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be more likely to win acceptance if the reasons for them were stated. But taken altogether this small book of two hundred pages is "full of matter," embodying the best results of the most recent inquiry, and bearing in every line the impress of a fresh and independent mind.

JOHN TAYLOR.

### *PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.*

#### II. PAUL'S RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

A STUDY of Paul's conception of Christianity may very fitly begin with an enquiry into his religious history, for two reasons. First, because his theology is to an unusual extent the outgrowth of his experience. He is as remote as possible in his whole way of thinking from the scholastic theologian, being eminently subjective, psychological, autobiographical in spirit and method. In this he resembles Luther, and indeed all the chief actors in epochs of fresh religious intuition. Next, because acquaintance with the Apostle's spiritual history helps us to assume a sympathetic appreciative attitude towards a theology which, though utterly non-scholastic in spirit, yet, owing its existence to controversy, deals to a considerable extent in forms of thought and expression belonging to the period, which, to modern readers are apt to wear an aspect of foreignness. How many words occur in Paul's letters bearing apparently a peculiar technical meaning; words the signification of which cannot easily be ascertained, remaining still, after all the theological discussion they have provoked, of doubtful import. Law, righteousness, justification, adoption, flesh, spirit—words these eminently Pauline, and in a high degree original, therefore interesting, as used by him, yet at the same time presenting a somewhat artificial appearance, and withal belonging to the region of theology rather

than to the region of religious intuition. Something is needed to help one to overcome the prejudice thence arising, and it may be found in the intense tragic moral struggle lying behind Paul's theology, and possessing the undying interest of all great spiritual crises. In the case of our Lord, we need no such aid to sympathetic study of His teaching. His mind moved in the region of pure spiritual intuition, and His words therefore possess perennial lucidity and value. They are, indeed, in form as well as in substance, words of eternal life. We have no information as to His inner spiritual history, and we do not feel the want of it, for the lapse of time has no antiquating effect on His profound yet simple utterances.

The autobiographical hints contained in the Epistles which are to form the basis of our study, though comparatively few, are valuable. The passages which exhibit most conspicuously the autobiographical character occur in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, and in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. From the former we learn that Paul, before he became a Christian, belonged to the class which in the Gospels appears in constant and irreconcilable antagonism to Jesus. His religion was *Judaism*; in the practice of that religion he was exceptionally strict; he was beyond most of his contemporaries a zealot for the legal traditions of the fathers.<sup>1</sup> In other words, he was a Pharisee, and a virtuoso in Pharisaism. His great aim in life was to be legally righteous, and his ambition was to excel in that line. How much this implies! It means either that this man will never become a Christian, but remain through life the deadly foe of the new faith, or it means that the very intensity of his Pharisaism will cure him of Pharisaism, and make him a Christian of Christians, as he had been before a Pharisee of Pharisees, possessing exceptional insight into

<sup>1</sup> *Galatians* i. 13, 14.

the genius of the new religion, and a wholly unexampled enthusiasm in its propagation.

Which of the two ways is it to be? The autobiographical hints in the seventh chapter of *Romans* enable us partly to foresee. As Paul advanced in Judaism,<sup>1</sup> he made one day a great discovery. He noticed for the first time that one of the commandments in the Decalogue, the tenth, forbade *coveting*,<sup>2</sup> that is to say, that a mere feeling, a state of the heart not falling under the observation of others, was condemned as sin. This was a revelation to the Pharisaic zealot as instructive for us as it was momentous for him. Two things that revelation shows us. One is how completely the Pharisaic system had deadened the conscience to any moral evil not on the surface. For the average Pharisee there was unrighteousness within in countless forms—evil appetites, desires, passions, yet totally unobserved as states of feeling requiring to be corrected, giving him no trouble or distress, because, forsooth, all was clean and fair without. Jesus often declared this to be the case, and that His judgment was just nothing can more convincingly prove than the fact that for Saul of Tarsus, a disciple of the Rabbis, insight into so commonplace a truth as that coveting is sinful, was an important discovery. The other thought suggested by the great revelation is that Saul, even while a Pharisee, was an extraordinary man. The ordinary man is a complete slave to the moral fashions of his time. He thinks that only evil which passes for evil in his social environment. If it is the fashion to disregard evil within so long as external conduct is in accordance with rule, there is no chance of his discovering that covetousness or any other plague of the heart is morally wrong. He will go serenely on his way, unobservant of the inner world, as a stupid peasant might pass heedless through picturesque scenery. But Saul of Tarsus cannot

<sup>1</sup> *Galatians* i. 14, *πρόεκοπτον ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ*.

<sup>2</sup> *Romans* vii. 8.

permanently do that, for he has moral individuality; therefore, he discovers what others miss. He notes that while one precept says, Thou shalt not *kill*, another forbids what may lead to killing—desire to have what belongs to another. Not all at once, indeed, for the system under which he has been reared has great power over him. But, eventually, insight into the searching character of God's law must come to such a man. For his conscience is not conventional; it has sharp eyes, and can see what to dimmer vision is unobservable, and new moral truth once seen it will not be able to take lightly, merely because for other men the truth it has discovered is of no account.

The momentousness of the discovery for Paul himself it is impossible to exaggerate. It is very easy to underestimate its importance. That to covet is sin, is so axiomatic to the Christian mind that it is very difficult to imagine a state of conscience for which it was a great moral revelation. And familiarity deadens the power to realize the significance of the new truth for one to whom it was a revelation. One can trace the effect of this influence in the recent literature of Paulinism. Interpreters forget that what is commonplace now was once very uncommon, and that truth, when first revealed, produces very different results from those which accompany traditionary belief. In the instance before us the new revelation may be said to have been the beginning of the end. From the day that the eye of Paul's conscience lighted on the words, Thou shalt not covet, his Judaism was doomed. It might last a while, so far as outward habit and even fanatical zeal was concerned, but the heart was taken out of it. That is the import of the other autobiographical hint in *Romans* vii.: "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died."<sup>1</sup> Hope died, because the zealot saw that there was a whole world of sin within, of which he

<sup>1</sup> *Romans* vii. 9.

had not dreamed, with which it was hard to cope, and which made righteousness by conformity with the law appear unattainable. This was a great step onwards towards Christianity. All along the youthful enthusiast, according to his own testimony in after years,<sup>1</sup> had been outrunning his fellow-religionists in pious attainments. His advance hitherto had been within Judaism. But now, without being aware of it, he advances away from Judaism, the outward movement being the natural consequence of the previous rapid movement within. He had been trying to satisfy the innate hunger of his spirit for righteousness with the food that came first to his hand—legal ordinances. It took him some time to discover that what he had been eating was not wheat but chaff. That discovery once made, the imperious appetite of the soul will compel him to go elsewhere in quest of true nourishment. It will not surprise us if he forsake the school of the Rabbis and go to the school of Jesus.

This we know was what eventually happened. Saul of Tarsus became a convert to Christianity. The Pauline letters give no detailed account of the memorable event similar to the narratives contained in the book of *Acts*. But the main feature in the story, as there told, is referred to in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, at the place where the apostle enumerates the different appearances of the risen Christ. "Last of all he was seen of me also."<sup>2</sup> Modern students of sacred history approach this great turning-point in Paul's life with very diverse bias. Naturalistic theologians desire by all means to resolve the objective appearance into a subjective experience, and to see in the self-manifestation of Jesus to the persecutor not a real Christophany, but a vision due to the convert's excited

<sup>1</sup> *Galatians* i. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *1 Corinthians* xv. 8. *Vide Acts* ix. 1-9; xxii. 6-11; xxvi. 12-18 for the detailed accounts.

state of mind. Others, dealing with the subject in an apologetic interest, make it their business to vindicate the objectivity of the Christophany, and its independence of subjective conditions.<sup>1</sup> Our present concern is not to refute, and still less to advocate, naturalistic theories of the conversion, but to learn all we can as to the inner history which led up to it, that we may the better understand the event itself and what it involved.

If the comments above made on the autobiographical hint in *Romans* vii. be correct, it follows that the conversion of Paul, however marvellous, was not so sudden and unprepared as it seems. There was that in the previous experience of the convert that pointed towards, though it did not necessarily insure, his becoming a Christian. Nothing is gained by denying or ignoring this fact. And there is more to be included under the head of preparation than has yet been pointed out. While the objective character of Christ's appearance to Paul is by all means to be maintained, it is legitimate to assume that there was a subjective state answering to the objective phenomenon. This may be laid down as a principle in reference to all such supernatural manifestations. Thus the vision and the voices seen and heard by Jesus at His baptism, and at the transfiguration, corresponded to and interpreted His own thoughts at the moment. Applied to the case of Paul, the principle means that before Christ appeared to him on the way to Damascus, He had been revealed in him,<sup>2</sup> not yet as an object of faith, but as an object of earnest thought. The Christ who appeared to him was not an utterly unknown personality. He had heard of Him before, he knew that His followers believed Him to have risen again from

<sup>1</sup> So Weiss: *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. i. p. 152; also Stevens, *The Pauline Theology*, p. 15. Dr. Stevens' work is a valuable contribution to the study of Paulinism, though traces of a disciple's reverence towards Dr. Weiss are not wanting. In one very important point, as will appear, he dissents from his master's teaching.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Galatians* i. 15.

the dead, and he had had serious reflections as to what such an event implied. As to the precise character of these reflections we have no information, but it is not difficult to make probable conjectures. He who was said to have risen from the dead had been crucified, mainly by the instrumentality of the Pharisaic party to which Paul belonged. By the resurrection, if it occurred, the stigma of crucifixion had been removed, and the claims of the crucified one to be the Christ vindicated. But if Jesus was the Christ, what view was to be taken of His death? Men thought that He had suffered for His own offences. What if He had really suffered for the sins of others, like the servant of Jehovah of whom it was written in ancient prophecy: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." And what if the crucified and risen One were a new way of salvation for men who like himself had begun to despair of reaching salvation by the old time-honoured way of legalism.

That such thoughts had passed through Paul's mind is rendered probable by the fact, vouched for by his own confession, that before his conversion he persecuted the disciples of Jesus with passionate zeal.<sup>1</sup> His ardour in this bad work was partly due to the energy of a man who put his soul into everything. But it was due also to what he knew about the object of his fanatical animosity. The new religion interested him very much. It seems to have fascinated him. He hated it, yet he was drawn towards it, and could not let it alone. He was under a spell which compelled him to enquire into its nature, and strive to penetrate into the secret of its growing power. In consequence he understood it as well as was possible for an unfriendly outsider. He evidently regarded it as a rival to Judaism, antagonistic thereto in its whole spirit and tendency, as otherwise it is difficult to comprehend his fiercely hostile attitude towards

<sup>1</sup> *Galatians* i. 13: "Beyond measure I persecuted the church."

it. If he did not get this view of the new religion from Stephen, as the accounts in *Acts* would lead us to infer, it must have come to him from his own keenly penetrating insight. A man like Saul of Tarsus sees below the surface of things, and can detect there what is completely hidden to the ordinary eye. In this respect he may have divined the genius of the new faith better than its own adherents, who for the most part very imperfectly comprehended what was to grow out of the apparently insignificant seed contained in the confession that Jesus was the Christ. He perceived that that confession was by no means insignificant. What! a crucified man the Messiah, shown to be such by resurrection! That, if true, meant shame and confusion to the Pharisees who had put him to death; yea, and something more serious, death to Pharisaism, condemnation of legalism. How, might not be immediately apparent, but the fact must be so. It cannot be that a crucified risen *Christ* should remain an isolated barren portent. It must have been God's purpose from the first, though men knew it not, and it must bear consequences proportioned to its own astounding character.

Only on the assumption that some such thoughts had been working in Saul's mind does his furious *hyperbolic*<sup>1</sup> hostility to Christians become intelligible. These thoughts combined with those ever-deepening doubts as to the attainability of righteousness on the basis of legalism fully account for his mad behaviour. They also prepare us for what is coming.<sup>2</sup> A man in whose soul such perilous stuff

<sup>1</sup> *Galatians* i. 13, καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκουν.

<sup>2</sup> The above account of the preparation for the conversion is, not in intention, but in result, a combination to a certain extent of the views of Beyschlag on the one hand and of Pfeiderer on the other. Beyschlag lays the emphasis exclusively on the fruitless struggle after righteousness; Pfeiderer insists with equal onesidedness on the familiarity with the Christian beliefs about Jesus and the processes of thought these originated in Paul's mind. It seems perfectly feasible to take both into account. For the views of Beyschlag, *vide* his *Neutestamentliche Theologie* (1892), vol. ii. p. 14; for Pfeiderer's, his *Paulinismus: Einleitung*.

is at work cannot be far from a spiritual crisis. By the time the Damascus expedition was undertaken the crisis was due. Is it asked, How could one on the eve of a religious revolution undertake such a task? The answer must be that men of heroic temper and resolute will do not easily abandon cherished ideals, and never are less like surrendering than just before the crisis comes. In the expressive phrase put into Christ's mouth by the historian of the *Acts* they "kick against the pricks."<sup>1</sup>

When a spiritual crisis does come to a man of this type, it possesses deep, inexhaustible significance. Such was the fact certainly in the case of Saul. In the view of some writers the spiritual development of this remarkable man took place mainly in the period subsequent to his conversion to the Christian faith. They find in the period antecedent to the conversion little or no struggle, and in the conversion itself they see nothing more than the case of one who, previously an unbeliever in the Messiahship of Jesus, had at length been brought to acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ, through a miraculous demonstration that He was still alive.<sup>2</sup> It would, however, be nearer the truth to say that on the day Saul of Tarsus was converted his spiritual development to a large extent lay behind him. For him to become a Christian meant everything. It meant becoming a *Paulinist* Christian in the sense which the famous controversial Epistles enable us to put upon that expression. The preparation for the great change had been so thorough that the convert leaped at a bound into a large cosmopolitan idea of Christianity, its nature and destination. The universalism, *e.g.*, which we associate with the name of the Apostle Paul, dates from his conversion. It was not, as

<sup>1</sup> *Acts* xxvi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> So Dr. Matheson in his very suggestive and ingenious work on *The Spiritual Development of St. Paul*, pp. 39, 65. In his treatment of the subject the alleged development has reference rather to Paul's views of the Christian ethical ideal than to his theological conceptions.

some imagine, a late growth of after years, due to the accident of some persons of Gentile birth showing a readiness to receive the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Such a view is contrary at once to Paul's own statements,<sup>2</sup> and to intrinsic probability. The truth is, that a whole group of religious intuitions, the universal destination of Christianity being one of them, flashed simultaneously into Paul's mind, like a constellation of stars on the day of his conversion. As soon as he had recovered from the stunning effect of the strange things that befel him on the way to Damascus, and emerged into clear, tranquil, Christian consciousness, he saw that it was all over with Judaism and its legal righteousness, all over with the law itself as a way to salvation, that salvation must come to man through the grace of God, and that it might come through that channel to all men alike, to Gentiles not less than to Jews, and on equal terms, and that therefore Jewish prerogative was at an end. The eye of his soul was opened to the light of this constellation of spiritual truths almost as soon, I believe, as the eye of his body had recovered its power of vision. For thought is quick at such creative epochs, and feeling is still quicker, and we can faintly imagine with what tremendous force reaction would set in, away from all that belonged to a past now for ever dead; from Pharisaic formalism and pride and pretensions, and from Judaistic narrowness, and from intolerance, fanaticism, and wicked, persecuting tempers, towards all that was opposed to these in religion and morals.

The foregoing view of Paul's conversion, as ushering him at once into a new world of anti-Judaistic thought, is borne out by the autobiographical notices of that eventful period contained in the first chapter of *Galatians*. Four points deserve attention here.

<sup>1</sup> So Weiss, *Introduction*, vol. i. pp. 154, 164; also Stevens, *The Pauline Theology*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Galatians* i. 15.

1. The term employed by the Apostle to describe his old way of life invites remark. He calls it *Judaism*.<sup>1</sup> He was not shut up to the use of that term ; he might have employed instead, Pharisaism or Rabbinism. He obviously has present controversies in view, and wishes to make his references to past experiences tell against those whose great aim was to get Gentile Christians to Judaize.<sup>2</sup> It is as if he had said : "I know all about Judaising and Judaism. It was my very life element in long bygone years. There never was such a zealot as I was for national customs on grounds at once of patriotism and of conscience. I was a perfect devotee to the Jewish way of serving God. It is a miracle that I ever escaped from its thrall. It was certainly by no ordinary means that I was set free ; not by the method of catechetical instruction, whether through apostles or any others. God alone could deliver me. But He could and He did, effectually and once for all. To His sovereign grace I owe my conversion to Christianity, which meant breaking away completely and for ever from Judaism and all that belonged to it." If this be indeed a true interpretation of what was in the Apostle's mind, we can see with what perfect truth he could protest that he did not get his Christianity from men in general, or from any of the apostles in particular. Which of the apostles could have taught him a Christianity like that, radically and at all points opposed to Judaism ?

2. The Apostle virtually asserts the identity of his Gospel throughout the whole period during which he had been a Christian. It is the same Gospel which he received "by revelation"<sup>3</sup> at his conversion, which he had preached to the Galatians,<sup>4</sup> and which he is obliged now to defend against men who call it in question, and seek to frustrate it by every means, as *e.g.* by denying the independent apos-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* vv. 13 and 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Galatians* ii. 14 : 'Ιουδαϊσµῶν.

<sup>3</sup> *Galatians* i. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Galatians* i. 8.

tolic standing of him who preaches it. It is a gospel which from the first has addressed itself to Gentiles not less than to Jews, and which has treated circumcision and the Jewish law as a whole, as possessing no religious value for Christianity. It may indeed appear as if the assertion that Paul preached such a gospel to the Galatians at the time of his first visit were irreconcilable with what has been stated in our first paper concerning the Apostle's mode of presenting Christian truth to infant churches. But the contrariety is only on the surface. Paulinism was implicitly involved in Paul's mission-Gospel, though the implications were not explicitly stated and commented on. Universalism and denial of the religious significance of the Jewish law were latent in it. Universalism was involved in the simple fact that the preacher addressed himself to a Gentile audience, and the abrogation of the Jewish law was quietly taken for granted by the simple fact that the rite of circumcision was never mentioned. Paul held up a crucified and risen Christ broadly sketched<sup>1</sup> to the eye of faith as the all-sufficient means of salvation, and left it to work its own effect. Unfortunately it soon appeared that his Galatian hearers did not understand the drift of his Gospel as he understood it himself. They saw no inconsistency in beginning with faith in a crucified Jesus and ending with Jewish legalism; but for him these two things then and always appeared utterly incompatible. The position he laid down in his interview with Peter at Antioch: "if by the law righteousness then Christ died in vain,"<sup>2</sup> had appeared to him self-evident from the time of his conversion onwards. Becoming a believer in Christ meant for him renouncing legal righteousness.

3. The Apostle connects his conversion with his call to be an Apostle to the Gentiles, representing the one as a means to the other as an end. "When it pleased God to

<sup>1</sup> *Galatians* iii. 1: προέγραφη.

<sup>2</sup> *Galatians* ii. 21.

reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles."<sup>1</sup> According to Weiss he is simply reading the Divine purpose of his conversion in the light of long subsequent events, which for the first time made him conscious that he was being called in God's providence to a specifically Gentile mission.<sup>2</sup> Now it need not be denied that such a procedure would be quite in keeping with Paul's habits of religious thought, but it may gravely be doubted whether it suited the position in which he was placed when he wrote the Epistle to the Galatians. What the circumstances required was, that he should make it clear beyond all dispute that he was an Apostle, and an Apostle to the Gentiles, by immediate Divine authority and equipment; that both his Gospel and his call came to him direct from the hand of God. In presence of men lying in wait for his halting, and even ready to charge him with falsehood, if they got a chance, could he have so spoken of a call which came to him late in the day, from the fact of Gentiles giving an unexpected welcome to a Gospel which, so far as the preacher's intention was concerned, had not really been meant for them? If that was how the call came, why should he regard himself as an Apostle to the Gentiles more than any of the eleven apostles, who in like manner saw in events God's will that Gentiles should be admitted to the fellowship of the Christian faith? Would Paul's opponents have recognised him as the Gentile Apostle had they known the facts to be as supposed? Would he have dared to state the case as he does in his letter to the Galatians, with solemn protestation that he was not lying,<sup>3</sup> had his heathen mission been a tardy afterthought? What could give him the courage to make

<sup>1</sup> *Galatians* i. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide his Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. i. pp. 154, 164. Here also Dr. Stevens follows Weiss, *vide The Pauline Theology*, pp. 21, 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Galatians* i. 20.

the statement but a distinct recollection that the change which made him a Christian gave him also the presentiment that the destiny of the converted Pharisee was to be Christ's missionary to the Pagan world? It is scarcely necessary to add that the view advocated by Weiss totally fails to do justice to the strength of Paul's feeling as the Gentile Apostle, to the way in which he habitually magnified his office, to his fervent devotion to the grand programme, Christianity for the world. Such an enthusiasm could not be the product of external circumstances. It must have been the birth of a great religious crisis. Just here lay the difference between Paul and the eleven. Their universalism, if it may be so called, consisted in bowing to God's will revealed in events; his was a profound conviction rooted in a never-to-be-forgotten personal experience. He was born, and born *again*, to be the Gentile Apostle, gifted both by nature and by regeneration for his high calling; and only one of whom this could be said could have undertaken its arduous tasks, and endured its severe trials.

4. Finally, not without bearing on the question at issue, are the particulars mentioned by the Apostle as to his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. The precise purpose of this visit is probably not fully indicated. The Apostle deems it sufficient to say that he went up to make the acquaintance of Peter, one of the leading apostles.<sup>1</sup> But two points are noteworthy, the careful specification of the date and duration of the visit, and the not less careful exclusion of the other apostles from participation in it.

<sup>1</sup> *Galatians* i. 18, ἰστορήσαι Κηφάν. The verb is used in connection with going to see important places, great cities, etc. Bengel remarks *grave verbum, ut de re magna*. Paul wishes to suggest that he went to visit the great man of the Christian community; not sneeringly, but possibly not without a slight touch of humour. His opponents laid great stress upon important personalities. He too recognised Peter's importance, but only as an equal, after he had kept three years aloof, and now went to see him as a man who sought neither patronage nor advice.

Paul wishes it to be understood that it was a private friendly visit to Peter alone, in which the other apostles had no concern. To be strictly accurate, he admits that he did see James, the Lord's brother, but he alludes to the fact in such a manner as to suggest that the meeting was accidental and of no significance. There could thus be no question of apostolic authority brought to bear on him on this occasion, as at the conference held in the same city fourteen years later. Then as to the date and duration of the visit: it took place, says the Apostle in effect, three years after my conversion, and it lasted just fifteen days. Very suggestive specifications, and meant to be reflected on in relation to each other. Three years passed before he saw any of the apostles, or had any opportunity of learning from them. And what eventful years in his life, those immediately succeeding his conversion; how much of his spiritual experience he lived through in that time, in the solitude of the Arabian desert! Not till those memorable years of intense meditation are over does he go up to Jerusalem to see Peter; not as a man still at sea and needing counsel, but as one whose mind is clear and whose purpose is fixed. He remains with Peter *fifteen days*. After so long a period he still remembers the exact number of days, for it was a happy time, and one remarkable man does not readily forget the time he has spent in another remarkable man's company. And what passed between them? Much talk on both sides doubtless, Paul relating to Peter his personal history and present views, Peter communicating in turn copious reminiscences of his beloved Master. Paul can have no desire to underestimate the value of these communications, otherwise he would not have stated how long he was with Peter, but would rather have indicated that his stay lasted only for a short while. Very much could be said in a fortnight, and it is quite likely, that in the course of that time, Peter told

Paul all he remembered of Jesus. Yet fifteen days are a short period compared with three years; quite sufficient for a full rehearsal of the Evangelic memorabilia, but hardly enough for a vital process of spiritual development. Paul might learn then the contents of our Gospels, such facts as we read of in the gospel of Mark, but it was not then that he learned, or could possibly learn, his own Gospel. That he had got by heart before he made his visit to Peter.

All this the Apostle means to hint, by his brief rapid jottings relating to this early period. He would say, After my conversion I took no counsel with men in the church who might be supposed able to advise me, in particular I did not put myself in communication with any of the apostles. I retired into the desert for a lengthened period, that there I might be alone with God. At length, when thought and prayer had borne their fruit in an enlightened mind and a firm purpose, and the time for action had come, after three full years,<sup>1</sup> I felt a craving to meet one of the men who had been with Jesus, that one who had ever been the foremost man and spokesman of the twelve, that I might hear him talk of the earthly life of the Lord to whose service I had consecrated my life. I went to see Peter in Jerusalem, desiring from him neither recognition nor counsel, but simply to enjoy friendly intercourse on perfectly equal terms with one for whom I entertained sincere respect. It was a time of delightful fellowship which I can never forget. I remember still the very number of the days, and the topics of our conversation each day. The memory of it is unmarred by any lingering recollections of discord. I opened my heart to Peter and told him all my past experiences and my present thoughts

<sup>1</sup> The expression *μετὰ ἑτῆ τρία* does not necessarily mean three full years, but the purpose of the Apostle in making the statement justifies the assumption that he is speaking exactly.

and purposes. He showed no sign of dissent, and as for the other apostles, not even, excepting James, whom I did see for a few moments, they had no part in our intercourse. Yet, what I thought and said then, was just what I think and say now.

From the foregoing interpretation of the Apostle's statement regarding his first visit to Jerusalem, it follows that his universalistic antinomian Gospel goes back, if not to the very hour of his conversion, at least to the years immediately following that event and preceding the visit.<sup>1</sup> This period might be included within the conversion, as the time during which the convert attained to a full conception of the significance of the great event.

The view advocated in the foregoing pages does not imply that Paul's system of Christian thought underwent no expansion in any direction after the initial period. We must carefully distinguish here between his religious intuitions and his theological formulations. The former fall within the early years or even days of his Christian career, the latter may have been the slow growth of time; though even they may to a large extent have been worked out during the period of retirement in Arabia. The distinction may be illustrated by a single instance. Among the intuitions may be reckoned the perception that righteousness and salvation are not attainable by legal performances, but only by the grace of God as exhibited in a crucified Christ. This we are to conceive Paul as seeing from the first. But he may have had to go through a lengthened process of reflection before he reached a compact theoretic statement of the truth such as we find in the words: "Him who knew not sin, He made sin on our behalf, that we might become

<sup>1</sup> Such is the view of Holsten: *vide* his *Evangelium des Paulus*, p. 9; also of Beyschlag in his *Neutestamentliche Theologie*: "The main lines of his (Paul's) system" (remarks the latter writer) "as sketched in his interview with Peter at Antioch before any of his Epistles were written, go back, without doubt, to his retirement in Arabia," vol. ii. p. 8.

the righteousness of God in Him." That pithy, pregnant sentence has all the appearance of being the ripe fruit of much thought.

Another distinction has to be taken into account in discussing the question as to the development of Paulinism. We must distinguish between the positive doctrines of the Pauline system and its *apologetic elements*. At certain points, Paul's conception of Christianity appears weak and open to attack, or, to say the least, as standing in need of further explanation. He teaches that righteousness comes not by the law, but by faith in Christ, and that it comes on equal terms to all, without distinction between Jew and Gentile. Three questions are immediately raised by this threefold doctrine. First, if righteousness come not by the law, what end does the law serve? Next, what guarantee is there for ethical interests, for real personal goodness, under the religious programme of righteousness by faith? Lastly, if the benefits of Christ are open to all men on absolutely equal terms, what comes of the Jewish election and prerogative? The answers to these questions constitute the Pauline apologetic. It is probable that the apologetic ideas of his system came to Paul latest of all. First the intuitions, next the positive dogmatic formulæ, lastly, the apologetic buttresses. It need not be supposed that Paul never thought of the defences till some antagonistic critics arose to point out the weak side of his theory. We may be sure that he was his own severest critic, and that answers to the three questions were imperiously demanded by his own reason and conscience. But even on that view the apologetic would naturally come last. In logical order, a theory must be formed before objections can be taken to it. It must first be affirmed that righteousness comes by faith in Christ before the question can be raised, But what about personal righteousness on that hypothesis? Paul's solution of the difficulty is his doctrine of the mystic soli-

parity between the believer and Christ. It was probably one of the latest, as it is certainly one of the most beautiful developments in his system of Christian thinking.

A. B. BRUCE.

### *CHRIST AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.*

JOHN V. 1.

THIS miracle drew after it the gravest consequences. The dispute which it entailed led Jesus to assert that His working was parallel with that of God; and since His Father, while resting from creation, continued His providential benevolence, He would for His part do the same. It led the hierarchy at Jerusalem to resolve upon His death, as the raising of Lazarus forced them to precipitate it.

It has therefore an immense significance which lies beyond the object of these papers. Their aim is to examine the miracles themselves, the spiritual harmonies which bind them to each other and to the discourses, the mind and character to which they bear witness, and which is identical with what we find in the portion of the narrative that is allowed by all moderate scepticism, and to show how the unbelieving theories neglect or outrage these all-important considerations.

In treating the present miracle there are several preliminary points of interest.

It is well known that the question, at what feast was it performed, affects gravely the chronological arrangement of the ministry of our Lord. If this was a passover, as many have always believed, then we find four passovers during His public work. At one He first cleansed the temple, and a little before another He fed the five thousand (John ii. 13, vi. 4). At another He suffered; and if