

brought her the rakia (vest), proves that the second heaven, called rakia, is to be ascribed to the Moon. Thus the third heaven, Shechakim, is the heaven of Mars. Of this heaven we read in the Midrash : "In the heaven called schechakim ¹ there are millstones, which grind the heavenly Manna for the departed righteous." It is evidently to this that the promise refers which they that overcome among the community in Pergamon receive : "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white mill-stone ² and on the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receiveth it."

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HELENA RAMSAY, *transl.*

DID PAUL EVOLVE HIS GOSPEL ?

(1) THERE are fashions in thought, which sometimes become almost superstitions. About the value of the idea of evolution for modern knowledge there can be no doubt or question. In nature and in history alike it enables us to think things together. In every department of science the *static* view is being replaced by the *dynamic*, the world and man are being interpreted as not at rest, but in movement. At present at least we cannot conceive a category which is likely to supersede this dominant conception. Nevertheless there is a twofold danger in the universal application of

¹ From schachak = to grind.

² It is possible that the reference to the manna-mills was not comprehensible to the Greek translator of the Apocalypse, who translated stone as ψήφος. Nevertheless ψήφος signifies a pebble. In the East large pebbles are used as millstones. [This is the least convincing detail in Dr. Lepsius's explanation. The purpose of the "white stone" was to receive a name. Millstones are not intended to receive a name. The kind of stone (ψήφος) which the writer of the Apocalypse had in mind was a tessera, as is pointed out in my *Letters to the Seven Churches*.—W.M.R.]

the idea. On the one hand the thinker is liable to ignore the permanent elements in recognising the progressive stages in any object of study. On the other all change tends to be conceived as necessarily more gradual than it actually is. The catastrophic cannot be altogether banished from nature, nor the revolutionary from history. Two instances of the misapplication of the idea of evolution in Christian theology may be mentioned, although it is the intention of this article to examine only one of them more closely. It is a common opinion that in the ministry of Jesus we can trace a gradual development of His own view of His vocation. He began as a teacher, hoping to win the people by the truth which He offered, and only slowly did He come to know that not thus, but by His suffering would He fulfil His calling. That there was the unfolding of a purpose in the work of Jesus may be fully acknowledged. There was change of method with change of circumstance. But the writer feels sure that there was no change of purpose in the mind of Jesus. In his *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus* he has endeavoured to show that even in the Baptism Jesus already dedicated Himself to the realisation of the ideal presented to His conscience in the suffering servant of Jehovah. From this instance we may, however, turn to examine more closely the general assumption that we can distinctly trace an evolution of Paul's Gospel in his letters.

(2) The proof of this statement appears to the writer to involve reasoning in a circle. First of all the letters are arranged in the order in which such an evolution is apparent, and then the evolution is proved from this order of the letters. It is usual to arrange Paul's letters in four groups, (1) 1 and 2 *Thessalonians*; (2) 1 and 2 *Corinthians*, *Galatians* and *Romans*; (3) *Colossians* with *Philemon*, *Ephesians*, and *Philippians*; (4) 1 and 2 *Timothy*, *Titus*. Th-

first group may be called the eschatological, the second the soteriological, the third the Christological, and the fourth the pastoral; and each group may be supposed to show an advance in the thought of Paul. To carry out this idea of evolution consistently, a certain arrangement within the groups themselves seems to be necessary. Although there are good reasons for placing *Galatians* before 1 and 2 *Corinthians*, yet from this point of view it would seem necessary to place this epistle as near to *Romans* as possible, as both letters move in the same circle of thought. Similarly all the indications are that *Philippians* was written after *Colossians* (with *Philemon*) and *Ephesians*, and yet there is a passage in this epistle that brings it nearer to *Romans* than these other epistles, and again consistency in applying the theory would seem to require that all the other evidence should be set aside, and that the earlier date should be chosen. A study of the Pauline theology has led the writer to the conviction that this assumption of an evolution in Paul's thought has resulted in forcing an order, which is not the historical, on his letters, and that, setting aside the assumption, we get a more satisfactory arrangement; and further, that the assumption itself as commonly held is unwarranted. We may first consider how this view affects the position assigned to the letters, and then discuss the argument which can be advanced against the view itself.

(3) The general acceptance of the South Galatian theory as a result of the strenuous advocacy of it by Sir William Ramsay makes it possible to assign to the Epistle to the *Galatians* a much earlier date than the North Galatian theory allowed. But most scholars are deterred by this assumption from placing it before 1 and 2 *Thessalonians*, in which the earliest phase of Paul's Gospel is supposed to be presented. The explanation of the peculiar contents of 1 and

2 Thessalonians may be held over till we have fixed the date of *Galatians*. The writer finds himself in entire agreement with Dr. Bartlett (*The Apostolic Age*, pp. 84-85) in assigning *Galatians* to the close of the first missionary journey, and prior to the Council in Jerusalem ; but thinks it less likely that it was "written when en route for Jerusalem" than that it was sent off before the decision to refer the question to the Church in Jerusalem had been made. Once Paul consented to that course, the matter was *sub judice* ; and it would not have been becoming in him to discuss it as he does in the Epistle. Surely the circumstances amid which the letter was written are well described in *Acts* xv. 1, 2. The reasons for assigning this date to *Galatians* are the following : (i) Despite all the ingenuity which scholars have displayed in proving the identity of the visit to Jerusalem described in *Acts* xv. with that of which Paul gives an account in *Galatians* ii. 1-10, the writer cannot persuade himself that Paul would have been dealing honestly with his readers, had he described only the private conferences, and kept silence altogether about the public assembly with its important decision affecting the relation of Jews and Gentiles within the Church. (ii) If it be argued that Paul and Luke are not referring to the same visit, but that Paul is writing in *Galatians* about the visit Luke refers to in *Acts* xi. 30, it seems still less possible to place *Galatians* after the Council, as total silence regarding a visit of such primary importance would have been disingenuous in the extreme. (iii) The action of Peter and Barnabas at Antioch, which Paul so severely rebuked (*Gal.* ii. 11-21), is much more improbable after the Council when a decision on the question had been reached than before, when there was still uncertainty. Does not Peter's speech (*Acts* xv. 7-11) at the Council show how thoroughly he had taken to heart the lesson Paul had given him on that

occasion. The mood of *Galatians* i. and ii. with its vehement assertion of independence appears real before the Council, as it does not after, when Paul had acquiesced in these negotiations with the mother Church. Such indications as the history in *Acts* afford us suggest that at first Paul was treated with such suspicion as aroused his resentment, and that his mood at first was not as conciliatory as it afterwards became. Conscious of his own distinctive Gospel, and the vocation as the Apostle of the Gentiles which this involved, he was for a time impatient of any interference, and was only slowly brought to see that for the unity of the Christian Church he must make some concessions. But if *Galatians* was written after the Council we must assume that Paul relapsed from this more conciliatory mood. (v.) Could Paul honestly have asserted such independence as he does in *Galatians* after he had consented to the question being submitted to the Church in Jerusalem? (vi.) The early date of *Galatians* enables us to assign their plain sense to the words in i. 6: "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different Gospel," whereas the later date involves a torturing of the language. (vii.) The contrast of tone and thought even between *Galatians* and *Romans* is an argument against bringing them closely together. It is not likely that Paul would deal with the topic as vehemently as he does in the one letter, and soon after discuss it as calmly as he does in the other. The one was written in the very heat of the conflict, the other when the worst of the danger was past. (viii.) A more general consideration may be added. Would not the question of the intercourse between Jew and Gentile in the Christian Church emerge almost as soon as Gentiles began to enter the Church? And would not Paul as a Pharisee have been forced to face the question

for himself as soon as he himself began to preach among the Gentiles? The fiercest controversy was likely to be at an earlier rather than a later date. (ix.) The one objection to the early date is that the theology of *Galatians* appears more developed than that of 1 and 2 *Thessalonians*. But this objection can be met by showing, as the writer believes can be shown, that it was this Gospel of justification by faith alone which Paul reached as a result of his meditation on his conversion before he began his missionary labours, and that had he not reached this distinctive Gospel, but only such common Christian teaching as we find in 1 and 2 *Thessalonians*, he would never have realised his own unique vocation as the apostle to the Gentiles. This was the constant element in all his preaching. It appears in *Philippians* near the close of his ministry as in *Galatians* at the beginning. This view must be more fully justified in the subsequent discussion.

(4) Much more briefly can we deal with 1 and 2 *Thessalonians*. The difference between these two letters has led some scholars to deny the authenticity of the second; but Harnack's recent suggestion that the first epistle was addressed to the Gentile, and the second to the Jewish section of the Church, would relieve the difficulty. Without now giving judgment on this suggestion, the writer would point out the wider principle involved, namely, that the contents of Paul's letters were not determined by what he himself was thinking at the time, but by the needs of those whom he was addressing. In Thessalonica there was no problem of the relation of the Law and the Gospel, and so it was not necessary to present the distinctive Gospel which for Paul himself had solved the problem. Further, the eschatological teaching of the letter cannot be regarded as a temporary phase of Paul's theology; it is a constant element. This mood of expectancy that he would survive

to the Second Advent might give way to a mood of acquiescence in death as the way home to his Lord, but his conception of the last things was too deeply rooted to be overthrown. In *Philippians*, written in a mood in which to die seems to him gain (i. 21), he still expresses the common Christian hope, "we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (iii. 20, 21). The doctrines which are most prominent in his writings are not successive phases of a theological development, but constant elements in a theology, made up of many parts, not all entirely harmonious, because derived from so varying sources.

(5) There is no good ground for regarding the eschatological as prior to the soteriological stage of Paul's thought. If the former was what he owed to the common Christian tradition, and usually preached, the latter was his own distinctive Gospel, and as such was not only the satisfaction of his own personal need as a converted Pharisee, but also the impulse to his vocation as preacher to the Gentiles. Must we recognise a fresh theological development in the Christological teaching of *Colossians* and *Ephesians*? Here we must concede that two new influences did affect Paul's thinking. (i.) In the first place the heresy which is dealt with in *Colossians* supplied Paul with the weapons that he handled so skilfully in his warfare against it. The writer cannot find, however, that a new conception of Christ emerges in the letters. The recognition of Jesus' Lordship, which we find in the early letters, involved that His claim to supremacy over all other powers in the Universe would be asserted as soon as challenged. To the modern man, to whom nature means much more than grace, a cosmic function may appear greater than Saviourhood, but we may be sure that for Paul Saviourhood was the ultimate fact about Christ, and to that all other assertions made in its defence against all rival claims were sub-

ordinate. In *2 Corinthians* viii. 9, we have a pregnant Christological statement, of which *Philippians* ii. 5-11 is but a development. Paul's valuation of Christ did not alter, although error might lead him to be more explicit and emphatic at one time than another in expressing that value in doctrine. Still less did any Christological interest divert his mind from the soteriological. In *Philippians* iii. 1-16 we have in a description of his own experience a summary of the teaching of *Romans* and *Galatians*. One may venture the suggestion even that had it not been for the Colossian heresy, Paul's own interest would not have led him into these paths at all. (ii.) As regards what may be called the ecclesiastical interest, especially in *Ephesians*, while the vocabulary is borrowed from heresy, yet a real interest of Paul's finds expression. It is the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in Christ that is the surpassing glory of the Church of Christ, and is not this interest continuous with the soteriological in *Galatians* and *Romans*? The controversy that evoked the first, and has still its echoes in the second epistle was at an end when *Ephesians* was written; but had the controversy not ended in the emancipation of the Gentiles, for which these earlier epistles contended, this later epistle could not have presented to us a united Church as the body of the Lord. Of course Paul did learn from history; and he could in *Ephesians* conceive the Church of Christ as at an earlier stage in his career it was impossible for him to do; but in asserting the sufficiency of Christ for salvation to Jew and Gentile alike he was laying the foundation of his later doctrine. What has to be insisted on is that Paul did not add one doctrine to another, but that in his distinctive Gospel there was already implicit the moral and spiritual appreciation of Christ and His salvation which was on necessary occasions made more explicit now in one respect and then in another.

(6) We may for our purpose exclude the Pastoral Epistles from our consideration, as even if they are in their present form Paul's, they present to us no theological progress on his previous writings. If *Galatians* be the first and *Philippians* the last of the letters to be taken into account, if 1 and 2 *Thessalonians* present to us teaching specially adapted to the temporary and local circumstances, and if *Colossians* and *Ephesians* differ in their doctrine in form rather than in substance from Paul's other writings, we need not admit an evolution of Paul's Gospel. This does not mean that there was no progress in his religious life and thought, that Christ did not become to him always more precious as the object of his faith, hope, love, that he made no advance in moral insight and spiritual discernment as regards the contents and applications of his distinctive Gospel, but it does mean that the Gospel of free grace for faith alone was no temporary phase, but the constant element, and the most potent factor in his personal development. For this assertion we may now offer positive evidence. In the first place, Paul's own personality makes such an evolution of his Gospel improbable. Dr. Percy Gardner maintains that we must recognise in history "a great force, which is not, so far as we can judge, evolutionary, and the law of which is very hard to trace—the force of personality and character" (*A Historic View of the New Testament*, p. 13). [Not every personality advances by a gradual development; but there are personalities which we may describe as catastrophic or explosive rather than slowly progressive. On the crises in personal history Browning delights to dwell, and has well described such experiences in the lines—

"Oh we're sunk enough here God knows!
 But not quite so sunk that moments,
 Sure though seldom, are denied us,
 When the spirit's true endowments

Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing."

"There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honours perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse
Which for once had play unstified
Seems the sole work of a lifetime
That away the rest have trifled."

(Christina.)

If we consider the whole history of Paul as that is disclosed to us in his letters, are we not forced to the conclusion that his was a catastrophic or explosive rather than a slowly progressive personality? That he was converted from the persecutor to the preacher of the Gospel was not contradictory of, but consistent with his peculiar disposition and temperament. He was not melancholic or phlegmatic, but sanguine or choleric. So intense and passionate was he, that sudden and thorough change was characteristic of him. His conversion dominated his whole subsequent career. Sir William Ramsay well interprets the mind of Paul in words he, as it were, puts upon his lips. "In the divine reckoning my life begins from the conversion and call to the Gentiles. . . . If you would understand my life, you must refer every act in it to that primary revelation of the will of God in me" (*Historical Commentary on the Galatians*, p. 272). This applies to his ideas as well as his actions. His Gospel was included in his conversion, and it was his meditation that made explicit in doctrine what was thus implicit in experience. When did this explication take place?

(7) Assuming that the writings display an evolution of his Gospel, it must have been during his ministry that

he became more fully aware of what his conversion meant. The writer, however, is convinced that the explication took place soon after the conversion itself, probably before the ministry began. An intellect, acute and disciplined as was Paul's, could not have left the miracle and the mystery of his conversion unexplored. Truth had for him not a theoretical interest, but a practical. In the contrast between his experience as a Pharisee and his experience as a Christian resulting from his conversion, in which the old things had passed away, and all things had become new, he had the data for his distinctive Gospel, and his equipment and discipline as a Roman citizen and a Jewish scribe enabled him to elaborate the data as he did. It was not after his conversion that he acquired the Jewish learning or the Gentile culture that he possessed, but it was his at his conversion, available for an immediate application to the many questions which such an event at once started in so fertile and keen a mind. Doubtless it was in Arabia that he reached certainty and lucidity of conviction, and soon after his return he discovered that while in general agreement with the common teaching of the Christian Church, yet God had in a special way revealed His Son in him (*Galatians* i. 16), and that he had a Gospel which he could call his own, given him by God, and not by man. It was the possession of this distinctive Gospel which impelled him to become the Apostle of the Gentiles. If 1 and 2 *Thessalonians* had represented all his Gospel at the time, there would have been no reason in his convictions for his sense of a call of God to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. It is surely more reasonable to suppose that it was not in any mysterious impulse that he discovered his unique vocation, but that the Gospel implied in his conversion by its distinctive features was the urgent motive of his vocation.

(8) An examination of that Gospel supports the conclusion that it was all involved in his conversion. His sense of moral helplessness and hopelessness, as expressed in *Romans vii.*, was his before his conversion, and prepared him for it. The impotence of the law to make man righteous before God, while pronouncing the condemnation of the sinner, and even by its restraints provoking to sin, had been discovered by him as a Pharisee seeking peace for his soul by entire obedience. The Resurrection, of which the appearance to him brought him absolute certainty, compelled him to recognise Jesus as Messiah, and the confession of the Messiahship made imperative an explanation of the death by crucifixion consistent with the Messianic dignity. In such statements as that what the law could not do because of its weakness, Christ had done (*Romans viii. 3*), or that God made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us (*2 Cor. v. 21*), or that He became a curse (*Gal. iii 13*), we have surely the answer Paul gave to his own questionings regarding the meaning of the Messiah's death. This salvation as apart from the law impotent to save dethroned that law from its authority over the sinner's soul. And with the abrogating of the law for the believer the barrier between Jew and Gentile fell. The pardon of his guilt, and the power of his renewal which Paul had found in living fellowship with Christ belonged to the early days of his experience. There is nothing in the context of his distinctive Gospel, as presented in *Galatians, Romans* and *Philippians iii.*, which cannot be thus shown as implicit in his conversion and capable of such explication as he has given to it by the resources at his command at the beginning of his career. Before he began his ministry as the Apostle to the Gentiles, he was possessed of the distinctive Gospel that was his impulse to it, and his warrant for it.

(9) An examination of the relevant dates supports this conclusion. Between the conversion and the first missionary journey a period of about fifteen years elapsed ; between the first missionary journey and the final visit to Jerusalem a period of about nine years ; yet during the first period we are asked to believe (in the common assumption of an evolution of Paul's Gospel within the writings we possess) that Paul practically made no advance beyond the common Christian tradition, the eschatological teaching of 1 and 2 *Thessalonians*, whereas during the second he advanced from this position to his distinctive Gospel in *Romans*. Is a man between thirty and forty-five, just after an experience which transformed his whole inner world, more likely to have advanced theologically, or a man between forty-five and fifty-five subject to a constant strain of travel, labour, and service? Between *Romans* and *Ephesians* only about five years at most can have elapsed, and Paul was then a man over fifty. Can any marked change of theological view at that age in so short a time without any inward crisis which would compel reconsideration of long-held convictions, be regarded as at all probable? In dealing with Paul's letters we may conclude that we must recognise differences due to his adaptation of his message to local and temporary conditions and necessities, but it is not possible to distinguish successive stages of theological development, or to demonstrate any evolution of his Gospel.

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