, "He tempts him not from evil motives to an evil end, but from good motives to a good end" (Augustine). He tries him that He may make him a better man. (2) Solicitation to evil comes from within. "Each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed" (i. 14)—that is, drawn away of his own desires, enticed with a bait, and dragged a willing prey to land. James cuts up by the roots the modern heresy that a man's character is determined by heredity and environment. The actual source of temptation he finds in man himself. Every man is devil to himself. It is through his own desires that the principle of evil works. When the prince of this world comes and finds much in him that he can work upon, the smallest spark may explode the mine. (3) The end of those who yield to sinful desires. "The lust when it hath conceived beareth sin, and the sin when it is full grown bringeth forth death" (i. 15). All sin begins in desire and ends in death. "The sweetness of sin like a bait enticeth men," says Plutarch. Bede makes temptation consist of suggestion, delight,

consent. The crocodile of evil must be killed in the egg of desire.

7. *An exalted view of God* (i. 16-18). Nothing is of more importance than correct views of God. Error here is fatal. Nothing but good is to be ascribed to Him. (1) God is the primal fount of goodness. This is the central truth of Christianity. He is "the Father of lights," the fountain of light and purity. He is to the universe what the sun is to our planetary system. "Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above"; they all descend from heaven like the manna. As there is no evil thing that comes from God, there is no good thing that does not come from Him. (2) The goodness of God is unchanging. "Without variableness," having no change in the degree of its light; without "shadow of turning"—that is, having no shadow such as is caused by the turning of the heavenly bodies. His goodness never suffers eclipse. It is always at meridian. Perfection cannot change. (3) The goodness of God is manifested in the bestowment of spiritual blessings. (a) The best gift that comes from above is a good heart. A good heart is of God's begetting. (b) A good heart is brought forth by God through the instrumentality of "the word of truth." (c) It is given "that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures." Regenerated souls are the seed from which the future kingdom grows. The Hebrew Christians, to whom James wrote, although poor and despised, were chosen to be the founders of the Church.

8. *The ethics of speech* (i. 19-21, iii. 3-12). "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Let self-restraint be practiced in the control

of the tongue. Man has two ears and one mouth, therefore he ought to hear more than he says. "Speech is silvern, silence is golden." No one ever repented of being silent, many have repented of uttering hasty, bitter words. (1) The evil (iii. 3-12). The tongue is the hardest thing to tame. By human power it never can be tamed (iii. 8). It is like the bridle which guides the horse, like the helm which steers the ship, like the spark which kindles a conflagration in the forest. It is "the world of iniquity among the members," defiling the whole body and setting on fire "the rolling wheel of life." As giving expression to human inconsistency it yields poison and health. With it we bless God and curse men. From it come sweet water and bitter. Those things ought not so to be. The salvation of man is not complete until it includes the control of the tongue (iii. 2). (2) The root of the evil—vassalage to impulse. When passion is uncontrolled the rudder is lost. Quick speech kindles anger. The angry man who cannot refrain from the swift rejoinder "speaks poniards, and every word stabs." Hasty and angry speech does not lead to the practice or to the furtherance of righteousness. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (i. 20). What harm has come from religious controversies! Unholy passion has often been mistaken for holy zeal, angry speech for earnest speech. The fiery breath of wrath blights every virtue. (3) The corrective. (a) Lay aside all filthiness. Pluck it up and cast it away as a noxious weed. Cut off the overflowing and outflowing of malignity at the fountain head. (b) "Receive the implanted or inborn word, which is able

to save the soul." Receive it with meekness, and it will save the soul from barrenness and death (i. 21).

9. *The Christian view of religion* (i. 22-27). James presents religion from the ethical rather than from the dogmatic side. His epistle might be called a manual of practical or applied religion, were it not that in so far as religion is real it is always practical and applied. (1) The importance of right action. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." Hearing should result in doing. "He who hears the law and does not practice it," says the Jewish proverb, "is like a man who plows and sows, but never reaps." James says he is like a man who beholds his face in a mirror and goes away and forgets how he looked. But the man with whom hearing leads to action "looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty," that he may consult it; and in that law he continues to walk, "being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh," a doer that makes a business of religion. Of such a one it is said that he is "blessed," not in his knowing, but "in his doing." (2) A vain and empty religion. Where there is an unbridled tongue, where the tongue is not held in check by the bridle of self-control, religion is a thing of seeming, an empty shell, a shadow without the substance. Volubility is no sign of piety. (3) True religion. Religion "pure and undefiled," religion which is clear and unclouded, like a precious stone without a flaw, religion which stands the highest test, being accounted right in the sight of God our Father, consists in two things. (a) In benevolence toward man. Not in creeds but in deeds. Its ritual is the ritual of active love. It impels its possessor "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,"

coming into personal touch with them, giving them not things only, but self. Love and sympathy are more than gold. "Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor." (b) In personal purity. This is the spring of all that is good in the outward life. The man who would help an evil world must keep an untarnished soul. Here, then, is the definition of religion which James offers—open-handed charity and personal purity. Who can furnish a better?

10. *Christ's view of man* (ii. 1-13). The accusation, "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons," may be read as an inquiry, "My brethren, do ye in accepting persons hold the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory?" (margin R. V.) By "the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ" is meant His teaching—in this case His doctrine of human brotherhood, which is founded upon divine fatherhood. (1) Those who hold the faith of Jesus will have regard not to the clothes upon a man, but to the man in the clothes. They will not give the best seat in the synagogue to the "gold-ringed man," and put the man in the threadbare coat behind the door (ii. 2, 3). They will treat all men as equals. (2) Looking at man through Christ's eyes they will not judge heirs of the kingdom with evil thoughts. The rich will not oppress the poor, dragging them before the judgment seats (ii. 5, 6). (3) In all their dealings with their fellowmen they will strive to fulfill the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (ii. 8). (4) They will strive to act toward others "as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty" (ii. 12). Brotherly service will always be rendered freely when

the law of liberty to which we are bound is the gospel of God's grace.

11. *An ethical view of faith* (ii.14-26). Faith is looked upon as an ethical force. It is not the hand of a beggar that receives alms, but a spiritual power working in the soul for the production of righteousness. (1) Faith and works are inseparably connected. Where you find the one you find the other. The faith that does not bring forth deeds of mercy has no saving power (ii.14-16). (2) Faith without works is dead. It is a dead pole stuck in the ground, and not a living, fruit-bearing tree. When faith is alone it is dead; when it brings forth works it is alive. (3) The power of faith comes from its object. Saving faith takes hold of a saving Christ. The primary article of a monotheistic faith—belief in one God—is not Christian faith. "Demons believe and shudder," Christians believe and rejoice; demons believe and rebel, Christians believe and obey. It is not bare belief in God that saves, but belief in God the Father whom Christ reveals. (4) Faith and works are both necessary to justification. It is the aim of James to show that the man who has the root of faith in his heart will have the fruit of goodness in his life. He takes as an illustration of his argument the case of Abraham, whose faith had "a true and valid accomplishment in works." Abraham was justified by faith in the sense that his works showed that he was in possession of faith. His faith was counted for righteousness because it had in it the potency and power of righteousness (ii. 23).\*

\*Between James and Paul there is no antagonism. They are looking at the same thing, but from opposite ends. Paul is thinking of initial justification which takes place when a man by faith accepts Jesus Christ as a Saviour;

12. *The Christian view of life.* The battle-ground of the soul. An education rather than a probation.

(1) Things to be avoided: (a) Jealousy and faction (iii. 13, 14). (b) War and strife (iv. 1, 2). The war spirit is anti-Christian. It comes from the lower and baser side of man's nature. (c) Envy; which is contrary to the spirit which God has planted in us (iv. 5). (d) Pride (iv. 6). (e) Hasty judgments (iv. 11, 12). (f) Presumptuousness (iv. 13-17). The uncertainty of life is to be taken into account in every undertaking. (g) Carelessness in the taking of oaths. Oaths are not to be taken lightly or profanely (v. 12). In most cases a simple affirmation is all that is needed.

(2) Things to be cultivated: (a) Meekness, "the meekness of wisdom" (iii. 1). (b) Humility (iv. 10). (c) A peace-making spirit (iii. 1). (d) Usefulness. Knowledge is to be translated into action (iv. 17).

13. *The Christian hope*—the coming, or rather, the presence of the Lord (v. 7-11). The proper attitude of those Hebrew Christians in the persecution that encircled them was that of patient waiting; like the farmer, who having sown his seed, waits for "the early and later rain"—that is, the rain of winter and spring. Hardship and injury were to be borne without a murmur, "for the presence of the Lord was at hand." It was no distant, nebulous hope that was held out, but a hope that was to find swift and certain realization. The recompense of endurance was to come to them as surely as it came to Job.

James of progressive justification which takes place when a man by good works proves the reality of his faith. With Paul the ground of justification is objective—it is in Christ; with James the ground of justification is subjective—it is in the man himself. The point of union between these views is this, that the works that justify are works which are the offspring of faith in Jesus.

14. *The Christian view of prayer* (v. 14-20). When suffering, pray; when cheerful, sing. (1) Pray for the sick. Concentrate power upon the object sought by uniting in prayer with others. Call in the elders of the Church. Do not trust in charms, but anoint with oil as a means of healing.\* Having made use of means, pray in faith, trusting in God's love and power, and believing that He will raise the sufferer up, provided a lengthened life will redound to His own glory and the sufferer's good (v. 14, 15). (2) Make the spiritual supreme. The emptying of the soul of evil by confession ought to precede prayer for health (v. 16). Prayer "availeth in its working" when it comes from the heart of a righteous man. The case of Elijah is given. It is the inference of James that the drought and rain came in answer to Elijah's prayer, and a reasonable inference it is, if we believe that behind all outward phenomena there is a loving Father who controls all things for spiritual ends. (3) Aim at spiritual restoration. Save others from death by saving them from error. This is more important than the healing of the body. He who saves another's soul covers with the veil of divine mercy a multitude of sins and redeems a life from destruction. The last word of James is a call to the noblest of all works, the work of soul-saving.

\* This text lends no countenance to the doctrine of Extreme Unction. Extreme Unction is administered sacramentally in cases where recovery is regarded as hopeless; here oil is administered therapeutically, in order to recovery; as being a remedy in common use for the cure of all kinds of disease.



# THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF PETER

## I. PETER

There is perhaps no book of the New Testament more fully authenticated than the First Epistle of Peter. The external and internal evidence for its Petrine authorship are equally strong. It was known to Polycarp, and has been accepted by well nigh the universal Church, but it has been left to certain modern scholars to question this position, some of them on the ground of its Pauline characteristics attributing its authorship to Barnabas.\* It is addressed to "the sojourners of the Dispersion," and was transmitted by Silvanus (Silas), who was the amanuensis of the author.

### THE WRITER

The original name of Peter was Simon, or Symeon. He was born in Bethsaida, and lived in Capernaum, where he followed the occupation of fisherman. He was a married man, and his house seems to have been a meeting-place for the disciples. The turning point in his life was his meeting with Jesus, to whom he was introduced by Andrew. Nothing is said of that interview, but from it Peter came away with a conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, and with a firmly formed purpose that henceforth he would follow His fortunes.

Peter was a typical Galilean, energetic, fiery, brave,

\* A. C. McGiffert, *The Apostolic Age*, p. 598.

impulsive, changeful. The rock-like qualities which Jesus saw in him from the first came out into bold relief as his character developed. He was a born leader. In him the disciples found a mouthpiece. It was from his lips that there came the first Christian confession of faith, that good confession of Christ's divinity upon which the Church is founded (Matt. xvi. 17-19). It was mainly through his efforts that the Jews were brought to acknowledge the Messiahship of Jesus. As a mediator between theological extremes, Peter could sympathize with James and Paul. Although the apostle of the circumcision, he associated freely with the Gentiles. This was his offense in the eyes of the strict Jews who came from James to Antioch to spy out his liberty in Christ. When rebuked by Paul because he had leaned back toward the exclusiveness which he had renounced in withdrawing for a time from his Gentile brethren, he did not take offense. He speaks of his rebuker as "our beloved brother Paul" (II. Ep. iii. 10).\* The rebuke of Paul was merited. It was eminently proper for Peter to act as a Jew if he chose, but to do so after his free and confidential action was wrong. This was not the only *lapsus* in the life of Peter. His denial of the Master is the great blot upon his character. With his example before us it is hard to believe in apostolic perfection. But nobly did he retrieve his failures. After the private meeting with the Master he was publicly reinstated into the apostolic fellowship. "To the erring but repentant apostle was given the leadership of the entire Church and the honor of martyrdom" (Seiffert).

\*Even if the Petrine authorship of the Second Epistle be questioned, this reference to Paul is in Peter's well known spirit, and may have been one of his reputed sayings.

## THE PERSONAL EQUATION

It would be possible to construct a biography of Peter from his first epistle. To Peter the confessor, Jesus had said, "Thou art Peter (a stone), and upon this rock will I build my Church"; but Peter, disclaiming preëminence, and realizing the essential oneness of all who confess the same confession, says: "Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices" (ii. 5). Remembering how, when carried off his feet by the passion of the moment, he had drawn his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, he says, "If, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently; this is acceptable with God" (ii. 20). Remembering the cowardly way in which he had parried the taunting questions of the servant maid in the hall of Caiaphas, he says, "Be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (iii. 15). Remembering how he had been surprised into sin by the sudden assault of temptation, he says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you" (iv. 12). Recognizing that the commission he had received to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ was not for himself alone, he says, "The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, tend the flock of God which is among you" (v. 1). Remembering his self-confident boast, "Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended," he says, "Gird your-

selves with humility (literally, tie on humility, cf. John xiii. 4) to serve one another, for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble" (v. 5). Remembering his miserable fall, he says, "Be sober, be watchful; your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom withstand steadfast in your faith" (v. 8). Rejoicing in the triumph which he had achieved through the power of divine grace, he says to tried and tempted souls everywhere, "The God of all grace, who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while shall himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you" (v. 10). These examples show that out of the spiritual experience of the writer this epistle was born. It was written in his heart's blood. As a word of reality it finds a responsive echo in other souls.

#### AIM OF THIS EPISTLE

It was written to comfort and strengthen Christians in a season of trial. Judgment was beginning at the house of God. The Church was to be sifted and cleansed. Connected with this state of persecution there were special temptations against which Christians are warned. The present trials of Christians are contrasted with their future inheritance. Emphasis is put upon the future manifestation of Christ—the eschatological element is prominent. The brightest Messianic hopes are to be realized, the prophecies of the Old Testament are to be fulfilled. The key-word of this epistle is *hope*.

## PECULIARITIES

In style it is easy and unconventional, yet never careless. It bears evidence that the writer was acquainted with Paul's epistles to the Romans and Ephesians, and also the epistle of James, and while influenced by them, he is thoroughly independent and original. There is in his epistle very little of the subjective side of Christianity. Truth is presented objectively and practically. A large use is made of Old Testament imagery, yet the epistle seems to have been written quite as much for Gentile as for Jewish converts.

A conservative estimate places the date somewhere from 65 to 67 A.D., probably nearer the latter than the former date. It is said to have been written from Babylon (v. 13), which is evidently a symbolical name for Rome, to which political center Peter seems to have come in his missionary itinerancy.

## II. PETER

The genuineness of this epistle has been much disputed, and with a good show of reason. It differs in style from the first epistle; it has but few references to the Old Testament; it deals with a new range of ideas, and while painting in the darkest colors the signs of judgment which were to accompany the coming of Christ, the picture of doom which it presents is unrelieved by the light of hope which shines so brightly in the first epistle. The occasion for the writing of this epistle was the new dangers to which the infant Church was exposed from two classes, the

libertines and the mockers, against both of which the Church is warned.

Despite the difficulties attending the subject of the genuineness of this epistle, the fact that the writer claims to be Simon Peter, the apostle, who had been with Jesus in the holy mount, and the additional fact that the epistle itself contains valuable spiritual teaching, which to many appears to bear the apostolic stamp, it was after much hesitation finally admitted into the canon of the New Testament. Its inspiration if tested by its moral value stands unquestioned.

## SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

### FIRST EPISTLE

This epistle is characterized by an outpouring of soul rather than an orderly arrangement of thought. It is a collection of pearls. The thread upon which these pearls are strung is the idea of Christian hope. This hope, which is the source of comfort in affliction, nothing can blight nor destroy. From it come some of the most powerful motives for noble living in the present.

### SEPARATE PEARLS

I. *Election* (i. 1, 2). Here we have the *ground*, the *sphere*, and the *end* of election. Believers are elect "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." In view of their faith, and as standing within the sphere of things in which the Holy Spirit operates, they are elected unto a life of obedience and purity. The question,

How is election realized? is subordinate to the question, For what end are we elected?

2. *A living hope* (i. 2-7). This hope is begotten in the believing heart "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Its object is an incorruptible inheritance, which from the beginning has been reserved in heaven for those who are guarded by the power of God, through faith, unto a salvation ready to be manifested at the end of the times. The fullness of salvation is not yet realized. There is much to look forward to. Hope gives wings to the feet. God will guard His own until the last danger is past, and the wilderness of earth is changed for the heavenly fold.

3. *The end of faith* (i. 8-12). The end of faith is salvation—"the salvation of the soul." Not the salvation of the soul as distinguished from the salvation of the body, but as the word "soul" imports, the salvation of "the life"—in other words, the salvation of the entire man in the whole circle of his being. This complete salvation for which the prophets "sought and searched diligently" is realized in Christ. It comes through faith in His unseen presence, and through participation in His saving power.

4. *The Christian ideal* (i. 13-21). How is it secured? (1) By strenuous effort, "girding up the loins of the mind." (2) By setting the heart perfectly upon the source of help—namely, "the grace which is being brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (3) By non-conformity to the world. (4) By imitating the holy God. (5) By remembering *by what, from what, and to what* we have been redeemed. We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, from

a vain, empty, and unprofitable life, to a rich and glorious life in which is fulfilled in some measure the ideal presented in Christ.

5. *Inward purification* (i. 22-25). Unlike the Levitical purifications, which were external and had reference merely to the body, Christian purification is inward and spiritual. It is a thing of the soul. It goes to the center of personality, where the life forces of the man reside. Hence the salvation of the soul is often taken for the salvation of the whole man; for when the citadel is captured the outworks surrender; when the bitter fountain has been cleansed the issuing streams are pure and sweet. (1) This inward purification is an accomplished fact. The cleansing process is already begun (i. 22). (2) The condition upon which it is obtained is obedience to the truth. (3) One of its tokens is "unfeigned love of the brethren" (i. 22). (4) The means employed for its accomplishment is the living word of God, which fadeth not like all earthly glory, but "abideth forever" (i. 23-25).

6. *Spiritual development* (ii. 1-10). (1) *Personal growth*. (a) In order to personal growth in the divine life "all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies, all evil-speakings," must be cast away as a polluted garment. For by these things growth is hindered. (b) Suitable nourishment must be taken. "Loŕg for spiritual milk" ("reasonable milk," margin R. V.), milk that is wholesome and unadulterated, not that ye may be *satisfied* thereby, but "that ye may *grow* thereby" (ii. 2). (2) *Corporate growth*. Growth of the whole body of believers. A new figure is adopted. (a) Believers as living stones are built up on Christ the living stone (ii. 5). By



them the preciousness of that stone chosen of God and rejected of men is proved (ii. 7). (b) When life is built up upon life there is growth. Only living things grow. Where there is decay of life there is an arrest of development. (c) Believers are not only the temple, they are the priests that minister in it. They are "built up a spiritual house for a holy priesthood" (ii. 5). To all believers priestly rank belongs. In the temple of the spirit are priestly souls, but no priestly class. (d) Believers are united in priestly worship and service "to offer up spiritual sacrifices" in the name of Christ (ii. 5). (e) They are indwelt by God, "a people for His own possession." Not only are they filled with the glory of God, they also become a reflection of His glory, showing forth "the excellencies of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light" (ii. 9).

7. *The pilgrim spirit* (ii. 11-15). Christians are to comport themselves as "sojourners and pilgrims." In the world, they are not of the world. (1) Things to be abstained from. Not the innocent and legitimate pleasures of life, but things that make for spiritual ruin, "fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (ii. 11). (2) Character to be made attractive. "Having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles," so that if the mouth of slander cannot be stopped, its power for injury may be neutralized. In those days the vilest charges were brought against the Christians by their pagan neighbors. To the venomous lies of slander their only reply was to be a blameless life. "By well-doing" they were to endeavor to put to silence (literally, to muzzle) the ignorance of foolish men." (3) The end sought—the influencing of

others for good. They were to live so that those who did them wrong, seeing their beautiful works, might be changed in heart, and "glorify God in the day of visitation," whether that day was one of mercy or of judgment (ii. 12).

8. *Political, social, and domestic duties* (ii. 13-17, iii. 1-7). (1) *Submission to civil authority*. "Be subject to every ordinance [institution] of man for the Lord's sake." Government of some kind is necessary. Even when far from ideal, it is to be respected as the expression of a divine principle. The authority exercised by the emperor in his own name, and that delegated by him to his provincial governors, was to be obeyed, that the charge made against the Christians of being turbulent and rebellious might be refuted. At that particular time it would have been the highest folly to exercise, on the ground of their freedom in Christ, the divine right of revolt against tyranny and oppression. The law-abiding spirit inculcated was not a passive and spiritless non-resistance, but the heroic endurance of political wrong for righteousness' sake. (2) *Servants and masters*. Household servants, whether bond or free, are enjoined to be subject to their masters with all fear, not only to the kind and considerate, but also to those who made peremptory and unreasonable demands. (a) *The motive*. Wrong is to be endured for "conscience toward God" (ii. 19), or more correctly, "through the consciousness of God"—to-wit, through the consciousness of His presence and of His infinite help. The soul that is consciously environed by the unseen and eternal, consciously touched by God, consciously dependent upon Him, will be inspired with courage to endure wrong

and to do right. (b) The ideal to follow. "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps" (ii. 21)—literally, put your feet in His tracks. Not His life only, but His death and resurrection are the objects of imitation. The end for which He carried our sins up to the tree was "that we, having died unto sins, should live unto righteousness" (ii. 24). The death of Christ is something more than the figure of the death of the soul to sin; it is the force by which the spiritual change is produced. "By whose stripes you were healed." From the sacrificial death of Christ comes the death of the soul to sin and its quickening in righteousness. (3) *Duties matrimonial* (iii. 1-7.) Husbands and wives were to act in their relation to one another in harmony with the principles enunciated. Christian wives were to render to their heathen husbands the submissiveness of a true affection, that they might win them to Christ "without words"—that is, by the eloquence of silence. They were to "find their charm not in outward adornment, but in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit." Christian husbands, on the other hand, were to "dwell with their wives according to knowledge." In other words, they were to treat them in a thoughtful and reasonable way, honoring them as the "weaker vessels," and as "joint heirs of the grace of life." The married state is here looked upon as a field for the exercise of Christian virtues.

9. *A summary of duty* (iii. 8-17). As if about to close Peter says, "Finally,"—"to sum up in a word": (1) Cultivate the Christian temper. "Be ye all of one mind, sympathetic, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded." A special blessing is promised to

those who manifest these tender feminine graces. Bless, and ye shall inherit a blessing. (2) "Seek peace and pursue it" (iii. 11). Peace is often found only after diligent pursuit. (3) Make Christ central. Sanctify Him in your hearts as Lord, separate Him in your thoughts from other men, enshrine Him in the inmost sanctuary of the soul (iii. 15). (4) Find a basis for faith in reason. Be ready when occasion demands to give a rational defense of faith. Give it in the proper spirit, "with meekness and fear" (ii. 15). (5) Keep a good conscience, a conscience that points to the Christian ideal as the needle to the pole. (6) Suffer for well doing, not for evil doing. There is no merit in retributive suffering.

10. *Lessons from the suffering and exaltation of Christ* (ii. 18-22, iv. 1-6). (1) The object of His suffering. "He died for sin once, that he might conduct us to God," leading us by His nail-pierced hand into the Father's presence. (2) His divine nature. "Being put to death in the flesh, He was quickened in the spirit, in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison." This allusion to His descent into Hades is incidental. It lay outside of the purpose of Peter to open the seven-sealed mystery of the unseen world. His aim was a practical one. It was to show that Jesus having accomplished His mission in the under world, ascended to the place of power at the right hand of God. (3) An illustration. A comparison is found between the flood and baptism (iii. 21). The waters of the flood by which Noah and his household were saved from the doom which overtook their ungodly generation "washed clean the sin-stained earth," and thus became the means of the

world's purification. They were a figure of that essential, ethical baptism which now saves us, a baptism which consists not in "the putting away of the filth of the flesh," but in that inward purity which is the inquiry of a good conscience toward God—a baptism which is realized "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (4) The practical power of the resurrection of Christ. This was the leading idea in the apostle's mind. "Arm ye yourselves also with the same mind" (iv. 1), the mind of Him who suffered and triumphed. Separate yourselves from the old life. Live no longer "to the lusts of men, but to the will of God," so that if you should be put to death in the flesh by your cruel persecutors, you may, like the dead unto whom the good tidings were preached, "live according to God in the spirit" (iv. 6). All who die with Christ shall also live with Him.

11. *Impending judgment.* "The end of all things is at hand" (iv. 7). "The time is come for judgment to begin" (iv. 17). The tone of this epistle is different from that of II. Thessalonians. There is to be no delay. The cup of iniquity is now full. Judgment is imminent. It is about to fall upon "the house of God." On the background of Israel's judgment the "salvation ready to be revealed at the last time" (i. 5) shines forth. Christians are to suffer patiently, for the time of suffering will be short, and in the glory about to be revealed they will become partakers (v. 1).

12. *Hortatory ending* (v. 5-12). (1) Official faithfulness. Elders are to tend to the flock of God "with willing and self-denying oversight, that they may receive the aramanthine crown. (2) Stability—being

firm in the faith. (3) The goal—perfection. “After ye have suffered a little while, the God of all grace shall Himself perfect, establish, strengthen you.” For that end He is now at work upon you. (4) The object of the epistle is thus stated: “I have written unto you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. In this take your stand.”

#### SECOND EPISTLE

It adds interest to this epistle if we look upon it as written by Peter even in “a partial and secondary sense,” for then will we see in it some of his latest and ripest thoughts. But one thing is clear, the writer of this epistle, whoever he may have been, had a distinct and definite purpose, to which he steadfastly adhered. His purpose was twofold. It was to forewarn those who had obtained “an equally precious faith” with himself of the changes which were coming, and to exhort them to progress in Christian thought and life. (See iii. 17, 18) The salient points of the epistle are:

1. *The saving power of Christian knowledge* (i. 1-4). The key-word of this epistle is *knowledge*. In the full and complete knowledge of God, as revealed in Christ, all spiritual good is to be realized. (1) In the full knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord, grace and peace are multiplied (i. 2). (2) Through this knowledge come “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (i. 3)—that is, all things that are requisite for the attainment of spiritual life and godliness. (3) Included in this knowledge are “precious and exceeding great promises,” which are given by Him who called us through the manifestation of

His own glory and power, that we might become partakers of the divine nature (i. 4). Divine life is an impartation, not an evolution. A sinner does not evolve into a saint. A new and holy nature is implanted which produces holy actions. Those who are partakers of Christ's nature, are partakers of His holiness.

2. *Salvation in fullness* (i. 5-11). Because of the grace provided, strenuous effort must be made to grow in every Christian grace. Virtues are not self-sown. "All diligence" must be given to produce them. Stone is to be added to stone in the building up of a holy character. (1) Faith is the foundation, to which everything is to be added. (2) In faith we are to add virtue, or force—not prowess and courage only, but aptness and readiness for action, "activity, tone, and strength of soul" (Bengel). Equally in the working and fighting Christian may "virtue" be exemplified. (3) "In force knowledge," or the practical wisdom by which force is to be regulated and directed. (4) "In knowledge, temperance," or self-control in the presence of life's enjoyments. (5) "In temperance, patience" in the presence of suffering. (6) "In patience godliness," or a supreme regard for God. (7) "In godliness love of the brethren, and in love of the brethren, love"; in the two streams of love of the brethren and love of humanity Christian love is to flow forth. (8) The promise given. Those who give diligence to build upon faith the superstructure of a holy life shall make "their calling and election sure," and shall gain a triumphant entrance into Christ's eternal kingdom. If the figure of furnishing and leading out a chorus be adopted, then those who

give diligence to furnish a chorus of graces, which accompany faith as a lovely train, shall have an abundant entrance given them into Christ's eternal kingdom. The graces which they have furnished will attend them as a radiant escort as they sweep through the gates.

3. *A sanctified memory* (i. 12-15, iii. 1). The function of memory in the Christian life is here brought out. Memory is not only the golden thread upon which the experiences of life are strung; it is a power unto spiritual resuscitation. We need often to meditate afresh on old themes. The evil is not that we do not know, but that we forget. (1) We are to take a fresh grip upon old truth (i. 13). (2) We are to be established in "the present truth"; that is "in the truth which is with us" (i. 12). Truth in its essence is eternal, but there is some aspect of it which is specially adapted to present circumstances and needs. In "the truth that is with us" we are to seek to be confirmed.

4. *A ground for certainty* (i. 16-21). A comparison is drawn between the word of special revelation which is sure, and the word of prophecy which is more sure. (1) The sure word of special revelation was the "voice from heaven" which Peter heard on the mount of transfiguration. That word was to the favored three who heard it satisfactory and convincing. But as something unwonted and miraculous, its reality and validity might to others be open questions. (2) The more sure word of prophecy is found written in the Old Testament Scriptures. (a) This surer word is a light shining in a dark or squalid place. From it came all the light for the times in which it is given.



(b) It is temporary. It passes away, to give place to something better. The lamp of prophetic inspiration is of use "until the day dawn and the day-star arise" in Christ-illuminated hearts. What need is there for a lamp when the morning-star has heralded the approach of day? (c) It is not of private interpretation or invention (i. 21). This does not mean that it is not to be privately interpreted. It means that the prophets did not invent what they wrote. "They spake from God," as if his mouthpieces, "being moved by the Holy Spirit."

5. *A time of defection.* (Chapter II.) In these last times there were false teachers in the Church, as there had been false prophets in Israel. These false teachers are characterized: (1) As schismatics, "who privily bring in destructive heresies" (vv. 1-4), or more literally, "sects or schisms of perdition." The heresies which are generally condemned are heresies of life; but there is one heresy of belief which stands out for special reprobation. This heresy of heresies, which consists in denying the Master who bought us, brings destruction swift and sure. (2) Apostates. Those who had previous knowledge of Christ, from which they had fallen away. They sin with open eyes (vv. 20, 21). They have forsaken the right way, and have gone astray, following the way to Balaam (v. 15). Their destruction will be like that which came upon the angels that sinned (v. 4), or like that which overtook the antediluvians (v. 5); or like that which fell upon the cities of the plain (v. 6). From their doom the righteous escape (vv. 5, 7, 9). (3) Scoffers, who taunt the believers and ask, "Where is the promise of His presence?" They point to the unvarying con-

stancy of the operations of nature, forgetful of the fact that there have been sudden and startling changes, and hence oblivious to the natural inference that what has been may be.

6. *The breaking up of the old order, and the dawning of the new.* (Chapter III.) This epistle was evidently written before the fall of Jerusalem, and probably, as Weiss suggests, in the latter days of Nero's reign. In this section it depicts: (1) The speedy destruction of the existing order of things. "The Lord is not tardy" (v. 9). "His seeming delay is not delay, but mercy and forbearance" (Augustine). Nor is He ever in a hurry. He does not reckon time by our standards of measurement. With Him "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (v. 8). The present order is represented as "*being dissolved*" (v. 12). The symbolical character of the cosmic changes referred to will present no difficulty to the student of Old Testament prophecy. (2) Willing ignorance of coming judgment (v. 5). This voluntary ignorance is not the result of a want of capacity or of evidence. It springs from unwillingness to know; men often shut their eyes upon what they do not want to see. (3) The new order. "New heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (v. 13). No dim and distant heaven, but a new order begun on earth. Judgment was to be a cleansing process. By the fiery judgments about to come the world was to be renovated.

7. *What the knowledge of the approach of the day of the Lord should lead to* (iii. 14-18). It should have a reflexive influence upon character. "Seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found

in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight." Be on your guard that you do not misread the long-suffering of God. Do not allow yourselves to be carried off your feet "by the error of the wicked." "But grow in the grace and knowledge of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," to whom be glory given, "both now and unto the day of eternity."

## THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

There are three distinct periods in the life of John: the first when he was the constant companion of the Lord; the second after the death of Jesus, when he was an exile in the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse; the third when in his old age he was the honored leader of the Church, the sole survivor of the apostles. It was during this latter period, which was spent in Ephesus, that the fourth gospel and the three epistles which bear his name were written.

These epistles are anonymous. That they are the work of John, the beloved disciple, has been generally admitted. In the second and third epistles the writer styles himself "the elder." That name may have been used to denote the office of Presbyter, which he held, or more likely, because of his age. In either case, there is in its use a suggestion of personal modesty.

### PECULIARITIES

This trinity of epistles shows the same peculiarities which mark the fourth gospel. There is a recurrence of the same words, such as witness, light, love, and life. There are the same sharply drawn contrasts between light and darkness, good and evil, life and death, God and Satan. In the first epistle there are thirty-five passages which have their parallel in the fourth gospel. Not only do these three epistles and

the fourth gospel bear evidence of having been written by the same hand; they also bear evidence of having been written about the same time.

#### LITERARY FORM

What appears at first a series of detached statements is found upon closer study to be an organic whole. There is an underlying unity of thought which binds all the parts together.

The first epistle contains a more formal statement of Christian doctrine than the second and third, which are simply specimens of Christian correspondence into which spiritual instruction is incidentally interwoven. All of them have the same mystical touch, the same contemplative spirit, the same flashing intuition that belong to the apostle John. Apart from mannerisms of style, they have the essential Johannine qualities. They deal not so much in argument as in affirmation. They make no appeal to the Old Testament, but they assume its authority. They recognize certain sources of knowledge as the common property of the Christian brotherhood. "We know"—that is, you and I know—"that such and such things are so." There is a direct appeal to the Christian consciousness, and to the common objective faith out of which that consciousness has grown.

#### CONDITIONS PREVAILING AMONG THE CHURCHES WHEN THESE EPISTLES WERE WRITTEN

The churches had rest in those days. There was a pause in the devastating work of persecution. Dr. Farrar says that in these epistles a state of society is revealed which in many respects resembles that

described in the recently discovered "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles." The churches had grown. They had also undergone internal change. The destruction of Jerusalem and the shattering of Judaism had emancipated the Church completely from Judaizing tendencies. The old burning questions touching the relations of Christians to the law were no longer discussed. The distinction between Gentile and Jew had completely vanished. New forces were in operation. The leaven of heresy was beginning to work. The churches in Asia were in peril from false doctrine. Hence John in his old age felt compelled to break the seal of silence and utter a word of warning. Hence, also, the anti-heretical character of his epistles. They were written to expose the error of those who denied that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh. The theme of John's gospel is that "Jesus is the Christ"; the theme of the epistles is that "the Christ is Jesus" (Westcott). That the denial of the reality of the incarnation of Christ is the climax of iniquity, is the final and impressive message of the apostolic age.

#### THEIR CATHOLICITY

These epistles have no local coloring. They are spiritual and universal. While assuming the existence of the Church as an organized body, they put emphasis not upon questions of doctrine, government, or ritual, but upon the cultivation of the spiritual life. Their key-word is love, their practical aim is the awakening of the life of love in the soul of man. As the latest of the apostolic writings, written at the close of the Jewish age, just as the new age, the Christian age, now current, was beginning to dawn, they

have a peculiar adaptability to the Church of to-day. They contain something of the universal truth which the Spirit is now revealing to the churches.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

The Church of the new age to which John writes is set in the midst of new conditions and is beset with new dangers. Missionary fervor has abated; development in doctrine has taken place; old controversies have died out; speculation has become rife; the anti-christ of this new age is not some political power, crushing out the life of the Church, but the denier of the divine humanity of Jesus. "This is the anti-christ, even he that denieth the Father and the Son" (I. John ii. 22). Outward opposition is no longer experienced. The main source of peril is from the working of evil within the Church itself, the churches' foes those of her own household. But the world, although not actively and openly hostile, is still alien. "It is indeed perilous, but it is rather by its seductions than by its hostility" (Westcott).\* It is therefore something to be opposed and overcome. The Church is to conquer the world, instead of allowing herself to be conquered by it.

#### FIRST EPISTLE

#### SEED THOUGHTS

1. *The doctrine of God as central.* From the doctrine of God, which is summed up in the two affirmations, "God is light" and "God is love" (iv. 9), John

\*The term "world" as used by John is very elastic. It is employed in three distinct senses: (a) To denote the earth, the present abode of man. (II. John vii). (b) To denote the people living on this planet (I. John, ii. 2). (c) To denote the present corrupt and sinful world-order (I. John ii. 15). In this latter sense it is contrasted with the Church (I. John iii. 13).

deduces all that he has to say concerning the Christian life.

“*God is light,*” and hence He gives light. He is glorious in holiness, and hence He is the source of holiness in us. He is the true God, and therefore He is the fountain of truth. The expression “God is righteous” (I. Eph. ii. 29), is the ethical equivalent of the figurative expression “God is light.”

“*God is love,*” and hence He loves. As all the colors when combined form white, all the attributes of God when combined form love. Love is the content of the divine personality, the essence of the divine nature, the sum total of the divine attributes. It is also “the supreme and comprehensive determination of God in the Christian religion” (Ritschl)—that is, the power by which righteousness is produced.

2. *Religion as personal and spiritual.* (1) As realized in fellowship with God. This fellowship is not that of a subject with a sovereign, but of a son with a father (i. 1-4).\* (2) It is secured by the manifestation of the eternal life (i. 2). The manifestation of God in the life of Jesus was for the purpose of bringing man into union and fellowship with the Father. (3) It begins in forgiveness and leads to inward cleansing (i. 7-9). (4) It issues in a life of joyous service. The soul that is in union and communion with God walks in the light (i. 7).

3. *Religion as social.* (1) Fellowship with the Father includes fellowship with all the Father's children (i. 7). (2) Brotherhood and sonship are correla-

\* Whereas with Paul sonship is a legal state into which the believer comes by adoption, with John it is a vital state into which he comes by birth.



tive. Those who are sons of God are brothers of one another (iii. 14). (3) Love to God carries with it love to all the children of God (iii. 13-24). Two strong things are affirmed of the man who says he loves God while he is hating his brother. First, "he is in darkness" (ii. 9); second, "he is a liar" (iv. 20). Evidence of divine sonship is found in the possession of social righteousness (iii. 10), and of social compassion (iii. 17).

4. *The width of Christ's Messianic mission.* It is wide as the world. All Jewish narrowness touching the scope of salvation has entirely disappeared. Christ is the propitiation "for the whole world" (ii. 2), not in the sense that He placates God's wrath, but in the sense that He expresses God's love (iv. 10). Be it noted that it is not said that He *made* a propitiation for the world's sin, but that "He *is* the propitiation for the world's sin." Salvation is not found in something abstract from Him which we call His work. It is in Christ Himself, and is realized in personal union with Him as a living, personal Saviour.

5. *A new commandment* (ii. 7-11). The commandment enforcing brotherly love is new, and yet it is old. It is the old commandment of the Decalogue reaffirmed, enlarged, and reinforced by new motives. More specifically it is the great commandment of Christ already recorded by the same writer (John xiii. 34; xv. 12), but now needing new emphasis and application in view of changed conditions. The new grows out of the old. The revelation of the love of God in Christ awakens in man a responsive love, which becomes the law of his life.

6. *A time of transition.* A new day was dawning

upon the world. The old age was fading before the coming of the new. The darkness was passing away, and the true light already shining (ii. 8), tipping the mountain peaks with its growing brightness. "The hour cometh and now is," when the local and temporary should give place to the spiritual and the eternal. It is the last time—yea, "the last hour" (ii. 19), the extreme end of the Jewish dispensation. To call this "a note of spiritual, not material time" (Sinclair) is a mistake. The death-knell of the old age had already rung. It might yet have spasms of expiring life, but the dispensational crisis had arrived. Speaking to the common Christian consciousness of his day, John says, "We know that the Son of Man is come" (v. 20). And because He had come Christians were exhorted to abide in Him, that they might rejoice before Him at the manifestation of His presence (ii. 28). Their hope for the future was not in His coming, but in the manifestation of His presence.

7. *The climax of iniquity.* The climax of iniquity is the denial of Christ's incarnation, the denial of His actual coming in the flesh. The denier of Christ is branded as "the liar" and "the antichrist" (ii. 22). He is said to "annul Jesus" (iv. 3, marginal reading R. V.). He makes the Messianic claims of Christ null and void. The errorist of to-day is in danger of swinging in the opposite direction, denying the proper divinity of Christ.\*

8. *Christ the present life of the Christian.* "The life eternal" which was manifested in Him is imparted to the believer (ii. 25, v. 11, 12). There is no men-

\* Confessional progress is seen in the emphasizing of the Messiahship of Jesus by Peter (Mark viii. 29); of His Lordship by Paul (Phil. ii. 11); and of His Sonship by John (I. Ep. iv. 15).

tion of His cross or resurrection. He is now an indwelling presence, filling the soul and controlling the life. His *Parousia* has become a blessed reality in Christian experience.

9. *The purifying power of Christian hope.* "He that hath this hope set on him"—that is, the hope of seeing Christ, and being like Him—"purifieth himself even as He is pure" (iii. 3). "Set on Him"—that is, set on Jesus Christ. Those who set their hope on Christ are inspired to live pure and Christ-like lives. Their hope of final attainment is a vital power within them, the spring of heroic endeavor and endurance.

10. *The ethical value of the incarnation.* The eternal life and love of God, which are always in a state of manifestation, found their supreme manifestation in the human life of Jesus. This supreme manifestation of God, which constitutes the greatest event of all time, was for the purpose of redemption. "The Son of God was manifested (1) that He might destroy the works of the devil (iii. 8); (2) that He might take away sins" (iii. 5).

11. *The victory of faith.* In the conflict with the alien world-forces the conquering power is faith (v. 4). The overcoming power of faith lies in its object. Through faith the soul of man is brought into union with the mighty Son of God, and is made a partaker of His victorious strength.

It is worthy of note that as Paul, the apostle of faith, reaches his supreme utterance when discoursing of love (1 Cor. xiii.), so John, the apostle of love, strikes his highest note when discoursing of faith.

12. *A threefold witness.* (1) The witness of God to

us—to-wit, His witness regarding His Son (v. 10).\* (2) The witness of God in us (v. 10), which is the answer to our faith in the outward witness, and meets the demands of conscience, of reason, and of moral aspiration. (3) The witness which we bear for God (iv. 14), and which comes out of the inward assurance of faith.

13. *Boldness in the judgment* (iv. 16-18). This holy boldness springs from love. Love neutralizes fear. It expels it from the heart as light expels darkness. Those who love their heavenly judge stand in the midst of the fiery judgment of the present unmoved; they also face the future without foreboding, for they know that all judgment is from love and for salvation.

14. *Boldness in prayer* (v. 13-17). Those who are one in desire with God have every reason to be bold in prayer. They cannot ask too much when every wish is subordinated to the divine will. But where God's forgiving mercy stops, prayer must stop. "There is a sin unto death, not concerning this do I say that he should make request" (v. 16). This one deadly sin is the sin of wilful, persistent unbelief. It is a sin which the pardoning love of God cannot overlook. It can be taken away only by personal repentance. Hence we are to pray, not that God would forgive this sin, but that the sinner may be brought to repent of it, that he may be forgiven. John holds up the red flag of danger. He warns while he woos. The apostle of love is the son of thunder. Love can be stern.

\*The reference in v. 7 to the three heavenly witnesses, "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit," is not genuine. It probably crept into the text from Greek notes on the passage.

15. *Confidence in Christ's keeping power* (v. 18-21). The one who is begotten of God "keepeth himself," not, however, by his own power, but by maintaining connection with the source of power in Christ.

16. *Inward renewal*. "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not" (v. 18). It is a prominent thought in this epistle that sin is foreign to the spiritual man. It is opposed to his very nature. He hates it; he loathes it; he flees from it. Surprised into sin he may be, overtaken in a fault he may be, but sin willingly he cannot. The reason for this irreconcilable antagonism to sin is thus given. "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed abideth in him"—that is, the seed of the divine life which is opposed to sin,—“and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God” (iii. 9). Again it is said, "Every one that abideth in Him sinneth not" (iii. 6). By dwelling in Christ the will to sin is taken away. All the currents of the Christ-entempled soul set toward righteousness.

17. *A final word of warning*. "Little children guard yourselves from idols" (v. 21). Allow no one but God to occupy the throne. Put Him first. Give to Him the supreme place in the heart, and everything in life will fall into its proper order.

## SECOND EPISTLE

1. *Christian friendship*. Christianity deepens and sweetens the friendships of earth. "The elect lady" and her children, whose hospitality John had probably enjoyed when visiting the churches in Asia, receive assurance that they are truly loved. Their home life must have been redolent of the Christian spirit to

make it so attractive to the apostle. His love for them was no doubt abundantly appreciated.

2. *Walking in truth* (v. 4). John rejoiced that he found certain children of the elect lady not only accepting the truth of the gospel, but walking in it—that is, walking in conformity with its requirements. Truth has an ethical side. It is something to be obeyed as well as something to be believed.

3. *Walking in love* (v. 6). Those who walk in truth walk also in love. Love is the element of their lives. It is the law by which they are governed. “Love is one commandment in which all God’s other commandments are summed up” (Alford).

4. *Holding on to what has been gained*. “Look to yourselves that ye lose not (or destroy not) the things which we have wrought”; or it may read, “the things which ye have wrought” (v. 8). In either case the general idea is, Pull not down what has been built up. Lose not your full reward by undoing the good already done.

5. *True conservatism*. “Whosoever goeth onward”—or as the margin of the Revised Version has it, “whosoever taketh the lead not abiding in the teaching of Christ, hath not God” (v. 9). It is not going forward too fast, but going forward too far, that is condemned. The teacher who advances beyond Christ is too progressive. “He hath not God”—that is, he has no real knowledge of God, no true fellowship with God, and hence no divine sanction for his teachings.

6. *How to treat a heretic*. “Receive him not into your house and give him no greeting” (v. 10). Does this mean that he is not to be shown common human-

ity? By no means. Such a thing would be utterly opposed to the spirit of Christ. Alas, how often has religious bigotry and hatred sought justification in these words! What the apostle evidently means is that "the deceiver" who causes others to wander is not to receive countenance and support. Feed him if he is hungry, of course; but do not receive him into the bosom of your household, and do not send him away on his evil mission with your godspeed.

## THIRD EPISTLE

1. *The person addressed.* Regarding "Gaius the beloved" nothing is positively known. He was perhaps the person of that name who was the host of St. Paul at Corinth. The purpose for which this letter was written was to express thanks for hospitality received at his hands.

2. *A noble wish.* "I pray that in all things"—in every respect—"thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (v. 2)—the very opposite of the usual form of greeting. How badly many would fare if soul prosperity was made the measure of worldly prosperity.

3. *A word of commendation.* (1) Gaius did "a faithful work" in ministering to the religious itinerants. (2) He did a work of wide-reaching helpfulness, speeding forward those messengers who were acting "worthily of God" (v. 6). (3) He was prompted by a right motive, doing it "for the sake of the name" in which these messengers went forth.

4. *A contrast.* (1) A hinderer. Diotrephes, who loved to have the preëminence—a domineering, prating, pestiferous man. He opposed the apostle in

every way in his power, suppressed his letters to the church of which he was a member, refused to receive his messengers who brought them, and tried to have those who did receive them excommunicated. He was the kind of man whose example is not to be imitated. (2) A helper. If there are those who oppose the good work, there are those who assist it. Such a one was "Demetrius," a man of good respect, "having the witness of all men and of the truth itself" (v. 12).

5. *A final salutation.* "Salute the friends by name" (v. 14). Words that reveal personal interest in others, and agree well, as Dr. Farrar has pointed out, with the traditional utterance, "Little children love one another," with which the aged apostle was wont to salute the members of the Church in Ephesus when carried upon a couch into the midst of their assemblies. If these are really the last words which came from the pen of the apostle John, and the last words of revelation, they are sufficiently characteristic as summing up in a sentence the message of the apostle of love.



## THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

This is the seventh and last of the catholic epistles. The presence in it of illustrations drawn from Jewish sources does not militate against its catholic character. Although it seems to have been written for the Judæo-Christians, it was not written for them exclusively. It has a note of universality.

The writer styles himself "Jude, the brother of James," meaning, no doubt, James, the Lord's brother, bishop of Jerusalem and author of the epistle which bears his name. In Matt. xiii. 55, Jude is named among the brethren of the Lord. He is to be distinguished from "Jude of James" (Luke vi. 16), one of the apostles, and elsewhere called Lebbæus and Thaddæus. The expression "Jude of James" is wrongly paraphrased "Jude the brother of James" in the Authorized Version, and rightly paraphrased "Jude the son of James" in the Revised Version. That the writer of this letter was not an apostle is evident from the statement in v. 17. Like his brother James, Jude modestly veils the fact that he was the Lord's brother. He subscribes himself "a bond-servant of Jesus Christ." For a long time he was staggered by the Messianic claims of Jesus, and not until after His resurrection and His personal manifestation to His brother James did Jude come within the circle of the believers (Acts i. 14).

The style of this letter is peculiar. Its ideas and figures are arranged in groups of threes. In spirit and literary form it resembles a section taken from one of the old Hebrew prophets. Its movement is cyclonic. It lashes with a whip of scorpions the libertines who try to conceal their evil deeds under the cloak of religion. Fierce invectives flash out like lurid flames. But the severity is seasoned with Christian compassion. The prophet of judgment has felt the touch of the pity of Christ. It is difficult to determine the date of this epistle by internal evidence. Its use of phrases found also in II. Peter shows its literary kinship with that epistle. Absence of reference to the fall of Jerusalem tends to show that it was written before that event, for in recounting the judgments of God against disobedience, the lack of allusion to the most notable judgment of all can be accounted for only on the supposition that it had not taken place.

An interesting story which lends countenance to the early date of this letter is to the effect that the Emperor Domitian, who reigned in 80 A.D., sent for the grandchildren of Jude to inquire of them touching the kingdom of Christ, of which he had heard. When he saw before him a group of poor peasants his jealousy was changed into contempt. Before the time of this interview Jude was dead.

One of the most marked peculiarities of Jude's letter is the use which it makes, for illustrative purposes, of uncanonical books. In the same free way that Jesus uses Old Testament narratives, it makes use of the legend in "The Assumption of Moses" of the conflict between the archangel Michael and the devil about the body of Moses. The substance of that

legend is that the devil wishing to disclose the place where the body of Moses was buried that he might tempt the people to make it a shrine, and thus lure them into idolatry, Michael prevented him, rebuking him for the evil motive which he artfully concealed. From the apochryphal book of Enoch, one of the best-known specimens of apocalyptic literature, a quotation is also made verbatim (vv. 14, 15). For a time the references to these two books made against the canonicity of Jude's letter, but when the process of selection was completed its right to a place in the New Testament canon was generally conceded.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

In this epistle the hatred of iniquity is more conspicuous than the love of righteousness. The writer had evidently been turned aside from his original purpose. He says, "While I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (v. 3). He had begun to write a treatise upon the general theme of "the common salvation" which has been brought to man by Jesus Christ when a vision of the actual state of things around him changed the current of his thoughts, and caused him to take up a more pressing subject. This was no time for the leisurely writing of extended treatises. It was a time for winged words of warning and rebuke, a time for pointed speaking and prompt action.

1. *A good contention.* The thing to be contended for was "the faith"—that is, the body of doctrine—

“which was once for all delivered unto the saints,” namely, by the apostles. No new doctrine was held to be admissible. The apostolic teaching was final and complete. This does not imply that there was to be no development in doctrine, but it does imply that all development was to be based upon apostolic teaching.

The urgency for this contention lay in the fact that the truth was being corrupted by certain men who had slunk into the Church and were making the grace of God a chartered license to sin, thus virtually denying “the only Master, our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 4). The deadliest foes of the Church have always been those of her own household.

2. *Lessons from the past.* An argument for the coming of retribution upon those who were opposing Christ and His truth is strengthened by a reference to notable historical examples of divine vengeance against sin. The four beacon lights set up are: (1) The destruction of the unbelieving Jews, who had aforesaid been mercifully delivered from Egypt (v. 5). (2) The destruction of the wanton angels “who kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation” (v. 6). (3) The destruction by eternal fire of the moral plague spots, Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7). (4) The destruction of individual sinners, like Cain, Balaam, and Korah, who fell respectively through jealousy, avarice, and resistance of divine authority.

The corrupt and impious men whom Jude castigates were harsh and headlong in their judgment of others. They railed against “dignities,” not putting themselves under restraint as the archangel Michael is said to have done when contending with the devil

concerning the body of Moses; for he, not daring to bring a railing accusation against the arch-deceiver, left him in the hands of the righteous judge, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee." No difficulty need be found in the statement that these evil men were "set forth unto condemnation" (v. 4). They were not "ordained," or foreappointed to condemnation, as the Authorized Version puts it, but were merely described beforehand on the page of prophecy in the character of notorious sinners selected as their representatives; and were marked out as ripe for the same doom.

3. *A dark picture.* These evil-workers pilloried by Jude were as lax in morals as they were false in doctrine. They are described as: (1) Dangerous—"hidden rocks in the love feasts" (v. 12); sunken reefs upon which others split. (2) Self-seeking—shepherds who fed themselves and starved the flock (v. 12). (3) Pretenders—"clouds without water" (v. 12), promising what they did not fulfill. (4) Barren of good—"autumn trees without fruit" (v. 12). (5) Shameless—"wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame" (v. 13). (6) Lawless—"wandering stars," which had broken loose from their orbit, and were rushing on to destruction.

The sad thing about these evil-workers is that they tried to conceal their real motives under the cloak of religious profession. They were traitors in the Lord's camp, and were certain sooner or later to be overtaken by the traitors' fate.

3. *Forewarned.* A traditional prophecy of Enoch which foretold in a general way the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath upon the ungodly, is applied to

this particular class of offenders (vv. 14, 15). The apostles of the Lord had also given definite warning that "in the last time," pestiferous renegades should spring up within the borders of the Church (v. 17).

The root of all the wickedness in all these vile men, whose very breath carried moral pestilence, is thus given, "These are they who make separations, sensual" (animal, carnal, or more literally, psychical) "having not the Spirit" (v. 19), and hence unspiritual. They were not destitute of *a* spirit, but of *the* Spirit. "Their inward and outward life was directed by the soul, the lower side of their immortal being—the side nearest to the body and the outer world" (Beet). "The *pneuma* being unvivified and uninformed by the Spirit of God, was overborne by the animal soul" (Alford). Untouched by spiritual considerations, they slavishly obeyed the solicitations of their lower nature. In a word, they were "of the earth earthy."

5. *How to meet the dangers of the hour.* (1) By giving attention to the cultivation of the spiritual life. "Building up yourselves on the foundation of your holy faith; praying under the inspiration and help of the Holy Spirit; keeping yourselves in the life-giving sunshine of the love of God; looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which issues in eternal life (vv. 20, 21). To resist the tendency to fall from a high to a lower level sustained effort is needed. (2) By working for others, seeking the recovery of backsliders (vv. 22, 23). Discriminating between them, dealing with some gently, with others severely. (a) Reasoning with doubters to convince them of error. (b) Saving others by desperate effort, snatching them as brands from the burning. (c) Shunning those who

are incorrigibly corrupt, fearing the polluting touch of their flesh-stained garments. (3) By trusting in the keeping power of God (vv. 24, 25). Those who keep themselves in the love of God are kept by His power. They are "kept for Jesus Christ" (v. 1). They are guarded from stumbling and guided along their upward way until they are "set before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy." In a doxology of praise to Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom the keeping power of God is ministered, this epistle ends.

## THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Like many other portions of the Bible, the utterances of the Apocalypse of John find explanation in the circumstances out of which they emerged. The background and key to the book may be discovered by reference to the two great events which made the second half of the first century profoundly significant to the Church—the persecutions of Christians at the hands of the Roman power beginning in the time of Nero, and the Jewish war with its tragic conclusion in the downfall of Jerusalem.

When Nero ascended the throne, in 54 A.D., the omens were propitious for a happy and popular reign, in spite of the unprincipled methods by which his mother, Agrippina, had brought about his adoption into the family of Claudius and his elevation to the purple. Indeed, the earlier years of his rule were marked by moderation in conduct and administration. But presently he surrounded himself with associates whose character was an insult to the honor of Rome, and the emperor himself plunged into that career of debauchery and crime which ended by making the palace a scene of nameless infamy and horror. One after another those to whom he owed most fell victims to his insane jealousy or suspicion—Seneca, his teacher; Burrus, the stanch and incorruptible



soldier; Octavia his wife and Poppæa his mistress; and even his mother, who had schemed and labored in his behalf. But the thing which more than aught else roused his people to indignation was the burning of Rome, a deed said to have been suggested to Nero by one of his creatures as a spectacle sufficient to inspire the emperor to a supreme expression of his poetic talents in an ode on the destruction of Troy. The catastrophe which befell the city brought with it such appalling distress that Nero found it necessary to find a scapegoat on which the responsibility for the awful crime could be laid. The small but rapidly growing community of Christians in Rome provided the object sought, to divert suspicion from the emperor himself, and perhaps also to gratify the malice of certain classes, like the Jews, under whose ill-will the Christians rested. The outcome was the terrible persecution which began at once, and which found expressive characterization in the Christian vocabulary of the time as "the great tribulation" (Rev. vii. 14). The sufferings of the little church in Rome were sufficient to have shaken the courage of the most resolute defenders of the faith. Fire and sword, the cross, the arena of the amphitheater, did their deadly work, until the suffering church might well cry out, "How long, O Lord, how long" (Rev. vi. 10). In this persecution, according to the tradition of the fathers, perished Peter and Paul, leaving John as perhaps the sole surviving member of the apostolic group. If the scenes of the Apocalypse are to be taken as descriptive to some extent of these events, one is led to believe that the writer was himself a witness of at least a portion of the disasters which befell the Christian cir-

cle, and sought to sustain the wavering faith of his brethren by assurances of the ultimate overthrow of the beast that was ravaging the Church, and the certain triumph of Christianity under its divine leader.

Similarly, tragic events in Palestine supply additional means of understanding the symbolic language of this remarkable book. The oppressive measures of the procurator Gessius Florus, in the year 65 A. D., provoked repeated uprisings in Judea. The popular discontent spread to Galilee, and presently all these provinces were in a fury of revolt. In this crisis an appeal was made to the Roman legate of Syria, Cestius Gallus, for aid, and the entire force of Roman troops in the district was brought into action against the Jews. This only resulted in greater humiliation for the imperial arms, for the legate was defeated (A. D. 66) in a battle at Beth-horon, the scene of Joshua's victory over the Canaanites. This overthrow of Roman power in Palestine produced a crisis so serious that even Nero was sobered for a moment by the news, and hastened to send Vespasian, his ablest general, to take charge of the campaign and recover the lost province. This veteran soldier hastened, with his son Titus, toward the revolted territory, gathering all available forces on the way, and pressing southward from Antioch in March of the year 67 A. D., he drove the flying insurgents before him, and drew his lines ever closer about the doomed capital, where multitudes had taken refuge. The story told by Josephus regarding the horrors of this war and the fall of Jerusalem, rent by furious and fanatical factions within, and "compassed about with armies" need not be recounted here. In July, 70 A. D.,

the last wall was breached, and the Romans under Titus rushed in to complete the extermination of the unhappy people, already weakened with famine and perishing by thousands. The temple, a glittering mountain of marble and gold, the glory of the chosen nation, was fired by the soldiers, enraged by the stubborn resistance of the Jewish forces, and with its fall the life of Israel as a nation went out. Thus, under the power of that same Rome at whose hands the Church in Italy was suffering such afflictions, the Holy City had fallen, and the heart of the apocalypticist, himself a Jewish Christian, related by ties of faith and of blood to both victims of these appalling tragedies, was rent with anguish and fierce with an indignation which might well burn in the breast of the Son of Thunder. In the Apocalypse these emotions voice themselves. Rome was triumphing everywhere, the faithful were persecuted unto the death, and the Holy Land was ravaged as by wild beasts. Yet the Church was only being tried as by fire, and Jerusalem had but called down upon her head the recompense of her many sins. So felt and wrote the seer. No believer, however, had any cause for despair; much had been suffered, much more would yet be suffered, but the end was sure. The world powers were certain to fall under the power of the Messiah. Let the Church look up; her deliverance and the transfiguration of the kingdoms of the earth into the kingdom of God and His Anointed was near. The City of God, the new social order, the reign of righteousness on this earth, was already descending from heaven.

## STYLE

This message, so timely and necessary, was couched in the cryptographic terms in which all apocalyptic writings abound. One has but to compare this book with such works as the prophecies of Daniel, in the Old Testament, and the book of Enoch, in the extra-canonical literature, to perceive that the impress of a common type of thought is upon them all; albeit, this book possesses elements which give it a striking superiority to the apocalypses of Judaism, because of the faith and hope with which Christianity had fired the writer. Its terms and figures are those of one who speaks a cryptic language to mask his message from foes who were watching the Christian community for utterances which could be construed as treasonable. The scenes of the book are drawn from those experiences of the Church and the Holy City which served to point the moral of the perpetual struggle between the world forces and the kingdom of God. While the interpretation of particular features is difficult or impossible by reason of our ignorance of the events to which the writer alludes, the leading pictures are not difficult to identify in the light which history throws on that period.

To understand this book one needs to be familiar with the figures of speech common to all apocalyptic literature, both of the Old Testament, including Zephaniah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel, and of the extra-canonical books which developed in great variety after the Maccabean uprising. This entire class of literature makes use of figurative and striking language. Pictures and portents, falling stars, earth-

quakes, clouds, beasts of the land and sea, are parts of the structure; and all have a significance which was understood by the Jews of those and later centuries, and which may easily be discerned by students at the present time. This book is not a series of visions, but a collection of apocalyptic figures taken to describe one vision, and hence the book has unity and consistency of plan. The writer describes a definite vision which was given to him when he was "in the spirit." He sets forth in pictorial form the destruction of the Jewish age, which was rapidly drawing to its close, and the coming of the new age which was soon to be ushered in. Jerusalem was about to fall, the Jewish system was about to collapse, the final scene of the long drama of Jewish history was to be a tragedy. Then would the Son of Man come in power and glory.

#### AIM OF THE BOOK

But the Apocalypse was calculated to meet not only the crises of imperial persecution in the Church and the closing tragedy of Judaism with a message of courage and hope; it is also fitted to meet every such crisis of struggle between the world powers and the kingdom of God with the same message. While an exuberant fancy, the product of limited knowledge of apocalyptic literature, or of crude efforts to impose on this book the test of prediction which it nowhere admits, may lead to the attempt to identify its figures and symbols with actors and events in the unfolding drama of Christian history through the centuries, it is manifest that the conflict between the powers of earth and heaven which is set forth, and whose issue is forecast

in terms of triumph for its own age, was the precursor of other conflicts, indeed of every similar conflict, and that the confidence of the seer in the victorious outcome of the struggle in his own day may be taken as the invariably triumphant note of the Church in the face of every foe. It is this fact which gives the Apocalypse significance beyond a mere chronicle of distress in the apostolic age. It strikes the universal note of confidence and courage. It voices the hopes of Christianity, not only for present success, but for progressive realization of its supreme purpose in ushering in the city of God, the kingdom of heaven, the reign of the Messiah. It describes events which the Saviour had indicated as marking the arrival of the kingdom in power and as destined to consummation during that generation. In these events the Son of Man came afresh in power, and a new period began in the life of the Church. They were therefore worthy of such portrayal as the apocalyptist has given them, in terms lurid and awful, for they depict the expiring agonies of the old age and the birth of the new.

#### AUTHORSHIP

The question of authorship is still unsettled. Is the book in its entirety the work of one writer or of several? If of several, were some of the parts from Jewish and other apocalyptists, or were they all from Christian hands? These are questions which can be answered only by further investigation. Some one named John purports to be the writer of at least portions of the book. Who is this John? Is he the well-known apostle, or is he some unknown author of the

same name?\*

In the absence of certainty the Church has inclined strongly to the former opinion, and while the case is complicated by indications of various strata in the work, and of doubt as to the relation of the main author to others who may have wrought upon portions of it, and still further by the question as to whether the relation of John to the work as a whole is primary or secondary, yet one is justified in inferring that the book has a Johannine character, and that the final verdict of criticism may justify the tradition of the Church.

Before His ascension the Master gave to John an intimation that he would live until he witnessed His second advent. During the interview between Jesus and His disciples by the sea, when Jesus foretold that Peter should glorify Him by a death of martyrdom, Peter pointed to John, and asked, "Concerning this man, what?" "If I will that he tarry till I come," said Jesus, "what is that to thee?" He did tarry until after the other apostles had gone, and lived to witness the great crisis which he describes in his apocalypse.

The value of the book, however, does not rest on the questions of authorship, unity, or date, but on the contribution which it makes to our knowledge of Christian thought and experience at a period so near the life of our Lord. It is a great drama, written at a great epoch. The transition from the outward to the spiritual which it describes is evermore repeating itself in the events of history and in the experi-

\*The theory that the writer or final editor was not John the apostle but John the Presbyter has in recent days been revived by Harnack. Haussleiter, on the other hand, maintains that John the Presbyter is a figment of the imagination.

ence of the Church. Every coming in judgment is followed by a coming in salvation; every old Jerusalem that perishes brings in a new Jerusalem.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new  
And God fulfills Himself in many ways.”

Every change leads to consummation.

#### SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION

The book of Revelation has been called “the great enigma;” but an enigma or a puzzle-book it was surely never meant to be. As its name imports, it is an uncovering or unveiling of that which is hidden. It was written for edification. A special blessing is pronounced upon those who read and observe its teachings (i. 3).

Fortunately we are not required to draw upon our imagination for an interpretation of this remarkable book. The key that unlocks its treasures hangs on the door. That key is found in the opening words, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show unto His servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass.” In these words the book explains itself.

1. *It is a revelation of Jesus Christ*, a revelation of His kingly glory and conquering power. It opens with a sublime vision of Christ as He now is, transfigured and glorified (i. 14-19). From an artistic point of view this vision may not satisfy the strictest canons of art, but from a spiritual point of view it is profoundly impressive. It presents an unsurpassable picture of moral majesty. The Son of Man has become the high priest of humanity; the Ancient of Days has become the Lord of the present; to Him



who was despised and rejected of men divine homage is given. He is king and judge of men. On His head are many crowns; in His hand is the all-conquering sword of truth. He goes forth scattering His enemies like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and bringing all alien forces under His sovereign sway.

No vision of Christ could have been given at that particular time more full of comfort to His feeble and fainting Church. A storm of persecution was already breaking upon it, such as the world had never witnessed. Would it outlive the storm? Would the Lord in whom it had trusted be able to bring it through? How cheering the assurance that the Church would triumph over all opposition, and that through its agency the kingdom of Christ would be established on the earth. "Consummation," says Bernard, "is the doctrine of this book." The consummation foretold is the consummation of the Church in the kingdom.

The seven titles given to Jesus in this book are all descriptive of His kingly glory. (1) He is the one "who was, who is, and who cometh" (i. 4). (2) "The faithful witness" (i. 5). (3) "The first-born of the dead" (i. 5). (4) "The ruler of the kings of the earth" (i. 5). (5) "The Alpha and the Omega" (i. 8). (6) "The first and the last" (i. 17). (7) The living one who was dead, and who is alive forevermore (i. 18). The crucified Christ has become the reigning Christ. When His enemies were exulting over His death, saying to His discouraged followers, "What can your lost leader do for you in the day of tribulation that is approaching? He has gone from you forever. His

power is at an end. Why continue to follow a forlorn hope?" Then comes the joyful announcement, "The dead has become alive; the lost leader has returned. His presence is about to be visibly manifested" (i. 7). He is about to make His saints victorious over all their enemies, making them "to be unto our God a kingdom and Priests"; and giving them authority "to reign upon the earth" (v. 10).

2. *It is a revelation of Jesus Christ given in impending historical events.* The object of the revelation is expressly said to be "to show the things *which must shortly come to pass,*" or the things which Jesus was about to bring to pass. The book is not a gradual unrolling of the scroll of the future, not a panoramic view of the history of the Church from the beginning to the close; not a history of the Church written in advance, but a revelation of things which were about to happen. "The time is at hand." "Behold, I come quickly," is the way in which the immediacy of the things foretold is announced.

The book deals with the events described in the eschatological discourses of our Lord, and gives their interpretation. "In Christ's day these events were within a lifetime or generation; in the epistles they were 'at hand'; in the apocalypse they have come" (Brown). Historically the book follows the Acts of the Apostles, which describes the planting of the Church. It portrays the struggle of the Church for existence, and its initial triumph over the assailing powers that seek to crush out its very life. It shows what Jesus does to save His Church.

3. *The revelation of Christ to the Church.* He is represented as being with them, walking in the midst

of the seven-branched candelabrum, trimming it, and feeding it with oil, so that it might burn with a clear and steady light (i. 13). He sends epistles to seven churches in Asia Minor, which are selected as typical or representative churches. All these churches are in the thick of a deadly conflict, and a reward is promised "to him that overcometh"; the reward in each case being graded according to the degree of trial to be overcome. That the words of the risen Christ have something more than a local application is suggested by the refrain with which every letter closes, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." There are also seven beatitudes which pronounce special blessings upon those who are found faithful in the hour of trial. For a study of these beatitudes see i. 3, xiv. 13, xvi. 15, xix. 9, xx. 6, xxii. 7, xxii. 14.

4. *The opening of heaven.* A door is opened in heaven, and a glimpse is given into the secret of the divine purpose regarding "the things which must come to pass hereafter" (iv. 1), thus fulfilling the promise made by Jesus at the beginning of His ministry to His disciples, "Ye shall see heaven opened" (John i. 51). In the center of all things there is a throne—the symbol of government and power—and on the throne One before whom the angels bow. In the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne is "a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals" (v. 1). For a time there is great lamentation because no one is found who is worthy to open the book or to look thereon. But weeping is turned into joy when it is announced that "the Lion who is of the tribe of Judah, the Root

of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof" (v. 5). A beautiful pictorial representation of the power of Christ to open the seven sealed mysteries of life, of death, and of the future!

When it is known that the seals can be opened there is an outburst of joy, and pæans of praise are sung. Victory is anticipated before the battle begins. The struggle may be fierce, but its final outcome is no longer uncertain (v. 6-14).

5. *The conflict which now opens is between Christ and His Church on the one side, and the world powers and the powers of darkness on the other side.* To describe this conflict and its issue is the main purpose of this remarkable book.

John the Son of Thunder writes with all the fiery impetuosity of one whose soul longs to be relieved of its prophetic burden. His exuberant fancy is steeped in the imagery of the Old Testament apocalypses, especially of Ezekiel and Daniel. The prophetic drama which he produces is one which for magnificence of diction and sweep of thought has never been surpassed. It is characterized by unity of plan and by a skillful arrangement of its material. The framework upon which it is constructed is that of seven septenaries, each of which constitutes a sevenfold series. The events thus systematically set forth do not, however, follow each other in chronological sequence, for the aim of the book is ethical, and not historical. It is a succession of flashlight pictures, given for the purpose of exhibiting the first great conflict by which the Church was to be sifted, cleansed, and strengthened. It was not written to satisfy the curiosity of men regarding

the secrets of the future, but to confirm Christian faith and inspire Christian hope in that age, and in all ages.\*

With this practical end in view it was natural that John should write from the standpoint of his own age. Professor W. Milligan is unquestionably correct in saying, "We are not to look in the Revelation of St. John for any prediction of events beyond that great event of which the whole New Testament is full—the manifestation of the glory of the now exalted but hidden Lord, together with the complete and final victory over all evil."†

In giving a series of paintings full of color, life, and movement, dealing with the things in which men are always most deeply interested—namely, the things of their own age, the things about to happen—John writes as a literary impressionist. His work is not to be studied in its minute details, but in its broad outlines. To seek for a hidden meaning in every figure which he uses would be as unreasonable as if one should search for a hidden meaning in the ring, the shoes, or the fatted calf mentioned in the parable of the prodigal son.

Looking in a broad light at the great struggle here depicted, we find that it falls into two parts.

PART FIRST—which extends from Chapter VI. to Chapter XI. inclusive, is descriptive of the last days

\*The schools of interpreters may be divided into three, the Preterists, who hold that the events recorded have been fulfilled in whole or in part; the Futurists, who hold that the events recorded are yet to take place in connection with the second advent; and the Historical school, who hold that the book gives a progressive unfolding of the history of the Church from its beginning to its close. In this exposition the Preterist standpoint is occupied.

† *Book by Book*, p. 557. It would have saved Professor Milligan from great confusion if he had always held consistently to that unassailable position.

of the Jewish age. There is about this part a Jewish tone or atmosphere. Its symbolism is Jewish, its view-point is Jewish. Judgment begins at the house of God's Israel, who had been hostile to the Christian faith. The first seal is opened, and the Son of Man, crowned and armed, rides forth upon a white horse, conquering and to conquer (vi. 1). As each successive seal is opened some new aspect of the conflict is seen. Before the seventh seal is opened the elect of God are gathered "out of the tribes of Israel," and sealed upon their foreheads (vii. 1-8). Then there is a pause, "a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (viii. 1). The silence is broken by the sounding of trumpets, which herald the things that are coming. The blowing of the seven trumpets is followed by a succession of judgments which shake terribly the earth. The temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein, "are measured, and being found wanting, are given over to the fury of the nations" (xi. 1, 2). War is made upon the saints, and "their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom, and Egypt, wherein also their Lord was crucified" (xi. 8). In a shock of doom the city falls, and with it is swept away the old Jewish system which stood in the way of the kingdom of Christ. With a single glimpse of the new spiritual temple about to be erected upon the ground which had thus been cleared, the vision ends. "And there was opened the temple of God in heaven, and there was seen in the temple the ark of the covenant" (xi. 19).

PART SECOND—the downfall of paganism. It is pagan, not papal Rome, that is referred to in this

section. The two great opposing powers of the new faith were the Jewish and the Roman, the one ecclesiastical and the other civil. Between the lines of John's vision one may read a history of the Rome of his day. From prudential reasons the references are, of course, veiled in metaphor. John lived too near the events which he describes to make it wise for him to name the chief actors, but the cryptograms which he employs were no doubt perfectly intelligible to the Christians of his own day for whom he specially wrote. We have an example of this form of speech in I. Peter v. 13, where Rome is generally understood to be referred to under the name of Babylon.

The exact meaning of the mystic figures employed it is difficult to determine, even when their ethical import is apparent. The red dragon, who is called "the old serpent," "the devil," and "Satan," after being hurled from heaven, where he made war, persecutes the woman and her offspring; but the earth helps the woman, and she is delivered from the dragon's power (xii.). Two beasts, one of which rises out of the sea and the other out of the earth, make havoc of the saints. The life is well nigh crushed out of the saints when, in the hour of darkness and the power of the enemy, the Lamb is seen standing on Mount Zion, surrounded by a mighty host whom He has rallied around His standard (xiii., xiv. 1). Their shout of victory is as the voice of many waters (xiv. 2). Now the scene changes. Those that worship the beast and his image and receive the mark of his name are tormented with fire (xiv. 10, 11); seven bowls of wrath are poured out upon the enemies of

the Church, and the power of Babylon the great is shattered (xv. 5-8, xvi. ).

1. *Through conflict comes triumph.* The sublime drama reaches its climax. Salvation and judgment have commingled; now by judgment comes salvation. A great voice of a great multitude is heard in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! salvation and glory and power belong to our God; for true and righteous are His judgments" (xix. 1, 2). The reign of God is now established, and "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready" (xix. 7). That the contest is a moral one is made evident by a reference to the "angel flying in mid-heaven, having an eternal gospel to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth" (xiv. 6), and to the conqueror who is arrayed in garments sprinkled with blood; and His name is called the Word of God (xix. 12, 13), "and He hath on His garments, and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (xix. 16).

Now comes the death struggle. The beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gather for a final assault. But their overthrow is complete. The beast, the false prophet, and Satan, the arch-deceiver, who have been leagued together against the Lord's anointed, are overcome, and are bound and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (xix. 19, xx. 1, 2).

2. *The blessed consummation.* The day of millennial glory at last breaks upon this troubled earth. The old Jerusalem has passed away, and "the holy city, new Jerusalem, comes down out of heaven from God" (xxi. 1). A new social order has begun. The kingdom of God is realized here and now. Earth is the scene of its glory. The heavenly ideal is brought



down to earth, and becomes a this-world's kingdom. The tabernacle of God is with men. Into the new city, which the most beautiful and precious things of earth are taken to describe, the kings of the earth bring their glory (xxi. 9-27).

This city, which forms the metropolitan center of the kingdom, is not confined to a single localized enclosure. It is to be found wherever Christ and the principles of His religion have triumphed. It will be found in Rome, in London, in Paris, in New York, in Chicago, or in any of the world's civic centers, when within its gates the rule of Christ is supreme.

But this Holy City is not presented on its earth side alone. The glowing figures in which it is described are not exhausted in its temporal manifestation. There is a suggestion of something beyond, a suggestion of the extension of the present into the future. The heaven side is more than hinted at. The temporal melts into the eternal. The kingdom of God in heaven is at once the continuation and the culmination of the kingdom of God on earth. The finger of promise points to that city which no eye has seen, which is the final goal of all earth's hopes and longings. But the main emphasis is upon the present. The king is here, the kingdom cometh; and it cometh just because the king is here to make it come. Is it any wonder, then, that when the voice for which the world has waited is heard crying, "Behold, I come quickly," the Church should send the answer back, "Amen; come, Lord Jesus"?



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