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THE
CHURCHMAN

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ART. I.—LOISY'S SYNTHESIS OF CHRISTIANITY.

IN pressing his theory that the doctrine of our Saviour's Divinity was realized by the primitive Church mainly through the inspirations of St. Paul, Loisy refers to the early preaching of Peter in Acts ii. 23, 24, and x. 38-40. For Peter the *human* Jesus could only have been "a man approved of God among you by miracles . . . whom God raised up."¹ His preaching was "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power," and "Him God raised up," etc. Therefore, Jesus had never spoken of His pre-existence in the glory of the Godhead. This argument seems telling at first. Yet when we refer to the times when the Divinity was by admission realized, we find ourselves confronted with the same language used in regard to the Saviour's human and mediatorial capacity.

If there was really a gradual evolution (not merely a closer definition) of the doctrine of Christ's Divinity in the years succeeding, we shall expect to find a scrupulous abstention from this earlier and insufficient way of expressing His claims. Yet what are the real facts? Not only does Paul preach in similar phraseology all through the Acts, but it occurs to the last in his Epistles.² Thus, in Ephesians he speaks of "God's mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." The same Epistle tells us, nevertheless, of God "creating all things by Jesus Christ," who, as the Husband of the Church, recalls to our minds the Jehovah of the Old Testament. In Colossians we read that "God has

¹ "Autour," etc., pp. 111, 112.

² Cf. Acts xiii. 30, xvii. 31, xxvi. 8; Eph. i. 20, iii. 9, v. 23, *et seq.*; Col. i. 13-17; Phil. ii. 6-9.

translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." But it is by that Son that "all things were created," and "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." In Philippians Paul tells us how God "highly exalted" Jesus, and "gave Him the name which is above every name." Yet immediately before we are told of this same Christ Jesus being originally "in the form of God."¹

Equally significant in this way is the Epistle to the Hebrews. No Epistle so fully sounds the depths of the Kenosis: "It became Him . . . to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings"; "Who having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He were a Son, yet learnt obedience by the things which He suffered." Yet this Epistle affords, too, the clearest representation of the Eternal Christ in His hypostatic union as the "ray-image of God's glory," "by whom also He made the worlds," who Himself claims the words of homage, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."² Similarly, Clement in one passage speaks of Jesus as "sent from God," "by the will of God," as if the mere chief of the Gospel ministers. Yet in another he represents Him as personally Divine in the very language of the Epistle to the Hebrews.³

Loisy's interpretation of the early Christology would really require that Peter had never known our Lord appropriate to His earthly ministration the Messianic titles "Son of man," "Son of God," with their profound suggestiveness; never heard the parable of the Vineyard, whose Lord "last of all sends unto men His Son"; never heard those teachings that speak of the Messianic "kingdom" already set up in the human heart. There is no occasion for such destructive exegesis as this, for reflection will tell us there is no difficulty in these passages in the Acts. The economy observable in these public speeches is almost necessitated by the exigencies of circumstances. For Peter or Paul to propound the glory of the pre-existent Christ to men only acquainted with the fact of the public execution of Jesus was hardly possible. One can scarcely see how they could have approached their

¹ I might also instance the Epistle to the Romans, where we have, "Like as Christ was raised . . . through the glory of the Father," in vi. 4; and in ix. 5, "Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever." But I do not press this, in view of the different rendering given by some critics to the last clause (see R.V., margin).

² Cf. Heb. i. 1 *et seq.* with ii. 8, v. 7, 8.

³ Cf. Clement ad Cor., xxxvi. and xlii.

subject otherwise than by the reasoning actually adopted—viz., that this human Jesus had been raised by God from death, and was so *demonstrated* to have been the Christ.

Many a modern missionary in full possession of the Nicene dogma has found it necessary to cope with heathen ignorance in the same way, keeping the deeper mysteries of the faith in the background, and basing his appeal just on the lines presented in these discourses in the Acts. It must be remembered, too, that the orthodox Christology of itself involves a twofold doctrine, which the human mind cannot appropriate in its entirety. Our intelligence can but see the individual facets singly, and it is faith only that induces us to attach a credence to their harmonious coexistence. In ordinary unrestrained thought the most orthodox Christians are still continually led by mood or circumstance to view singly either the human or the Divine side of our Saviour's personality. This remark might be illustrated by a comparison of some familiar English hymns. A thousand years hence, some Harnack or Loisy investigating the present era will perhaps confidently discover in certain hymns of the Georgian and early Victorian periods a distinct Nestorian theology. The same acumen might detect in some of the recent additions to "Hymns Ancient and Modern" as marked Eutychian proclivities. Yet in both cases the authors were men who accepted to the full the Christology of the first four Councils.

My mention of Hebrews suggests another remark. For Loisy there is a distinction between the Gospel preached first to Jews: "On avait dit aux Juifs Jésus est le Messie prédit par les prophètes"; and the Gospel of the Apostle Paul, who "trouve à l'Évangile, au rôle et à la personne de Jésus une signification universelle."¹ What real ground is there for this assertion beyond the admitted fact that Paul was specially commissioned to convey the tidings of salvation to the Gentiles? It is contradicted by many sayings of Jesus, which we believe to be authentic. It is contradicted by Peter's first sermons, in which the Gospel blessings are for the Jew first, but afterwards to "all the kindreds of the earth"; "to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."² It is contradicted by the Christology of this Epistle, which is addressed to a community of Jewish extraction. It is a singular feature in such a work that the claims of Jesus as the Messianic King of the House of David are put out of sight throughout as they are. On the other hand, no Epistle presents more emphatically the "signification universelle" of the work of Christ, who is alike the Creator of the worlds and

¹ "Autour," etc., pp. 111, 112.

² Acts ii. 30, iii. 25, 26.

the universal Mediator, "who tastes death on behalf of every man," and has "all things [τὰ πάντα] put in subjection under His feet."

Now, it is almost certain, I think, that this Epistle is not Paul's, and the modern critics seem to incline to the belief that the writer was not even "acquainted with Pauline literature."¹ On the other hand, it is sufficiently early to be used largely by Clement of Rome. We are thus brought face to face with a problem with which Loisy never attempts to deal. He tells us that "la divinité du Christ est un dogme qui a grandi dans la conscience chrétienne, mais qui n'avait pas été expressément formulé dans l'Évangile."² It is an ecclesiastical development, due mainly to St. Paul, and "l'auteur de l'Épître aux Hébreux complète l'idée de Paul" and "l'auteur du quatrième Évangile y découvre la révélation même du Logos, du Verbe divin."³ But where and when was the initial step taken? Where is there a trace of a record of any joint action by the Apostles to thus reconstrue the human life and personality of Jesus Christ?

The sermons of the "Prince des Apôtres," we are told, come from one who is merely convinced that Jesus is shown to be a *future* Messiah by the resurrection from the dead. Yet his teaching, later on, is that the spirit that inspired the old Jewish prophets is the "Spirit of Christ"; and this Christ is "foreknown before the foundations of the world," and Christians believing in Him believe "in God."⁴ John was with Peter on the occasion of these first discourses, and presumably shared his meagre Christology. Yet he, too, later on (unless his Epistle and Apocalypse are to go the way of the fourth Gospel), has full convictions of the Lord's eternal Divinity. This unknown writer to the Hebrews speaks in the same strain. St. Paul, as early as A.D. 56-57, has preached that Christ is the "Power of God" and the "Wisdom of God," and applied to Him all the familiar Divine titles, and before his death has, as Loisy admits, sufficiently defined the future lines of ecclesiastical Christology and of the Trinitarian dogma.

The question, therefore, may be fairly put, Is it at all probable that Christian teachers, working independently, should evolve this striking addition to the Gospel? Or is it conceivable that the historian, who in the Acts relates what meetings there were to insure unity of doctrine and practice,

¹ See Dr. Bruce's article in Hastings, *s.v.* "Hebrews."

² "Autour," etc., p. 117.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 126.

⁴ 1 Pet. i. 11, 20, 21.

should ignore altogether a doctrinal development which was certainly the most important one in all Church history—nay, should deny it in the third Gospel by his testimony as to Christ's own teaching? If not, the reasonable alternative is just that with which plain folk are familiar as the actual story of our Scriptures. The revelation of His Divinity was, as the Gospels state, an actual part of our Saviour's historical teaching. The Apostles appropriate it along with the facts of His human life. They present their Lord, each, doubtless, according to his own degree of inspiration and advancing power of realization, but with the component factors in their Christology determined for them by Christ's actual teaching. In fact, they knew from the first the elements which I have been indicating in the Synoptic story, and the Christology which is brought so prominently forward in the Gospel of St. John.

I sum up, then, my contention in these two papers thus. There is not a vestige of proof in early Christian literature that the Christological development postulated by Loisy occurred. The theory that makes it originate in St. Paul's later Epistles and be carried on in the fourth Gospel is as unnecessary as it is unsubstantiated by evidence. On the contrary, the Gospels and Epistles alike testify to a primitive recognition of the Saviour's pre-existent Divinity.

I. In the case of the Synoptic Gospels after we have eliminated the "récits de l'enfance," His preter-human character as an actual part of our Saviour's teaching is attested, not only by the noted words in Matt. xi. 25-27, Luke x. 21, 22, but by His continually appropriating to Himself the Messianic titles. I have shown that the usual title "Son of man," if in a sense suggestive of a human nature, itself connotes a Messiah endowed with Divine attributes, and interchanges in actual Jewish usage (as in the scene before Caiaphas) with "Son of God." In these Gospels, moreover, Loisy's theory is contradicted indirectly by such episodes as the Temptation and the Transfiguration. The temptation scenes, portrayed by Matthew and Luke, take us far beyond the similar stories of human prophets prepared by disciplinary asceticism for ministerial work. "If Thou be the Son of God" is the clue to their insidious potency. The second (in Matthew's order) is especially instructive in this connection. The gist of this temptation is that Jesus should fulfil the Messianic hope of the Jews by an immediate startling proof of Divine power, instead of by the ministry of humiliation. A self-manifestation of Deity, fulfilling such prophecies as "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His Temple," is here suggested, instead of the prescribed

path of self-sacrifice with the cross on Calvary as its climax.¹

The Transfiguration story involves the same idea of a Christ who has a nature higher than that of man, and can assume at will a glorious spiritual form. Here again, too, the Kenosis ("the decease that He should accomplish at Jerusalem") is presented in significant contrast to the inherent Divinity. To the witnesses of the scene the Transfiguration must have of itself suggested the truth that Jesus was more than man. As regards the central figure, the episode is unintelligible in the biography of a Christ, who "a vécu dans la conscience de son humanité," and is only shown to be Messiah by His resurrection. I do not know what the Abbé makes of these two incidents in the synoptic narrative. Possibly for him they fall, like the "récits de l'enfance," outside the actual biography, as a kind of Haggada tacked on by the early Christians to the reminiscence of the historical Jesus. To me it seems that a subject of such transcendent importance to the first Christians as the biography of their Lord could not have been dealt with in this spirit. Pretexts and occasions for "cunningly devised fables" were as yet remote. In fact, Paley's old argument here still holds good. There was no motive for such inventions, and much was sacrificed by those who accepted the belief in Jesus as Divine.

Further, to the Evangelists themselves, the biography they deal with certainly connotes the Divinity of Jesus directly and indirectly. The doctrine is as clearly behind St. Mark's narrative, which opens, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," as behind the two which give the story of the Parthenogenesis. The identity of the Divine figure is obvious, whether we are summoned (as Bishop Ellicott well phrases it) "in the first Gospel, to recognise transitions from theocratic glory to meek submissions," or "in the second, to see our Redeemer in one light only of majesty and power."²

One can imagine that Luke was affected by companionship with the Apostle to the Gentiles, but can all four Evangelists be supposed to have reconstructed history in deference to Pauline Christology? Is it probable that Paul was either able or willing to reshape fundamental principles for them, and for the older Apostles too, and, indeed, for the Church

¹ It is only thus that the form of the temptation is intelligible, and it is strange that its point is missed in Farrar's "Life of Christ." See further Ellicott's Hulsean Lectures on the "Life of our Lord," p. 112.

² "Life of our Lord," p. 26.

at large? Could the biography of Jesus be thus perverted at will, without protest from surviving witnesses for the conservation of the true facts and teachings? These are the questions which really bar the way to Loisy's statement of the case, "La divinité du Christ est un dogme qui a grandi dans la conscience chrétienne, mais qui n'avait pas été expressément formulé dans l'Évangile."¹

II. St. Paul's own "development" in this matter of Christology is an unsubstantiated postulate. What is clear and certain is that the doctrine of the Lord's Divinity is sufficiently fixed for Paul when he writes to the Corinthians in A.D. 56-57. When Loisy tells us that it is in "ses dernières Épîtres" that "un rôle cosmologique est attribué au Christ," and quotes Col. i. 15-20 for an identification of Christ with "la Sagesse de l'ancien Testament qui assistait le Créateur dans toutes ses œuvres,"² he postdates our evidence by at least six years.

If Christ is in that passage the "Image of the Invisible God, the first-born of all creation," in 2 Cor. iv. 4 the statement is anticipated. We are told of the dawning light "of the Gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God." The Christology and the simile alike suggest the full expression of our Saviour's claims in Heb. i. 2 *et seq.* Further, in the Epistle that precedes this, there is a clear assertion of the Saviour's pre-existence in heaven. "The second man," says St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 47, is "of" or "from heaven." These teachings come in quite incidentally, the one in a presentation of the doctrine of a future resurrection, the other in a vindication of St. Paul's own ministerial relations. We cannot suppose that it was a new doctrine to the Corinthians or other than a part of what Paul taught when he founded the Church there in A.D. 50-52.

As for "la Sagesse," I showed in my last paper that it is in 1 Cor. i. that we find the phrase "Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God." I think, too, we may find an indirect identification of Christ with the hypostatized Wisdom again in chap. x. For in the later Jewish literature (Wisdom x. 15 *et seq.*) it is the Divine "Wisdom" which "delivers the righteous people from Egypt" and "brings them through the Red Sea," etc., and similarly in 1 Cor. x. St. Paul, after telling us of his Gospel of "Christ the Power and Wisdom of God," goes on to show how the sins of the ancient Israelites were committed "against Christ" and how

¹ "Autour," etc., p. 117.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 125.

the Rock that gave them relief from thirst "was Christ." But be this as it may, one may say certainly that if "Paul assigne hardiment cette place au Christ Éternel," this feat of theological evolution was completed at least some years before A.D. 56, and that reference to the later Epistles is really needless.

It is well to notice how closely Paul's Christology at this time corresponds with that of the fourth Gospel, and with that of those synoptic passages in Matt. xi. and Luke x., which Loisy tells us were only made utterances of Christ in later times. The teaching of "Christ crucified" includes, Paul says, for the fully instructed a Divine "mystery, . . . the *wisdom* which hath been hidden, which God foreordained unto our glory" (1 Cor. ii. 7, 8). "Christ is the *image of God*" (2 Cor. iv. 4). "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He *became poor*" (*ib.* viii. 9). (How could they "know" it, unless our Lord's pre-existent Divinity was an integral part of the Church's teaching?) He whom "the princes of this world crucified" was "*the Lord of glory*" (1 Cor. ii. 8)—an expression recalling our Lord's own saying, "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was," and the language in the prologue of the fourth Gospel. In 1 Cor. xv. He is the "*second man*," an expression built evidently on the term "Son of man" noticed in my last paper. He has been to the world "*a quickening Spirit*, an expression suggesting Christ's own words: "The Son quickeneth whom He will" (John v. 21). He is "*from heaven*"; *cf.* John iii. 13, where the Son of man is designated as "He that came down from heaven." It would, no doubt, be possible to carry the parallel further, but I content myself with noting that in A.D. 56-57 Paul connects these elements with the Gospel presented to the Corinthians about the years A.D. 50-52.

When, then, we have reached this point, the questions come before us from this part of the New Testament literature, too: Would even an Apostle be privileged to present Christ thus, had not the actual teaching of the Master supplied a basis? Is it a likely hypothesis that the first disciples were left without any fixed Christological doctrine to await the illumination of Paul? Is it conceivable that the new elements which take us so far beyond Loisy's "Christ de l'histoire" (as gauged by Acts ii. 23, etc.) were not only everywhere accepted, but tacked on to the recorded teachings of the Master as historical discourses, with place, hearers, and surroundings invented to give the semblance of historicity?

One may fairly remark, at all events, that, were such

"developments" conceivable, there would be good reason for those factions "of Paul," "of Apollos," and "of Cephas," which the Apostle here censures as a disgrace to the Corinthian Church. Indeed, his own exhortation, "that ye all speak the same thing," and his disclaimer, "Is Christ divided?" would have been invalidated by Apostolic practice.

The presentation of the mystery of the Atonement and of the work of the Holy Spirit was, doubtless, the subject of inspired investigation. The relations of Christianity to the Gentile races and their institutions and practices were the subject of determinations and prescriptions. The complex life of the early Church included, too, a recognition of *charismata* of the Holy Spirit in the field of prophesyings, as well as in Apostolic ordinances. But behind all this variety of thought and function, we may confidently say that there was then, as there is now, the one central truth—Jesus, the Manifestation of God. Special revelations were, indeed, made to Paul, and in his independence of the older Apostles he can legitimately state that his Gospel was not "of man." None the less, it is incredible that one who so presses unity of doctrine taught any other Gospel than that which the Church was acquainted with from the first, in respect to her Founder's personality. The foundation had been deeply laid in many hearts before the conversion of Paul, and, as he himself says to the Corinthians, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." We have seen what "Jesus Christ" means for St. Paul in this Epistle: that we may be sure, and nothing less, was the belief of all the Churches.

There is no occasion, then, to carry the theory of "evolution" into other provinces than those generally recognised—the realization of the distinct Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and consequently of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The Acts sufficiently shows us how this advance was made—viz., by personal experience of the Holy Spirit's working.

The Acts, too, of course, confirms the record in the fourth Gospel of the promise of the Holy Spirit's coming. It may even be said that Luke's two accounts of Christ's charges to the Apostles after the resurrection, and the wording "the promise of the Father which ye have heard of Me" only become intelligible by the light of the well-known utterances in John xiv., xv. Loisy, as we have seen, repudiates the historicity of these utterances. His comment on John xiv. 26 strikes one, therefore, as a curious illustration of the mental confusion involved by all attempts to reconcile destructive critical methods with the ecclesiastical pretensions of ultra-

montanism. "Ces paroles de Sauveur . . . doivent justifier la méthode de l'évangéliste, et elles signifient l'action permanente de l'Esprit dans l'Église . . . l'infallibilité de l'Église si l'on veut ; mais dans un sens positif comme un don d'illumination conquérante, non seulement comme une assistance contre le danger d'erreur."¹ Yet *ex hypothesi* "ces paroles" are purely fictitious, and are merely attributed to the Saviour by an unknown idealist writer. They are, therefore, as incapable of justifying such inferences as a man is incapable of hoisting himself by his own waistband. The lamented Dr. Salmon dealt, I think, very successfully with that fallacious doctrine, "the infallibility of the Church." But surely his task would have been rendered easier of accomplishment had its Roman champions adopted the Abbé's methods.

ARTHUR C. JENNINGS.

(*To be continued.*)



ART. II.—THE BOOK OF GENESIS (*continued*).

OUR attention must now be drawn to the second account of the Creation and to the history of the Fall of man. But before doing so we should like to bring forward what we consider to be two or three instances of perversity on the part of the modern school of critics.

1. The first words of Gen. ii. 4 are made a subscription to the previous section, instead of an introduction to the following one. It is allowed that *everywhere else* the formula stands at the head of a section. Why is it not allowed to do so here? The answer is clear. Everywhere else the formula is attributed to the document labelled P, which is held to have contained the superscription as well. Here the formula follows an extract from P (Gen. i. 1 to ii. 3), but is succeeded by a section from J (Gen. ii. 4b to iv. 26). It cannot be that such a formula—for this is the argument—could have been one used in common both by J and P; therefore it must be, contrary to its usage elsewhere, turned into a subscription, and the extract from J made to begin in the middle of a sentence. That this was the reason seems to be clear from the treatment of another passage where the same difficulty

¹ "Le Qu. Évang.," p. 756.