

St. Paul and the Twelve.

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IN order to understand the relations of these apostles, we must know first the things for which the original apostles stood, and those changes in the situation which were introduced by the innovator in the apostolic circle. The Twelve adopted a reactionary policy, instead of the liberal attitude of Jesus. Our Lord was a Jew, but he moved with absolute freedom among the ceremonial requirements of the law. In this he was not less a Jew than his contemporaries, but he reverted to the type of Jew represented by the prophets, who insisted, as he did, that God desires mercy and truth instead of sacrifice. One might suppose that the passages in the Psalms and prophets which speak slightly of sacrifices and forms were intended merely to represent the superiority of the moral requirements of the law to these formal commands. But there is one passage in Jer. 7²² 23 which denies that God instituted the sacrificial system, and affirms that he confined himself in his commands to those things which belong to a righteous walk in life, leaving out the sacrifices which would make up for the lack of this. To say that Jesus stood in the line of prophets, therefore, is to say that he eliminated from the law its formal requirements, and thus absolutely rationalized and spiritualized its contents. The result was that he found no place for himself in Jerusalem, which was the headquarters of the rabbinical and priestly cult in Judaism. Now, that the disciples reacted from this position after his death is sufficiently plain, without introducing any doubtful testimony from the Acts. We may leave out of the question altogether the statement that they were regarded with favor by all the people because of their assiduity in following the temple worship, though the whole history points to the general accuracy of that statement. But the undeniable fact is the church at Jerusalem, which city became by this means the headquarters of the new sect. This would have been an impossibility if they had kept up the movement to replace Pharisaic Judaism with prophetic Judaism, instituted by Jesus.

The one thing in the disciples' position which excited opposition was their insistence that Jesus was the Messiah. But here their programme was the Jewish Messianism in all its details, with Jesus filling the principal rôle, and the chosen people as its primary beneficiaries. Here again we may doubt whether Jesus gave them any specific commands to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. But we have sufficient material in his teaching to show that he inculcated universalism as one of its features. In the Lord's Prayer he puts at the head of all the petitions this, that God's will may be done, his kingdom come, and his name be hallowed on earth as in heaven. The earth that is, and not Palestine, is to be the seat of the kingdom. And so, when we come to the parables, which evidently represent the kingdom as advancing by the processes of growth to a perfect conclusion, it means that the world was to be infused with its leaven, and not simply Judaism. But here again we come upon the fact that Jesus was a descendant of the prophets and inherited their universalism. It would be a strange commentary upon his Judaism that it reacted anywhere from the prophets, instead of making an advance along the whole line. When we find him quoting from Jeremiah, at the time of his cleansing of the temple, the famous passage to the effect that God's house was to be a house of prayer for all the nations, it not only gathers probability from the circumstances, since it was the court of the Gentiles which the dealers were defiling, and from the general use of the Old Testament by our Lord, but also from the fact that he represented that broader side of Judaism which the prophets instituted. Then while Jesus prophesied a gradual and sure progress of his kingdom to completion, he predicted on the other hand an early demise of Judaism, a combination impossible within the Jewish Messianic programme. On the whole, then, we can leave out altogether the more specific prophecies and evangelizing commands of our Lord, and there still remains the principle of universalism as the prime note of his teaching about the kingdom. And this was included in that growth of the kingdom taught in the parables, and not in the conquests of the kingdom which were to follow the advent in the Jewish Messianism. On the contrary, the disciples regard the ascended Lord as having for his work to bring repentance and remission of sins to Israel. The chosen people's sin has culminated in the crucifixion of the Messiah, and since it is recorded in all the prophets that the soul which does not believe in the last and greatest of the prophets shall perish from among the people, God has raised him for the very purpose of turning the chosen seed from their iniqui-

ties. But they do not stop here : the covenant with Israel is that in them shall all the nations of the world be blessed. And it is for this double reason that they turn their attention to the Jews, because the chosen people must be saved, and because they must be made the instruments of blessing to the rest of the nations. This, then, was the programme of the disciples : the conversion of the Jews first, and then through them the accomplishment of whatever work God had in hand for the rest of the nations.

Now, in both these particulars St. Paul set up an entirely different policy. The controversy gathered head about two special matters. The demand was made on him, in the first place, that his Gentile converts should be circumcised ; and then that they should abstain from meats offered in sacrifice to idols and otherwise unclean. In regard to this controversy, it is simply impossible to accept the testimony of the Acts, as it conflicts with that of St. Paul himself in his epistles, and is self-contradictory besides. This account makes it out that there was an agreement between St. Paul and the rest about the matter to this effect, that circumcision should not be demanded, but that abstinence from things offered in sacrifice to idols, from things strangled, and from blood, should be demanded. If there was this agreement, then there was clearly very bad faith on both sides—on the part of St. Paul because he taught in the plainest manner that the domain of morals did not extend into the matter of foods, and that to eat things offered in sacrifice to idols was quite an indifferent matter morally ; and on the part of the Twelve because they were clearly back of the movement to Judaize the Gentiles. The facts of the matter are told in the Epistle to the Galatians. According to that epistle St. Paul did have a conference with the Twelve, the result of which was that they gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, with the understanding that they should continue their work among the Jews, and that he should go to the Gentiles. But this is followed up by the appearance of St. Peter at Antioch, about which we will say nothing except that it has a suspicious look, as if they were keeping a watch upon St. Paul, when they had agreed to let him alone. But be this as it may, what is unquestioned is, that when certain men came from St. James, St. Peter dissembled and withdrew from fellowship with the Gentiles, with whom before he had been associating. Now, then, what made St. Peter dissemble, if those men who came from St. James did not represent him and the church and the apostles? If the traditional theory were correct, that these men were a miserable faction who repre-

sented nothing but a small party in the Jewish church, then St. Peter, knowing that they were nothing and nobody, and that the church as a whole and the apostles were in sympathy with St. Paul in this matter, and not with these men, would simply have ignored them and gone his way as before. But no; St. Peter, during his stay at Antioch, had evidently come under a new influence, and been turned by it, as was his wont, into new paths. And then the church, either because it distrusted him or possibly had heard of his defection, sent another delegation, and St. Peter, knowing that these new men represented the church and its leaders, gave way before a power whose numbers and influence were too great for even him to disregard. But there is a passage in the Acts which unconsciously gives away its whole policy. Passages in this book which betray the *Tendenzschrift* are of no value as testimony to anything except this character of the book. But passages which unconsciously reveal the real character of the time, and so serve to correct the book itself, are so much the more valuable. Of this character is the passage 21²⁰, where St. James is represented as saying that there are myriads of the Jews who believe, and that they are all zealots of the law. Again we see no miserable faction, but the whole great number of Jewish believers, and they are all zealots of the law; not of the moral law, but of the customs, by which is evidently meant those parts of the law which have to do with manners and customs, and not with moral regulations. And zealots: it is no exaggeration to translate this word by our "fanatics." That is, it denotes an excessive zeal. But how about the leaders of the church? Could the church have taken on this universal character, marked evidently by this strong feeling, if the Twelve had been men of the Pauline stamp? As to the original agreement between them, by which St. Paul and St. Barnabas had been given the right hand of fellowship, the account in Galatians tells us how that was. They could not gainsay the evidence of miracles and of his converts. If they had done this they would have had nothing to stand on themselves. But they were evidently out of sympathy with his views and practices, and acted simply under this constraint. If they had really been convinced, and conceded to him the same authority as they had, the suspicion with which they followed him up and the final rupture at Antioch would have been impossible.

It is needless to speak of St. Paul's reversal of the policy of the Twelve in the other particular. Their programme was, the Jews first, and then through them the Gentiles. St. Paul reversed that

because he saw the utter futility of it. He accepted the idea of the whole church that the Lord was to return within that generation, and to him the inference was the impossibility that the Jews should be converted within that time, in even a general sense; and, on the other hand, he did believe that the great work of evangelizing the Gentiles must be completed within that time, and that for this reason, if for no other, the work among the Gentiles could not possibly wait for the conversion of the Jews. His programme, therefore, was exactly the reverse: he proposed to convert the Gentiles first, and then through them to stir up the Jews to jealousy, and at the very last bring them in too. That is, to him the difficult, not to say impossible, task was the conversion of the Jews on account of the strong prejudice among them against the break with the ceremonial law represented by Jesus. And he depended therefore on the jealousy which the redemption of the Gentiles would arouse among the Jews to bring them in at the very last.

It is evident, then, that St. Paul and the Twelve were not in harmony in the matter of their teachings. There was no open rupture between them; the Twelve recognized St. Paul as an apostle, but it was under constraint. There is one thing that needs to be said, however, in the way of exception to this general statement. What has been said applies without exception to the early position of the Twelve. But if the accepted tradition about the authorship of the Synoptical Gospels is true, then there must have been a modification of this, though not within the period covered by the Pauline writings. If St. Peter was the source of the second gospel, and St. Matthew of the Logia, and the Synoptics were derived from these sources mainly, then we have here an entirely sympathetic account of our Lord's teaching in its advanced form coming from within the circle of the Twelve, which is clearly in opposition to the reactionary policy of the Twelve in the early period. It is true that they were reporters in so strict a sense that they sometimes give us accounts of our Lord's teaching out of line with their own opinions, by means of which we are able to correct the later teaching of the New Testament. A good example is the eschatological discourse, the report of which quite frees Jesus himself from the charge of making the mistake in regard to his coming which marred the teaching of the first century. But this will not account for the whole phenomenon. Evidently this sympathetic account must have come from sympathetic men. And if we accept the plain inference from this, then it accounts for certain matters in the New Testament story

which do not seem to me to be sufficiently covered by the present theory, in spite of its generally indisputable character. Where did the prevalent idea come from, assigning to St. Peter the rôle of leader in the change of the Twelve to a liberal attitude? I know that it is easy to ascribe it to a desire to invest that movement with the prestige of St. Peter's name. And the Cornelius story — it is possible that that is made out of whole cloth too. But if we find somewhere an indication so plain as the liberalism of the Synoptics, which are evidently not *Tendenz* writings in any sense of the word, that there was later a change of attitude among the Twelve, in which St. Peter was at least one of the factors, then we have an explanation of the story in the Acts which increases the margin of actual history in that book, and makes it out that the writer did not create the story of the liberalizing of the Twelve, but simply antedated it. The change of time was due to the same *Tendenz* as the supposed invention of the whole story, but is not so difficult morally. It simply assumes an arrangement of what we may easily suppose to have been floating, unlocated material. On the whole, the New Testament problem is in the way to solution, but we want to be very sure that we include in it all the facts. At present the Synoptics seem to me to have been left out of the main scheme.