

## THE THOUGHT OF PAUL.

### I. THE HELLENISM OF PAUL.<sup>1</sup>

A PRELIMINARY question about the thought of Paul imperatively demands some notice. How much did he learn from his surroundings and early life as a Roman citizen, a member of the privileged aristocracy of the Roman world, born and educated in a half-Greek city, "the one city which was suited by its equipoise between the Asiatic and the Western spirit to mould the character of the great Hellenist Jew" ?<sup>2</sup>

My friend Principal Garvie, if he will permit me to call him so, though we only once met, and I know him better from his written than his spoken words, challenges my position that "Gentile influences were far more potent factors in Paul's development than has hitherto been generally recognised."<sup>3</sup> I have maintained this, and still maintain it. These Tarsian influences were what marked out Paul, already before his birth, as the man who was destined to be the Apostle to the Gentiles.<sup>4</sup> The expression fades into in-

<sup>1</sup> In *EXPOSITOR*, 1911, p. 260, l. 9, for "mentions" read "depends on authorities who mention." Ptolemy gives a list of cities in Pisidian Phrygia (the same region which Strabo calls "Phrygia towards Pisidia"). That region was part of Galatia Provincia from 25 B.C. to 72 A.D. Then the largest part of it was included in the new Province Lycia-Pamphylia, and Ptolemy intended to omit from the list the Phrygian cities which were left to Galatia, but by error he retains Antioch in the list. He mentions also both Antioch and Apollonia in Galatia under Pisidia; but the small parts of Phrygia and Pisidia which were left to Galatia were in the Roman lists (see *Histor. Geogr.* p. 253) commonly called Pisidia, though the natives of Phrygia Galatica clung to the racial name Phrygia or Mygdonia as late as the third century.

<sup>2</sup> This and some following quotations are taken by Principal Garvie from (as I think) my *Cities of St. Paul*.

<sup>3</sup> *EXPOSITOR*, May, 1911, p. 346 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. i. 15-16.

significance if it is not taken in this way: it becomes a mere general statement of the vague truth that, wherever he lived and whatever he was by birth, the purpose of God had chosen him out to be the Apostle of the Roman and Greek world; it made no difference to that purpose whether he was born in Jerusalem or in Mesopotamia, in Ethiopia or in Tarsus. This is not, as I believe, the way in which the New Testament should be read.

I have repeatedly asserted that the Jewish nature and character was the strongest and the most fundamental part of Paul's endowment.<sup>1</sup> This has been so much emphasised by others that I was absolved from any need to discuss it; and I professedly left this side of his nature apart, both because it had been so vigorously insisted on, that there was nothing to gain by repeating what had been already better said, and because I was not competent to treat that side of Paul's character. I do maintain, however, that the thought and plans of Paul are "wholly inexplicable in a mere narrow Hebrew, and wholly inexplicable without an education in Greek philosophy." A Palestinian Jew could never have grown into the Apostle of the Græco-Roman world. He was an outsider in that world. He could not touch its heart or even feel its pulse, as Paul could do. Paul had a certain power of comprehending it that no Jew of Palestine could attain. He began in the Roman world on the level which our greatest missionaries have rarely been able to attain by many years of study and thought and growing familiarity, and which others of our missionaries have hardly been able to attain and have regretted their failure to attain throughout a long and useful life.

The real question is whether or not I have laid too much

<sup>1</sup> I have not looked up references; but I know that they occur often in print, and that I begin every lecture I have ever given on this subject by this statement.

stress on the Hellenic side of Paul's thought. It is a question of degree. Principal Garvie admits that there was a Hellenic side. I have frequently said that the Jewish side of Paul's nature was the foundation on which his whole character was built up and the strongest and most determining part of his mind. As to details, everybody will be inclined to feel that others have not hit exactly the precise degree and shade which suits himself.

I mentioned two respects in which Paul had taken up into his thought the ideals of Hellenism, for "Hellenism had showed how the freedom of the individual could be consistent with an ordered and articulated government, and it organised a system of State education";<sup>1</sup> and Paul insists on freedom and on education as essential to the Christian life. To my statement Principal Garvie objects that I have myself admitted that, as regards the freedom of the individual, "we can trace this Pauline idea back to its origin in the teaching of Jesus"; and he goes on to say that "surely the phrase of James, 'the law of liberty,' shows that the idea of freedom is involved in the distinctive Christian conception of salvation." And "again the second idea, the necessity of education in the Christian life, is surely not so peculiar as to need so special an application. The Jews, too, cared for education; Jesus had given much pains to the training of His disciples, etc."

I think I have emphasised as strongly as any one both the importance of the idea of freedom in the teaching of Jesus,<sup>2</sup> and the "truth which will soon be discovered and emphasised by the Germans, and will then be brought over and emphasised among us, that the Hebrew nation was at that time

<sup>1</sup> It failed to keep true to its ideal, and Hellenism gradually sank to be the heritage of a few.

<sup>2</sup> *Luke the Physician and other Studies in the History of Religion*, p. 92 ff., following in the footsteps of Harnack.

the most highly educated people in the world—in the true meaning of the word education.”<sup>1</sup>

What I can do I have tried to do in the way of making these truths the basis of all my studies; but you cannot exhaust the idea “freedom” or the word “education” in a sentence or in a paragraph or in a book. You have to feel them and live in them in order to know what they mean. In the first place, if Jesus had “freedom” and “education” in His heart, it does not follow that His disciples caught those ideas and worked them out. The disciples, as we know from the Gospels, used often to lament that the meaning of Jesus’s words was hidden from them, and that they had failed to comprehend Him. Is it so unusual a thing for the pupils of a great teacher to miss his meaning? Does not every teacher in a university learn by experience that, except in so far as he dictates his lectures and has them reproduced to him (which trains the power of memory, but not of thinking), the examinations which he sets to his pupils are a constant humiliation to him, because he finds that the things on which he has lavished all his efforts at explanation and clear statement are reproduced to him more or less wrongly (generally wholly wrong) by 80 per cent. of his classes? Yet he will find years later that he had not failed so completely as he fancied, and that far more was understood in the future than at the moment.

Who would compare the Socrates, as depicted to us by Xenophon, with the Socrates set before us in Plato’s Dialogues? There is no inner resemblance between them; it is only in externals that any likeness can be traced. Xenophon understood hardly anything that Socrates said; Plato understood it in his own way, and carried out his master’s teaching in his own style to reach conclusions which Socrates did not contemplate, or contemplated only dimly.

<sup>1</sup> *The Education of Christ*, p. 67.

If you ask whether Xenophon or Plato best understood Socrates, I can understand no one voting for Xenophon. Plato sets before us one of the greatest figures in human history. Xenophon sets before us an interesting but quite second-rate personality: he was incapable of seeing more. The impulse which Socrates gave to Greek thought proves that he was one of the great master-spirits of the world, such as Plato, but not Xenophon, shows us.

It is therefore not sufficient to say, as both Principal Garvie and I have said each in our own way and each with equal emphasis, that the idea of freedom was fundamentally involved in the teaching of Jesus. How was it, and in virtue of what education and character was it, that Paul caught this feature in the teaching of Jesus? There had to be something in the mind of Paul to respond to the teaching of Jesus, otherwise he would have remained as deaf to it as the mind of Xenophon was to all (or almost all) the higher teaching of Plato.

If there is any quality which beyond all others distinguishes the teaching of Jesus, it is that He "rose high above such a narrow idea" as that of Jewish exclusiveness. I trace to Paul's mixing in the Roman world and his early training in the Stoic school his familiarity with "this wider and nobler idea of a unity and brotherhood that transcended the limits of a city or a tribe; but the conception of universal brotherhood remained as yet an abstract and ineffective thought, devoid of driving power to move the world." So long as Paul knew this idea only in the abstract and ineffective way of the Stoic thought, or in the half-hearted fashion of the Roman Empire (where the distinction, first between slaves and free, second between the Roman aristocracy, the provincials, and the subject races such as those of Egypt, obscured the general principle), the thought remained only external to him. It was when he had to

recreate the whole religious and philosophic foundations of his life, during the two years of quiet meditation which followed on the epoch-making experience of his conversion, that he began to comprehend what lay in the idea of Universal Brotherhood as taught by Jesus: "there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."<sup>1</sup> What was it that enabled Paul to comprehend all that lay in the freedom that Jesus taught? What, but his wider experience, his better realisation of the inchoate facts of the Roman Empire, his familiarity with the abstract and unapplied teaching of the Stoics? He was prepared to grasp the truth, and he comprehended it in the fashion that was suitable to the educated middle class of the Roman world.

Moreover, although Principal Garvie quotes from James the phrase "the law of liberty," one need not hesitate to maintain that the phrase is post-Pauline. The writer of the Epistle attributed to James (whom I am quite ready to regard as James the "president" of the Apostolic Council) had certainly been strongly influenced by Paul, and had not confined his studies to the narrower type of Jewish literature. When the three leading Apostles recognised Paul as divinely appointed to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, this implies a very great step on their part. It does not merely mean that they accepted Paul as permitted to do something which they did not wish to do themselves. It means that they accepted Paul as commissioned directly to take the leading part in one branch of their duty; but it did not absolve them from taking an interest in this duty and a general oversight of it. The Council of the Apostles, several times called in the Acts simply "The Apostles," still retained a general superintendence of the entire work through-

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iii. 28.

out the Church and the whole world ; and this authority was fully acknowledged by Paul himself (Acts xv. 2 ; Gal. ii. 2).<sup>1</sup>

In men like Peter and James and John the recognition of this duty implies a corresponding growth and broadening out of their ideas and plans. It is pointed out elsewhere<sup>2</sup> that the original Council of the Apostles, and mainly the leaders of the Council, were never prevented by any scruples or prepossessions or prejudices from learning, even though their teachers were younger and less experienced than themselves. Stephen carried the Apostles with him wholeheartedly in his resolute breaking with the old ties and opening up of the Church to the world. So did Paul, when his time came ; and it was after these lessons had been learned that James spoke of " the law of liberty " ; and then James recognised that, though his eyes had been holden that he could not see, still the law of liberty was embodied in the teaching of Jesus. The test for the Apostles always was that the new teaching should simply be an explanation and a declaration of the truth as it had been originally taught them.

But the influence of Hellenic surroundings on Paul's early life and the growth of his mind should not be restricted to the higher ideas of his education : it is equally applicable to the cast of his language. I need not do more than refer here to the paper on this subject which forms part of my *Luke the Physician and other Studies in the History of Religion*, pp. 285 ff. on " St. Paul's use of Metaphors from Greek and Roman Life," and to the argument there stated that these metaphors (much more than the similes of Philo)

<sup>1</sup> The misconception which identifies the visit to Jerusalem of Galatians ii. 1-10 with that described in Acts xv. 2-30 destroys the perspective of Church history in the first century.

<sup>2</sup> *Pictures of the Apostolic Church repeatedly.*

show how deeply the early familiarity with the surroundings of Hellenic life had affected the fabric of his mind and his style of expressing his thought.

Finally, I may quote the opinion of a distinguished German scholar, Professor Johannes Weiss, on this subject. There are many people in this country to whom nothing can commend itself unless it appears in the German tongue; and I may therefore quote from his *Paul and Jesus*, 1909, p. 59 ff. §§ 11-13, "Previous comparisons have not sufficiently appreciated that which may be stated in one word as Paul's Hellenism."<sup>1</sup> Much of what he has stated is exactly in accordance with my views. He carries his statement even further than I have gone; but his arguments and reasons are very similar to those from which I started.

There are expressions from which I should dissent, e.g., "For Paul, the unit is the country or nation, not the individual" (p. 66). According to my view the unit for Paul is the individual human soul; but he marches in his victorious course from Province to Province, and counts his steps by their capitals. He did not think of countries or nations, but of Provinces, as the constituents of the empire; and he accepted these political entities as passing phenomena, powerful for the moment. The real and permanent element in the world was the soul of man and the soul of God.

## II. DID PAUL SEE JESUS?

One of the most fundamental questions in regard to the point of view from which Paul regarded the Saviour is whether Jesus in life had been a complete stranger to him or had been personally known to him. The article by Professor J. H. Moulton in the *EXPOSITOR* for July, 1911, p. 16, therefore, profoundly interested me; and still more Pro-

<sup>1</sup> I follow the translation of Rev. H. J. Chaytor; I have not seen the original German work.



fessor Johannes Weiss's *Paul and Jesus*, which I immediately procured on Professor Moulton's recommendation. In the EXPOSITOR, May, 1901, p. 362, I published an article stating reasons for the same view, that Paul knew Jesus in the vision on the road near Damascus, because he had seen Jesus in life and recognised the man whom he had known.<sup>1</sup> When Professor Weiss on p. 40 expresses his "wonder how the whole school of modern theology has been able so readily to reject the best and most natural explanation of these difficulties, namely, the assumption that Paul had seen Jesus personally, and that the sight had made an indelible impression on him," he may perhaps be interested to learn that one who looks at this subject solely as an historian, and who has no pretension to be a theologian, took his view.

It must have been about the year 1901 that I ventured to express the same opinion in an address at Sion College ; and, in the discussion which followed, the Rev. Mr. Relton (as I think) expressed the opinion that I must inevitably regard the words of Second Corinthians v. 16 in very much the same way as Professor Weiss does in his book, pp. 42-53. I had not myself observed the bearing of this passage from Second Corinthians ; nor should I have been able to argue so subtly and skilfully as Professor Weiss has done for his interpretation ; but, since Mr. Relton drew my attention to the passage, I have regarded it as a good and incidental, but far from the most convincing, argument on this side.

More than ten years have passed since that article was printed ; and the more I have thought over the subject, the more has its importance been impressed on me. Often

<sup>1</sup> It was § li. of a Historical Commentary on First Corinthians. The short article being in a foreign tongue was not likely to attract the attention of the distinguished Professor of Heidelberg, any more than it has caught the attention of Professor Moulton.

I have had to speak on the subject ; and as time passed the clearer grew in my thought a certain picture and vision of the Apostle. With much that appears in Weiss, I gladly find myself in perfect agreement. As he says (p. 29) that near Damascus "the figure of the Messiah, whose coming from Heaven was the object of such deep desires and prayers, might appear to the Apostle : he was profoundly moved by these longings. . . . But . . . by what signs did Paul recognise the figure as Jesus ? " Peter and others recognised Jesus (1 Cor. xv. 5 ff.) : Paul also recognised Him. In both cases they recognised Him because they had seen Him. I can only quote the words of Weiss (p. 31) : " Paul's vision and conversion are psychologically inconceivable except upon the supposition that he had been actually and vividly impressed by the human personality of Jesus."

Paul describes himself as a witness that Jesus was living quite in the same way as he describes Peter and the rest as witnesses. They were witnesses, because they knew the man whom they had seen. Paul would not offer his evidence as in the same category with theirs, if he merely believed what he was told. He believed, because he recognised the man whom he had seen in life.

For this recognition it is necessary that the event should have occurred not too long after the death of Jesus. Recognition is most effectual and weighs most with others, when it is applied to a person who has not been very long dead. When Paul classes himself as a witness with Peter and the rest, he does not mean that they recognised Jesus within a few days or weeks of His death, while he recognised Jesus after eight years (to adopt the chronology—hopelessly wrong, in my opinion, on other grounds—that the Crucifixion occurred in A.D. 29, and the Vision of Saul after A.D. 37). This furnishes a subsidiary, though not in itself an absolutely conclusive argument, against that chronological theory.

The point of view which has been taken in the preceding paragraphs is after all, external, though as put by Professor Weiss, it is very strong. To my own mind the most conclusive reason lies in its bearing on the development of Saul's mind and thought. In this respect I find myself in diametrical opposition to the Heidelberg theologian. To him Paul's Conversion was the outward and final culmination of a long and slow inward process. He says on p. 35, referring to the view which he quotes from Kölbing, that Paul "possessed a very close and clear knowledge of the person and work of Jesus: it would almost appear that Paul before his conversion had read that Gospel of Mark from which Kölbing takes the essential features of his picture of Jesus." Weiss then proceeds: "At any rate, the main idea is undoubtedly correct . . . he must already have been half-persuaded, and have plunged into the task of persecution with forced zeal and an uneasy conscience." On p. 36 he proceeds: "It is certainly correct to assume that the faith of the first disciples also influenced Paul"; and on p. 37, "we may therefore adhere to the opinion that the 'Spirit of Jesus,' working through His disciples, eventually conquered Paul: the figure of Jesus was so convincingly apparent through the lives and characters of His adherents that Paul's powers of resistance eventually grew wearied, and mentally he was prepared for the ultimate change that he himself realised."

With this picture of the process in Paul's mind, I regret to find myself in absolute disagreement. One may pass over what is, in my opinion, the hopeless incongruity that a man like Paul, in order to still an uneasy conscience and to force himself to resist the conviction which was gradually growing in his mind, "plunged into the task of persecution" and of murder. Had Saul felt a moment's doubt he must have satisfied himself before he slew his neighbours and outran all his contemporaries in cruelty and desire for blood.

This psychological impossibility might be insisted on at more length, but we pass over it, and we rest our case on the statement of Paul himself, corroborated by Luke but quite independent of Luke's evidence.

In the first place Paul lays the strongest emphasis on the fact that his change of mind and life was wholly independent of the older Apostles. He came to his new career through direct relation between Christ and himself. He stood over-against God, and he was struck down by God and grasped by Jesus. If we give up that, what are we to accept from Paul about his own past life? We are plunged in a sea of uncertainties: some things we accept and some we reject in his testimony. We accept or reject in virtue of some prepossession or psychological theory, and not in virtue of Paul's own statements.

In the second place, Paul states in the strongest way that he was in the full course of unhesitating and fanatical persecution. He had no doubt. He hated that impostor, and he was resolved to exterminate all that were deluded by Him, and to trample out the embers of the dying fire. There was in the mind of Paul no preparation for the great change in his life, no process of gradually assimilating this teaching. He had, once for all, been convinced by that shameful death on the Cross, that the man Jesus was an impostor who had degraded and brought into contempt the most sacred belief of the Jews, the belief in a coming Messiah and in an elevation of the whole race once more to its rightful position in the world.

Now take into account Paul's nature and his acquired character. He was fully possessed by all the Jewish obstinate and fervent belief in what he considered right. He hated the Man that had parodied the Messianic idea and shamed the chosen people. What process of reasoning would have convinced such a man? What argument would have

weighed with him ? He was blind and deaf to all human evidence. One witness, or fifty, or five thousand, would have weighed equally with him ; and their weight would have been nought. Their evidence was all delusion, all untrustworthy. They had some virtues, for they were, after all, Jews ; but they were destroying the hope of Israel by their perverted delusion. That Israel might live, they must die so far as the Roman law allowed : in Damascus ; a foreign and non-Roman city, there was more hope of massacre, and there for some reason the Christians had taken refuge in considerable numbers.

Human reasoning and testimony could have had no effect on Paul, as he describes his own condition. He was suddenly convinced : Christ seized him : the power of God irradiated him. He recognised as living in the Divine glory the Man whom he had believed to be a dead impostor. He knew the man by sight. He heard His voice and His words.

I assume here, because this is not the place to discuss it more fully, that there are occasions when one man can hear what another cannot hear, and when one man can see what another cannot see. That Paul knew to be true. He had felt it : he had seen, and he had heard. On this his life was built. You cannot get away from this. So he says, and on this belief he built his career, and conquered the world. I believe, and I know from experience, that the thought of one mind may, in certain circumstances, be heard by another. No one can take from me what I know to be true, although, as a whole, the circumstances and comforts of modern life alike in Britain and in Germany, are unfavourable to the development of that sensibility. Yet the power exists potentially in most people, though often weakened and deadened by the fortunes of life, and can become active in a few.

The view that seems to emerge from the year-long discussion of the subject is the same view that Paul himself states, and Luke and others believed. Saul with his intense belief in the truth and righteousness of his own opinions—a belief common among young men, trained by great masters and leaders, venerating their teachers, intensely desirous of knowing the truth, enthusiastic to the highest degree, zealous for the right as they conceive it, and strenuously bent on living the Divine life and spending themselves in their career of duty—was wholly impervious to reason and to evidence. He knew far better than these followers of Jesus. Some other way was needed to move him. He had to be convinced that Jesus, whom he had thought a dead impostor, was a living God. He saw the man, and recognised Him. He would believe no other person, he believed his own senses and his own knowledge. Nothing except himself would convince him. He was a witness that Jesus was living. As he says, "Have I not seen<sup>1</sup> Jesus Christ our Lord?" He ranked himself as a personal witness to the truth on which his future career rested; and this change of mind and life came on him suddenly like a flash of lightning. There was no preparation for the change. Paul was one of those who learn the greatest things by intuition, as in a flash of inspiration.

There was a motive cause, sudden and overwhelming. This cause was that he saw alive the man whom he had believed to be dead.

The permanent effect on Paul was most striking in respect of one detail. The cross, which had hitherto been the "stumblingblock" in his way, which he regarded as typical of the triumph of Rome over his own race, the Chosen People, and as the visible expression of the disgrace and shame inflicted

<sup>1</sup> The word *éōpaka* is as strong a word as could be chosen. Paul claimed to have seen Jesus face to face, as he says in Acts xxvi.

on Israel by its conquerors, that cross he henceforth regarded as typical of the triumph of Jesus over Rome, and as symbolical of the powerlessness of the mighty Roman Empire to touch the man whom it had condemned and tried to kill, but tried in vain. In His Crucifixion, Jesus celebrated a triumph over all His enemies : He nailed to the Cross the condemnatory document : He leads in the long train of His triumph (as the Roman general led through the Roman streets) His conquering soldiers who trust in Him (Col. ii. 15 ; 2 Cor. ii. 14). Paul henceforth gloried in this symbol of victory and Divine power more than in anything else. He learned by eyesight, as well as in other ways, what the Cross really meant.

In 1 Corinthians ix. 1 and xv. 8 Paul emphasises specially that he had seen Jesus. This is the point on which he lays great stress. He is comparing himself with the Apostles. He saw Jesus as they saw Him. He is an eye-witness as they were.

The evidence of the Acts seems at first sight somewhat different. To those who are ready to accept the evidence of the Acts when it suits them, and to throw it overboard whenever they dislike it, the statements on this subject contained in that book will matter little ; they take just what they want and leave the rest. But to those who treat the Acts seriously and rationally as a historical work from which the modern critic is not free to pick what he likes and throw aside what he dislikes, but which he has to judge as a whole, the case is different. Why does Luke in his three accounts mention only once (Acts xxvi. 13-20) that Jesus appeared before the eyes of Saul ? <sup>1</sup> Here Paul relates that as he rose and stood on his feet before Jesus, detailed instructions were given him as to what he should do : part of his work was to bear witness of what he saw.

<sup>1</sup> The same words are used in 1 Corinthians xv. 8 and in this passage of the Acts, *ὠφθην* and *εἶδες* or *έώρακα*.

In the first account given in the Acts ix. 4-8 Luke mentions that the men who were with him "stood speechless, hearing the voice but beholding no man." If it is mentioned that they were half aware of something which was happening: the statement that they beheld no man naturally implies that Paul did see a man. There were a great deal to tell about that scene: some of the details are omitted in every account, because in Luke's brief narrative it was not possible to mention everything.

In the second account, which Luke in Acts xxii. quotes from Paul's own mouth, there is no direct mention by Paul himself that he saw Jesus. But as to this we notice two facts. In the first place, Paul's object is not to compare himself with the older Apostles as it is in 1 Corinthians. His purpose in this hurried, almost breathless, address to the Jews, who had been on the point of tearing him in pieces, was simply to touch their hearts. In the second place, he quotes from Ananias, a Jew of high character and standing among the people, some details of this incident. Ananias visits him after some days, and recites to him as proof of his authority the whole incident: he reminds Paul of what had happened, and among other things, that he had been chosen "to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth." The point which seemed afterwards so important to Paul is here put first in the words of Ananias.

Accordingly, in every one of Luke's three narratives, we find that the detail on which Paul lays such stress in writing to the Corinthians appears as a feature of the incident, sometimes more emphasised, sometimes less, but always either implied or formally expressed. In every case the details which were selected stood in some relation to the urgent pressure of the moment. Neither Paul nor Luke ever gives an absolutely complete account of all the things that happened: to do so would have required a book at least as long as the Acts.



## III. PAUL AND JOHN.

The relation between Paul and John seems (in the present writer's judgment) to be of the utmost importance for the comprehension of the New Testament as a whole. What is adumbrated in Paul—"wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest unto their own destruction"<sup>1</sup>—is wrought out finally in John's Gospel and his First Epistle to its absolute perfection as a religious expression suited for the ancient mind on the borderland between Greece and the East.

Yet to us in the West it is sometimes necessary to read Paul in order to understand John: often Paul comes nearer to our way of thought than John. Always, however, each must be read in the light of the other. There is a definite evolution of the religious consciousness from Paul; but it is an evolution towards full comprehension of the original teaching of Jesus. It is not the case that the "Church's consciousness" constructed for itself a new religious thought. From first to last both Paul and John were moving within the circle of Christ's thought: they were both interpreting, according to their nature and experience, the true content of His teaching. There seems no reason to regard John's Gospel as specially comprehensible to the Gentiles, though it was written in Asia for Asiatic Hellenes. It is deeply Palestinian in its cast of thought and expression; and the religious atmosphere in which it moves is non-Hellenic to a greater degree than the writings of Paul, which are more strongly tinged with Hellenism. Inasmuch as John wrote in Asia Minor, perhaps at Ephesus, a sort of prepossession has grown up that his Gospel was most easily understood by Greeks. Do early quotations justify the belief that his Gospel was most popular or most frequently read by the early Gentile Christians?

<sup>1</sup> Pet. iii. 16.

I take here one very slight example, more of manner and style than of thought, and yet one which is of considerable interest. It occurs in Dr. Moffatt's *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, where on p. 562 we find it stated "as a feature of a later age" that, in the Fourth Gospel, "the dialogues beginning with the introduction of some figure pass over into a disquisition or monologue in which the author voices, through Jesus, his own or rather the Church's consciousness, usually upon some aspect of the Christology which is the dominant theme of the whole book. The original figure is forgotten, . . . and presently the so-called conversation drifts over into a doctrinal meditation upon some aspect of Christ's person."

One marvels, first of all, at the phrase "so-called conversation." Where is it called a "conversation"? Certainly not by John, who thought of it in a very different way. Who calls it a conversation? Solely and simply the modern writer, who has never apprehended the manner, or imagined to himself the purpose and intention, that rule the Fourth Gospel. To him what he calls a "conversation" must be and remain a conversation.

In chapter iv. of this Gospel the disciples, when they came back to the well—I take just one of Dr. Moffatt's examples—found Jesus, "and they marvelled that He was talking with a woman: yet no man said 'What seekest thou?' or 'Why speakest thou with her?'" The verbs that are used, *ζητεῖν* and *λαλεῖν*, are perfectly suitable to the investigation of problems and to formal exposition. The woman herself went to the city and told the men, "Come and see a man which told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?" There is here no word about a conversation. The woman recognised instantly that, in continuation of the request by a traveller for water at a well's mouth (the commonest incident of travel in the East), what might have

turned into a conversation in the usual tone between a man and a woman alone at a well became at once a serious discussion about the greatest and gravest things in life ; and she drew the inference, " Can this be the Christ ? "

Dr. Moffatt, however, can see here only a " so-called conversation," and marvels that this conversation became ever anything else.

We see, then, that John does not use the term " conversation " or anything corresponding to it : he was interested in these " so-called conversations," for the doctrinal meditation into which they pass. They begin as personal scenes, often marvellously individualised ; and they gradually or instantaneously pass into an exposition. But why not ? Why should the author be debarred from following out his own bent ? He has produced the greatest book in all literature by doing so ; but the modern scholar cannot see the greatness and forbids the method.

In the second place, why is this method peculiar to and characteristic of the second century ? Why was it impossible in the first century ? Dr. Moffatt assumes that it is a " feature of a later age." He offers no evidence for the assumption ; there is none to offer. He starts with the fixed idea that the book is late, and anything and everything in the book becomes to him forthwith a proof of lateness. He never asks why it should be late, or what marks it as of the second century. He simply assumes.

In the third place, Dr. Moffatt offers in a footnote one single analogy to the method which we find in John ; and this analogy is taken from one of the few parts of the New Testament which he admits to have been composed in the first century, and at the very beginning of Christian literature, viz. the Epistle to the Galatians ii. 15 f. This analogy stands in a footnote, perhaps it is an afterthought ; but how can a critic prove his assumption that this method of

John's could only be originated in the second century, by a quotation from a first century book? The natural insensitiveness of the Author to historical method, and his natural preference for wire-drawn argument, leads him into this awkward situation.

Dr. Moffatt goes on to say that "this method" [in the Fourth Gospel] "precludes the idea that the author could have been an eye-witness of these scenes, or that he is reproducing such debates from memory." Why so? What proof does Dr. Moffatt offer? None, except German opinion and the passage from the Epistle to the Galatians. Now, that passage is autobiographical: Paul relates his own debate with Peter, and gradually "drifts over into a doctrinal, disquisition, while "the original figure is forgotten," and we hear no more about Peter and have no "record of his final attitude or the effect which he produced."

It would not be easy to produce a more perfect parallel. Dr. Moffatt knows it, and quotes it, and argues that, inasmuch as this method was used by Paul in the first century, therefore it could not be used by John, but that its occurrence in a work bearing John's name proves that the work was written in a later age. Is this historical reasoning, or literary criticism, or sheer prepossession with a fixed idea that anything and everything observed in the Fourth Gospel is, and must be, a proof of lateness and "pseudonymous origin?"

In the fourth place, with regard to this method, which Dr. Moffatt unhesitatingly takes as indicating second century origin without any proof that it is usual in the second century—simply assuming that such a way of writing belongs to the second century, of which we know next to nothing—I would venture to maintain that the method is peculiarly characteristic of the first century. It belongs to the period when the facts were still close at hand, and not afar off: it

belongs to the period when the lesson and the moral and the principle were still felt to be the most important—not that I believe the facts ever were regarded as in themselves unimportant, but they were at first more familiar and were assumed as familiar. Finally, it is very characteristic of Paul, who slips so unconsciously from narrative of events to his own inferences from them, that it is hard to tell where narrative ends and hortatory inference takes its place.

So it is in the passage quoted by Dr. Moffatt from Galatians ii. 13 ff. So again it is in the passage 1 Corinthians xi. 25–34, where I defy any one to detect at what point the narrative passes from a direct simple recital of the words of Jesus, first into what may be a drawing out of the truth involved in the words, then into what must be such an exposition, and finally into a pure hortatory lesson deduced by Paul from what he begins as a narrative. There is in the passage no desire and no intention to paint a picture or describe a scene. There is only the intense and overmastering passion to bring out the bearing of the acts and words on the present situation.

To put the case in a word, the method of John in this respect is the method of Paul. If one belongs to the first century, there is no reason why the other also should not belong to the same century. John was not bent on composing a formal history of the life of Jesus. He records what remained to him in the end of his life as a most vivid and deep-lying possession, viz. his memory of certain scenes and the lessons they conveyed to him (as he looked back over them) and to others (as he hoped).

The examples of this class and method are frequent. Take Acts i. 16–22. Here you have a historical scene, the first filling up of a vacancy in the number of the Twelve Apostles. The situation is opened by a speech of Peter as president (so to say) at the meeting. For certain reasons,

on which one need not here enter, the speech of Peter goes off into a brief historical narrative and returns to the main subject. The narrative is partly explanatory, addressed by the historian to the readers. How much is explanatory, and how far Peter is regarded as incorporating narrative in his speech, no one can say exactly and confidently. This was the method of the age, when people stood, almost or completely, in the immediate presence of the facts. It belongs to that age. I wait for some proof that it was more characteristic of the second century than of the first. It is, generally speaking, characteristic of an attitude of mind; and it might therefore occur in any age, when the writer's mind was in a certain condition. It is perfectly harmonious with the tone of the first century.

W. M. RAMSAY.

### *THE BROKEN HEART OF JESUS.*

"God has only one method of salvation, the Cross of Christ. God can have only one; for the Cross of Christ means death to evil, life to good."  
*Rev. Frederick W. Robertson.*

"THEREFORE doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. . . . I and my Father are one" (John x.). "He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. . . . And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix.). How was that life laid down? How was that exit accomplished in harmony with natural law? What was the physical cause of the death of Christ?