

could scarcely believe they were not in that place of bliss. Within a week she had actually passed to the better country, and Augustine had to set forth alone to face the great future that lay before him.

JAMES STALKER.

PAULINISM AND THE RELIGION OF JESUS.

THE true criterion of any religion or system of thought is the effect it produces upon its followers. And in the case of the Religion of Jesus this line of evidence is all the more essential because it is the evidence to which He Himself trusted. Jesus Himself wrote no book. He never, so far as we learn from the Gospel narratives, made any attempt to present His teaching in systematized form. He was content to implant certain seed-thoughts and truths in the minds and hearts of his immediate followers, and leave them to germinate and develop there. The disciples of Jesus thus became in a very special sense His witnesses, to whom the future proclamation and propagation of His religion were intrusted, and any attempt to estimate in what the real significance of Jesus' Religion lay must necessarily start from their testimony.

Amongst these witnesses, the Apostle Paul occupies an outstanding, if not the outstanding place. True, it may at once be said that St. Paul was not himself one of the original Twelve, nor even a personal companion of Jesus. But this, so far from being an objection, rather tells the other way. Historical personages and events are as a rule best understood not by those who stand immediately under their shadow, but by those who, while furnished with adequate knowledge, are able to look at them as it were from the outside, and under circumstances favourable to an impartial judgment. And from this point of view where

can we find a better witness than St. Paul? His conversion took place at most within a very few years after the death of Jesus, and he consequently had the opportunity of free intercourse with those who had been Jesus' own contemporaries; while, on the other hand, the whole course of his previous training and mode of life made it imperative for him to ascertain in what the secret of Jesus really lay.

Nor is this all, but we are in possession of altogether unexampled means of discovering what the views of St. Paul regarding the religion of His Master were. If, as Goethe puts it somewhere, the best memorial a man can leave behind him is a letter, in the letters of St. Paul we have memorials of the most trustworthy and convincing kind regarding his influence and thought. The day has happily gone by when the authenticity of by far the greater part of the Pauline Epistles can be seriously attacked. With the exception of the Pastorals, which stand on a somewhat different footing, practically all are accepted by such outstanding critics as Professor Harnack in Germany and Sir William Ramsay amongst ourselves. And we are also now able—largely through the labours of the same scholars—to accept as genuine historical documents the corresponding and supplementary narratives of the Book of Acts. And the general result is, that not only is St. Paul himself “the most luminous personality in the history of primitive Christianity” (Harnack), but that what for convenience we are accustomed to describe as Paulinism—Christianity seen through St. Paul's eyes, and interpreted by St. Paul's thought—is better known to us than any other type of teaching in the apostolic age.

On the corresponding influence that Paulinism has exerted—on the impress that it made not only on the Apostle's own times, but on the whole succeeding life and thought of the Church—it is unnecessary to dwell. It is

reflected in our creeds. It has been the inspiring cause of our principal religious movements and reformations. Men like St. Augustine or like Luther have been "unable to find a religion in Christ until they have entered by Paul's door." And we have only to trace to their source the language, the expressions, of which we make use in giving utterance to our own deepest religious convictions to discover how largely St. Paul is responsible for them.

This very fact, however, that St. Paul has exerted such a commanding influence in the past history of Christendom inevitably raises the question as to how far this influence is justified. And the question is all the more urgent, because of the attitude that is so frequently taken up at the present time with reference to it.

Thus we are all familiar with the contention that the Religion of Jesus, instead of being helped, has rather been hindered by this close association with St. Paul, and that not till it shakes itself free from the "burden of Paul" can it make its true power felt. "Back to Jesus" is the cry—"Back from the subtleties and dogmas of the disciple to the simple and direct teaching of the Master."

Or, conversely, we are asked to see in St. Paul, and not in Jesus, the real founder of Christianity. The "gospel" on which the Apostle so prided himself, and which even in his own days was regarded as "another," has, so we are told, no real roots in the Person or Words of the historic Jesus: its "kernel" lies "elsewhere." And as the latest and most outspoken exponent of this view, Professor Wrede, does not hesitate even to say, as compared with Jesus, St. Paul has "exercised beyond all doubt the stronger—not the better—influence . . . He has thrust that greater Person whom he meant only to serve, utterly into the background" (*Paul*, Eng. Tr. p. 180).

An attitude such as this, so fearless, so incisive, and at

the same time so utterly subversive of what we have been accustomed to regard as the true relation between Jesus and His foremost follower, has naturally called forth a number of replies. And writers of the more "advanced or "liberal" school in Germany—such as Kölbing,¹ A. Meyer,² and Jülicher³—have hastened to join hands with the veteran Professor Kaftan⁴ and others in repudiating the existence of any such deep and impassable gulf between Jesus and Paul as Wrede thinks he has discovered.

Upon the different arguments they have advanced, or the different methods in which, while admitting real and important differences, they have sought to establish essential agreement between Paulinism and the Religion of Jesus, it is impossible to enter just now. It would involve us in endless technicalities, and after all perhaps not carry us very far, for it is obvious that a full solution of the problem can only be reached after agreement has been arrived at as to what is really involved in the teaching of Jesus on the one hand, and in the teaching of Paul on the other, and then a detailed examination of the points of likeness and unlikeness that have thus emerged. But it may perhaps help you to put yourselves at the proper point of view for approaching the study and discussion of this question, which after all is a question not merely of great historic and literary interest, but of immense practical significance, if I try to bring before you one or two considerations of a general kind that have an important bearing upon it.

1. In itself there is nothing unreasonable in the fact that out of the fundamental truths of the Religion of Jesus—truths, remember, in which His Life as well as His Words

¹ *Die geistige Einwirkung der Person Jesu auf Paulus* (1906).

² *Wer hat das Christentum begründet, Jesus oder Paulus?* (1907).

³ *Paulus und Jesus* (1907), one of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher* like Wrede's *Paulus* (1905).

⁴ *Jesus und Paulus* (1906).

have a place—St. Paul constructed a definite and systematic exposition of thought.

On the contrary, such an exposition was from the nature of the case inevitable. Men must think out—interpret—the varied bearings of the religious truths on which their faith rests, if that faith is to continue to have any real hold over them. And not until they have tried to understand so far as is possible the nature of the relation in which Jesus stands to God on the one hand and to mankind on the other, can they hope to realize the full character of the work He has accomplished. Or, to express this in the language of Theology, no sooner have we grasped the meaning and extent of Jesus' claims on our allegiance, than a theory of His Person, a Christology, entitling Him to make such claims, must follow. And this Christology carries with it in its turn a Soteriology, or doctrine of the redemption, which by His Death and Resurrection He has effected.

The fact, then, that St. Paul, in a sense which I shall define more exactly directly, is a theologian cannot in itself be made any real ground of complaint against him. It may be that his early Rabbinical training shows itself at times in a style of argument which we have great difficulty in following; and that, at other times, the controversies in which he was engaged, and which are so clearly reflected in his Epistles, have led to a certain sharpness of definition which would otherwise have been wanting. But the broad fact remains, that in placing the Religion of Jesus on a reasoned basis, he has given us a constructive scheme of Christian thought, without which that Religion could not have continued to assert its supremacy over the mind as well as over the heart of man.

Nor in this connexion is it without significance to notice that in so doing St. Paul was only carrying out and developing a tendency of which we have already traces in

the teaching of the original Apostles. The sermons and speeches, for example, of the first half of the Book of Acts are by no means so untheological as many would have us to believe. And it is surely a pertinent inquiry to ask those who are so fond of magnifying the peculiarities of St. Paul's doctrinal system to explain how it was that, after undoubted difficulty and much discussion, his teaching in the main was ultimately accepted and approved by the "pillars" of the Church at Jerusalem.

"There is no historical fact," says so great a master of historical inquiry as Professor Harnack, "more certain than that the Apostle Paul was not, as we might perhaps expect, the first to emphasize so prominently the significance of Christ's death and resurrection, but that in recognising their meaning he stood exactly on the same ground as the primitive community" (*What is Christianity?* p. 153). And again—"It was, indeed, no insignificant circumstance that men in whose ears every word of their master's was still ringing, and in whose recollection the concrete features of his personality were still a vivid memory—that these faithful disciples should recognise a pronouncement to be true which in important points seemed to depart from the original message and portended the downfall of the religion of Israel" (*ibid.* p. 179).

2. We must not, however, in approaching the study of St. Paul's teaching think of him only or even principally as a theologian. Though he was Paul the thinker, he was and remained Paul the man. And only as we regard the truths he taught in the light of his own personal religious experience can we hope to understand either him or them.

The point, self-obvious as it seems, is too often forgotten. Wrede, for example, in the book to which I have already referred, while rightly denying that we can describe Paul as a theologian in the modern sense of the word, insists

emphatically that "*the religion of the apostle is theological through and through : his theology is his religion*" (p. 76). And we all know how frequently in the ordinary text-books on Paul and Paulinism the man himself—the eager, passionate, living man, whose whole self throbs in every word he writes—is apt to be lost sight of in endless discussions on the exact meaning or bearing of this or that doctrine ; whereas, nowhere more than in St. Paul's case does the old maxim hold true : "*pectus facit theologum.*" Only as we get at the heart of the man can we hope to get at the heart of his teaching. Or, to invert Wrede's phrase : "his religion is his theology."

The central fact in St. Paul's religion, and consequently in the future development of his religious thought, is of course the outstanding event in his life, which we commonly call his conversion, as caused by the appearance to him of the Risen Lord on the Damascus road. And whatever view is taken of that appearance, whether it is regarded as subjective or as objective, or better, as both subjective and objective—subjective when viewed in its effect upon St. Paul's own mind, and objective because that effect was caused by no hallucination but by a real manifestation of Jesus in what the Apostle afterwards calls "the body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 21)—I say whatever the exact view taken of that appearance, as a simple matter of historical fact it changed St. Paul. Henceforth he was literally a "new man"—influenced by new feelings, dominated by new impulses, looking at all truth from a new point of view, so that it is not going too far to say with Holtzmann, that St. Paul's entire system of doctrine or teaching—his *Lehrbegriff*—"simply means the exposition of the content of his conversion."¹ Or, in the words of a recent English writer, Mr.

¹ Holtzmann's words are : "Sein ganzer Lehrbegriff . . . bedeutet einfach die Explication des Inhalts der Bekehrung, die Systematisierung

Bernard Lucas, which I gladly quote, if only for the sake of recommending to you his fresh and suggestive study of Paulinism published under the title of *The Fifth Gospel*: "The Gospel of Paul is an interpretation of the life and work of Jesus, based upon the revelation to him of Jesus as the risen Christ . . . It cannot be too strongly emphasised that it was a fact and not a theory, experience and not argument, [which revolutionised his thought]" (pp. 15, 63).

3. But if so, we see how inevitable it was that St. Paul's main interest should centre in this Risen, this Glorified Christ, who had appeared to him, and in union with whom he was conscious that his own life was henceforth lived. He began, in fact, first where the older Apostles ended. They, starting from their experience, saw in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus the crowning of the whole of the earthly life they themselves had been privileged to witness. But St. Paul, to whom no such earthly acquaintance had been granted, starting in his turn from his experience, saw in Jesus first and foremost a Heavenly Being, the "image" (2 Cor. iv. 4, Col. i. 15) of God, who had come down from heaven to suffer and to die.

The problem that St. Paul had to face—and this alone makes his experience so important for ourselves—was What could this Risen Christ do for one who had never seen Him upon earth, or at any rate who had never been one of His personal followers during His earthly ministry? And his answer was that He could do all and more than all that the historic Jesus had done. "He was still a living Personal Power, still the source of healing, righteousness, and life to all who would trust Him; that is the truth of which the doctrine of justification by faith is the theological expres-

der Christophanie. Das ist die Grösse und das ist die Schwäche der Sache" (*Neutest. Theologie*, ii. p. 205).

sion.”¹ For, just as while He was upon earth Jesus extended His saving ministry to all who showed “faith” in Him, even so a corresponding faith was still rewarded by the assurance that the believer was “in Christ,” and consequently, as the result of this union, and not as leading up to it, placed within the sphere of God’s forgiveness and justifying love.

It would have been interesting to try and show how the other great Pauline doctrines of adoption, of sanctification, of future salvation, are but varying theological expressions of this great personal experience looked at from different points of view. But that would carry us too far from our immediate purpose. And it must be sufficient to emphasise that it was the consciousness of the change that had been wrought in his own life, and that affected his whole life, that afterwards made it so impossible for St. Paul in his teaching to dissociate the objective redemption in which his gospel centred from the new life in which that redemption found expression. The crude divorce between religion and morality with which we are so familiar nowadays, and for which Paulinism is sometimes held responsible, was certainly unknown to its author. Not less strenuously than his Master does he insist that it is not the mere “word of hearing” that constitutes “the believer,” but the word “doing its work,” or better “through its Divine inherent power being made to work” (*ὁς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται*, 1 Thess. ii. 13) within the heart. And so far, therefore, from faith being with him “at bottom belief in a dogma,” as Wrede asserts (p. 164), Jülicher is nearer the mark, when he finds in it a convenient contraction to describe the whole life as it is lived in Christ with the consequent victory over the lusts of the flesh, or, in a word, a convertible term with holiness (cf. *Paulus und Jesus*, p. 21).

¹ Lock, *St. Paul, the Master-Builder*, p. 69f., a discussion to which the whole of this section is much indebted.

4. While, however, in virtue of the nature of his own experience—an experience, I repeat, which is also in its own degree ours—the Risen and Glorified Christ is the centre of the whole of the Apostle's theological and ethical teaching, this is very far indeed from saying that the Jesus of history has no interest for him.

It is perfectly true that the references in the Pauline Epistles to the facts of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus are by no means so numerous as we might naturally perhaps have expected. But this arises not only from the Apostle's overwhelming interest in the living Lord, to which reference has already been made so often, but to the fact that these Epistles were addressed to Christian communities and individuals whose knowledge of the more elementary truths could be taken for granted, and who consequently were in need not so much of instruction as of confirmation and edification in the faith.

Nor is this all, but the references that do exist are of such a nature as to show us that St. Paul could have told us a great deal more had it lain within his immediate purpose to do so. When, for example, he refers to Jesus' being born of a human mother, to His Jewish origin, to His Davidic descent, to His circumcision, to His brethren, of whom one was James, to the poverty of His early surroundings, it is obvious that he had more than a vague knowledge of what these early surroundings were. And consequently when we pass to the closing scenes, which from their still deeper significance bulked so largely in his thoughts, it is not surprising to find that, even if other sources of information were no longer available, we could still gather from the Pauline writings alone a wonderfully clear impression of how the Saviour's last hours on earth were spent—His betrayal, His Crucifixion, His Death and His Burial. While, as regards the Resurrection, it is to the same source that we owe not

only the earliest, but in a sense the completest record of the appearances of the Risen Lord, before He finally ascended from the earth (1 Cor. xv. 5 ff.).

Other evidence that points in the same direction are the references—few but unmistakable—which St. Paul makes to the words or teaching of Jesus, and, more important still, the striking manner in which the whole portraiture of the meek, the sinless, the loving Christ of the Epistles presupposes and rests upon just such a personality as is brought before us in the Gospels. These Gospels in their present form were of course not available for St. Paul. But he may well have had in his possession certain written records of the words and deeds of Jesus, such as are pointed to in St. Luke's preface, while his knowledge was undoubtedly supplemented by personal intercourse with the original Apostles.¹

Attempts indeed have been made by Wrede and others to explain St. Paul's picture of Jesus as due not to the impression made upon his mind by the account of Jesus' actual character and words, as to certain Jewish conceptions regarding the Messiah which had been familiar to him in his pre-Christian days, and were afterwards transferred by him to the Christ of his faith. But the evidence appealed to in support of these alleged parallels is utterly inadequate to bear the weight laid upon it. And while I am, of course,

¹ Resch in his elaborate work *Der Paulinismus und die Logia Jesu* (Leipzig, 1904) is of opinion that immediately after his conversion Paul came into possession, perhaps at the hands of Ananias, of a primitive Gospel, the Hebrew *Logia* of Jesus, and that this was his constant companion during the three years' solitude in Arabia (p. 533 f.). The conjecture is more interesting than convincing, as is the case also with many of the parallels that its author seeks to establish between the language of the Pauline writings and the discourses of Jesus. The whole question of the *Testimony of St. Paul to Christ* may be most conveniently studied in Canon Knowling's judicious Boyle Lectures published under that title (1905), with their wealth of bibliographical references. See also the valuable monographs by P. Feine, *Jesus Christus und Paulus* (Leipzig, 1902), and M. Goguel, *L'Apôtre Paul et Jésus-Christ* (Paris, 1904).

very far indeed from denying that St. Paul frequently clothed his teaching in forms suggested to him by his old Jewish training, for the essential contents of his thought we must look, not to any dead system of ideas, but to an historic personality—the Jesus of Nazareth, of whom His opponents said that He was “dead,” but “whom Paul affirmed to be alive” (Acts xxv. 19).

“Jesus is Lord”—that is the central, the dominant note of all St. Paul’s life and thought. As the Risen Lord, who appeared to him on the Damascus road, appeared under the human name of Jesus (an interesting confirmation of the historical character of the whole narrative), so with all his after-sense of dependence upon the Christ of experience, the Apostle saw ever behind that glorified and heavenly Being the Christ of history, the religious significance of whose life and death His resurrection had first made clear. And it is further highly significant of this need that St. Paul himself felt of an historical basis to his creed, that in the most spiritual of all his Epistles he reminds his readers that thus only can they truly “learn Christ,” according as they have been taught “even as the truth is in Jesus” (Eph. iv. 20 f.).

In his *Saint Paul*, in which he analyses with such marvellous insight the feelings and longings of the great Apostle, Frederic Myers goes too far when he represents Paul as regretting that an actual companionship with Jesus upon earth had been denied to him—

Oh to have watched thee through the vineyards wander,
Pluck the ripe ears, and into evening roam!—
Followed, and known that in the twilight yonder
Legions of angels shone about thy home!

Of any such desire the Apostle himself never gives the slightest trace. On the contrary, whatever the exact meaning of the much disputed words, all such outward

knowledge of Christ "after the flesh" seems to him a very small thing indeed as compared with the new knowledge "in Christ," which is his chiefest glory and hope (cf. 2 Cor. v. 16 f.). But this is very far indeed from saying that St. Paul did not constantly look towards the historic Jesus, or that his faith was of the vague, subjective character that it is sometimes represented to have been. The indwelling Christ was for him no empty abstraction, but a real Person, freed from all those limitations by which He had been encompassed during His sojourn "in the flesh," and able to make His Divine power universally felt. And it is just "from this intimate blending of history and faith, of the subjective and objective in his mind" that St. Paul's theology resulted: "in this combination lies its distinguishing feature."¹

We need not, then—to come back to the point from which we started—have any fear that, in approaching the study of Paulinism, we run the risk of being influenced by one who substituted for the religion of Jesus an unauthorised gospel of his own. St. Paul was not, in Deissmann's happy phrase, "the second after Jesus, but the first 'in Christ'"; and if, in certain respects, his gospel differs from the gospel of the other Apostles, it is only because he has entered more fully into the mind, the whole mind of Christ. To him "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11). And so far from glorying in "persuasive words of wisdom" (1 Cor. ii. 4), his one ambition is to interpret to the world the Incarnate and Risen Lord, whom first of all he has discovered for himself.

Therefore, not "Away from Paul and back to Jesus," but rather, as one of his recent apologists puts it, "Back through Paul to Jesus and to God."²

GEORGE MILLIGAN.

¹ Sabatier, *The Apostle Paul*, Eng. Tr. p. 85.

² A. Meyer, *Wer hat das Christentum begründet, Jesus oder Paulus* p. 104.