

entrance to the Holy Sepulchre is in the depths of each of our hearts. Let us go down into it in order to find there the pledges of our adoption, the fragments of that record of debt which bore witness against us, now torn up by the hand of our heavenly Creditor; the fragments also of the sceptre of death, which has been shattered by the foot of our Deliverer; and finally, the helmet of hope that has been laid there by his hand, in order that every believer may enter and put it upon his own head. Oh, how comforting is such a visit to the overwhelmed soul! It returns from thence, as John came out of the sepulchre after seeing the linen clothes and the napkin wrapped together in a place by itself. "He *saw* and *believed*," he tells us himself, summing up in those few words the deepest experience of his life. Let us *believe* the testimony of those who have seen, a testimony which authenticates itself to our hearts as holy and therefore true. Then we, too, shall *see* also; we shall behold, even here below, the glory of God.¹

F. GODET.

THE GOSPEL IN THE EPISTLES.

I believe in the Holy Catholick Church, and in one Baptism for the remission of sins.

CLOSELY interwoven with the history of Christ's earthly life must of necessity be the history of those institutions which He founded among his disciples, and left through them as an inheritance to all who

¹ Professor Godet has treated the subject of the evidences of the Resurrection of Christ, and summed up his arguments respecting it, more completely, in some respects, with reference to modern objections, in an *excursus* appended to the forthcoming edition of his Commentary on St. Jchn's Gospel.—TR.

hereafter should bear his name. And there is hardly any point on which the accord is greater between the early Epistles of St. Paul and the later-written records of the Evangelists than on the history of the primitive Christian organization.

First and foremost we must notice that Christianity is set before us in St. Paul's letters as above everything a preaching institution. Now preaching, as Christ and the early Christians preached, was a new thing in the world. The heathen teachers of Greece and Rome had never been preachers animated as the Christians were with the desire of making converts, and of spreading their doctrines throughout the world. And they differed from the Christians also in having no message for the poor and uninstructed, no gospel of glad tidings for all people. Nor did the Jew preach. The great object with him was to keep himself separate, and his chief idea had in Christ's time come to be that he was a chosen being, one of Abraham's seed, on whom there could come no care for making proselytes. "Ye know," said St. Peter to Cornelius and his friends at Cæsarea (Acts x. 28), and he was only echoing the sentiment of the whole nation, "that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation." The Christian institutions broke down this exclusiveness. From beginning to end, the letters of St. Paul are full of zeal for preaching; yea, he thanks God that this was the end which had been set before him rather than any other duties of a Christian minister. "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. i. 17). And in this very sentence we have the two words

which mark the new character of the whole of the Christian work. First, the teachers were *sent*, divinely sent, Christ's own missionaries, and so they are called from the very beginning. St. Paul's word here (*ἀπέστειλε*) is the verb which gives to these first preachers their new name, *apostles*, the name which he is never weary of applying to himself and to his fellow-labourers. "Paul, called to be *an apostle* of Jesus Christ" (I Cor. i. 1); "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, *called to be an apostle*" (Rom. i. 1); and when he needs to put forth a ground for his claim for support from his converts, a claim which he ever asserted that he had a right to make, but which he never made, he says, "Am I not an *apostle*, am I not free?" (I Cor. ix. 1.) So in like manner he speaks of his fellow-labourers as *the other apostles* (Gal. ii. 9), who had received a commission from the same authority as himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. The other distinctive word is the title *Gospel*. For this the writers of the New Testament seized and converted to their own use a Greek word (*εὐαγγέλιον*) meaning good news, or perhaps more frequently the reward for bringing such news, but which had never been employed concerning good news like theirs. The solitary messenger who on some occasion had glad tidings to announce had of course employed this word to define his message, which might be a concern of but a moment. But in the mouths of the new teachers, *εὐαγγέλιον* became the name for the whole message of Jesus Christ in every aspect and for all time, and has since become the special name for those writings which contain the story of the earthly life of Jesus. And not content with this,

they have formed from the noun a verb. The life of Christ and its lessons to mankind are the *Evangel*, and the work of all who should spread the tidings of this great Teacher is called by a new title, to *evangelize*. The word is almost unknown in classical Greek, never used by any good writer, as the critics say,¹ but the first Christian teachers made it the great word to describe their office, and it occurs on every page of the writings of St. Paul. Our English Version renders it in several ways, to *preach* simply, as (1 Cor. xv. 2), "Keep in memory what I *preached* unto you;" or to *preach the gospel*, as (Rom. xv. 20), "So have I strived to *preach the gospel*;" to *bring glad tidings*, as (Rom. x. 15), "How beautiful are the feet of them that *bring glad tidings* of good things." In other epistles there are other variations, but everywhere in the original is this one verb, strange to classic ears, which the first preachers made their own, and invested with a dignity which its occurrence in classic writers could never have bestowed, *εὐαγγελίζεω*, "to evangelize."

And for the discharge of the great duty signified in this, their special word, those employed were to be of a devoted character. It was to be no duty that could be discharged in a brief time, but all through his epistles St. Paul represents himself and his associates as bound to do this work of evangelizing, as a special and continuous service owed to God. Thus in Romans i. 9, after having just before called himself a *servant* of Jesus Christ, he adds, "God is my witness, whom I *serve* with my spirit in the gospel of his Son." And we may see the

¹ See Lobeck, *ad Phrynichum*, p. 268.

solemnity with which he viewed his enjoined duty, if we consider his words (1 Cor. ix. 16), "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, *woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.*" And the lives of the preachers were to be devoted to going about through all the world, a sight which had never been seen or dreamt of before, that all men might know this eternal good news of which they were the deputed heralds. For to the Romans (Chap. i. 5) the Apostle testifies, "We have received grace and apostleship (*i. e.*, the very commission on which all our life's course is now based) for obedience to the faith *among all nations*, for his name." All the world was to hear the new message, all the world was to be invited to obey the precepts of the new Master. In like tone to the Corinthians (2 Cor. x. 14-16) he writes, "We have come *as far as to you* also in preaching the gospel of Christ;" but adds directly, as though there were to be no end to his work, that his desire is "to preach the gospel in *the regions beyond*" Corinth.

Nor were these messengers to look for an easy lot in the discharge of their duty. They were to be like men going into an enemy's land, with a full determination to win it for their King. And this St. Paul feels, though he uses the language of the first peaceful overtures from foe to foe, when he writes (2 Cor. v. 20), "Now then we are *ambassadors* for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye *reconciled* to God." Your ways and your doings make you foes to Him. He would have you as his friends and subjects. And this glad news we bring unto you.

Now this institution of preaching, and all its surroundings, so new in the world's experience, is just that which Christ founded during his life, and enjoined on his followers before his ascension. In sending forth the Twelve we read (Matt. x. 7), "And as ye go, *preach*, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." And when afterwards the Seventy received their commission, it was for a like purpose (Luke x. 1, *seq.*). "He sent them two and two into every city and every place whither he himself would come;" and both to those who received them and to those who refused to hear, they were to be preachers of the same message, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." And to mark the solemnity with which it was attended, He adds, "He that heareth you *heareth me*; and he that despiseth you *despiseth me*; and he that despiseth me *despiseth him that sent me.*" Yet Christ did not lead his first emissaries to think that the duty which He had assigned to them would be an easy one. "I send you forth," are his words (Matt. x. 16), "as sheep in the midst of wolves. . . . Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; . . . and ye shall be hated of all men *for my name's sake.*" And hence we gather what the purport of this new teaching was to be. It was Christ's deeds and Christ's gospel which they were to carry abroad, as He says (Matt. xxviii. 20), "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Now this description of the message and character of the preaching is what appears on every page of the epistles of St. Paul. Thus (1 Cor. ix. 12), "We *suffer all things*, lest we should hinder

the *gospel of Christ*;" and in the Second Epistle (Chap. ii. 12), "I came to Troas to preach *Christ's gospel*;" and again (Chap. iv. 5), "We preach not ourselves, but *Christ Jesus the Lord*, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." And just as St. Luke in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles (Chap. iii. 12-16) makes St. Peter, at the outset of the gospel preaching, proclaim that it was the power of the crucified Jesus which had given to the cripple his strength, so to the Galatians (Chap. iii. 1) St. Paul bears witness that it was *Christ crucified* who had been set forth as the Saviour by those who had preached unto them. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes *Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified* among you?" These words were written many years before the Acts of the Apostles; and the character of their remonstrance implies that the preaching of Christ crucified had been heard in Galatia some time before the epistle was written. The people had accepted the message of salvation through faith in Christ from the teaching of the Apostle and his companions, or perhaps of some who had preceded them, and had persevered in these doctrines for some considerable while. For he writes of them (Chap. v. 7), "Ye did run well." It was, therefore, only after a lapse of some time that they had been beguiled to put their necks under the Jewish yoke of bondage. The preaching which had won them to Christ had been given to them some years before St. Paul felt moved to write this epistle of loving remonstrance, every detail of which, so far as it touches on the gospel story, anticipates the later-

written narratives of the Evangelists. And we may gather from another peculiarity which prevails in all these letters, that the first converted heathen had been made aware of that injunction of Christ which confined the efforts of his first preachers to the Jewish nation, but that He afterwards, at his parting benediction, extended their field of labour to the Gentiles also. For the allusions in the epistles are not made to the call of the Jews first as God's people and the seed of Abraham, but simply as the first recipients of the gospel message. "I am not ashamed," he says (Rom. i. 16), "of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." And once more, in allusion to the contributions of the Gentile Churches to the relief of the Christians of Jerusalem, in a passage (Rom. xv. 27) which cannot possibly apply to anything but the gospel message, he writes, "For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things (*i. e.*, the message of Christ Jesus which the Jews had received first), their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things." The persons to whom these words were intelligible (and more to the same purport might be produced) must have known from the lips of preachers those historical details with which we have been made familiar in the Gospels; how at first the Jews alone had been invited to hear Christ's message, had been made partakers of "the children's bread;" and that it was only at a later time that the door had been thrown open more widely, and the gospel given freely "to every creature in all the world." Thus do we see that the novel institution of missionary preaching

meets us exactly in the same wise in St. Paul's epistles as we find it presented in the writings of the Evangelists. These men went forth far and wide, they preached the good news with which Christ had charged them, and the cross of Christ was the theme on which they were constantly dwelling. They gave forth in their preaching, as its subject of necessity implies, a history of Jesus, with such details as would explain his mission, and the causes which led to his crucifixion ; and even descended to such minute points in the history of the scheme of Christianity as to let it be known to their hearers that the message of glad tidings was not at first published so widely as it was after the death of its Founder. When preachers said so much, there is little in the Gospels which they could have left unnoticed. They must have told of their own appointment as apostles, of the many causes which the Jews had found in Christ's miracles and teaching for that hatred and opposition which ultimately culminated in his execution on Calvary; and they must have told of his later life after the Resurrection, for in that time it was that the mission to the Gentiles was announced. To be in such wise preachers of Jesus Christ, implies that his life was the great theme on which they spoke, and its lessons the constant topics of instruction.

And just as they dealt with *εὐαγγέλιον*, so did they deal with another word from classic authors, that is, *ἐκκλησία*. Before the Christian period this word, of constant occurrence in Greek writings, was employed to denote various political assemblies, and above all, the general assembly of citizens at Athens. The Christians were to have their assemblies, though for

no political end, yet they took hold of this word, *ecclesia*, and adopted it, and through this employment of it it has since become hardly applicable to any meeting but for religious purposes; and when we speak of *ecclesiastic* affairs, our words can bear no interpretation but the affairs of the Church. This word, St. Matthew tells us, Jesus Himself used of his new sodality (Chap. xvi. 18), "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church" (τὴν ἐκκλησίαν). And speaking again of the functions which this body should exercise in times to come, we read (Matt. xviii. 17), If thy brother who has trespassed against thee will not hear the counsel of friends, "tell it unto the *church*: but if he neglect to hear *the church*, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Now, precisely in the same way do we find St. Paul employing this borrowed word in all his epistles, before the present Gospels had been reduced to writing, thus shewing that the establishment of such religious assemblies dates from the very earliest preaching of Christianity. We need hardly do more than look at the last Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and we shall there find this matter illustrated in almost every point of view. In the first verse we read of Phebe, "a servant of the *church* which is at Cenchrea," a verse which by itself testifies that wherever a Christian community was established there the body of members were known by this distinctive title, "the *ecclesia*." Cenchrea was not a place of great importance, except as one of the ports of Corinth, but its body of worshippers formed their own *ecclesia*. And that this was so in other places, may be more fully seen from

Verse 4 of the same Chapter, where the Apostle speaks of "all the *churches* of the Gentiles," in the sense in which we might now employ the word congregation. We know from the Acts of the Apostles that these "churches" were at first assembled in private houses placed at the disposal of the congregations by their richer members. In exact parallel with this does St. Paul exhibit the Christians at Rome in his day (Chap. xvi. 3-5). "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, . . . and likewise the *church* that is in their house." And Gaius, spoken of in a later verse (Chap. xvi. 23), must also have been one who in the same way lent his house for the use of the worshippers, for St. Paul calls him "the host of the whole *church*." Such was the condition of Christian services at Rome, such their *ἐκκλησίαι*, when St. Paul wrote; and to them he sends among his greetings (Chap. xvi. 16) from other places possessing similar institutions, the message, "The *churches* of Christ salute you." The same features meet our view in the Epistles to Corinth and Galatia. It is to "the *church* of God which is at Corinth" that the Apostle addresses both his letters (1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Cor. i. 1); and as the Galatian Epistle must circulate through the whole province, it is inscribed (Chap. i. 2) "unto the *churches* of Galatia;" and in like manner does he speak in this last Epistle (Chap. i. 22) of "the *churches* of Judæa which were in Christ;" and in these three Epistles the word *ἐκκλησία* is found almost as many times as there are chapters in the letters, shewing that an expression which five and twenty years before had been solely employed for political assemblies in the heathen world had become the

familiar term for the meetings of Christian worshippers. Thus have we the incontrovertible testimony of history embalmed in language to the nature of the Christian institutions in this particular; and this testimony shews that what Christ is reported to have designed at the outset for the constitution of his societies, was acted on throughout Asia and Europe, wherever the gospel had been preached in the days of St. Paul. Christ had said, "I will build my *church*," and every congregation from the earliest days called itself by this name, as a constituent portion of Christ's great *ecclesia*; and all these institutions, which presuppose that appointment of which the Gospels tell us, had come into vigorous existence many years before any of the narratives of the Evangelists were penned.

Once more: when we come to examine into the notices of those two ordinances most peculiarly Christian, I mean the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are to be found in St. Paul's letters, we meet with most interesting evidence that the Gospel teaching and the institutions by which Jesus had marked the new communion were at once carried into action, and were in full operation in the wide-spread congregations of Christians to whom St. Paul sent his epistles. Of the sacrament of Baptism it does not come within the scope of the Gospels to mention more than its mere institution. That it was to be the sign of Christian communion we may gather from Mark (Chap. xvi. 16); and from St. Matthew (Chap. xxviii. 19) we learn that it was to be used as the means of admission into the Christian body. "Go ye therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" — a sentence from which we are taught how baptism was to be administered in the name of the three Persons of the Trinity. And this is all the Gospels tell us of a rite which was to play so important a part in the foundation of the Christian society. But when we turn to St. Paul, we see in active use all the system of which the Gospels merely give the institution. Speaking in a tone of reproof to the Corinthians (1 Cor. i. 13), to warn them against rending the unity of the body of Christ's Church, he asks, "Is Christ divided? Were ye *baptized* in the name of Paul?" implying that it was into the name of Christ that they had been received, and that therefore they were of Christ's party only. But, as he proceeds, we learn that all the congregation had been received into the Church by this sacrament. "I thank God," he continues, "I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius." You are all baptized, but, in consequence of your divisions, I rejoice that I was not the minister of that sacrament unto you, "lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name." And not only was the ordinance of Baptism in general use, but the lessons to be derived from its symbolism had been taught and were understood. To the Romans (Chap. vi. 3) the Apostle writes, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." The dipping of the new convert into the water had its spiritual lesson closely united to the outward visible sign. And we learn also that some of the body of believers endeavoured to

secure the benefits of this holy initiation into the Church of Christ for those of their friends who had already departed from the world. It is difficult to understand in any other sense the sentence about "those who were baptized for the dead," of whom the Apostle speaks in 1 Corinthians xv. 29. Rightly or wrongly, these people were actuated by the pious hope that their faithful reception of baptism might impart some blessing to their friends who had been called out of life before this new sacrament, whereby believers should be united to Christ, had been made known, and that they too might be reckoned in the number of those who had been "baptized into Christ," or, as St. Paul calls it elsewhere, "who had put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27).

Now, to bring into general use the rite of baptism was, we may be sure, from what has happened in the conversion of the heathen elsewhere, a work of some long time, and still longer would it require before the minds of converts from heathenism were prepared to receive such teaching as we have just quoted from St. Paul; and it can only have been after years of Christian lessons that the pious hope which the Corinthian brethren cherished, of helping their departed friends, could come into the thoughts of the Churches, and the observance, which the expression indicates, grow so common that St. Paul could allude to it in the brief and general terms which he there employs. Baptism had been in use, and all the history of its institution, as well as the solemn lessons which it was meant to teach, had been understood for years in the Corinthian Church before the writing of St. Paul's First Epistle; and all the notices that he

there gives of the rite correspond with what we should expect from the slight details which the Gospel narrative gives us of the institution of Baptism. Little is said on the subject in the Gospels, but what we do find prepares us for such observances as these Epistles set before us. Yet this baptizing and teaching of converts had been going on for years in Corinth before the writings of St. Matthew and St. Mark were in existence. What can we conclude from all this but that everything which the Gospels tell us of this sacrament had been orally communicated to the Corinthian Church? St. Paul's Epistles are our witness that these men knew this portion of the Gospel long before it was found necessary to put the story of Christ's life into an authentic form.

When we turn to the other sacrament, we find, in the same First Epistle to the Corinthians, an account of its institution quite as precise as anything which we have in the Synoptists, who alone give us any history thereof. Before any of our Gospels existed, St. Paul was able to appeal to the Christians at Corinth concerning his teaching, and say (1 Cor. xi. 23) that it had been: "that the Lord Jesus, in the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." And in a previous Chapter (Chap. x. 16) he had said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"

The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" It is manifest from this language that by these converts the whole history of this institution, and the significance of the holy ordinance, was thoroughly understood.

We ought not, in an inquiry like the present, whose object is to point out that the life and lessons of Christ were well known from oral teaching long ere the Gospels were committed to writing, to lose sight of a fact in connection with the Lord's Supper to which attention has lately been drawn.¹ This is, that the whole of the language connected with its institution is of a very strange and startling character. That a teacher should give to his followers his flesh to eat, is an expression which would hardly have been used, except from a direct injunction of the Master. Church history tells us of the horrible imputations to which the use of such a phrase exposed the first Christians. And we feel, as we read the account, that the words could only have been given to and accepted by disciples who had drunk largely from the Teacher's own lips of such lessons as are contained in the sixth Chapter of St. John's Gospel; men who had been trained to comprehend the force of words like those of Jesus, "I am the bread of life;" "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." We feel that into a rite, of which the terms of institution would be shocking to untrained minds, true spiritual life could only have been infused by the presence at the first breaking of bread of Him who said, "This is my body," and in this

¹ In a Sermon, by Prof. Salmon, on "The Evidential Value of the Eucharist." "Reign of Law, and other Sermons," p. 37, *et seq.*

way taught the first recipients the spiritual nature of the sacrament which He was ordaining for them. But when once understood and its blessings appreciated, it could never be allowed to die out. A solemnity would also attach to the very words of institution, which would give them a power that no time could weaken. This very language we find in use among the Corinthians long before the date of the Gospels, and we may be almost sure that they received the ordinance of the Lord's Supper either from the apostles themselves or from some of those teachers who were sent forth by them to different fields of missionary labour. From this instance we may fairly infer that the celebration of the Lord's Supper was introduced by the earliest teachers into each congregation which they formed; and if this, the most solemn of all the rites of the Church, much more all the rest, and with them the history was of necessity given which would account for their institution, that is, they were taught the story of the Gospels.

But the events which called forth these words of St. Paul about the institution of the Lord's Supper are of great importance for our purpose. We gather from a study of them, not only that the Corinthians had been taught all these things, but that by the lapse of time, and increased familiarity with the sacrament, this solemn ordinance had lost, in their observance, much of the reverent awe with which it must at first have been regarded. The words which have been quoted form part of a chapter of rebuke which the Apostle administers because there had been unseemly disorder in the Corinthian congregation at the cele-

bration of the Lord's Supper. "When ye come together," he says, "into one place, there is no eating the Lord's Supper. For in eating each one taketh before other his own supper : and one is hungry, and another is drunken." No brief space of time must have elapsed since the first solemn administration of the Holy Sacrament at Corinth ere such scenes of clamour and confusion could have become possible. *Nemo repente turpissimus* holds good here, and we therefore have in this passage a strong proof that the teaching to which St. Paul appeals as delivered by himself to the Corinthians, and which is in complete accord with the words of the Gospels, had been imparted several years before this remonstrance became necessary, and therefore a still longer time before the Gospels were put into a written form.

From all these particulars we can see that we have no need to do battle for the early date of any written Gospel, because the whole of that economy of the Church which we have just been reviewing, and by consequence the historic details out of which the ordinances arose, was known and understood (part of it, alas ! perverted) before a line of any Evangelist was circulated.

Let us briefly recount those facts of Gospel history which our survey of the Christian institutions, as they appear in the Epistles, have proved to have been made known wherever the gospel was preached. The glad tidings of Christ were carried abroad by the preaching of the apostles. They must have explained their appointment and the source from whence they derived their authority. No journeys were too great for them to undertake, no peril was

able to daunt them; and when men spake to them of their labours, they must have received a reply which would tell them that for all this they had been prepared by the Master's teaching from the first. Wherever they went they founded societies, and called these by a name which Christ Himself is said to have chosen. Must they not of necessity have explained this, and how they came to be employing the words of the Greek authors in senses so widely different from their first use? Converts were admitted into the Church by baptism in the way and with the words which the Gospels tell us Christ Himself appointed. Can we suppose these converts to have been left ignorant of the origin of this rite to which they were invited to submit? The account of the Lord's Supper which St. Paul gives might be used as a history of the institution of that sacrament. Are we to think that the complete history of the whole of that night in Christ's life had not been recited to the Corinthian disciples?

Such is the evidence we can draw from these Epistles on the points which we have just been considering, and it will be seen that it supplies no scanty contribution to a Gospel history; and that were the other Gospels taken from us, we might compile, from these documents alone, a copious Gospel according to St. Paul, from which little would be wanting, on the subject of the rites of the early Church, which we are able to gather from the records of the Evangelists.