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for these thick walls. There is no room for further discussion until M. Naville concedes that the extreme unlikelihood of a sign-post in letters, words and measurements not understood of the people, conveying a very slender amount of information as to a singularly unimportant fact, may have found its way into his excavations at a somewhat later period than that in which Greek was the current European tongue of Northern Egypt.

His arguments from Pithom, and the inscription of Ptolemy Philadelphus are challenged by the opinion of the Jews of the twelfth century, as recorded by R. Benjamin. There were hundreds of shrines to the god of the setting sun. His "recorders" may have lived at "Thuku," but the immense breadth of inference gives a result resembling an inverted pyramid, to whose position of unstable equilibrium any number of objections can be taken with fatal effect.

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

### XI. WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

WE have now gained a tolerably definite view of St. Paul's way of conceiving the good that came to the world through Jesus Christ, that is to say, of his soteriological system of ideas. Our next task, in order, must be to make ourselves acquainted with the apologetic buttresses of that system. The Pauline apologetic, as we have already learned, relates to three topics: ethical interests, the true function of the law, and the prerogatives of Israel. We have now therefore to consider in detail what the apostle had to say on each of these topics in succession, and the value of his teaching as a defence against possible attacks in any of these directions.

The first of the three is a wide theme, and in the highest

degree important. In reference to every religion it is a pertinent and fundamentally important question: What guarantees does it provide for right conduct? No religion has a right to take offence at such a question, or to claim exemption from interrogation on that score. Least of all Pauline Christianity, for, while Christianity as taught by Christ is conspicuously ethical in its drift, the same faith as presented by St. Paul seems on the face of it to be religious or even theological rather than ethical, so that the question as to moral tendency is in this case far from idle or impertinent. The point raised, it will be observed, does not concern the personal relation of the teacher to morality, about which there is no room for doubt, but the provision he has made in his doctrinal system for an interest which he obviously feels to be vital. Theoretic failure is quite conceivable even in the case of one who has a burning passion for righteousness.

Paulinism offers two guarantees for holiness in the Christian: the moral dynamic of faith, and the influence of the Holy Ghost. These therefore we shall consider, each in a separate chapter, with a view to ascertain their efficiency, and how they arise out of the system.

Despite the most circumspect theoretic provision, it is a familiar experience that the reality of conduct falls far below the ideal. The Christian religion is no exception to this observation, and the devout soul may well be moved to ask, Why, with such guarantees as the above named, should it be so? The question did not escape Paul's attention, and his thoughts about it shall be gathered together under the head of the *Flesh as a hindrance to holiness*.

It will help us to understand the apostle's doctrine on these three themes if in a preliminary chapter we endeavour to ascertain what was the precise relation in his mind between the two sides of his soteriology as set forth in *Romans* i.-v. on the one hand, and in *Romans* vi.-viii. on

the other. It is a question as to the connection in the apostle's thought between the objective and the subjective, the ideal and the real, the religious and the moral. This topic forms the subject of the present paper.

On this question, then, various views may be and have been entertained.

1. The crudest possible solution of the problem would be to find in the two sections of the Epistle to the Romans two incompatible theories of salvation, the forensic and the mystical, the latter cancelling or modifying the former as found, on second thoughts, to be unsatisfactory and inadequate. This hypothesis, though not without advocates,<sup>1</sup> can hardly commend itself on sober reflection. That St. Paul, like other thinkers, might find it needful to modify his views, and even to retract opinions discovered to be ill founded, is conceivable. But we should hardly look for retractations in the same writing, especially in one coming so late in the day. It may be taken for granted that the apostle was done with his experimental or apprentice thinking in theology before he indited the Epistle to the Romans, and that when he took his pen in hand to write that letter, he was not as one feeling blindly his way, but knew at the outset what he meant to say. He had thought out by that time the whole matter of objective and subjective righteousness; and if he keep the two apart in his treatment, it is not tentatively and provisionally, but as believing that each represents an important aspect of truth.

2. We may go to the opposite extreme, and find in the two sections not two incompatible theories, one superseding the other, not even two distinct while compatible aspects, but one train and type of thought running through the

<sup>1</sup> Ritschl's treatment of Paul's view in *Die Entstehung der Altkatholischen Kirche*, 2te Aufl., looks in this direction; vide pp. 87-90. Vide also his more recent work, *Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, ii. p. 224.

whole. And as the two parts of the Epistle certainly seem to speak in different dialects, it comes to be a question of interpreting either in terms of the other by ingenious exegesis. Which of the two apparently different types of thought is to be resolved into the other will depend on the interpreter's theological bias. One would gladly find in St. Paul's writings everywhere, and only, objective righteousness; another welcomes not less eagerly whatever tends to prove that subjective righteousness is the apostle's great theme. The latter bias, a natural reaction against the former, is the one most prominent in modern theology. Those under its influence read the doctrine of *Romans* vi.-viii. into *Romans* i.-v., and find in the Epistle one uniform doctrine of justification by faith as the promise and potency of personal righteousness, and one doctrine of atonement, not by substitute but by *sample*, Christ becoming a redeeming power in us through our mystic fellowship with Him in His life, death, and resurrection. Reasons have already been given why this view cannot be accepted.<sup>1</sup>

3. In the two foregoing hypotheses an earlier type of thought is sacrificed for a later either by St. Paul himself or by his modern interpreter. A third conceivable attitude towards the problem is that of sturdily refusing assent to either of these modes of dealing with it, and insisting that the two aspects of Pauline teaching shall be allowed to stand side by side, both valid, yet neither capable of explaining, any more than of being explained into, the other. One occupying this attitude says in effect: I find in the Epistle to the Romans a doctrine of gratuitous justification, to the effect that God pardons man's sin, and regards him as righteous, out of respect to Christ's atoning death. I find also, further on in the same Epistle, a doctrine of regeneration or spiritual renewal, to the effect that a man who believes in Christ, and is baptized into Him, dies to the

<sup>1</sup> Vide THE EXPOSITOR for August.

old life of sin, and rises to a new life of personal righteousness. These two things, justification and regeneration, are two acts of Divine grace, sovereign and independent. The one does not explain or guarantee the other. There is no nexus between them other than God's gracious will. Whom He justifies He regenerates, and that is all that can be said on the matter. There is no psychological bond insuring, or even tending to insure, that the justified man shall become a regenerate or righteous man. Faith is not such a bond. Faith's action is confined to justification; it has no proper function in regeneration; here baptism takes the place which faith has in justification.

4. So purely external a view of the relation between justification and regeneration, as handled in the Pauline literature, is not likely to be accepted as the last word, though spoken by a master of biblical theology, even by his most admiring of disciples. Accordingly, a fourth attitude falls to be discriminated; that recently taken up by Dr. Stevens, in his excellent work on *The Pauline Theology*, who in many respects is a follower of Dr. Weiss, the chief exponent of the theory stated in the foregoing paragraph. The basis of the view espoused by this writer is the distinction between *form* and *essence* in Pauline thought. He holds that in form St. Paul's conception of justification is forensic, and that any attempt to eliminate this aspect from his system must be regarded as an exegetical violence. As a mere matter of historical exegesis, it is beyond doubt that he taught the doctrine of an objective righteousness. But this does not preclude the question, What is the eternal kernel of truth enclosed in this Jewish shell? The kernel the author referred to finds in the mystic doctrine of *Romans* vi.-viii. "In chapter iv. he (Paul) develops the *formal* principle of salvation, which is justification by faith, treated in a forensic manner in accord with prevailing Jewish conceptions; in chapters v., vi., and viii. he unfolds the real

principle of salvation, which is moral renewal through union with Christ. The first argument is designed to parry a false theory, and meets that theory on its own juristic plane of thought; the second exposition is adapted to the edification and instruction of believers, and, mounting up into the spiritual realm, deals with the moral and religious truths, processes, and forces which are involved in justification."<sup>1</sup> The writer of these sentences, it seems to me, makes the mistake of imputing to St. Paul a distinction which exists only for the modern consciousness. It is one thing to insist on the need, and claim the right, to interpret Pauline forms of thought into eternally valid truth; quite another to ascribe to St. Paul our view of what is form and what essence. For the apostle, objective righteousness was more than a form, it was a great essential reality; not a mere symbol of a higher truth, but an important member of the organism of Christian truth; not a mere controversial weapon, but a doctrine in which his own heart found satisfaction.

None of the foregoing hypotheses can be accepted as a satisfactory account of the way in which the two aspects of St. Paul's soteriology were connected in his mind. How, then, are we to conceive the matter? Perhaps we shall best get at the truth by trying to imagine the psychological history of the apostle's thought on these themes. The first great stage in the process would be connected with his never-to-be-forgotten escape from *legalism* to a religion of faith in God's grace. What would be the attitude of his mind at that crisis? One of blissful rest in the ideal of righteousness as realized in Christ: "I have failed, but He has succeeded, and I am righteous in Him." That thought would undoubtedly give his eager spirit rest for a season. But only for a season. For the imperious hunger of the soul for righteousness is still there, and no mere pardon, or

<sup>1</sup> *The Pauline Theology*, p. 275.

acceptance as righteous through faith, will satisfy permanently its longings. And as soon as the convert discovers that he has not yet attained, the cry will awake in his conscience, How shall I become all I ought and desire to be? It is not, like the old cry, "Oh, wretched man that I am," a despairing exclamation. It is the voice of Christian aspiration uttered in good hope, grounded on the consciousness of spiritual forces actually at work within the soul. What are these? There is faith incessantly active about Christ, constantly thinking of Him as crucified and risen, winding itself about Him, and extracting nourishment from every known fact in His earthly history. And there is the Holy Ghost, about whose mighty working in believers one living in those days could not fail to hear. How He revealed Himself in St. Paul's consciousness as a factor making for Christian holiness, distinct from faith, is a question that need not here be considered. Suffice it to say that, judging from his writings, the Spirit of Jesus did not leave Himself without a witness in his religious experience. These were two potent forces at work within him, filling him with high hope. But, alas, not they alone; along with them worked a sinister influence, seeming to have its seat in the *flesh*, possessing potency sufficient to disturb spiritual serenity, cloud hope, and introduce a tragic element of sadness into the new life. Here were conflicting forces supplying food for reflection: faith, the spirit, the flesh. How were those facts of the Christian consciousness to be formulated and correlated? The apostle's mind would not be at rest till it had got a way of thinking on these matters, and the results of his meditations, more or less protracted, lie before us in *Romans* vi.-viii., and in some other places in his Epistles. They consist of his doctrine of faith as a spiritual force, his doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the immanent source of Christian holiness, and his doctrine of the flesh as the great obstructive to holiness.



From the foregoing ideal history, it follows that St. Paul's doctrine of subjective righteousness, its causes and hindrances, was of later growth than his doctrine of objective righteousness. This was only what was to be expected. God does not reveal all things at once to truth-seeking spirits. He sends forth light to them just as they need it. Inspirations come piecemeal, in many parts and in many modes, to apostles as to prophets. System-builders may throw off a whole body of "divinity" at a sitting, but in a scheme of thought so originating there is little of the divine. The true divine light steals upon the soul like the dawn of day, the reward of patient waiting. So St. Paul got his doctrine of righteousness, not complete at a stroke, but in successive vistas answering to pressing exigencies. The doctrine of objective righteousness met the spiritual need of the conversion crisis; the doctrine of subjective righteousness came in due season to solve problems arising out of Christian experience.

The two doctrines, when they had both been revealed, lived together peaceably in St. Paul's mind. The later did not come to cancel the earlier, or to put the Christian disciple out of conceit with his primitive intuitions. He conserved old views while gratefully welcoming the new. Why should he do otherwise? The two revelations served different purposes. They were not two incompatible answers to the same question, but compatible answers to two distinct questions. At his conversion, Saul, a despairing man, threw himself on the grace of God, crying, "God be merciful to me, the sinner, for Jesus Christ's sake," and in doing so found rest. On reflection this experience shaped itself intellectually into the doctrine of justification by faith: God regards as righteous any man, be he the greatest sinner, who trusts in His grace through Jesus Christ. At a later period, Paul, the believing man, on examining himself, discovered that what he had utterly failed to accomplish on

the method of legalism, he was now able approximately to achieve, the realization of the moral ideal even as interpreted by the Christian conscience, an ideal infinitely higher than the Pharisaic. The righteousness of the law, spiritualised and summed up in love, was actually being fulfilled in him. A marvellous contrast; whence came the striking moral change in the same man? The earlier question had been, How can I get peace of conscience in spite of failure? The question now is, Why is it that I no longer fail? how comes it that, notwithstanding my greatly increased insight into the exacting character of the Divine law, I have a buoyant sense of moral ability and victory? St. Paul sought and found the answer through observation of the forces which he perceived to be actually at work within him.

In making this statement I have answered by anticipation the question, Whence did St. Paul get the mystic element which formed the later phase in his composite conception of salvation as unfolded with exceptional fulness in the Epistle to the Romans? According to some he was indebted for this directly or indirectly to the Alexandrian Jewish philosophy. Certain modern theologians, while ascribing to him a preponderant influence in determining the character of Christianity, seem disposed to reduce his originality to a minimum. They will have it that in no part of his system was he much more than a borrower. He got his forensic doctrine of imputed righteousness from the Pharisaic schools and his mystic doctrine of imparted righteousness from Philo possibly, or more probably from the Hellenistic Book of Wisdom. So Pfeiderer, for example, in his *Urchristenthum*, and in the new edition of his *Paulinismus*. Men of sober judgment will be very slow to take up with such plausible generalizations. They rest upon an extremely slender basis of fact, and they are *a priori* improbable. That St. Paul, after he became a

Christian, wholly escaped from Rabbinical influence, I by no means assert; but I am very sceptical as to the wholesale importation into his system of Christian thought of the stock ideas of the theology of the Jewish synagogue. There is truth in the remark of Beyschlag, that it does too little honour to the creative power of the Christian spirit in St. Paul to lay so much stress on the points of resemblance between his views and the Pharisaic theology.<sup>1</sup> Still less justifiable is the hypothesis of dependence in reference to Hellenism. Even Pfeiderer admits that possibly St. Paul was not acquainted with Philo, and his contention is not that the apostle drew from the great Alexandrian philosopher, but from the Book of Wisdom, which is a literary product of the same Greek spirit. It is in the power of any one by perusal of the book to test the value of the assertion, and for myself I put it at a low figure. Speaking generally, I distrust this whole method of accounting for Paulinism by eclectic patchwork. It attaches far too much importance to contemporary intellectual environment, and far too little to the creative personality of the man. The true key to the Pauline theology is that personality as revealed in a remarkable religious experience. And if we are to go outside that experience in order to account for the system of thought, I should think it less likely to turn out a wild goose chase to have recourse to the Hebrew Scriptures, and especially to *the Apostolic Church*, than to the Jewish synagogue or the literature of Hellenism.

For, while the originality of St. Paul in his doctrines of faith and of the Holy Spirit is by all means to be insisted on, it is at the same time to be remembered that he did not need to be original in order to recognise the existence of faith and the Holy Spirit as real and potent factors in the Christian life. One could not live within the Church of the first generation without hearing much of faith as a great

<sup>1</sup> *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, vol. ii., p. 23.

spiritual force from the men who were acquainted with the tradition of Christ's teaching, and without witnessing remarkable phenomena which believers were in the habit of tracing to the mighty power of the Holy Ghost. Faith and the Divine Spirit were universally regarded in the primitive Church as *veræ causæ* within the spiritual sphere. This common conviction was a part of the inheritance on which St. Paul entered on becoming a Christian. His originality came into play in the development which the common conviction underwent in his mind. In his conception of the subtle, penetrating nature of faith and its irresistible vital power he distanced all his contemporaries. The *faith-mysticism* is all his own; there is nothing like it elsewhere in the New Testament. The Apostle Peter comes nearest to it when he exhorts Christians to arm themselves with the mind exemplified by Christ in suffering for men in the flesh.<sup>1</sup> But St. Peter's point of view is comparatively external. The suffering Christ is for him simply exemplary: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps."<sup>2</sup> There is no co-dying and co-rising here, as in the Pauline Epistles. So peculiar is this to them that it might be made the test of genuineness in reputedly Pauline literature. On this ground alone there is a strong presumption in favour of the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Colossians, wherein we find an exhortation to Christians who have risen with Christ to complete the process of mystic identification by ascending with Him to heaven.<sup>3</sup> If some unknown disciple of the Pauline School wrote the letter, he had caught the master's style very well, and had noted the faith-mysticism as specially characteristic. It is very doubtful if any imitation, conscious or unconscious, would have reproduced that trait. It was too peculiar, too poetic, too much the creation of individual idiosyncrasy. The ordinary man

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter iv. 1.<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter ii, 21.<sup>3</sup> Coloss. iii. 1.

would be afraid to meddle with it, and inclined to leave it alone, or to translate it into more prosaic and generally intelligible phraseology, like that in which St. Peter held up Jesus for imitation as the great exemplar.

For a similar reason it may be regarded as certain that St. Paul did not borrow the faith-mysticism from any foreign source. The mind which could not produce it would not borrow it. The presence of that element in St. Paul's letters is due to his religious genius. No other psychological explanation need be sought of his great superiority to his fellow writers of the New Testament as an assertor of faith's powers. He was a far greater man, incomparably richer in natural endowment, than Peter or James, or even than the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, though in some respects the latter excelled him. He was gifted at once with an original intellect, an extraordinary moral intensity, and a profoundly mystical religious temperament. To their united action we owe his doctrine of the believer's fellowship with Christ. As he states the doctrine, that fellowship was a source of ethical inspiration, and so doubtless it was; but it is equally true that it was an effect not less than a cause of exceptional moral vitality. St. Paul's whole way of thinking on the subject took its colour from his spiritual individuality. This does not mean that his views are purely subjective and personal, and of no permanent objective value to Christians generally. But it does imply this much, that the Pauline mysticism demands moral affinity with its author for due appreciation, and that there must always be many Christians to whom it does not powerfully appeal.

One point more remains to be considered, viz., the mode in which the two aspects of the apostle's double doctrine of righteousness are presented in his Epistles in relation to each other. There is no trace of the gradual development implied in the psychological history previously sketched

beyond the fact that the subjective aspect, the later, according to that history, in the order of development, comes second in the order of treatment, both in *Romans*, where it is handled at length, and in *Galatians*, where it is but slightly touched on. In both Epistles the doctrine of subjective righteousness is introduced with a polemical reference. In *Romans* it is set in opposition to the notion that reception of "the righteousness of God" by faith is compatible with indifference to personal holiness; in *Galatians* it is exhibited as the true method of attaining personal holiness as against a false method, which is declared to be futile. Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?<sup>1</sup> is the question to which the doctrine is an answer in the one case; shall we supplement faith in Christ by circumcision and kindred legal works? is the question to which it is an answer in the other.<sup>2</sup> Over against the patchwork programme of Judaistic Christianity the apostle sets the thorough-going self-consistent programme of a Christianity worthy of the name: "we in the spirit from faith wait for the hope of righteousness," where, as we shall see more fully hereafter, righteousness is to be taken *subjectively*, and the two great guarantees for the ultimate attainment of personal righteousness, faith, and the Spirit, are carefully specified. His whole doctrine of sanctification, as fully unfolded in the Epistle to the Romans, is contained in germ in this brief text in his earlier Epistle to the Galatians. As here stated, the Pauline programme is sanctification by faith not less than justification—faith good for all purposes, able to meet all needs of the soul.

In some respects the earlier formulation is to be preferred to the later. If briefer, it is also simpler, gives less the impression of abstruseness and elaboration, wears more the aspect of a really practicable programme. It makes

<sup>1</sup> *Rom.* vi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Gal.* v. 2-6.

Paulinism appear one uniform self-consistent doctrine of righteousness by faith, not as in *Romans*, on a superficial view at least, a doctrine of objective righteousness imputed to faith, supplemented by a doctrine of subjective righteousness wrought out in us by the joint operation of faith and the Holy Spirit. It addresses itself to a nobler state of mind, and moves on a loftier plane of religious feeling. St. Paul's ideal opponent in *Galatians* is a man who earnestly desires to be righteous in heart and life, and fails to see how he can reach that goal along the line of faith. In *Romans*, on the other hand, he is a man who conceives it possible to combine reception of God's grace with continuance in sin, and even to magnify grace by multiplying sin. Against the latter the apostle has to plead that his gospel is a way of holiness; against the former that it is the only true way to holiness. That it tends that way the legalist does not dispute; he only doubts its ability by itself to bring men to the desired end. Such an one an apostle may without loss of dignity seek to instruct. But how humiliating to argue with one who cares nothing for holiness, but only for pardon; and how vain! What chance of such an one understanding or sympathising with the mystic fellowship of faith with Christ? Is it not casting pearls before swine to expound the doctrine to so incapable a scholar? Perhaps, but St. Paul's excuse must be that he cannot bring himself to despair of any who bear the Christian name. He wishes to lead into the school of Jesus all who have believed in Him, whether they be honest but ill-instructed legalists, or low-minded sensualists. Therefore to the one class he says, "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing";<sup>1</sup> and to the other, "let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Gal.* v. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Rom.* vi. 12.