

intentions will count for good works. Like the son in the parable, they say, "I go, sir," and yet go not. "I will do better," they say; and yet they do no better, but fall back into their old course of careless negligence. And so the lamp, which has been lit in order that it might give light, is hidden under a bushel of good intentions, or under the couch on which they weep over their past offences, and the world is none the brighter for them, none the better.

Let us understand that we must *do* the will of God, not *intend* to do it merely, nor merely regret that we have not done it, nor be content either with feeling beautifully about it or speaking eloquently in its praise. That high Will has to be *done*, done in the good deeds of a good daily life, before men can really see what it is and how fair it is, and glorify our Father who is in heaven by an obedience like our own.

And let us remember that the lamp that would shine must *burn*; that to do good we must deny and sacrifice ourselves, sacrificing at least all that is evil, and denying ourselves in much that might be very good and pleasant for us did it not impede us in our service of God and man.

S. Cox.

THE HISTORICAL CHRIST OF ST. PAUL.

1. THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS (*Continued*).

ROMANS vi. 23.—"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." There are two distinct conceptions in this Verse; one of them is decidedly Jewish, the other as decidedly not Jewish. The Jewish conception is the connection between sin and destruction, "the wages of sin is death"; it bears so manifestly the stamp of the Old Testament that no one can have

the slightest difficulty in referring its origin in the mind of St. Paul to that part of his culture which was Judaic. The conception which is not Jewish, and which never could have come from Judea, is contained in the last clause of the Verse: "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." Let us consider what it implies—that the actual life of the Eternal, the essential being which dwells in the immortal Jehovah, is communicated to mortals through a son of man. An idea more distinctly anti-Jewish it would be impossible to conceive. The characteristic of the God of Judaism was the fact that He was incommunicable. He was self-existent, self-contained, absolutely self-sufficient. He dwelt in a region apart. His deepest nature had never been revealed to mortal eye; no man could see Him and live. The essential feature of his relation to humanity was the vastness of his distance from it. He could only speak to man through the medium of imperative command; and his communications required to be conveyed through the agency of intermediate intelligences. Such a view of God left no room for a conception which implied the communication of the Divine to the human. It would have repudiated the Pauline idea that God could present a gift of Himself, could make his own creatures the sharers in his essential life. Such a thought was the very antithesis of Judaism; yet it is the leading thought of the passage before us. Whence did Paul derive it? He was born and bred a Jew, and was up to the age of manhood impregnated with the genius of the national religion. All the original elements of his nature must have led him in an opposite direction from the thought he has expressed in this passage. There must, therefore, have entered into his mind some element different from those which made up his original constitution. The change in his inward experience must be referred to some collision of his old nature with the surroundings of a new historical atmosphere.

When we turn to the fourth Gospel we find ourselves in the presence of an atmosphere which would amply account for the Pauline consciousness. We find this Gospel dominated and pervaded by the idea that the Divine Life has imparted itself to the world; that the Son of God, in the form of the Son of Man, has communicated to the hearts of men the very essence of his own eternal being. The impartation is expressed in the boldest figures: He gives his flesh for the world; his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Of course we do not here assume that the narrative of the fourth Gospel is true, nor yet that it is the work of an Apostle: we simply take for granted that such a narrative is now in our hands; and, being in our hands, we ask how it is related to the passage before us. The answer to this question at least is irresistible. It is manifest that the conception of the fourth Gospel, if admitted to be historical, would explain the conception of Paul; it would reveal the existence of an atmosphere which would account for his revolt from the distant God of Judaism. This fact is very remarkable, and is well worth considering; it bears powerfully upon a point of modern criticism. It is a favourite doctrine of the Negative School that the fourth Gospel is the fruit of a later atmosphere than that of the first Christian age. We are told that there is a sharp contrast between the Christ of the apostolic period and the Christ of the closing century; the one is a practical Teacher, the other is a dreamy Mystic. The Christ of the first age, we are told, is essentially a Jew, recognizing the incommunicable unity of God, and conscious Himself of being the servant of God; the Christ of the fourth Gospel is a manifestation of the life of God, who, by revealing Himself in the soul of man, bridges for ever the chasm between them. We are told that this later Christ is the product of an Alexandrian influence, the mythical embodiment of a time when the internal was beginning to supplant the

external, and when the doctrines of Neo-Platonism were taking the place of the outward conceptions of Judaism. While the Temple stood, and the worship of the Temple was paramount, men had been content to reverence a Christ of history; when the Temple had passed away, and the externalizing tendencies of Jewish worship had been superseded, they were impelled to seek for a Christ who should be deeper and nearer than the historical Personage, a Christ who should not simply be seen and heard, but realized in the thought and felt in the heart.

Now no Christian apologist has ever denied that Christianity has an outward and an inward aspect; nor has he ever doubted the fact that, in the order of nature, the outward precedes the inward; Paul himself affirms that that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural. What the Christian apologist contends is that the spiritual conception of Christ is not an afterthought in the sense of being a human creation; he contends that the spiritual, like the natural, conception had its root in the first Christian atmosphere, and its origin in the life of the Founder. He will not accept the view that it is the product of an Alexandrian school. He refuses to accept that view, not from any dogmatic bias received from theological training, but simply and entirely on the ground of historical fact. He finds within the boards of the New Testament itself, and in a portion of the New Testament about which there can be no doubt at all, conclusive evidence that the idea here called Alexandrian had its home in the first Christian age and on the first Christian soil. Had the Apostolic origin of the fourth Gospel been conceded, its comparatively late date would not have prevented it from being regarded as the testimony of primitive Christianity; it would be felt to contain the sayings of one who had heard the words of the Master. But here is a testimony about whose Apostolic origin there cannot be a shadow of suspicion, a testimony

which is a generation earlier than John even on the orthodox supposition, and which beyond all question radiated from the dawn of the Christian Church. And when we examine it, what do we find? Simply this, that the conception of the fourth Gospel is concentrated and focused in a sentence: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Gospel of John simply exhibits this thought in endless variations—in the bread from heaven, and the water of life, and the flesh given for the food of the world. The conception is made more vivid, but nothing is added to its substance. The thought which is dominant in John is clearly prefigured in Paul; the thought that the Divine Life has, through a human life, been communicated to the life of humanity. It is vain, therefore, to say that the Christ of the fourth Gospel is an after-thought; in germ He is all here, in the very foreground of the historical scene. There are undoubtedly in our authorized Christian narratives two clearly marked stages of development, the earlier exhibiting the outward, and the later the inward, work of the Master. But the Epistles of St. Paul clearly prove that the earlier and the later stage alike belong to one historical atmosphere; that they are both exhibited in the original conception of the Christian Founder; and that the advent of the later development is already prefigured in the earlier. If we find in these Pauline Epistles an echo of those plain and practical precepts which mark the teaching of a primitive age, we are confronted not less powerfully by those germs of philosophic thought which constitute the preparation for an age which is to come; the Christ of the Synoptists and the Christ of St. John would seem to blend consistently in the heart and in the creed of the Gentile Apostle.

Romans vii. 4.—"That ye should be married to another; even to Him who is raised from the dead." Here we have

a passage which, to a considerable extent, runs upon the lines of the foregoing Scripture ; but it is expressed in a far bolder figure. So bold indeed is the metaphor, that it is only the familiarity of eighteen hundred years which prevents us from being startled by it ; the first Christian century must have felt it in all its force. St. Paul speaks of the human soul as *married* to the Divine Life. Marriage is the nearest possible form of union known amongst men. There are forms of union which do not imply an equality of rank. The relation of the head to the members is a union ; but it does not destroy the notion of the head's sovereignty. The relation of the soul to the body is a union ; but the soul remains supreme. The relation of the parent to the child is a union ; but the parent is king over the child. The marriage relation, on the other hand, whatever it may be in point of practice or even of civil law, is, in point of theory, a bond of oneness ; its root idea is the reduction to unity of lives that before ran separately. The marriage of the soul with the Divine Life is, therefore, the boldest of all figures ; it is a much more startling expression of union than anything in the fourth Gospel. It is more than the sheep and the Shepherd, more than the branches and the Vine, more than the participation in the flesh and blood of the Son of Man ; it is the idea of an essential identity of life, of a complete community of interest, and of an entire sharing of each in the possessions of the other. It becomes more and more impossible that St. Paul could have uttered these words if the atmosphere called Johannine were not already around him, if the conception of the fourth Gospel had not been involved in the earliest vision of Christianity. Nor does it seem to us a likely supposition that he would have ventured on a metaphor so bold, if there had not been ringing in his ears an echo from the words of the Master, which seemed to warrant it. If he knew as an historical fact that the Master had called Himself " the

Bridegroom," or if he was familiar with such parabolic references to the marriage feast as we meet with in the Synoptic Gospels, we can well understand his language; if he was the inventor of that language he must have transcended in a remarkable degree all traces of his Judaic birth and education.¹ The whole passage sounds like Johannine thought expressed in Synoptic symbolism. It singularly unites the elements of two generations. It breathes the atmosphere of profound mysticism, and as such it anticipates the spirit of the fourth Evangelist; it employs the metaphor of familiar daily life, and as such it re-echoes the spirit of an earlier day. On the very lowest computation, it may with confidence be affirmed that, if there were an historical Christ who united in his own person the characteristics of the first three Gospels with the spirit of the fourth, the natural outcome of such a union would be the passage before us.

Romans viii. 3, 4.—Here, for the first time in this Epistle, we get a glimpse into a very important subject—the relation which, in the opinion of the earliest Christian age, the Founder of Christianity bore to the essential faith of Judaism: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God [did], sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemning sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We wish, from the apologetic point of view, to attempt an analysis of this very important passage. We shall try to come to it with no foregone conclusion, but, in the first instance, to forget that we have already in our minds a discourse called the Sermon on the Mount, which professes to reveal Christ's relation to the law of

¹ Isaiah liv., Jeremiah iii. etc., are spoken of the ideal collective nation, not of individual men in history.

Judaism. We shall assume, meantime, that this is our first introduction to the Founder of Christianity in his attitude towards the old religion; and shall merely recapitulate the statement that, by the admission of the adversaries of the Faith, it is an introduction given by a document undoubtedly genuine and unquestionably belonging to the first Christian age.

What, then, according to this document, was Christ's relation to the Jewish law? First, and foremost, we have to observe the broad fact that, in the view of St. Paul, the aim of the Christian Founder was identical with the aim of the Law; it was in each case the condemnation of sin. St. Paul declares that Christ and Moses were allies, fellow-workers, towards the same great end. And this is all the more remarkable from the fact that it was Paul's interest to maintain the contrary, or, at least, to say nothing about it. There was a strong party in the Christian Church which desired to make Christianity merely the flower of Judaism; and the proclivities of the Gentile Apostle might well have led him either to underrate or to ignore the similarity of purpose proclaimed by the two systems. The fact that he did neither is a strong proof that such a similarity of purpose *was* proclaimed; and that the evidence for it was to his mind historically irresistible. With his habitual candour, therefore, he accepts the position. He maintains that the historical design of Him whom he calls the Son of God was to fulfil the righteousness of the law; that He came not to destroy the legal institutions of the past, but to carry on that very work which it was the special aim of these institutions to begin, continue, and finish.

But St. Paul goes further. He declares that the Christ of history could only fulfil the law by transcending it. He came to do that which the Mosaic institutions had all along designed to do; yet He came to do that which the Mosaic institutions had found themselves unable to accomplish.

The Jewish law, Paul says, had a Christian purpose ; but it could not carry out its purpose : it was too weak to execute its own mission. The Founder of Christianity came to impart to the law a new force ; and, in this light, He was apparently an innovator upon the things which had been said to them of old time.

Let us look yet more deeply into the passage, and we shall see yet more deeply into St. Paul's estimate of the relation which the Christ of history bore to the law of Judaism. That law, he says, was too weak to execute its own mission. Wherein, in his view, consisted its weakness ? He goes on to tell us ; he says it was "weak *through the flesh*" ; that is to say, weak by reason of its outwardness or carnality. As interpreted to the men of old time it meant no more than the command to refrain from certain acts of evil, and to perform certain acts of goodness ; it did not contemplate good and evil as principles of life which stretched in a moment over the acts of the whole man. The Jewish law had been viewed merely as a civil law ; it was a police force to prevent crime rather than a moral force to ensure purity ; and, therefore, all its prohibitions were interpreted in a local and temporary sense. The Founder of Christianity brought a new strength into the law by substituting an inner for an outward force, by replacing the walking after the flesh by the walking after the spirit. There was no difference in the attitude of walking ; the difference lay in the object which impelled the movement. The precepts of the Law were to be the precepts of the Gospel ; the distinction between the Law and the Gospel was to be the motive force which dictated their observance : those who had kept the Law had walked after the flesh ; those who obeyed the Gospel were to follow the impulse of the spirit.

Now in this analysis we deny that we have made any use of the document called the Sermon on the Mount.

We have read nothing into the passage, have exhibited nothing but what is directly and immediately involved in its teaching. Having done so, however, we are now at liberty to turn to this Sermon on the Mount. We are not, in the meantime, seeking for a similarity of portraiture; we can have no portraiture of a Christ until the facts have been all gathered. But when, in a document undoubtedly primitive, we find a fact stated in the same form as it appears in a document alleged to be later, we are entitled to conclude that the writer of the later MS. did not himself invent it, in other words, that it was not a myth of his own imagination. We have then a document alleged by Christians to be an authentic discourse delivered by the Founder of their religion, declared by negative criticism to be a fabrication of the second century. In this discourse there are put into the mouth of the Christian Founder these words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." The critics of the school of Tübingen make these words the product of the second century, and propose to explain their origin by the exigencies of the time. They tell us, and quite truly, that the Christendom of that period was divided between two tendencies, one seeking a Judaic and the other a Gentile atmosphere. The individual peculiarities of the Apostles had become the germs of distinct schools of thought, and each school tried to express itself in a Gospel of its own. The Judaic tendency expressed itself in a Gospel attributed to Matthew; the Gentile tendency in a Gospel attributed to Luke. The Gospel attributed to Matthew studied to represent its Christ in a Jewish attitude. It held Him up before the eye of Christendom as one who, amidst all his seeming innovations, had never really departed from the old conservative principle. Accordingly, in his Sermon on the Mount, it caused Him to speak as a Jew, put into his mouth the

words which betokened an unbroken harmony with the institutions of his ancestors: "Think not I came to destroy the law; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." When the school of Tübingen turns to Luke xvi. and xvii., it finds more difficulty. It attributes the Gospel of Luke to a Gentile Christian; and yet it finds that Gospel saying, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." But the school of Tübingen is not daunted. The Gospel of Luke is the work of a Gentile indeed; but it is the work of a Gentile of a conciliatory spirit. He admired St. Paul so much that he wanted to make the Christ of St. Paul the Christ of all Christendom; and he thought he would best effect this by putting into the mouth of the Pauline Christ some verbal concessions to Judaism. Accordingly, wherever a strong Gentile sentiment is uttered, it is generally followed by some modifying clause or qualifying consideration. In the immediately preceding Verse the writer had made an assertion very strongly Gentile: "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached." He is afraid he has gone too far. The Judaic party may be offended by a declaration so uncompromising. Something must be said to modify it. There must be put into the mouth of this Gentile Christ some utterances which may tend to reconcile Him with the sentiments of the Judaic Sermon on the Mount, some words which may help to unite Him with the conception of an earlier day. Therefore, immediately after the declaration has been made that the kingdom of heaven had superseded the reign of the law and the prophets, there is added the significant saying that the spirit of the law still governs the new regime: "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

Now before the earlier Pauline document this air-built castle of Baur and Zeller vanishes into its native element.

Here is a manuscript unquestionably belonging to the first Christian age, and indubitably the work of an early Christian disciple; and here, in the most unequivocal terms, is asserted Christ's relation to the Jewish law. It is the same relation which appears in our present Gospels. The Founder of Christianity stands before us in the light of a Reformer whose reforms are in the interest of conservatism, who fulfils the spirit of the old institutions by seeming to innovate upon them, and who adds strength to the original fabric by building it up from within. He does what the law could not do; but, all the time, He is executing its destined mission. And this seeming combination of the Innovator and the Conservative is not the effort of some Christian to reconcile Paul with Peter; it is Paul's own conception of the Christ of Christendom. In the very heat of his opposition to Judaism, and with every inward principle impelling him to revolt from the legal dispensation, the Apostle of the Gentiles has proclaimed to the world a Christ who came not to destroy the law but to fulfil. Is not this in itself a powerful presumption that the Christ of Paul is a Christ of history?

Romans xii. 4, 5, compared with Verse 14 *seq.* In the intervening Chapters there are references to the historical Christ which might have been adduced; but they move upon the same lines over which we have already travelled, and do not introduce any new matter. Our object in this inquiry is to avoid repetition; and therefore we confine ourselves to those passages which present a fresh phase of the Christian portraiture, or which furnish at least a fresh aspect of its old phases. We pass now to the 12th Chapter of *Romans*, and we begin with that portion of it which extends from the 14th Verse to the end. In reading these verses we are at once impressed with the notion that we have heard something like them before. They

contain a series of practical precepts, bearing an unmistakable resemblance to those in the Sermon on the Mount. The Apostle tells his readers to "bless those that persecute them, to bless and curse not"; and we recall the words of St. Matthew (Chap. v. 44), "Bless them that curse you." He tells them to "provide things honest in the sight of all men"; and we recall the command of St. Matthew (Chap. v. 14), "Let your light shine before men." He tells them to "recompense to no man evil for evil"; and we recall the injunction of St. Matthew (Chap. v. 39), "I say unto you that ye resist not evil." He tells them "to give place unto wrath, to feed their enemy if he hunger, to give him drink if he thirst"; and we recall the precept which the first Evangelist (St. Matt. v. 44) ascribes to the Master: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Now the question is, whence did St. Paul derive these precepts? or, rather, for we do not here look beyond the mind of the Apostle, whence did he profess to derive them? Is he speaking on his own individual responsibility, or is he uttering the mandates of another? A moment's reflection will make it evident that St. Paul is not uttering these precepts on his own individual responsibility, but as an interpreter of the law of Christian morality; in other words, as a scribe in the New Dispensation. For it is to be distinctly observed that, before adducing any precept at all, he postulates his conviction that there exists an organic union between the souls of those to whom he is speaking and the spirit of the Christian Founder. In Verses 4 and 5 of this same Chapter he declares that the Christian derives all his gifts and graces from the fact that there dwells within him the actual life of the Christ of history: "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ"; and he says, in Verse 6, that it is only on the ground of this

union that he requires obedience to the precepts he is about to deliver. He declares that, because the servants of Christ are united to the Master, they ought to have the essential gifts and graces of the Master. We ask particular attention to this principle, as we shall have occasion to make great use of it in the sequel. St. Paul never asks his disciples to do anything of themselves, and never professes to teach them anything on his own responsibility, without expressly stating that he is diffident from having no command on the subject. He speaks to them as the members of a Divine Organism. He addresses them as one who is simply conveying the mandates of a higher life to which his own life has been mysteriously joined; and he expects them to fulfil these mandates only in so far as they have themselves been made recipients of this same communion. Let us make our meaning more clear.

In Romans i. 16, St. Paul declares that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He asserts, as a reason for not being ashamed of it, that it contains an element of power fitted to appeal alike to the Greek and to the Jew; and, in the following Verse, he goes on to state that this universal power consists in its Divine morality: "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Now the constant problem in the mind of St. Paul is, how the revelation is to be transformed into a possession; or, to use his own words, how a man is to be "*made* the righteousness of God." He acknowledges that this Divine morality is revealed in, and therefore professed by, the Christian Founder; how is it to be made to pass from the Christian Founder to the Christian disciple? There is clearly only one method possible; the life of the Founder must, in some way or other, be so attached to the life of the disciple that the spiritual possessions of the One will become the spiritual possessions of the other; if we are to be made the righteousness of God, it must be "*in Him*." Accord-

ingly, it is the distinct doctrine of Paul that between the Founder of Christianity and his followers there had taken place an actual organic union precisely analogous to that which subsists between the head and the members of a human body. And let us remember that, however mystical may have been the process by which this union was effected, there was in the view of the Apostle nothing mystical in its result. The method of its accomplishment was unknown; but, when accomplished, it was the union not only with an historical Christ, but with the actual Christ of history. When the human soul was united to the person of the Christian Founder, it became heir to all He had done in the flesh; it became partaker of his death, of his rising, of his righteousness. It was filled with the self-same Spirit which had dwelt in the Son of David; all its thoughts were the repetition of his thoughts, all its acts were the echoes of his working. To say that any gift or grace belonged to a Christian disciple was, with Paul, precisely tantamount to saying that such a gift or grace had been manifested in the life of the Founder; for the entire view of St. Paul was built upon the doctrine that the soul, which had been crucified together with Him, had received as its new life the divinely human Spirit which had animated the Christ of history.

Now what is the conclusion from all this in relation to the passage before us? It lies on the very surface. If St. Paul told his converts to follow certain precepts which the world of his day would have called paradoxes, if he told them to provide things honest in the sight of all men, if he bade them give place unto wrath, if he enjoined them to overcome evil with good, to bless their persecutors, to feed their enemy when he hungered and give him drink when he thirsted, he did so because, in his view, these precepts embodied the spirit and teaching of the historical Christ. He never dreamed of regarding himself as the founder of a

school; he was in his own eyes simply a disciple; nay, he did not claim even the independence of a disciple, he was but a member of the Divine body. The morality which he promulgated was not an ethical code woven out of his own imaginings; it was a morality which he believed himself to have derived from a Divine authority; it was the essential life of the Son of Man. And here, for the second time, we must direct attention to that remarkable amalgamation of standpoints which is exhibited in the Christ of St. Paul. Within the compass of twelve Verses we are introduced to two seemingly opposite phases of Christianity,—a Christ of mysticism, and a Christ of practice. The Jesus of Matthew has been called a practical Moralist; the Jesus of John has been termed a mystical Dreamer; and it has again and again been alleged that these two are contrary. With Paul the mysticism and the practice are the two halves of one whole, the spirit and the form which complete the Person of the Founder. We are ushered into the presence of a Christ so closely united to the soul that He is said to be the corporeal Head of humanity; and we feel instinctively that the Christ of St. Paul has all the mysticism of the fourth Evangelist. But, immediately afterwards, we are in the presence of a Christ who speaks the language of St. Matthew, addresses the common needs of men, and meets their moral wants with plain and practical precepts. And, in the view of St. Paul, so far are these from being contrary, that the latter is the result of the former. It is by reason of his union with the members of humanity that the life of the Christian Founder can cease to be a transcendental life, and can descend to the light of common day; it is because He has lifted humanity into the mystical region of the Divine that He is able to manifest Divinity in the practical sphere of the human.

G. MATHESON.
