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*THE PAULINE "MYSTERY" IN THE  
APOCALYPSE.*

SINCE the days of Jerome the readers of the Apocalypse have consented to his verdict on the book. *Apocalypsis Johanni tot habet sacramenta quot verba* still echoes in every school of interpretation. Yet recent investigation has been marked by a real progress. Preterist and Futurist schemes, in their older forms, are gradually disappearing. The prophetic character of the work has not been depreciated by the assumption that the writer was chiefly occupied with the conditions of the church and the world, as they existed in his own time. It has been shown that he made free use of the apocalyptic literature which had absorbed the interest of the Jewish people for several generations. The Apocalypse of Baruch, the Book of Enoch, and other documents of the same class—all more or less dependent on the Book of Daniel—have furnished ample illustration of the literary relations of the book. The result is that the Johannine Apocalypse is becoming more intelligible, and more available for edification.

The critics, however, are not yet agreed about its author and its date. Was it of Jewish or of Gentile origin? What was its object, and what is the key to its interpretation? A vast literature has accumulated around these questions. The present essay will engage itself chiefly with an inquiry respecting the school of Christian thought out of which the book proceeded.

I.

Ferd. C. Baur, and his school, were persuaded that the work was a production of St. John the apostle, and that it fully presented his Jewish convictions and ideas. They contended that the writer repudiated St. Paul and exalted

the twelve apostles. They also maintained that the book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem : while the Fourth Gospel was of later date, and, on account of its doctrine and style, to be ascribed to another author.

It was not difficult for Ritschl to prove, in reply, that the eschatology, which these writers had referred to associations exclusively Jewish, was not without support in St. Paul's writings ; and that even its chiliasm was akin to that exhibited by Barnabas, Papias, Justin and Irenaeus, who were Gentile Christians.<sup>1</sup> The "Day of the Lord," the great apostasy, the "Man of Sin," the beast rising from the abyss, were all included in the apocalyptic programme which had been accepted by the Gentile churches. De Wette had also found in the greetings to the churches, and in other portions of the book, indications of acquaintance with the Pauline writings.<sup>2</sup> By subsequent writers the use of Pauline phraseology has been more fully demonstrated.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of authorities regard the Apocalypse as a Jewish-Christian work, and its first readers as a community impressed with the same characteristics. Dr. H. Porter, in the article cited in the note, is of opinion that "the question so vital to an understanding of the beginning of Christianity, whether the Christology and Soteriology of 'Revelation' are Pauline, or anti-Pauline, or independent of Paulinism, remains quite unanswered." In general, he agrees with Weizsäcker, who says : "This Jewish-Christianity is universal in tone, and free from the law, not in the Pauline way, but in its own."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Die Entstehung der alt-katholischen Kirche*, 1857, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> *Kurzgefasstes exeget. Handbuch*, 1854, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Holtzmann, *Einleitung in das N. T.*, 1886, p. 432. The eschatological relations of St. Paul are fairly exhibited in Dr. W. Lock's article on 2 Thess. in *Hastings' Bible Dict.* iv. 747 : also in Dr. Porter's *Revelation*, *ibid.* p. 239.

<sup>4</sup> Weizsäcker : *Das apostolische Zeitalter der christlichen Kirche*, 1886, p. 525.

He ventures, however, to locate the Fourth Gospel—the universalism of which he recognizes—in the church of Asia Minor, though that church was beset, as he alleges, with such a large share of Jewish propensities. Weizsäcker perceives no improbability in the assumption that the church from which Polycarp, Papias and Irenaeus received Christian teaching was “principally Jewish-Christian.” Justin, Melito. and Apollinaris (of Hierapolis) represent the traditions prevalent in the same interesting area; yet they were controversial in their anti-Judaism. Weizsäcker also conjectures—without substantial corroboration—that the Church founded by St. Paul at Ephesus had collapsed after his departure, and that a new church arose there, later in the century under the auspices of St. John.<sup>1</sup> The later Pauline epistles—including the *Pastoral*—give evidences of an extensive intrusion of false (Jewish) teachers on this ground, but they scarcely warrant the conclusion that a wholesale subversion had taken place. It was to the church at Ephesus that Ignatius wrote: “Ye are they who were initiated by Paul, that truly holy and blessed witness.”<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere, this friend of Polycarp says: “It is absurd to profess Christ and to Judaize.”<sup>3</sup> This does not suggest that any authorized re-establishment of Judaistic influences had been effected. Neither does the writer of the Apocalypse imply that the Ephesian church had improved through its “departure from St. Paul”: rather the contrary.<sup>4</sup> May we not also suppose that the public reading of St. Paul’s epistles, which had become customary in these churches,

<sup>1</sup> Weizsäcker, *ibid.* p. 500.

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Ephes.* xii.: The longer recension extends the reference: “The Christians of Ephesus always had intercourse with the apostles, Paul, John, and Timothy.” As Ignatius seems to know nothing about St. John in Asia, Dr. Ramsay (*Letters to the Seven Churches*, p. 241) suggests that he had not seen St. John’s letters.

<sup>3</sup> *Ad Magnes.* c. viii.

<sup>4</sup> *Rev.* ii. 4.

would prevent any such transformation as that which is alleged ?

There is also an important historical difficulty to be considered. The Asiatic churches acknowledged the authority of St. Paul and Timothy until A.D. 64, or perhaps later. If they came under the influence of St. John, subsequently, it must have been within the next ten years. Up to that time these churches would be predominantly Gentile in their sympathies. But St. John had been "a pillar" in the church at Jerusalem. With Peter he had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision. The New Testament gives no sign that he ever relinquished this office, or that he became an apostle to the Gentiles. By the time of Irenaeus (iii. 3, 4) a tradition had arisen to the effect that "the church in Ephesus, founded by St. Paul, had John among them permanently until the time of Trajan." Bousset (*Die Offenbarung Johanns*, p. 142) criticizes this tradition, and urges that Irenaeus confused John the Elder with John the Apostle. Dr. Swete (*Apocalypse of St. John*, p. clxxvi.) shows from the statements of Papias "a confusion between the Apostle and the Elder which may have existed even in the mind of Irenaeus." On this account Dr. Swete, while he adheres to the Johannean authorship of the Apocalypse, yet allows that it may be regarded as an open question. In like manner, the supposition that the churches in Asia had yielded their ancient Paulinism in favour of Judaic opinions and practice, lacks evidence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian everywhere asserts that the apostle John was the author of the Apocalypse: but his testimony rests upon current tradition. He reports the escape of St. John from a bath of boiling oil before his departure to Patmos (*De Praescript. Haeret.* xxvi.). He also depended upon the Apocalypse for his view of the succession of bishops from St. John (Tertull. c. *Marcion*, iv. 5).

## II.

It has been observed by critics, of almost every school, that the Apocalypse, notwithstanding many obvious differences of conception and style, betrays a literary kinship with the Johannine Gospel and Epistles. As it is without express quotation that the writer interweaves into his composition the language of the Old Testament, so, when he uses the phraseology of Paul or John, he is not constrained by the demands of literal exactness.

We may next inquire how far the writer of the Apocalypse shows himself to be acquainted with the doctrine and language of St. Paul. Holtzmann (*Einleitung*, p. 422) adduces several instances of resemblance. They are such as the forms of greeting (Rev. i. 4, xxii. 21; Phil. i. 2); "his God and Father" (Rev. i. 6; Rom. xv. 6); "the dead in Christ" (Rev. xiv. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 16); "to him that loved us" (Rev. i. 5; Gal. ii. 20); "every bondman and freeman" (Rev. vi. 15; Gal. iii. 28); "the new Jerusalem" (Rev. iii. 12; Gal. vi. 19); and "the firstborn of the dead" (Rev. i. 5; Col. i. 18).<sup>1</sup>

Another of these cognate expressions appears in Revelation iii. 7, where the writer speaks of him that "hath the key of David, him that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and no man openeth." It has not been noticed that this figurative phrase usually refers to the evangelical opportunity afforded by the eagerness of the Gentiles to receive the word of Christ. In Acts xiv. 27 we are informed that, when Barnabas and Paul returned from their first mission, they reported how God "had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles." In 1 Corinthians xvi. 9 St. Paul

<sup>1</sup> Bousset prefers to relate the latter passage to a common use; but on Rev. iii. 14—"the beginning of the creation of God"—he remarks that in the letter to Laodicea there is "a direct contact with the Colossian epistle."

says that in Ephesus "a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." In Acts xix. 9 it is shown that these "adversaries" were Jews, on account of whose opposition he left the synagogue, and carried on his work "daily in the school of one Tyrannus." Similarly, in Philippians i. 28 he exhorts the believers to be "in nothing affrighted by the adversaries," who doubtless wished to close the door that had been opened to the Gentiles. These Philippian believers had "the same conflict" which he constantly endured (ver. 30). In Colossians iv. 3 he invites the church to "pray for us that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ." This "mystery," Bishop Lightfoot says (*Coloss.* p. 231), was "the doctrine of the free admission of the Gentiles"; and that "Paul might have been still at large if he had been content to preach a Judaic gospel." At Troas also "a door was opened" for the word. There (Acts xx. 4) he was surrounded by companions with Greek names, who had entered in by the "door" which so many of his own people were conspiring to close. We can, therefore, scarcely avoid the conclusion that, in the address to the Church of Philadelphia (Rev. iii. 8), the reference to the "door opened" implies the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of the gospel. They had beside them a "synagogue of Satan, of them which say they are Jews and they are not." Most critics now allow that these professed Jews were those whom the writer regarded as having no place in the true Israel. They were not proselytes (though this is not certain) nor Pauline Christians, but native Jews, who objected to eat with the uncircumcised.

Besides these instances of similarity in thought and language between St. Paul and the writer of the Apocalypse—and others which deserve notice—there is an important

series of phrases relating to the redemption by Christ. One of St. Paul's strong expressions on this subject is found in 1 Corinthians vi. 20, vii. 23: "Ye were bought with a price"—*ἠγοράσθητε τιμῆς*. *Ἀγοράζειν* is found here and in the Apocalypse only, except in 2 Peter ii. 1: "denying even the Master that bought them." In Galatians iii. 13, iv. 5 *ἐξαγοράζειν* is used, but in both cases the salvation of the Gentiles is implied in the context. But in Revelation v. 9 we find in the song of the elders before the Lamb: "thou wast slain, and didst purchase (*ἠγόρασας*) unto God with thy blood men of every tribe." <sup>1</sup> Again, Revelation xiv. 3, 4 speaks of those "that had been purchased out of the earth," and "who were purchased from among men."

The "purchase of a people" could scarcely refer to the children of Abraham, who were already "the people of God." Another word for redemption does appear to include them (*λυτροῦν*, *λύτρον*). Meyer says on Luke xxiv. 21, "We hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel," that the saying refers to "the politico-theocratic idea of the national Messiah": cf. Luke ii. 38. But in Hebrews ix. 11-13 a very different idea meets us: "Christ . . . having obtained eternal redemption"—*αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν*. The same adjective is used in Revelation xiv. 6 for the "eternal gospel," which was to be proclaimed "unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people"; and is also used in the doxology in Romans xvi. 26, which speaks of "the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal."<sup>2</sup> Beza may be our interpreter in this case: "Paul speaks of the vocation of the Gentiles, as he himself explains, Ephesians iii."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *ἐν τῷ αἵματι*, Heb. x. 19; Rom. iii. 25; Eph. iii. 9, etc.: *τῷ θεῷ*, 1 Pet. iii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ignatius, *Ad Magnes.* vi., viii.



(so Bengel). St. Paul also speaks of "the grace which was given in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but hath now been manifested" (2 Tim. iii. 9). In Titus i. 2-3 we read of "the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal, but in his own seasons manifested." What the "seasons" (*καιροί*) were, is explained in 1 Timothy ii. 6: "Jesus, who gave himself a ransom (*ὁ δὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον*) for all, the testimony to be borne in its own times (*καιροῖς*), whereunto I was appointed . . . a teacher among the Gentiles." There is also an allusion to the "mystery" involved in the universal gospel in 1 Timothy iii. 15: "Great is the mystery of godliness, He who was manifested in the flesh . . . preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world."

The word "mystery" occurs twenty-one times in the Pauline epistles, and, except in three or four cases, there is always a reference to the evangelization of the Gentiles. The Divine purpose in regard to this object had been kept secret from the older church, 1 Peter i. 10. In the Synoptics "mystery" is used only in the parable of the "Sower," whose labours were continued in the gospel ministry. In Revelation i. 20, "the mystery of the seven stars" may also contain an allusion to the evangelical call and work of the churches. In Revelation x. 7 "the mystery of God" which is "finished" is explained by "the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets." This primary, evangelical content of the word "mystery" was effaced at an early date by an ecclesiastical interpretation which applied it to the sacraments. Irenaeus iv. 18 connects Revelation iv. 8—"the prayers of saints"—with "the offering of the Gentiles," Malachi i. 11, "in which the Jews could take no part"; and this prophetic

passage is still used to defend the doctrine of "sacrifice" in the eucharist.

We may add that the conception of redemption which appears in Revelation xiv. 3, etc., as bringing to God a people "purchased out of the earth," is illustrated by Titus ii. 14: "who gave himself that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession." It is also in accordance with Romans ix. 24: "Whom He also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles. As he saith in Hosea, I will call that my people which was not my people."<sup>1</sup>

This aspect of redemption, in its special relation to the great world beyond the narrow limits of the Hebrew nation, has been too much overlooked. It is in the epistle to the Ephesians where this topic is most fully discussed. "Remember," says St. Paul, "that aforetime ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision . . . were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel . . . but now in Christ Jesus ye that were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 11-22). "For he is our peace," i.e. between Jew and Gentile: "He brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances," which had divided the race into two sections. This was done "that he might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross." A similar association of the case of the Gentiles with a reference to the cross is found in 1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2-9; Gal. vi. 11-14.

This doctrine, however, of the inclusion of believing

<sup>1</sup> *Λαὸς περιούσιος* only in Tit. ii. 14: but Clement, Ep. i. 58 has the adjective. It also occurs in LXX. Exod. xix. 15, where follows "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests," cf. Rev. i. 6. The idea re-appears in *περιποίησις*, Eph. i. 9, 2 Thess. ii. 14, and 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Gentiles in the true Israel was new ; it had come by revelation, 1 Corinthians ii. 7-10 ; Galatians i, 12 ; Ephesians iii. 3. This "mystery of Christ" "was not made known unto the sons of men" of "other generations" as it is now "revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." The testimony is "that the Gentiles are . . . fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ." Paul had been made the minister of this wider gospel—"to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. iii. 8, cf. i. 9-10).

### III.

So many associations in thought and language between the author of the Apocalypse and St. Paul suggest there may be a yet deeper connection. The Apostle of the Gentiles was possessed by a sense of the grandeur of the "mystery which from all ages hath been his in God who created all things." The Apocalypse has its great secret also. As this great topic is approached a doxology is introduced which is worthy of St. Paul himself : "Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power : for thou didst create all things" (Rev. iv. 11).

The writer then proceeds (Rev. v.) to speak of a book which no one was worthy to open or to read. But "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof." The "Lion" then, by a sudden transformation, becomes "the Lamb." The Messiah of the Prophets had "emptied himself of all but love." He took the book, and showed its contents to his servants. The great "mystery" is declared : the nations of the earth are redeemed. To them belongs the great future about to be described. They are exalted to be "a kingdom and priests" for ever. How fitting is the

“new song” to him that had been slain! Immediately “the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb.” They say: “Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” The Divine purpose, in relation to the salvation of the Gentiles, which had been disclosed to St. Paul is the theme of the Apocalypse.

We are, therefore, to look into the Apocalypse, not for the history of the Roman empire, nor for that of the world at large, but for the divinely appointed future of the Church. This Church is not to consist of Jews only, but of a “great multitude” gathered out of all nations. The old theory, that this book presented a programme of the coming ages of the world, has been more or less misleading. It has produced conjectures about “times,” and “half-a-time,” and the number of the beast. The church needed encouragement in times of trial and fear, and to be assured that the day of final redemption was nigh, when the new Jerusalem should descend out of heaven. Hence, at the beginning of the book (Rev. ii. 7) the writer shows that his treatise is addressed “to the churches”; and, at the close (Rev. xxii. 16) he restates his great design: “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches.”<sup>1</sup> The book is full of that which concerned (ἐπί) the churches. Many of the separate figures, allusions and symbols owe their obscurity to the apocalyptic material which came to the writer’s hand. Critical skill may yet engage itself with the dependence upon older apocalypses which is betrayed; the identity of the two witnesses and of the beast that was smitten and healed again, may need

<sup>1</sup> Another reading, A.V. “in the churches” (Cod. Al. *ἐν*; Vulg. *in*) is now rejected.

further exploration. But if it is allowed that these are not the principal things in the book, but subordinate to its general purpose, something will have been gained.

#### IV.

The order, in which the great development is to advance, is given in Revelation vi.-viii. The course of events is there presented in historical sequence, and nothing so definite is found afterwards. All that follows—the seven angels, the woes, the apparition of the woman in heaven, the dragon, the beast rising out of the sea, the angels with the seven last plagues, with the seven bowls, and the fall of Babylon, and the overthrow of Satan—are extensions of the several items previously mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

When the elders proclaim the accomplishment of the redemption of the true Israel, it might be expected that the new heaven and the new earth would immediately appear, and the mystery of God finished. But the great series of apocalyptic visions intervenes. His readers must not conclude "that the day of the Lord is now present" (2 Thess. ii. 2). The "falling away" must first come, and "the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

#### V.

It may be said that this theory concerning the sealed book is at variance with the traditional and yet current interpretations. The patristic view, from Origen, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius downwards, was that the mysterious book contained the key to the Old Testament. Hilary, Jerome and Ambrose agree with Victorinus, who said: *Vetus testamentum significat*. That opinion does not entirely exclude the one now proposed; for the conversion of the Gentiles is a commonplace in the later writings of the Old

<sup>1</sup> "The opening of the seventh seal evolves a series of symbolic actions which only ends with the book itself" (Alford).

Testament. Wetstein advanced the judgment that it referred to the rejection of the Jews, but his view has received little notice. The more recent opinion is represented by Lange and Düsterdieck, the latter of whom says : "So is indicated the rich content of the book which contains fully the divine counsel in regard to the future." Bousset holds that "this is not the book of judgment, but the book in which the fate of the world is indicated." Dr. Swete thinks it is "the book of destiny."<sup>1</sup>

If so much has been changed in the exposition of the Apocalypse, few will demand that absolute submission should be yielded to traditional interpretations, especially when they are not unanimous. Though there seems little direct evidence in favour of the view now advanced, there is an abundance of indirect and collateral evidence. St. Paul's frequent and emphatic allusions to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Church as "the mystery" (*τὸ μυστήριον*, Eph. iii. 4) must be taken into account. This great question was the cause of continuous agitation in the great apostle's time, and still maintained its significance in the following decades. St. Paul had asserted that the revelation of the "mystery" was given "that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. iii. 10). The Apocalyptic writer in his vision saw "the heavenly places" opened, and became a witness of the astonished gladness which was awakened among the angels and saints when they beheld the grace of the Lamb towards a sinful world. These "things the angels desire to look into," says St. Peter (1 Ep. i. 2-20). The older prophets had sought to understand the promised "salvation." His readers were Gentile believers (*vv.* 14,

<sup>1</sup> Jerome, *adv. Iovin. i.* 26, *vidit enim in Pathmos . . . apocalypsin infinita futurorum mysteria, continentem.*

23, ii. 10), who "in time past were no people." They had been "redeemed" from Gentile vanities "not with corruptible things, with silver or gold," but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." Revelation iii. 7 speaks of Him who held "the key of David"—"the root of David": and again, xxii. 16, "the root and offspring of David." St. Paul explains for us this allusion in Romans xv. 12: "Isaiah saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; on him shall the Gentiles hope." The "key of David" which opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, was that which opened the sealed book of the Apocalypse.

Thoughtful Gentiles, who entered into the great spiritual privileges of the gospel, must have been powerfully impressed by the anomalous and paradoxical elements of their position. Israel, which originally had "the oracles of God," and was heir to all the promises, seemed to have been passed by, and the heathen had been adopted into sonship and inheritance. The "best robe" had been thrown over the prodigal son; while the elder brother, who had served his father always—now an unwilling spectator of the family gladness—stood in the garb of a servitor. St. Paul discusses the matter in Romans ix.—xi., and concludes that "a hardening in part hath befallen Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." The post-apostolic writers all trace the misfortunes of Israel to disobedience and unbelief, and begin to doubt if any of them could be saved.

One of these writers refers in a very interesting way to this subject. The *Epistle to Diognetus* (c. viii.), the writer of which calls himself "a disciple of apostles," and "a teacher of the Gentiles," says: "God . . . formed in his mind a great and unspeakable conception (*ἄφραστος ἐννοία*): while he preserved his wise counsel in a mystery

he appeared to disregard us, but when he revealed through his beloved Son the things prepared from the beginning, he conferred every blessing at once (*πάνθ' ἅμα*) upon us . . . Who could have expected these things ? ” Again, (c. xi.) he says : “The disciples being faithful knew the mysteries of the Father. It was for this reason that he sent the Logos that he might be manifest to the world . . . who indeed was despised by his own people, but was preached by apostles, and was believed in by the Gentiles.”<sup>1</sup>

## VI.

If the theory now proposed should be established, there will be little room for questioning the literary unity of the Apocalypse. The unity of the subject will facilitate the connexion of its several parts. The continuity between the first three chapters, with their special addresses to the seven churches, and the remainder of the book will be fairly evident. The measurement of the temple (xi. 3) need not be attributed to an earlier writer : it will explain itself as a reference to the spiritual building—the Church (Rev. iii. 12, xxi. 2, 3 ; Eph. ii. 22 ; 1 Cor. iii. 9).<sup>2</sup> There is no difficulty in supposing that the writer, in his free use of older sources, appropriated whatever he found to be in accordance with his object. His selection of the great figures of the beast rising from the abyss, the great dragon, and the riders upon horses was undoubtedly owing to his desire to explain what these prominent objects in prophetic and apocalyptic literature signified for the church.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 15 : cf. Rom. ii. 9, xi. 33 ; Eph. i. 3 ; 2 Tim. i. 11-15 ; iv. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Swete defends the spiritual interpretation of the “ temple,” xi. 1. Bousset (also Mr. A. Scott), on the other hand, thinks it refers to the temple at Jerusalem, and that therefore this fragment was produced before A.D. 70 : “ John quoted an earlier Apocalypse.” Cf. Heb. xii. 22 : “ Ye are come unto . . . the heavenly Jerusalem ” ; and Ep. Barnabas xvi. : “ the spiritual temple built for the Lord.”



Dr. Sanday, in a reference to Dr. Swete's important work on the Apocalypse, says that "the author of the Apocalypse is a Jew, and in all probability a Jew of Palestine. . . . The Apocalypse thus supplies welcome evidence of a line of teaching that is parallel to St. Paul's and that really goes beyond his . . . fundamentally the Christology is that which has been held by the Church universal."<sup>1</sup> This agrees so far with the opinion of Bousset, who yet thinks that the evidence of direct Johannine authorship fails. He prefers to refer the book to the Presbyter John, who might have been a primitive follower of Jesus, and even "the disciple whom Jesus loved"; but had, with Philip and others, migrated to Ephesus. This theory would explain the remarkable acquaintance with the views and experiences of the first disciples revealed in the Fourth Gospel. But such a view at once encounters many difficulties. It would be strange that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" should not be more directly referred to in the New Testament, as apart from the son of Zebedee. It was to him that the guardianship of the mother of Jesus was committed (John xix. 27). Would he not be with Mary in the first assembly at Jerusalem after the ascension (Acts i. 14)? There seems to be no reference in the Gospels, or in the Acts of the Apostles, or in the Epistles to any personality so eminent, yet individually separate from St. John.

The evidence, therefore, "of a line of teaching that is parallel to St. Paul's, and that really goes beyond his," can scarcely in this way be proved to be independent of, or proceeding from an earlier source than himself. Dr. Sanday holds that the Apocalypse dates from the time of Domitian, when its author must have been acquainted with St. Paul's writing. We venture to think that such a

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Theological Studies*, July, 1907.

development of Paulinism was chiefly found in the churches of Asia Minor twenty or thirty years after the apostle's activity there had ended. To the same circle, perhaps, belonged those views of Christianity which have come to us in the Greek Matthew, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the first Epistle of Peter, and perhaps in the Pastoral Epistles—as well as in the Johannine writings. In this case, it would be difficult to assume that Judaic sympathies or tendencies prevailed in those churches. Their glory was in the gospel which admitted the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven, without dependence upon Jewish observances.

It would greatly assist the consideration of the whole subject if we had a clearer statement of what is meant by a "Jewish-Christian." Was St. Paul one? Certainly: if to be at once a Jew and a Christian is to be a Jewish-Christian. But St. James, who was so prominent in the Church at Jerusalem, was in this sense a Jewish-Christian also. He never forsook the observance of the Mosaic customs—never held good-fellowship with Gentile-Christians. St. John, in the first part of his history at least, was a Jewish-Christian of the same type. We are dependent upon the Johannine writings, and on many doubtful traditions, for the assurance that he afterwards adopted St. Paul's free fellowship with the Gentiles. But the author or authors of the Apocalypse and of the Fourth Gospel, if Jewish-Christian at all, were such after the manner of St. Paul rather than after that of St. James.

Unfortunately, the original Jewish-Christians have left no literature undoubtedly theirs by which we may judge them, and others who differed from them. Dean Robinson has said that "the Church—so far as its literature has survived to us—was a Church of Gentile-Christians."<sup>1</sup> That

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclop. Biblica*: "Eucharist," ii. 422.

is to say, "the Catholic Church" was a development of Pauline and Gentile Christianity, and not a direct amalgamation of Jewish and Gentile Christians, as Baur and his followers asserted. It is very easy to exaggerate the number of Jewish believers who associated with the Pauline churches. St. Paul complains, in his later epistles especially, that he had so little support from Christians of his own race (Col. iii. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17). He speaks everywhere of the opposition which he received from professors of the faith of Jesus among his own people, rather than of persecution from those who openly repudiated that faith. Justin Martyr (*Apolog.* i. 33) shows that there were far more added to the Church from the Gentile class than from the Jews and the Samaritans. The Jewish-Christians, strictly speaking, derived their descent from the apostolic Church in Jerusalem, and continued their patristic observances to the end. James, the traditional bishop of Jerusalem, was a strict observer of the law. After his death, the bishops of the fugitive Church were all of the circumcision.<sup>1</sup> Though they were denounced in the synagogues, they held no fellowship with the Gentile churches, and so far as is known, no uncircumcised Gentile could sit down at the Lord's Supper with this primitive community.

The "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs" has been a stronghold for those who supposed that there was a Jewish-Christian party—the Nazarenes—which held Pauline doctrine but adhered to Judaistic practices. Ritschl held that it was the work of a Nazarene Christian; and his opinion was adopted by Bishop Lightfoot. Except for some doubtful observations made by Origen and Jerome, it was the only evidence that such views were held by this sect. Dr. Conybeare, however, has discovered that the directly

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iv. 5.

Christian portions of the "Testaments" are not included in the Armenian versions. Dr. Charles has also shown that these paragraphs are dependent on the New Testament. It seems that several interpolators in the second century edited the Jewish treatise, which had been produced c. B.C. 135. The following extracts will show that the additions have arisen in a circle familiar with the later Paulinism.

In "Judah" it is said: "After these things shall a star arise to you from Jacob . . . the Branch of God most high . . . a rod of righteousness to the Gentiles." In "Joseph": "honour Judah and Levi; for from them shall arise unto you the Lamb of God, saving all the Gentiles and Israel." And in "Benjamin": "One shall rise up from my seed in the latter times . . . enlightening with new knowledge all the Gentiles, bursting in upon Israel for salvation with the light of knowledge, and tearing it away like a wolf, and giving it to the synagogue of the Gentiles."

This evidently belongs to the circle of ideas which is found in St. Paul and in the Apocalypse. Tertullian (*c. Marc.* iv. 1) refers to "the sure mercies of David," which came "by the stem of Jesse," as belonging to the Gentiles, and (*ibid.* iv. 16) says: "So long therefore as the mystery was confined to Israel (*ideoque quamdiu intra Israellem erat sacramentum*) he suitably recommended pity specially towards brethren, but when he gave to Christ the Gentiles as his inheritance, then began to be fulfilled the prophecy of Hosea: 'Who were not my people are my people.'"<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion is (i.) That the secret of the sealed book, Revelation v., is substantially that which was contained in the "mystery" of St. Paul, Ephesians iii.

<sup>1</sup> We may add an extract from Clem. 2 Ep. 2: "He called us when we were not, and willed that out of nothing we should have a real existence."

(ii.) That the Churches, to which the Apocalypse was addressed, consisted of Pauline Christians.

(iii.) That the writer of the Apocalypse was in full sympathy with the universalism which Paul held to be the supreme interest of his message.

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