

And proclaim the praise of His Spirit  
 And remove the filth from your face.  
 Love His holiness and clothe yourself with it  
 And ye shall be without blemish for ever with Him.

There is clearly a Philonic parallel to this, which is equally interesting and characteristic. Speaking of the hallowing effect which is sometimes produced by "the migration" of the soul from the body in dreams, Philo says: "Looking fixedly (*ἀφορῶν*) on Truth as at a *mirror*, having *removed-the-filth* (*ἀπορρυψάμενος*) from the things derived from the phantasies of the senses, the soul *receives*, by the divine indwelling, *an impress* from the truthful divination as to the future through dreams."<sup>1</sup>

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#### DID PAUL COMMEND HIS GOSPEL?

(1) NOT only did Jesus teach that the tree is known by its fruits, that creed is tested by character, but Paul himself submitted his own apostolate to the test that his converts were living epistles, read and known of all men. We prove Paul's Gospel as he would have desired that it should be proved by the testimony of his own character. Did he in word and deed commend his Gospel? In answering this question we must avoid two extremes. Paul's apostolate has on the one hand led many Christian scholars to substitute indiscriminating panegyric for a judicious estimate, and to resent even the suggestion that Paul was a man of like passions with ourselves, and had not already attained, nor was already perfect. It is certain that Paul himself would not have welcomed such flattery. Antagonism to Paul's Gospel has on the other hand led some scholars to an unqualified depreciation, to an exaggera-

<sup>1</sup> *De migratione Abr.* 34.

tion of the influence of his Pharisaism and Rabbinism on the substance and the exposition of his Christian belief, to an unwarranted emphasis on the abnormal features of his Christian experience in order to discredit the significance and value of that experience as a whole, to a failure to realise the essential greatness of the man, whether his Gospel be accepted or rejected. The purpose of this article is not to write a literary appreciation, but to give as accurate a psychological analysis of the personality of Paul as the data afforded by his letters will allow.

(2) As Paul was a Jewish scribe before he became a Christian preacher, we must first of all recognise and estimate him as a *scholar*. In a previous contribution the writer has endeavoured to show that he was not influenced by the Graeco-Roman environment of his early years to the extent that some scholars have tried to make out; but that his contact with this wider civilisation and culture did, when once he had escaped the bondage of his Pharisaism, impart a greater breadth to his intellectual outlook and personal sympathies than would have been probable in a Palestinian Jew. His scholarship was in the main Rabbinic: and his Gospel was, and could not avoid being, affected by his previous training. Not only had he as a Pharisee worked out in his own experience the inefficiency of the law for the life of the soul in God, but his knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, and his mastery of the scribal methods of interpretation enabled him to give a scriptural basis to his argument for the sole sufficiency of grace. It is the living experience that now appeals to us, and there is much in the argument that appears strange to our modes of thought; but it was of the utmost importance in the controversy of the apostolic age that the claim of emancipation was advocated by one who was so fully equipped with the weapons which the opponents

of the cause wielded, and who could use the weapons more effectively than they could. To the writer there seems to be very much in the late Dr. Bruce's suggestion that the gracious invitation of Matthew xi. 28-30 was addressed to such as Paul, because Jesus had a longing for disciples who were not in the matters of the mind and the soul "babes," but who, while "wise and prudent," were yet saved from Pharisaic self-satisfaction by having found the higher life both a labour and a burden, and to whom He could impart a deeper satisfaction than the "babes" were able to receive. As the scholar Paul brought more questions to, and so found more answers in, the Gospel of Jesus. It is interesting in this respect to compare Paul and John. John is a thinker, but not a scholar. His reference to the Logos in the prologue of his Gospel does not prove any minute knowledge of any current system of philosophy, and the rest of the Gospel is evidence of spiritual meditation rather than scholarly resource. By reflexion a comparatively few ideas are presented in varying aspects, and manifold relations. There is nothing like the wealth of knowledge or thought that we find in Paul's letters. Paul's scholarship is worth insisting on as, while scholarship by itself without moral effort and religious aspiration will not make the religious genius, and not even fit a man to be an influential teacher in the things of God, yet on the other hand it is a fact of significance that the Christian faith did gain possession of a mind so richly endowed as was Paul's, and that it was commended and defended so effectively by abounding learning of the age.

(3) The scholar is not often the man of affairs; but in Paul there was the combination of qualities. Sir William Ramsay has so fully dealt with Paul as the *statesman* that little need be said to prove this claim. As Roman

citizen he was led to recognise more clearly than any other Christian leader of the age the opportunity that the Roman Empire offered for the spread of the Gospel, and to make use more fully of the security and the facility of travel and intercourse that it afforded. Yet not every Roman citizen had so wide a vision of the Roman Empire as God's preparation for the Church of Christ on earth : and thus that fact alone does not account for Paul's aspiration and achievement. But this is not the only instance of what we may without exaggeration call statesmanship of the highest order. Surely the conviction for which he had to wage so severe a conflict, that the Gentile must not have the burden of the Jewish law imposed upon him, is also proof of practical genius. When the emancipation of the Gentiles was secured, does not the same excellence appear in his organisation of the churches he founded, and in the means he took for maintaining unity of spirit and purpose in these churches, and still more in his zealous endeavour to bring Jew and Gentile into the one body of Christ, the middle wall of partition having been removed in His cross ? In *Ephesians* we have an ideal of the Christian Church, the motive of Paul's labours and sacrifice, which has not yet been realised.

(4) Of this practical genius of Paul another instance may be found in his treatment of the questions of morals that were submitted to him. We may call him a *sage* as well as a statesman and a scholar. He had the practical reason of Kant, the Christian conscience enlightened and quickened by the Spirit of God, in eminent degree. The virtue of wisdom was richly bestowed on him ; it was indeed the philosopher of Plato's ideal who guided the churches he had founded in their practical affairs. We may illustrate this quality of Paul in his treatment of two difficult questions, the exercise of the spiritual gifts in the

church at Corinth, and the relation of the "weak" and the "strong" brethren in the church at Rome. Not only does he in 1 Corinthians xii. anticipate the modern conception of human society as organic, as a living body of which the members discharge different functions, and so must be mutually dependent, but in the following chapter he formulates the ultimate principle of all Christian morality not only with the wisdom of the philosopher, but with the beauty of the poet. In treating narrow scruples in Romans xiv. and pleading for consideration from those who do not share them he asserts the complementary moral principles of individual liberty and mutual responsibility. We have in the letter to Philemon the wisdom that discerns and claims the recognition of the worth of the slave even as the Christian brother, combined with the prudence that does not attempt the overthrow of the institution of slavery. It is possible, we must admit, that Paul's dealing with this institution as he did was less due to prudence, the quality which we now discover in his action, than to his detachment from the existing order of society by reason of his absorption of interest and desire in that Kingdom of God, the establishment of which on earth he anticipated ere long at Christ's Second Advent. In some minds such an expectation produced, as we see in the epistles to the Thessalonians, an impatience with and a revolt against the present conditions that were a peril to the influence of the church in the world, and we may in contrast lay stress on the sobriety of Paul in regard to human institutions. Paul is worthy of the highest honour as a sage when he deals with morality, but there is a lower realm of human conduct where casuistry tries to lay down precise rules of behaviour, and here one cannot but recognise that Paul is not so successful. Undoubtedly it was prudent in the society in which the Christian Church had to bear

its testimony that the women should not assert the spiritual liberty they had won in Christ by too rash a disregard of social conventions in appearing in public unveiled, or in speaking in the congregation, and we may even now endorse Paul's counsels of expediency; but the arguments Paul uses to support his commands betray the Jewish scribe rather than the Christian apostle. His views on marriage too as expressed in 1 *Corinthians* do not rise to the height of the Christian ideal, as do his exhortations in *Ephesians*. But it would be unreasonable to expect that even one so great as Paul should at once rise above all his limitations.

(5) But in the scholar, the statesman, and the sage, we have not what is most distinctive of Paul. We must think of him as the *seer*, to whom the supersensible, the spiritual and the divine was a reality, of the glory of which he did not catch glimpses only now and then, but which we may claim was the light of all his seeing, a splendour that fell on his daily path. We need not now dwell on those charisms, of which only when driven by calumny and depreciation he boasted, and yet felt himself foolish in boasting (2 Cor. xii.)—his speaking with tongues (ecstatic utterances), his "visions and revelations," his trances, in which he seemed to himself transported into Paradise. To us now these abnormal accompaniments of intense religious emotion do not appear as valuable as they appeared to Paul's contemporaries; and it is not of any of these experiences we think when we speak of him as a seer. It is surely a proof of Paul's own spiritual discernment that he assigned to all these charisms a subordinate place, and that he recognised, as he does in verse 7, the spiritual peril of being "exalted above measure" that their possession involved. While we cannot now in our estimate of Paul lay any stress on these gifts, yet

we must not make the opposite mistake of assuming that Paul was spiritually abnormal, not to say morbid, and that therefore his vision of the invisible is to be discredited. His "visions and revelations" do not deprive of its supreme significance the appearance of Christ to him on the way to Damascus, which changed him from the persecutor to the apostle. The way in which he appeals to this incident as the seal of his apostleship forbids our regarding it as no more objective than were these other experiences. That an objective reality was then manifested to him alone explains not only his conversion, but his subsequent course also. What gives him his place as the seer is his vivid and intense realisation of the presence of Christ with himself. One cannot read his letters without being brought as directly into the presence of the Christ of faith as the Gospels bring us into the presence of the Jesus of history. Paul impresses us as an eye-witness, if the paradox may be excused, of the invisible Saviour and Lord. To him the supersensible has the reality of the sensible, and is even more dominant in his life. As he himself confesses "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18). While for Paul the light and heat of the eternal realm are as it were focussed in the Christ, whom he so clearly perceived in spiritual vision and communion, yet this capacity is of still wider range. He always visualises the invisible. We may call it imagination if we will so long as we do not understand by that any fiction; but for Paul spiritual reality is not abstract as it is for most men, but concrete. In his conception of the Church in *Ephesians* he makes us see reality; so also of the last things he has not an idea but an image. So real to him is Christ, and all Christ brings with Him, that he has a distinct and

certain perception of that which to most men is little more than conjecture.

This characteristic of Paul has often been called his mysticism ; but it is undesirable that a word so ambiguous in its meaning as currently used, and having in its stricter historical sense such misleading associations, should be employed in this connexion. For there are two features of Paul's spiritual vision of and communion with Christ that distinguish his experience from such as may be properly called mystical. On the one hand his experience depended on history, and on the other hand it issued in character. For Paul the Christ of faith was identical with the Jesus of history. It may be that Paul was not much interested in the details of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus, although even that is by no means certain ; but there can be no doubt or question that he believed in a revelation of God and a redemption of man in facts of time, and not merely in eternal ideas and ideals. That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4), is the historic reality on which rested his experience. His union with Christ was not merely contemplation of, and satisfaction in Him, but moral transformation. His crucifixion and his resurrection with Christ were the two aspects of the new creation which in Christ he experienced—his dying unto sin, and his living unto God. If this be mysticism, then all deep and strong Christian life is mystical.

(6) As has just been indicated, Paul the seer was also Paul the *saint*. It is certain that Paul himself would not have welcomed the title saint as conferred on him by the Catholic Church, for on the one hand it distinguishes him from his Christian brethren as he was far too great to desire to be distinguished, and on the other hand it



includes him in a company in which for the most part he would not have felt at home. To saintship in this artificial use of the word he would have made no claim. When, however, we call him saint we must use the term with a fuller meaning than when Paul himself addresses all believers as called to be saints, for we do gratefully and admiringly recognise that he realised that ideal to a degree that few others have attained. To call him a saint is not, however, to assert his sinlessness. It shows no lack of reverence for his greatness and his goodness, but is the tribute that even in estimating the hero or the saint we ought to pay to truth, to admit that he was a man of a fiery temper, which on occasion blazed with a scorching heat (1 Cor. v. 5, xvi. 22; Gal. i. 8, v. 12; Phil. iii. 2; Acts xxiii. 3), that he asserted his own qualifications as an apostle with a confidence for which he himself makes an apology (2 Cor. xii. 7); that he did not place himself at the point of view of those with whom he was engaged in controversy, and so failed to do justice to their position or to recognise their difficulties; that he felt that he himself ran the risk of undue severity in demanding the punishment of a wrong-doer (2 Cor. ii. 5-11); that in dealing with some practical questions his inherited prejudices got the better of his Christian enlightenment (1 Cor. xi. 1-16); that he did not show his usual courage or faith in agreeing to the compromise with Jewish prejudices proposed to him on his last visit to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 23-26), or in playing on the rivalry of Sadducees and Pharisees in the Council (xxiii. 6). It is true that Paul was exposed to exceptional provocation, that in defending himself as an apostle he was contending for his Gospel and the freedom of the Gentile churches; that his opponents were most unscrupulous in their methods of undermining his authority, and appeared to him to challenge what was most essential

in his Christian faith; that interests, for which he was willing to lay down his life, were at stake; that when he came to Jerusalem he was anxious at any cost to conciliate the Jewish Christians, and to realise his ideal of a Christian Church in which Jew and Gentile should be one in Christ—all this must in fairness be argued. In such a situation, amid such difficulties and perplexities, with so great perils and antagonisms, we should probably marvel rather that Paul bore himself with a self-control which was so seldom broken down. But the instances we have noted show clearly that his was not that good-nature, in which control of temper is no virtue, but rather a passionateness of disposition which only a strong will reinforced by abounding grace could subdue.

(7) There is one question regarding the character of Paul which, however uninviting, cannot, in such an estimate of his personality, be passed over in silence. With Paul's doctrine of the *flesh* we are not at present concerned, but Dr. Bruce has suggested that Paul's use of this term for sin may be due to his own liability to the temptation of sensuality. (THE EXPOSITOR, Fourth Series, volume ix. pp. 190, 191.) If in Romans vii. 7-25, Paul is describing his own inward struggle before his conversion, as is almost certain, and if, as is probable, we should render *ἐπιθυμῆσεις* by "lust" rather than "covet," if further in 1 Corinthians ix. 27 he is referring to an asceticism which for his own safety he continued even after his conversion, then much can be said in support of this view. Even if animal appetite was naturally strong in him, he retained self-mastery, and thus the excellence of his character is enhanced by the strength of the temptations he resisted and overcame. And can there be any doubt that this form of temptation is more likely to assail the man of intense emotion and passionate affection as Paul was? His letters palpitate

with feeling. Many instances could be given of the sudden changes of his moods ; but 2 Corinthians best serves as an illustration. He was utterly cast down by the troubles and perils of the church in Corinth, where his authority had been defied, and probably he had himself been personally insulted (ii. 5-11); to quote his own description, " we were weighed down exceedingly beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life " (i. 8). But when Titus brought the good news that the church had been won back to its loyalty, he at once exults with joy ; the relief to him was like a resurrection from the dead. " Thanks be unto God, which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savour of His knowledge in every place " (ii. 14).

This intensity of his emotions made his changeful experience a blended tragedy and triumph. " We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves ; we are pressed on every side, yet not straitened ; perplexed, yet not unto despair ; pursued, yet not forsaken ; smitten down, yet not destroyed ; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body " (iv. 7-10). That Paul suffered much from bodily weakness and pain as well as from the perils of his journeys, the weariness of his labours and the persecution of his foes is certain. Whatever his " stake in the flesh " may have been, it caused him acute misery (xii. 7). The intensity of his emotional life makes it all the more wonderful that he fought his fight, finished his course and kept his faith as he did (2 Tim. iv. 7).

Closely allied with his intense emotion was his passionate affection. How great he was in loving appears not only in 1 Corinthians xiii., the perfect hymn of love, but in every one of his letters. In 2 Corinthians we have the passion

of wounded affection; in *Philippians* the praise of a love that was satisfied. The anger of *Galatians* is love enflamed by solicitude for its beloved. The personal greetings and commendations in the epistles show the discrimination of a tender and great heart. What gracious courtesy and consideration of love for slave and master alike pervades the epistle to *Philemon*. This love was always desiring, praying for, and seeking to bestow only the highest, the life in Christ, on all who were its care. It was willing to win blessing for others by sacrifice of self. "Yea, and if I am offered (Gr. poured out as a drink offering) upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all, and in the same manner do ye also joy and rejoice with me" (Phil. ii. 17-18). Gentleness, tenderness, forbearance, and forgiveness—love's manifold graces are found in him.

(8) Such emotionalism and affectionateness are often regarded as signs of effeminacy rather than as accompaniments of virility. But Paul was as strong and brave as he was full of feeling and love. His conflict with the Judaisers for the freedom of the Gentiles, his assertion of his authority in Galatia and in Corinth, when its overthrow meant the abandonment of the Gospel, his quiet and steadfast endurance of all the perils and persecutions that his ministry involved, his readiness to face the raging mob in Ephesus (Acts xix. 30), his self-command in his several trials (xxii.-xxvi.), his own calmness and power to inspire confidence in others on board ship (xxvii.) all show the man of heroic mould. Just because his temptations were so keen, his experiences so trying, his emotions so lively, and his affections so intense, does his self-mastery in his self-surrender to Christ in the fulfilment of his calling show a strength of will that is the glory of his manhood. It would be difficult indeed to conceive a stronger or braver man.

(9) Yet in Paul we see more than the glory of manhood ; there is in him the glory that excelleth of the grace of God. It is his absorption in, and submission to Jesus Christ that gives him the place he holds in the Christian Church. In his humility he describes himself as " chief of sinners " and " least of saints," and " not meet to be called an apostle," because his standard of judgment is not his fellowmen, but Christ Himself. We may call him scholar, statesman, sage, seer, saint, but his proudest title is slave of Jesus Christ. The soul's last peril in its moral progress is self-sufficiency. Pharisaism is the sin that dogs the steps of piety and morality. To be satisfied with one's own goodness is its defeat in the moment of victory. From this Paul was saved by his clear vision of, his close communion with, and his complete surrender to Christ. At the height of his soul's achievement he rested not in his own greatness, but was caught up into the surpassing grace of Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

(10) With confidence we can answer " Yes " to the question, Does Paul commend his Gospel ? It is needful to put the question, and to give the answer. To Paul's conviction of man's insufficiency in himself, and his need of depending on divine grace there is to-day opposed a tendency to the subtle form of Pharisaism, in which man feels himself satisfied in his own sufficiency. Professor McGiffert gives as an instance of " the vicious consequences of universalising an individual experience " the statement, " Because one man feels his need of divine grace, therefore all men must need it ; or because one man feels sufficient unto himself, therefore all men are " (*Protestant Thought before Kant*, p. 253 note). He seems to regard both statements as equally legitimate within proper limits. But it can be said without hesitation that the first is the Christian view, and the second the Pharisaic. There can be no

doubt that Paul would have regarded dependence on divine grace as the truth for all, and self-sufficiency as error for all who cherished it. When we consider what he became by the grace of God, by dependence and not self-sufficiency, we may surely conclude that his message is one not only for men constituted as he himself was, but for all men, so that they may accomplish more than man's unaided effort can, and may find as he did that he could do all things, Christ strengthening him.

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### *STUDIES IN CONVERSION.*

#### IV. JOHN BUNYAN.

CONVERSION may be said to consist in the seeking and the finding of the Saviour. Both of these may synchronize or nearly so; but they may also be separated by a wide interval. The seeking of the Saviour may last a long time, before He is found; and this interval may be one of pain and even agony. In such delay there is always an element of stupidity and unbelief, because the Saviour is waiting to be gracious. Yet there may, at the same time, be a providential reason. A prolonged and painful period of seeking may leave marks of various kinds on subsequent experience, of some of which notice will be taken in the present study; but the principal result designed invariably is to deepen the sense of sin and to render more complete the breach with a life of transgression.

In the Puritan Period there was so much frankness in the expression of religious feeling, not only among the Roundheads but also among the Cavaliers, that records of conversion from that time might have been expected to be numerous; and not a few anecdotes, bearing on the