

have silted up as to be rendered no longer subject to inundation, or may have become perennial channels as others have been obstructed. But, making allowance for all changes, it will be admitted that a stony eminence, bank, or island would not be so liable to wear as ground where there is little or no stone. There were stones on the very spot where the priests stood, and this might be some indication of the permanence of the spot ; so that, if it so happened that all the natural conditions accompanying the passage were discovered to be more or less present in or near the modern ford of el Mashra'a, the probability is that the limit of a radius of about three-quarters of a mile would sweep over the very spot where the priests stood with the ark. And it may possibly also be some indication to explorers not to expect to find any traces of these stones in the bed of the river, but on some higher ground not liable to inundation.

It would perhaps be interesting to readers to know that there is an island in the Jordan just above the traditional *ford of the passage*, though it seems that now the perennial channel is immediately on the east, and the overflow channel on the west of it. But these may have, of course, altered. Assuming the channels to have been as shown on our first diagram, that here presented will illustrate how they could be applied to the modern traditional ford.

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ART. VII.—ST. PAUL'S SIGNATURE.

THE following brief notes are an attempt to trace the evolution of the familiar prayer, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," and the use of the phrase by St. Paul as his signature. The study is one of intense interest, and might be carried a good deal further, especially if any light could be thrown from ancient inscriptions on the method of writing the phrase. Up to the present time the facsimiles of the three great uncials—the Vatican, the Sinaitic, and the Alexandrine—in the British Museum are the only ancient methods of writing the phrase which the writer has been able to examine. Should any student who is more fortunately situated with regard to inscriptions be able to throw further light on this subject, it may help in building an additional line of defence for the genuineness of the two Thessalonian Epistles.

"The salutation of me, Paul, with mine own hand, which is the token in every Epistle: so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." There is nothing to indicate that these words are to be treated separately. Our custom of concluding meetings with the "grace" leads us to separate the two verses, but there is no reason why this should be done. The sense is in effect: "This Epistle was written by a scribe at my dictation, but that you may be certain of its genuineness the salutation of me, Paul, with my own hand, which is the proof of genuineness in all my letters, is added. I write the special words thus: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.'"

The first question that must be determined is whether "thus" refers to what has gone before or to what follows. That *οὕτως* can refer to what follows is obvious from a reference to the concordance and dictionary. The use here seems to be analogous to those instances where it introduces a quotation from the Old Testament, "Thus it is written." Nor can we doubt that the "salutation" is what follows, not what precedes, verse 17, because "the Lord be with you" is not a token in any other Epistle, excepting, with a slight difference, in 2 Timothy. But "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," or, at least, "the grace," is found in all St. Paul's Epistles, and all which are attributed to him in our English Bible.

Assuming, then, that the words "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" were intended to be and were a specially Pauline mark, as written by him, we can inquire into the matter of the salutation and the possible manner in which he wrote it. If we had the original documents we should naturally first investigate the manner and, subsequently, the matter of this token. As it is, our inquiry must be reversed. But even so, it will be found interesting, and may throw some light on the defence of the genuineness of the New Testament writings.

The phrase "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" was only possible in the Christian Church. It was not possible for the Jews to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ until Jesus had come and been recognised as Messiah and Lord. This is still the controversy with Judaism. Was Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, Messiah? and is Messiah also Lord? We believe He was, and is, and because we hold that belief we are Christians. It is the corner-stone of the faith. On this the Church is built. The Rock is the Person in whom we believe; but the Church is the company of those who believe in Jesus as Lord and Christ. Thus St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, works up to this grand conclusion: "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this same Jesus

whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ." This is the climax of the Pentecostal sermon. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. The Apostles had spoken among themselves of the Lord Jesus when they elected Matthias, but their work was to convince the world that Jesus was Lord and Christ. So the healing of the lame man was a proof that Jesus was Christ. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth doth this man stand before you whole." The evidence for that miracle was irrefutable; it could not be discredited. The conclusion was inevitable that Jesus was the Christ. The other work is harder, to prove that Jesus is the Lord. The great argument has always been the Resurrection. With great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

It was the preaching in this name that the Jews forbade, but without effect, for the disciples ceased not to teach that Jesus is the Christ. St. Stephen asserted that He saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God. That was the place for the Lord, and to Him Stephen appeals: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." It was those who called upon this name that Saul hunted to strange cities; it was "the Lord, even Jesus," that sent Ananias to restore Saul's sight. The burden of Saul's first preaching was that "Jesus is the Son of God." Thus did the knowledge of the name spread, and came to the Gentiles. Describing their conversion, St. Peter says: "God gave them the like gift as He did to us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ." That is the great addition to the creed of Judaism which Christianity made and stereotyped into this phrase in the first instance. The doctrine spread to Antioch and Cyprus, for those who fled from the persecutions of Saul preached the Lord Jesus. On St. Paul's first missionary journey the theme that Jesus is Messiah and Lord underlies the preaching, but the phrase "the Lord Jesus Christ" does not occur. Then we come to the council at Jerusalem, and it is St. Peter again who brings out this phrase as the sum of the belief: "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they." Then for the first time the familiar phrase appears, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." It would seem that in a sense we specially owe it to St. Peter. He was, judged by the standard of his day, an uneducated man. But as such he was in the habit of going straight to the point. The Lord Jesus Christ had revealed Himself to Peter. He knew Him. He had confessed Him as Lord and Christ. He had preached Him, and now summed up the position. We have salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The phrase had come by a natural growth, and St. Paul carried it away

from the council at Jerusalem and adopted it as his sign-manual. He made it the salutation of Christendom, the universal blessing of the Church. The name offended the Jews. It does not appear in the sermons in the Acts, because the sermons were to prove the name and justify its use. To use it before the argument was developed would be begging the question. This is the controversy of Christendom against the world. Jesus is Messiah and Lord; not Messiah only, but also Lord. The position is eminently scientific. It begins with facts; it deals with the facts about Jesus of Nazareth; it finds that there is another great fact to be reckoned with, that some hundreds of years before the events concerning Jesus of Nazareth took place they had been predicted in the books of the Jews called the Old Testament; it draws certain conclusions from those facts that Jesus is Messiah and Lord. A geologist draws his conclusions from a fossil, a chemist makes experiments with his facts, and the results are scientific in the one case as in the other. The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven. The mourners are comforted, the outcast is reclaimed, the world is regenerated. By what force? By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. To question the veracity of the Christian faith in the person of Jesus Christ the Lord is like denying the attraction of gravitation because the evidence for the story of Sir Isaac Newton and the apple is not very complete.

But we are wandering from the point. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" was becoming a phrase of everyday Church life. St. Paul, returning from the council of Jerusalem, carried it away and adopted it in his Thessalonian Epistles as the token in every Epistle.

In the first Epistle to Thessalonica he writes at the close, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

In his second Epistle to the same Church, dealing with certain problems about which these early converts had been much exercised, he would have them assured that it is he who wrote what he has sent. So he adopts the phrase written in a special way as his signature, and with but slight variations it remains the token in every subsequent Epistle. That he meant to adopt this phrase as his signature becomes evident if we turn to the first Epistle to Corinthians, which is the next in order according to Bishop Lightfoot's grouping. There in chap. xvi. 21 and following we read: "The salutation of Paul with my own hand. If anyone love not the Lord, let him be Anathema Maran-atha. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus." Here, again, we have in the midst of other greetings the special phrase, written, perhaps, in the special manner adopted before.

In the second Epistle to the same Church we have the fully developed form for the first time, now become so familiar and so precious to the Church: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." To the Church to which he had written of the more excellent way of love, it was meet that he should send some reminder of that love, to which naturally the mind turned after the definition of the grace of the Lord Jesus which he had given to the Corinthians (2 Cor. viii. 9). "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." It was the love of God that prompted it, "For God so loved that He gave. . . ." The grace was the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came. The love was the Father's. He gave; He sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. That love becomes man's by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love. "Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." And so the crowning word, "The communion of the Holy Ghost," is added, making the complete prayer familiarized by the constant use of nineteen centuries. Theologians constantly quote this prayer as a Scripture proof of the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. It was essential to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that the underlying assumption of a plurality of persons in the Godhead should be made plain. Thus, St. Peter concludes his address on the Day of Pentecost with the assertion of the Deity of the Messiah Jesus. It would naturally not be long before the doctrine was embodied in the prayers of the Church, as in this phrase, whose evolution we have endeavoured to trace.

The Epistle to Galatia also closes with words written with St. Paul's own hand: "Ye see with what large letters I am writing with my own hand," and with the words: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren." If the Epistle precedes that to Corinth, as many are now inclined to think, we have the attention of the reader in Asia also drawn to the Pauline writing. The Apostle uses the same formula in concluding to the Romans.

In the group of Epistles belonging to the first imprisonment at Rome we find the same formula in Philippians and Philemon, but in Colossians and Ephesians it is shortened to "the grace be with you," or "with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ." By this time the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ had been preached throughout the Roman Empire:

"the grace" was enough. There was never such grace; it was the unique grace of the only begotten Son of God. In Colossians we also note that St. Paul draws attention to his writing, "The salutation with the hand of me, Paul." In his other Epistles—those, namely, to Timothy and Titus—he uses the shorter form, "The grace be with you" or "with you all." As time advanced there would be less fear of St. Paul's signature being forged. There were other marks by which his work would be known. In no part of the world, excepting Jerusalem itself, does he seem to have met with more bitter and unscrupulous opposition from the Jews than in Macedonia and Greece. It is in the Epistles addressed to those churches, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth, that the special signature appears, where, perhaps, the danger of forgery was greater.

It remains to inquire whether we can tell the form in which St. Paul wrote. Obviously, not with certainty, unless we had the original before us; but it is interesting to remember that the phrase, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," gave opportunity for certain abbreviations or alternative methods of writing which would enable the Apostle to adopt a peculiar one as his own special mark or signature. In this connection it is interesting to discover that in the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Alexandrine uncial MSS. the abbreviations are always the same, and just in the three same words, "the Lord Jesus Christ," KT, IT, XT, with a line over the T. As the phrase was essentially a Christian one, and primarily, as we have seen, almost entirely a Pauline one, and this abbreviation seems to have been adopted as the universal one in writing (for the earliest written specimens that we have appear thus in all cases), we venture to hazard the suggestion that it was actually this abbreviation that St. Paul used when he wrote the phrase thus to the Thessalonian Church: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

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ART. VIII.—THE MONTH.

A VERY important announcement was made by Mr. Balfour the other day in the House of Commons. In reply to an inquiry whether the Government contemplated taking any action for the better enforcement of discipline in the Church of England, the Prime Minister stated that he proposed to recommend to His Majesty the appointment of a Royal Commission to ascertain the nature and extent of the disorder