

considerate Master and a most righteous tender Father, we should lay our needs and wishes before Him, with a sure and certain hope that through the operation of law or by transcending law, by granting or by refusing our requests, He will give us all that we really need.

And, finally, I think we have a right to ask this question: If in all departments of human life we find that men can depart from the strict observance of law without sinking into caprice, nay, may thus rise to an exhibition of equity, of kindness, of love; why are we to concede the assumption that God's sole alternative is Law or Caprice? On what ground are we asked to admit that *He* can never suspend, or modify, or transcend the operation of his laws except at the prompting of a blind and unreasonable impulse? Surely equity, kindness, love, are not impossible to Him. And if they are not, we *must* traverse the fundamental assumption of the Uniformitarian School; we must affirm that God is neither the slave of his laws nor the sport of an arbitrary caprice; but a Judge who loves righteousness, a Master who rules by serving, and a Father who loves us with a pure and all-transcending affection. CARPUS.

THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION.

CHRISTIANITY was introduced into the world, not as an absolutely new religion, but as the development and fulfilment of Judaism. Its Founder was initiated into the Jewish covenant by circumcision; He was baptized by John the Baptist on the ground that it was becoming that He should fulfil all the outward

observances pertaining to a religious life; and He kept the feasts which a pious Israelite was bound to keep. Outwardly, therefore, He appeared before his countrymen as one of themselves; and when He began to teach He was regarded not as the author of a new religion, but as one who professed to have been anointed by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of proclaiming good news of deliverance from certain evils. And in his earliest public teaching He appears to have anticipated the objection that He was setting Himself in opposition to the established religion. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Not to destroy (*καταλῦσαι*), that is, not to overthrow suddenly and violently, as the Temple was overthrown by the Romans (cf. Matt. xxiv. 2, *καταλυθήσεται*), but to fulfil (*πληρῶσαι*), that is, to fill up that which before was empty; to conduct it to its full accomplishment by bringing in the higher law on which the law and the prophets depend. But this fulfilment involved an important change in the position of the Law, for the interest which attaches to a prediction or a promise before it is fulfilled is quite different from that which we feel about it afterwards: it is a past rather than a present interest which now belongs to it. We may retain the promissory note after the money has been paid, but if we do, it is in order that we may possess a record of the whole transaction, no longer as a valuable security.

And in accordance with this principle, we find that Christ in his public teaching refers but rarely to the Law, and when He does, He either speaks of it as holding an inferior position to his teaching—"It was

said by them of old time ; . . . but I say unto you ;” . . . “ Moses because of the hardness of your heart gave you this precept ;” “ In this place is one greater than the Sabbath ”—or else He selects from it an isolated precept, which He adopts as the one great commandment on which the rest depend. Indeed, there is very little in the oral teaching of Christ, so far as it has come down to us, that would not be as intelligible to a person ignorant of the Old Testament as it was to the Jews to whom it was addressed.

Not so, however, is it with the teaching of the Apostles. Both in their spoken words as recorded in the Acts, and in their written Epistles, we find frequent, and in some cases abstruse, references to the Old Testament ; minute illustrations, quotations sometimes turning on a word, and, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, elaborate parallels between the Jewish ceremonial and the Christian doctrine. Unlike the Gospels, the Epistles would be to a considerable extent unintelligible without a knowledge of the Jewish system. And from this it has resulted, quite naturally, that the Christian Church has always sought in the Old Testament for precedents for her observances, for illustrations of her teaching, and even for direct anticipations of her doctrine. On the Sabbath of the seventh day has been based the observance of the first day of the week ; in the Jewish priesthood has been seen, under various forms it is true, the Christian hierarchy ; in the laying of the high priest's hands on the head of the scapegoat, while he confessed the sins of the people, has been recognized the vicarious aspect of the Atonement. How far Christian theology has

been coloured by purely Jewish elements is indeed an intricate question, and one which has as yet received but very inadequate discussion; but it would be well if the Christian Church would attempt some solution of the question,—a very practical one for English Christians in the present day,—If St. Paul should come among us now, would he enforce upon our missionary societies the necessity of instructing native converts in Hindostan, in New Zealand, and in Africa, in the history and literature and ritual of the Hebrew nation, before they could be considered more than babes in Christ? or would he pronounce that after eighteen centuries Christianity is able to run alone, and that while there is much in Moses and the Prophets and in the Psalms that is imperishable because it is human, there is much also that is separable from Christianity because it is Jewish? Are we to suppose that if St. Paul were writing to a Christian Church now he would write precisely as he did to the Churches of Rome or of Galatia; or may we construct a kind of proportion, and say, That as was the first century to the nineteenth, so would St. Paul's teaching to the Christians of the first century be to his teaching to those of the nineteenth?

It is at least worth observing that we find in the writings of the Apostles no trace of any idea that they were writing for future ages; indeed, their whole thought of the future seems to have concentrated itself in the looking for the day of Christ. Unless, therefore, we hold that the form as well as the substance of their writings is the direct utterance of the Divine Spirit, there can be nothing in such an inquiry inconsistent with the truest reverence for Scripture.

There is a remarkable passage in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, which has an important bearing on this subject. St. Paul declares that the Gospel of the Uncircumcision (ἐναγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας) was committed to him, and the Gospel of the Circumcision (ἐναγγέλιον τῆς περιτομῆς) to Peter. Professor Lightfoot, indeed, than whom there can hardly be a higher authority, says that this denotes a distinction of sphere and not of type, quoting the words of Tertullian, "Inter se distributionem officii ordinaverunt, non separationem evangelii, nec ut *aliud* alter sed ut *aliis* alter prædicarent" (They arranged between them a distribution of their work, not a division of the gospel, nor so that they should preach different matter, but only to different classes). But the phrase, πεπίστευμαι τὸ ἐναγγέλιον (I was put in trust with the Gospel), like the one quoted by Dr. Lightfoot to illustrate it, ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ (To them were committed—or, literally, They were put in trust with—the oracles of God), refers, not to an office or an energy, but a subject. The ἐναγγέλιον is the matter of the good news, not the act of proclaiming it, for which another word (κήρυγμα, or rather κήρυξις) would be more appropriate. And therefore, if St. Paul's words are to be accepted literally, the Gospel of the Circumcision is not the task of preaching to the Gentiles, but the Circumcision's Gospel, the good tidings to be preached to them, and it is distinguished from the Uncircumcision's Gospel, or the good tidings to be preached to the Gentiles. It is therefore a question which fairly arises from his own words, Did St. Paul recognize any, and if so, what, difference between the

subject-matter to be preached to the Jews and that to be preached to the Gentiles?

But we are met at once by the objection, Granting for a moment that this is so, still remember it is St. Paul himself that is entrusted with the Gospel of the Uncircumcision, and therefore this is the Gospel that we practically possess in his teaching. True; and it is not improbable that the teaching of the Apostles of Jerusalem differed more or less widely from that of the Apostle of the Gentiles in respect of breadth and comprehensiveness. But beyond this, may we not trace in the teaching of St. Paul himself a difference, not indeed of doctrine, but of treatment and illustration, according as he is addressing Jews or Gentiles? Take, on the one hand, his address to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch, and, on the other, those to the simple pagans of Lystra and the philosophic idolaters of Athens. In the first, he bases himself, as Stephen had done, on the past history of the nation. He speaks of the exodus, of the wandering in the wilderness, of Saul and of David. The good tidings that he proclaims is that God had fulfilled the promise made to the fathers of Israel. He quotes the Psalms and refers to the prophets. To the Lystrans he speaks of the living God, who made heaven and earth and the sea; he speaks of the rain and the seasons, the outward nature with which they were familiar; and if it is too much to say, with M. Renan, "*L'effort des apôtres, quand ils prêchaient à des populations de ce genre, était moins de prêcher Jésus que de prêcher Dieu,*" we may at least say that their object was rather to preach Jesus the Saviour of all men, than

Christ the Messiah of the Jews. To the Athenians he declares that the unknown God, whom already they ignorantly worshipped, was indeed the God who had made the world and all things therein, and in whom they themselves lived and moved and had their being. He quotes not the Hebrew prophets, but their own poet Aratus, and he tells them how God had made all nations of men from one blood. But to neither the one audience nor the other does he say anything of the Jewish law, or speak of Christianity as in any way dependent on Judaism, or of the Gentiles as having to link themselves on to the past of Judaism before they can become really Christians. And in his Epistles we see the same distinction. Setting aside for a moment the Epistle to the Hebrews, as being almost certainly not St. Paul's, and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, as addressed to individuals and therefore not bearing on the question, we may almost gauge the relative proportions of the Jewish and Gentile elements in the several Churches by the amount of reference in the Epistles addressed to them to the Jewish law and ritual. In every Church, indeed, the two elements must have coexisted; but in the Epistles to Thessalonica and Corinth there is almost nothing of argument or illustration based upon Jewish history or ritual, while in those to the Romans and Galatians we seem to recognize in the elaborate argument to prove that Abraham was justified by faith, and in the remarkable passage in which Hagar and Sarah are made types of the old and new Covenants, an indication that the Apostle had in his mind Jewish converts, to whom the

familiar ideas of the Hebrew Scriptures would at once appeal, like the sound of some well-known tune. Still more do we find this in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Whoever may have been its author—and the profoundest critics of the present day gravitate more and more towards Luther's happy conjecture that it was written by Apollos—its title, "To the Hebrews," is incontrovertible. And further, it is generally agreed that the Epistle was addressed, not to the Hebrew Christians at large—the numerous special references, as Chapter vi. Verses 10–12, and Chapter xiii. Verses 19, 23, 24, make this view untenable—but to the Hebrew element in a particular Christian community, whether in Asia Minor, Rome, Jerusalem, or Alexandria. Indeed, the main argument of the dogmatic portion of the Epistle, that Christ has received a higher priesthood than that of Aaron, is one which would not need to be enforced upon Gentile Christians. When the writer, in the latter part of the Epistle, quits this subject and turns to the subject of faith, summoning as witnesses to the power of this great principle the heroes of the old Covenant, then indeed he makes us feel at once that the Christian Church without the Jewish would be imperfect; and that just as America claims an equal share with ourselves in the glories of old England, so we Christians claim our part in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in Moses, in Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthah, in David also, and Samuel, and the prophets. But just as an American citizen, unless he is studying constitutional history, may be pardoned if he takes but little interest in the origin and history of the English borough franchise, although

that very franchise may have preserved in dark days the spirit of liberty which was the seed of the great Republic of the West, so a modern Christian, who seeks in his Bible instruction in righteousness rather than in theology, will find that he instinctively passes somewhat lightly over the earlier Chapters of this Epistle, to dwell with delight upon the last five. Indeed, let preachers and theologians say what they will, there is in the spiritual life of every simple Christian an unconscious process of natural selection, by which he assimilates to himself those portions of Scripture which he finds nourish him, and passes by those which do not speak so directly to his heart.

The cry for "Christianity without Judaism" is no doubt apt to be a fallacious and a dangerous one. It is not an uncommon artifice to class together among inherited Jewish superstitions many truths or aspects of truth which, rightly viewed, would be found full of precious spiritual import. But on the other hand it is no uncommon thing to meet with systems of Christian doctrine in which the pure ore of gospel truth seems to have been melted down and cast in a Jewish mould; in which, if the substance is Christian, the form and colour are of the old Covenant. Take, for example, the great critical instance of the Atonement. That the good Shepherd layeth down his life on behalf of the sheep—that Christ died on behalf of our sins according to the Old Testament Scripture—that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin—this is what no Christian soul could do without; it is the very life of the soul. But theologians have not been content to feed upon this truth: they must analyze it, define it, discover pre-

cisely what it is in the Atonement that affects our relation to God. And this they have done for the most part by hardening into literal prosaic fact the figures, the shadows, the allusions which they found in the writings of the old Covenant and in the ritual of the Jewish Church. That the ordinances, the sacrifices, the types of the old dispensation, were intended to bring the Jews to Christ—to educate them up to Him—is most true: they were a shadow of things to come. But when the substance is present, we do not turn to the shadow in order to get a clear idea of its outline. We correct the shadow by the substance, not the substance by the shadow. And, therefore, while in writing to Hebrews it was natural to adduce the fact that under the Law there was no remission of ceremonial guilt without shedding of blood in illustration of the infinitely nobler and more spiritual sacrifice which began in the Incarnation and found its highest expression in the death of Christ, to found upon this text the inference that God required blood-shedding as an antecedent condition of the remission of sins, is surely to invert the relative positions of the old and new Covenants, and to take Moses as the interpreter of Christ, instead of Christ as the fulfilment of Moses.

Is it, then, the office of the Christian expositor to eliminate from the Mosaic system certain inferior and carnal constituents, unworthy of the more spiritual revelation which we possess in Christianity? Far from it. Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil; not to evacuate the old Covenant, but to spiritualize it, to lift it to a higher level, to bring out of the letter that killeth the spirit that giveth life. "The Old

Testament is not contrary to the New," but it is inferior and subordinate to it. There are, indeed, phases of spiritual life, both in Churches and in individuals, in which what may be called Jewish aspects of religious truths assume a disproportionate importance. There are minds, and there have been periods in the Church's history, in which what may be called the propitiatory aspect of the Atonement has well-nigh eclipsed all others; there are expositors of Christian doctrine, especially in the coarser forms of revivalism, in which this tremendous mystery is set forth as a *quid pro quo*, a bare compensation. And this produces a reaction, and a denial of any propitiatory element in it. But it is truer to say that it contains this and much more; that we can never exhaust its import; that the Atonement, like the love of Christ of which it is the expression, passeth knowledge; that whatever view of the Atonement meets a need of the human soul is a true view, but that it is hardly given to any one Christian soul to embrace its entire import; that we must endeavour to comprehend with *all* saints—with the saints of the old and of the new Covenant; with the saints of Calvinism and of Arminianism; with the saints of Catholicism and of Protestantism—what is the length and breadth and depth and height; and that only so may we hope to be filled with all the fulness of God.

And so we come round at last to the higher truth, that the Gospel of the Circumcision and the Gospel of the Uncircumcision are not after all two, but one; that they are two, indeed, so long as we insist upon making them two—two to the Jewish Christian who

cannot enter into the breadth of the new revelation; two to the Gentile Christian who impatiently refuses to see anything in the old Covenant but an effete national superstition; but that they are one if we will only rise to the serener heights where they meet, where, that which is perfect being come, that which is in part is done away; where there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but Christ is all and in all.

R. E. BARTLETT.

A CHAPTER OF GOSPEL HISTORY.

7.--THE SELF-ESTIMATE OF JESUS.

(*St. Matthew xi. 27.*)

THIS outstanding text, to which Keim has given the not inappropriate title of the Great Sonship Confession of Jesus, has from the earliest times attracted the attention of students of the Gospel history; and it was never an object of greater interest to theologians than it is at present. The saying of our Lord here recorded, and found also in the Third Gospel,¹ is invested with exceptional importance, both on doctrinal and on critical grounds. The striking resemblance between this Synoptical word and the utterances put into the mouth of Jesus by the Fourth Evangelist has already been adverted to in the first paper of this series. In view of this resemblance it seems natural to think that here, in this one precious text, we have a hint of a doctrine concerning the Person of the Speaker, rising above the general Synoptical level into the high mysterious region of truth in which John soars on eagle wing.

¹ Luke x. 21.