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THE  
PAULINE EPISTLES

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## THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

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THE Canonical Gospels have received much attention from critics, and their integrity has been effectively challenged. The prefatory verses of Luke's Gospel show that the writer was no eye-witness of the events described by him, but owed his information to others whom he even failed to name. The Gospels according to Matthew and Mark are linked with that according to Luke in the same scheme of narration, the three obviously at times following some common document. Luke's want of originality therefore attaches also to the other two so standing associated with him in the representations made by them. Luke and Mark make no pretension to being of the number of the apostles, and the tradition that the Gospel of Matthew was put forth in Hebrew destroys the credit of the document we have in this name as coming from a possible apostolic source. The writers therefore simply belonged to the church at large, and were not persons who had ever been in the society of the asserted founder of the faith whose history they undertook to give. The existence of their productions can be traced only to times removed by several generations from the alleged apostolical age, and their facts are found occasionally so discordant as to be mutually destructive. The result therefore arrived at is, that these narratives cannot be accepted as representing history. Standing associated with a crowd of similar marvellous tales which are universally disallowed as authorities, they are them-

selves found, when critically examined, equally unreliable. The Gospel according to John is condemned even more conclusively. It is of a later time than the productions of the synoptists; it is in violent opposition to their representations in nearly all its particulars; and it betrays itself as composed for dogmatic effect after Christianity had become matured. But in certain of the epistles attributed to Paul even advanced critics have thought that we have the genuine works of a renowned preacher standing in the apostolic age, and that there is consequently an exhibition of Christianity at a period approaching that of its alleged foundation in the life of its reputed originator. These are admissions which seem to me to have been made without sufficient consideration, and I propose now to show grounds why the Pauline epistles may be relegated to the region of the apocryphal, equally as the Gospels.

The Acts of the Apostles purports to be an account of the labours and doctrines of the first followers of Jesus. The time is that immediately ensuing after the asserted resurrection of Jesus, and it extends to the close of the active ministry of Paul, terminating when he was placed, as is said, under restraint in Rome. Jesus is described as having surrounded himself with a special band of twelve witnesses, and it was thought of such importance to keep up this apparent institution, that when a vacancy occurred from the alleged apostacy and death of Judas, the number is stated to have been filled up by an appeal to the Deity through the process of a selection by lot. We are to understand that to these the founder had committed his testimonies, and through them had provided the means of disseminating the doctrines of the new faith propounded by him. We are plainly informed that the appointed preachers at the outset confined their ministry to the Jews only, feeling no liberty to address the Gentiles; and when Paul and Barnabas

introduced the gospel to the Gentiles, we find members of the original Judean Church seeking to bring the new converts within the pale of Judaism by requiring that they should be circumcised. The Jewish faction failed in their endeavour, and from thenceforward an open door was afforded to the Gentiles. But it has been seen necessary to show adequate authority for this departure from the original institution in which was the expression of Jewish exclusiveness.

The founder, when he was in life, had peremptorily, as it is said, enjoined it on his followers not to go into the way of the Gentiles, nor even of the Samaritans, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and had encouraged them to expect that his second and final advent would be accomplished ere they had prosecuted their labours over the cities of Israel, or the region to which he so restricted them. When we find his first followers obeying such a rule, we must conclude that we are to understand that their founder left them unprovided with any other. But we are nevertheless called upon to believe that at his resurrection Jesus abrogated his previous instructions, and required that his gospel should be preached to "every creature" on the face of the earth. To accept the statement it is necessary first to admit the fact of the resurrection; but even passing over this difficulty, there are conclusive grounds to show that the command alleged could not have been given. The rule of exclusiveness is represented to have been broken through under the force of the vision accorded to Peter, who, when taxed with the undue liberty by his brethren, sheltered himself under the authorization of this vision. It is plain that the disciples could not already have had an injunction to address the Gentiles given them from the lips of the risen Jesus. Nor is the authority of the vision itself sustainable. In evident ignorance of any such sanction, Paul and Barna-

has are seen addressing themselves to Jews only, and then to have turned to the Gentiles on the mere ground that the Jews had refused to accept them, supporting themselves in their action by an appeal to the Jewish scriptures. Now if these scriptures gave the adequate warrant attributed to them, all the circumstances previously recited become negatived. Jesus, in the face of these scriptures, could not have shut a door upon the Gentiles, or have needed to open it by special command, as a being raised from the dead; nor, supposing there was no such command, was there a call for the mystical vision said to have been exhibited to Peter. The Holy Ghost, acting upon the believing body, especially after Pentecost, would have quite sufficed to have given them the sense of the scriptures described to have been independently arrived at by Paul and Barnabas. In the action ascribed to Paul and Barnabas we have a natural representation of the passage made by Christianity out of Jewish exclusiveness into the free sphere it has since occupied, and in some such manner we may understand the transition to have been effected. The result is that the Gentiles owe their access to the faith adopted by them to some other source than the ordinance of the asserted founder of the system, whether as possibly communicated during his lifetime when in the flesh, or, as is said, by an appearance made by him after his resurrection.

But the introduction of the Gentiles, it is apparent, did not effect their complete amalgamation with the Jewish party. The Hebrew scriptures relied on by Paul and Barnabas, as it is stated, say no more in respect of them than that they should be visited with "light." (Isa. ix. 2; xlix, 6). The Messiah was to be "for a light of the Gentiles," but "for a covenant of the people," meaning, of course, Israel. "When the Redeemer shall come to Zion," it is said of the sacred city, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;" but for the Gen-

tiles the provision was that they "shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising;" and it is expressed of Jesus by the evangelist (in, probably, an interpolated portion) that he should be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel" (Isa. xlii. 6; lix. 20; lx. 1-3; Luke ii. 32). The Jewish party, it may be judged in the book of Acts, retained among themselves the symbol of circumcision, while not imposing it on the Gentiles. Accordingly Paul circumcises Timothy even after he had opened the dispensation to the Gentiles. A lower standard, derived, however, from Jewish sentiment, was prescribed for the Gentile converts. They were to "abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled;" being also required not to indulge in promiscuous intercourse with females. In the Apocalypse the distinctiveness of the Jewish race is ever maintained in the ages of futurity there depicted, and place is ever afforded for their temple and holy city, while the Gentiles are represented as a promiscuous body held in subordination to them (Rev. vii. 4-9; xi. 1, 2; xxi. 2, 3, 12, 24-26; xxii. 2). These various features require to be kept in view in judging of the Pauline epistles, where the association of the Gentiles with the Jews is otherwise maintained.

The great question in biblical religion is, how to be freed of the consequences of sin. The Mosaic law professed to effect the deliverance by the sacrifice of bulls and of goats; but in later times fervent spirits, elevated above the trammels of Mosaism, saw that this was a vain resource, and were sensible that the sinner's heart had to be changed to secure for him acceptance by the Deity (Ps. xl. 6-8; l. 7-15; li. 15-17; Isa. i. 11-17; Hos. vi. 6; Amos v. 21-24; Mic. vi. 6-8). The Essenes, who are nevertheless accounted as of the Jewish persuasion, practised this higher form of faith, not resorting to sacrifices, but striving to commend themselves to the Almighty by devotion of heart and

harmlessness of conduct. John the Baptist, as described, was of this type. He is said to have initiated Jesus by baptism; and the traces of Essene doctrine, especially in the abnegation of the enjoyments of life to promote spiritual growth and secure everlasting bliss, are discernible in the teachings attributed to Jesus. His described method was that men should seek acceptance by the Deity through repentance and good works. They were to ask for forgiveness as they forgave others. This he illustrated by the parable of the unforgiving servant and that of the two debtors, showing that all debts, or transgressions, would be "frankly" forgiven for the mere asking; and he gave a marked instance of such a result where he portrayed the heavenly Father receiving the prodigal son with open arms on his turning to him in repentance. He himself undertook freely to forgive the man sick of the palsy, and the woman who anointed him, all their sins. The condition of a sacrifice in these instances was not merely not pointed to, but excluded. In his didactic discourses, and the illustrations given by him in parables, he placed the acceptance of mankind on their maintenance of good works. The entry into the kingdom of heaven was to be accorded to those who did the will of his father; the tree was to be judged of by its fruits; the wise man, who built his house upon a rock or sure foundation, was he who heard his sayings and did them; they who did his Father's will stood to him as brother, sister, and mother; in the parable of the sower those with whom the seed sown is fruitful are the accepted; in that of the net the "just" are severed from the "wicked;" in that of the sheep and goats, those who fed the hungry, sheltered the stranger, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and imprisoned, were to inherit the heavenly kingdom. We are to judge how far the doctrine of the first described followers of Jesus was consistent with what we are to consider thus traceable to his lips as the founder.



We learn that they invariably taught that forgiveness was to be freely expected on exercising repentance and faith in Jesus, unqualified by other conditions (Acts ii. 38; iii. 19; v. 31; viii. 22; x. 43; xiii. 38; xvi. 31; xx. 21; xxii. 16; xxvi. 18). The particular circumstance in respect of Jesus insisted on was his resurrection. It was to bear personal evidence to this alleged fact that the apostolic body are said to have been constituted (Acts i. 8, 21-26; x. 41), and thereto they assiduously offered their testimony (Acts ii. 32; iii. 15; iv. 33). Their doctrine was that, as prophesied, Christ must needs suffer to pass onwards to glory (Acts iii. 18). He was, consequently, "led as a sheep to the slaughter;" and "his life" thus "taken from the earth" (Acts viii. 32, 33). They attached no other sense to his death than that it was thus accomplished. "By wicked hands" he had been "crucified and slain," and "all the house of Israel" were to know assuredly that "God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ;" they had "killed the Prince of life, whom God had raised from the dead;"—"whom they crucified" he had "raised from the dead." "The God of our fathers," they said, "raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree;" "whom they slew and hanged on a tree, him God raised up the third day" (Acts ii. 23, 36; iii. 15; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 39, 40). Such was the character of the death. As the Jews had "persecuted" the "prophets," and "slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One," so of him, when he came, had they "been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts vii. 52). This negatives the idea that it was a death effected sacrificially. It was a mere murder, constituting the sufferer a martyr. And his reward was his exaltation to be the deliverer of all who looked to him for help. The early preachers consequently "preached peace by Jesus Christ," proclaiming him to be "Lord of all." "Whosoever,"

they declared, "shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Neither," they insisted, "is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts ii. 21; iv. 12; x. 36).

The preaching of the Paul described in the Acts consists with what has been thus attributed to the apostolic body. He declared that "Christ must needs have suffered and risen from the dead," for so had it been foretold by "the prophets and Moses" that he "should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead." He had been "slain" though "no cause of death" was found in him—which negatives the idea, promulgated in the later teaching, that he had been put to death for a very sufficient cause, namely to bear the sins of mankind, undergoing in their room the Creator's "curse," and so suffering. Christ being raised from the dead to be constituted a deliverer, Paul ever showed that it was in the recognition of his resurrection that the deliverance was to be secured. He who had been "dead" he "affirmed to be alive," and so he "preached Jesus and the resurrection." God had "given assurance unto all men in that he had raised him from the dead," that he had "appointed a day" in which he should "judge the world" by him; but his people, whom he had "purchased with his own blood," could find their safety in him. In this manner, through the resurrection of the deliverer, God, he assured his brethren, had "fulfilled the promise which was made unto the fathers." It was for "the hope and resurrection of the dead," simply, that he himself was "called in question;" in the way in which his accusers termed "heresy," so, he declared, "worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets; and have hope toward God" "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." It was "touching the resurrection of

the dead" that he had to defend himself. "Why," he asks, "should it be thought a thing incredible" "that God should raise the dead." It was for this, "the hope of the promise made of God unto the fathers," for which he stood to be "judged;" "for the hope of Israel," he stated, "I am bound with this chain" (Acts xiii. 18-20, 32, 33; xvii. 3, 18, 31, 32; xx. 28; xxiii. 6; xxiv. 14, 15, 21; xxv. 19; xxvi. 6, 8, 23; xxviii. 20).

The synoptic gospels have descriptions of Jesus constituting him a mere man, and where the contrary may appear the case, as in the accounts of his divine nativity, there is room to conclude that we have additions made after the creed had assumed that ultimate form in which his divinity was maintained. The genealogies tracing Joseph as descended from David are without purpose, unless Joseph is to be accepted as the father of Jesus. That he was so is repeatedly intimated (Matt. xiii. 55; Luke ii. 41, 48; iv. 22). The birth of Jesus involved the defilement of his mother, from which she had to "purify" herself as in the case of every natural birth; he had himself to be redeemed from penalties incurred by his mere birth; and, as an ordinary mortal, he is represented as growing "in wisdom" as well as in "stature." He repudiated possessing that goodness, or that prescience, which belongs alone to God; he had need constantly to resort to him in prayer for personal support; when he saw his end approaching he repeatedly asked God to deliver him; and in his last anguish, so destitute was he, that he concluded God had forsaken him (Matt. xix. 17; xx. 33; xxvi. 38-44; xxvii. 46; Mark xiii. 32; Luke ii. 22-24, 52; v. 6). And he commonly was accepted in no higher capacity than that of a prophet (Matt. xxi. 11, 46; Mark vi. 14-16; Luke iv. 24; vii. 16; xxiv. 19).

In the Book of Acts it is apparent that the first

teachers, including the Paul there depicted, had no other apprehension of Jesus than that he was a mere man, specially exalted at his resurrection. He was traced lineally to David as "the fruit of his loins," and being "of this man's seed" God had "raised" him to be "a Saviour" unto "Israel." He was that "prophet" of whom Moses had spoken who was to be of the Jewish "brethren" "like unto him," simply a human leader, "a man approved of God," as Moses had been, "by miracles, and wonders, and signs." It was at his resurrection only that his divine sonship was conferred upon him, according to the saying of the psalm, "Thou art my Son, *this day have I begotten thee.*" "Through this man," consequently, was forgiveness to be preached, and by this "man" are the dead to be judged (ii. 22, 30; iii. 22, 23; vii. 37; xiii. 33, 38; xvii. 31).

These doctrinal views, it is to be observed, did not go beyond the limits of Judaism as understood by certain sections of the Jewish community in those days, and the persons represented as holding them are in fact described as in strict Jewish association. Jesus is so put before us in the synoptics. His pedigree in Matthew is traced only up to Abraham; at the annunciation to Mary he is proclaimed as the future king of Israel; as such Herod is put in apprehension of him; in this aspect he formally enters Jerusalem; and under this title he is arraigned, mocked, and crucified. John's sphere of ministry as the precursor of Jesus, the one who was "to go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways," and "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," was confined to "Jerusalem and all Judea," and to these limits Jesus restricted his followers. His was a dispensation designed to raise up "children unto Abraham," and to bring in those who were to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;" and there, in a heavenly region, Abraham

receives and comforts Lazarus, and refers those on earth to the testimony of "Moses and the prophets," as all sufficient. Jesus accordingly announces that his mission required that he should observe the law in every "jot" and "tittle." As a Jew he underwent circumcision; was himself redeemed with the appointed offering; frequented the temple at its festivals; purged it as being to him the "house" of God; and he was buried as was "the manner of the Jews." The lepers he cleansed were directed by him to go to the priest with the gift "according as Moses commanded;" the woman bowed with infirmity was restored "as being a daughter of Abraham;" the centurion's servant and the Syro-Phenician woman's daughter were dealt with exceptionally, but still in recognition of Jewish privileges—the centurion being found with faith surpassing that of any "in Israel," and the Canaanitish woman being first made to understand that she was an outcast; Zaccheus was accepted "for as much as he also was a son of Abraham;" the fall of the temple was bound up with the day of judgment; and in the futurity the apostles were to sit on thrones, judging the still recognized twelve tribes of Israel.

In like manner, the apostles are found described as remaining strictly within the bounds of Jewish membership. They are said to have been at the outset at Jerusalem waiting for the divine visitation brought to them at Pentecost; on parting with the risen Jesus, their anxiety was to know whether he was about to "restore again" "the kingdom" promised "to Israel;" there were then "Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven," to whom Peter addressed the first reported Christian discourse, distinguishing them as "men of Judea," and dwellers "at Jerusalem." "Ye men of Israel," was his common form of appeal, and he brought the Deity before them as "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob;" as devout Jews they used "to continue daily with one accord

in the temple ;” Peter and John went up together there, “at the hour of prayer,” when the notable miracle on the lame man was wrought ; the address of the proto-martyr Stephen was presented strictly to Jews, and was made up of the elements of their sacred history, interesting only themselves ; to this time the “disciples” had “multiplied,” but only “in Jerusalem ;” at the dispersion consequent on the death of Stephen the members of the Church addressed themselves “to none but unto the Jews only ;” and Philip was divinely commissioned to convert a eunuch of Ethiopia, but he was one who “had come to Jerusalem for to worship,” and was thus a Jew (Acts i. 4, 6 ; ii. 5, 14, 22, 46 ; iii. 1, 12, 13 ; v. 42 ; vi. 7 ; viii. 1, 27 ; xi. 1-19).

And so also as to the Paul of the Acts. He primarily addresses himself to “men of Israel ;” he circumcised Timothy ; to conciliate Jewish brethren, “all zealous of the law,” he “purified” himself in the temple, and was at “charges” to enable four men to “shave their heads,” and make an “offering,” and thus keep a vow they had undertaken ; when on his defence he states he frequented the temple “for to worship,” and was never “found” there “disputing with any man ;” his brother Jews “found” him “purified in the temple ;” he had never, he alleged, “offended anything at all,” “neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple” (xiii. 16 ; xvi. 3 ; xxi. 20-26 ; xxiv. 11-15, 18 ; xxv. 8). The doctrine of the resurrection, which he preached, was unacceptable to the Sadducees, who had managed to have the apostles cast into prison. Paul, when brought before the Jewish council, took advantage of the schism between them and the Pharisees, who believed in a resurrection, and exclaimed, “Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee : of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question,” and so enlisted the Pharisees in his favour,

they testifying, "We find no evil in this man," demonstrating thus that he and his doctrine could stand scrutiny as strictly consonant to Jewish tenets (iv. 1-3 ; v. 17, 18 ; xxiii. 6-9).

Thus stands the *quasi*-historical record. We may accept the representation so far as relates to the doctrinal position of the first Christians, without being obliged to admit also the framework of the picture given. For example, we may reasonably disallow the statement that the apostles had been in intercourse with the risen Jesus for forty days ; that they witnessed his ascension, and just before the occurrence held with him the conversation respecting the coming kingdom, the words of which are reported ; that a divine manifestation, with physical symbols, was exhibited at Pentecost, whereby the disciples were enabled to speak in foreign tongues ; that the apostles were armed with miraculous power so as to be able to strike some persons dead, to raise others up from death, and to cure the sick, even through the instrumentality of their shadows and handkerchiefs or aprons. We may even go further, and dispute the constitution of the apostolic body, and the existence of Christianity during the era alleged for it.\* With these subjects I am not now dealing. I am merely occupied with the doctrinal teaching of the first Christians, as described in their own record, with the view of contrasting it with what is put forward in the Pauline epistles, and estimating the value of these epistles as an authoritative class of writings.

The history, then, of the doctrinal standing of the first Christians, (always excepting the later delineations in the gospel according to John, and those additions made in the synoptic gospels in view of establishing

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\* *The Twelve Apostles, Our First Century, and Primitive Church History*, all by the same able author in Mr SCOTT'S series; *The Sources and Development of Christianity*, by T. L. STRANGE. (Trübner & Co.)

a correspondence with the tenets taken up at a more advanced period), represents these earliest professors of the Christian faith as members of the Jewish persuasion; they describe their founder as such, attribute to him the design to keep up Jewish institutions, and derive from him a command to limit their ministrations to their Jewish brethren. The hope set before them was the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, the instrument of which was to be their asserted founder, whom they accepted as the Jewish Messiah. He had undergone death. They represented him as having incurred martyrdom, and held that his sufferings were the necessary passport to his glory. He was a mere man, but approved of God, who raised him from the dead and thus constituted him in sonship to himself. In his exalted condition he became the deliverer of his people. Repentance sufficed to insure pardon, and faith in the risen Christ made them partakers in his glory. With these doctrines in view as making up the sum of primitive Christianity, we may now turn to the consideration of the Pauline epistles.

We early notice in certain of these epistles a decided change of view in respect of the death of the founder. It is no more merely that of a martyr, incurred as a stepping-stone to glory, but an expiatory offering made sacrificially for the sins of mankind. The narratives of the trial and execution of Jesus, given in the gospels, involved no such features as that he bore the sins of others, and suffered for them atoningly. He is described to have been interrogated on his own behalf, to have been charged with offence against Jewish sentiment rather than with moral guilt, and to have been judicially acquitted, even (according to this strange account) when sentenced to execution. The expression is the death of a blameless man sacrificed to popular clamour. It is just the martyrdom which the first Christians set up, the wicked murdering the godly. But it involves no one element of the sacrifice for sin



needed for the support of the position in the Pauline epistles. The victim was taken to the cross forcibly by an armed party ; he had earnestly prayed the Deity to avert his fate ; he was hence no willing offering ; he had been exculpated and thus bore the sins of none ; there was no religious ceremonial, no altar, no priest, or sacrificial knife, associated with the occurrence. He died exactly as the thieves said to have been executed on either side of him. The Pauline epistles, which are now in question, take no account of the gospel narratives, but, on independent grounds, maintain their own representation. It is therein alleged that Christ was "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification ;" that he "died for the ungodly ;" "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ;" we are "justified by his blood ;" we are "reconciled to God by the death of his Son ;" "God spared not his Son, but delivered him up for us all ;" the writer, in his earnest zeal for his doctrine, "determined not to know anything" among those addressed, "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified ;" "Christ," he maintained, had "died for our sins according to the scriptures." "If one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again ;" he had been "made sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "O foolish Galatians," the writer exclaims, "who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you ;" "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree ;" "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." "We have redemption through his blood, the forgive-

ness of sins ;” we, “ who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ ;” he has “ reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby,” “ so making peace ;” “ Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour ;” “ we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” “ It pleased the Father ” to make “ peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself ; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven ;” he “ died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live with him ” (Rom. iv. 25 ; v. 6-10 ; viii. 32 ; 1 Cor. ii. 2 ; xv. 3 ; 2 Cor. v. 14, 21 ; Gal. iii. 1, 13 ; xvi. 14 ; Eph. i. 7 ; ii. 13, 16 ; v. 2 ; Col. i. 4, 20 ; 1 Thess. v. 10 ; 2 Tim. ii. 11).

Another question of doctrine raised in these epistles has respect to the constitution of Jesus. Was he mere man, or something more than man ? Could he be placed on a level with the Deity himself ?

In the leading epistle in this set he is simply announced as “ made of a woman, made under the law ” (Gal. iv. 4). That is, he was by birth one of the human family, as the same phrase is employed to express in various other scriptures—(Job xiv. 1 ; xv. 14 ; xxv. 4 ; Matt. xi. 11 ; Luke vii. 28) ; and as such had to rule himself by the propounded laws of God. I associate with this epistle, in common authorship, the epistles to the Corinthians, where the doctrine is similar. “ For since *by man* came death, *by man* came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, *even so* in Christ shall all be made alive.” The sin and the remedy were due to exactly the same agency, namely, a human one. “ Henceforth know we *no man after the flesh* ; yea, though we have known Christ *after the flesh*, yet now henceforth *know we him no more.*” In the flesh Christ was, as others, a mere man. The writer could recog-

nize him only as he stood in risen life as "a new creature." He was still a created being, though an exalted one. When he refers to him as "the image of God," it must be remembered that he could view ordinary man in like manner as capable of reflecting "the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. xi. 7; xv. 21, 22; 2 Cor. iv. 4; v. 16, 17). The doctrine is similar also in the Epistle to the Romans. Jesus is described as "made of the seed of David according to the flesh." The expression has great positive value. It points to his paternal origin, and in no way refers to the maternal association. "By *one man* sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" to meet which circumstance "the grace of God, and the gift by grace," was introduced by the means of *one man*—Jesus Christ." "By *one man's* offence death reigned by one," and therefore it was so appointed that "the gift of righteousness" should "reign in life *by one*—Jesus Christ." Christ, when going through this office, was necessarily therefore none other than a human being. Afterwards, at his "resurrection," he was endowed "with power" to become "the son of God," "according to the spirit of holiness." It follows that he had no such position previously while in life. The phrase "God blessed for ever," appearing in chap. ix. 5 of this epistle, after what has foregone, cannot possibly be an expression made applicable by the writer to Jesus. It is either an ejaculation addressed to the Deity himself, or, if respecting Jesus, it must have been interpolated after the doctrine had advanced to the recognition of his divinity. The writer is seen to reprobate the idea of a divinity presented in human form. It was, he says, the characteristic of the heathen, when they had become "vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened," to have "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," and of course he could not have been guilty of

the error he was denouncing by accounting Jesus an incarnate god (Rom. i. 3, 4, 21-23 ; v. 12, 15, 17).

The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians stand together in parity of doctrine, and probably in community of authorship. They give us an enhanced view of the constitution of Christ. As in the instance of the Alexandrine Logos, he is said to have pre-existed before all that has been created, and to have been the active agent of the Almighty, who "created all things by Jesus Christ." "In him," it is stated, his people have been chosen "before the foundation of the world." He is, moreover, declared to be "the image of the invisible God," possessing in himself all his "fulness,"—"the fulness of the Godhead bodily." But we are not to conclude that this involves his essential divinity. Christ still remains a created being, though "the first born of every creature," and whatever he possesses is by the endowment of God. It is as it has "pleased the Father," and "according to the good pleasure of his will," that Christ is what he is. And the ultimate manifestation was when the Deity put forth "his mighty power" and "raised him from the dead," and gave him the supremacy over the whole universe (Eph. i. 4, 5, 19-23 ; iii. 9 ; Col. i. 15, 19 ; ii. 9).

The last phase, namely, as it would seem, the absolute divinity of Jesus, is arrived at in the Epistle to the Philippians, and those to Timothy and Titus. He is said to have been not only "in the form of God," but to have "thought it not robbery to be equal with God ;" to have been "God manifest in the flesh ;" and to be about to exhibit a "glorious appearance" of himself as "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Phil. ii. 6 ; 1 Tim. iii. 16 ; Tit. ii. 13).

A third feature to be observed in these epistles is the strong anti-Judaic spirit they exhibit, a feeling so removed from what characterized the first disciples,

and prominently Paul himself as described in the book of Acts. "The blessing of Abraham" was declared to have "come on the Gentiles;" his "seed," in whose favour the promises ran, were not his natural progeny, but merely Christ and those who were his, and all distinction of Jew and Gentile was at an end. The Jewish dispensation was a thing of naught, consisting of "weak and beggarly elements," serving only to bring the soul under "bondage" (Gal. iii. 14, 16, 28, 29; iv. 9). "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing," the sole requisition being "the keeping the commandments of God." All are "baptized into one body," whether they be "Jews or Gentiles." "All things" have become "lawful," the Jewish interdicts being at an end. "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles" may be eaten; "whatsoever is set before us" we may eat, "asking no question for conscience sake" (1 Cor. vi. 12; vii. 19; x. 25, 27; xii. 13). The Jewish dispensation was a "ministration of death," and with all other "old things" has "passed away," in favour of what is "new" (2 Cor. iii. 7; v. 17). "There is no respect of persons with God," and the idea of an elect nation is at an end. The law on which they depended for divine guidance is found to be a work of supererogation, the action of the "conscience," as among "the Gentiles," being all-sufficient. "Circumcision" avails nothing over "uncircumcision." He is "not a Jew, which is one outwardly," but he only is one "which is one inwardly" through "circumcision of the heart." Abraham, we are reminded, received the "seal of circumcision" in recognition of the faith manifested by him while "yet uncircumcised." Those are not the "heirs" who can plead only "the law" in their favour, the true heirs being such as are "of the faith of Abraham," who in this manner exercises paternity for all. "The children of the flesh—these are not the children of God." Faith is the sole qualification

accepted, and this obliterates all distinction "between the Jew and the Greek" (Rom. ii. 11, 15, 25-29; iv, 11, 14, 16; ix. 8; x. 12). "Circumcision" is merely what has been "made by hands in the flesh." Those who are without it have been made "nigh by the blood of Christ," "the middle wall of partition" being "broken down," and "the law of commandments" "abolished." Everything "in heaven" and "on earth" is gathered together "in one," "in Christ." "The Gentiles" are thus "fellow heirs, and of the same body," and "partakers" of the "promise" in Christ (Eph. ii. 11-15; iii. 6). The true "circumcision" is that "made without hands." "The writing of ordinances," or the Jewish code, has been taken "out of the way" by Christ "nailing it to his cross." No man is now to be judged in regard of "meat," or "drink," or "in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." All such ordinances are merely "rudiments of the world," and made to "perish with the using." Henceforth, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision," "but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. ii. 11, 14, 16, 20-22; iii. 11). The writer's sympathies are evidently not with "the circumcision," who abound in "vain talkers and deceivers," circulating what he denounces as "Jewish fables" (Tit. i. 10, 14).

So low an estimate of the elect Jewish nation and their divinely propounded system, could not possibly be held by any who were themselves of the privileged people. It must be a Gentile mind that is guilty of overthrowing all Jewish advantages, levelling all distinctions between race and race, and appropriating the specific Jewish promises for all mankind. There are other indications in these epistles that such was the character of the authorship. The writer of the Epistle to the Galatians elects to be known as the apostle "of the uncircumcision," a title which no Jew could have emulated, and classes himself as of those

who are "Jews by nature," which the tenor of the doctrine held must mean in a non-Jewish sense ; that is, he is of the believing body who in newness of nature constitute the true Israel (ii. 7, 15). The writer of the 2d Epistle to the Corinthians announces his Jewish standing in a manner not necessary to be insisted on by a true Jew, and especially by the apparently well-known personage in whose name the epistle is put forward (xi. 12). And in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Philippians there is the like appeal, the very tribe to which alliance is claimed being specified (Rom. xi. 1 ; Phil. iii. 5), an allegation no real Jew could have made, seeing that the nation have had no sense of their tribal distinctions since the captivity.\*

It is clear that in the Pauline epistles we have a Gentile movement operating after a large accession of Gentiles to the Church. The Acts of the Apostles more than once notices that the Jews refused to accept the new creed founded on Christ, and that the preachers consequently turned to the Gentiles, with better prospects of success. The result has been such. The Jews, as a body, have rejected Christ, and the Gentiles have accepted him. What is disclosed by a comparison of the doctrine held in the Acts and in the Pauline epistles is, that in the early days of the formulation of the christian creed, the Gentiles, when introduced to the faith, varied its terms, bringing in elements of religion cherished among themselves. Prominently, they believed in the efficacy of human sacrifice, and they converted the martyrdom of Jesus into an atoning sacrifice ; and it was a current idea with them that gods incarnate had appeared on earth and mixed with mankind, and they ascribed to Jesus the like constitution. Eventually, they had him (in the first and third gospels) procreated by a divinity on a human female, in keeping with the origin of many

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\* The Legends of the Old Testament, p. 113.

of their demi-gods and heroes, a circumstance, however, not traceable in the Pauline epistles.

No such change from primitive christianity, as current among the Judaic section, could have been made without a severe struggle and a defiance of the so-called apostolic authority; and the leading epistle, that to the Galatians, gives ample evidence of such consequences. The writer, who is outside the appointed order of the twelve apostles, nevertheless claims for himself the title of apostle, and upon entirely independent grounds. He has it, "not of men," "neither by man," but by the appointment of the risen Jesus. Equally had he his doctrine from an independent source. "I neither received it," he declares, "of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Directly it pleased God "to reveal his Son" in him, "immediately," he asserts, "I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me." His "gospel," consequently, was an original communication made by the risen Jesus to himself, and it was of such special import that he could wish any one "accursed" who might preach any other. It is apparent that this gospel involved a line of doctrine not known of to the leaders at Jerusalem, for he alleges that, seventeen years after his conversion, he went thither and "communicated" it to them, but for some unrevealed reason "privately." Nothing can be more apparent than that we have here the admission of what we see really occurred, namely, the introduction of new doctrine not held by the primitive body of christians, but brought in among them, (seemingly in a covert manner), after christianity in some other form had been maintained for a course of years. And when we find springing up in this epistle, and enforced with earnestness, the doctrine of the sacrifice of Jesus, coupled with the levelling of all distinctions between Jew and Gentile, it is equally clear that we



have here the expression of Gentile sentiment to the subversion of the Judaic position and doctrine of the first christians.

The writer so acting has to establish the independence of his position. The Paul of the Acts was otherwise circumstanced. He is said, after his conversion, to have fled from Damascus to Jerusalem, where, when the brethren mistrusted him, as having been a persecutor, Barnabas became his warrant, and introduced him to the apostles, after which he was "with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem" preaching Jesus (Acts, ix. 26-29). All this the writer to the Galatians, having a Paul of another stamp to exhibit, stoutly denies, finding it necessary to support himself with an appeal to God that he was not lying. He alleges—"Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. And other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother."

So far from maintaining an independent ministry, and preaching for years a doctrine specially revealed to himself, and not known to the central body at Jerusalem, as ascribed to the Paul of the Epistle to the Galatians, the Paul of the Acts is seen to be in close correspondence with the central body; to have preached his gospel under their shadow; to have been indebted to Barnabas more than once for his mediation; to have been under the ordering of his own church at Antioch for his ministrations, whether as the bearer of their alms, or as their representative at a doctrinal conference, or in respect of his missionary labours; and it is observable that he was in the habit of giving an account of his labours to the churches with which he was associated at Jerusalem and Antioch (Acts ix. 26-30; xi. 25-30; xiii. 2, 3; xiv. 27; xv. 2, 4, 25; xvi. 4).

Without at all designing to endorse the account of Paul given in the Acts, that in the Galatians, I must remark, is on the face thereof incredible. It is impossible to believe that the alleged founder of Christianity should have provided for the dissemination of his faith through the agency of the apostles, and then, after he had left the world, from heaven have selected quite another instrument in the Paul of the Galatians. It cannot be that a new convert should at once have entered upon the scene, setting the constituted ecclesiastical authorities and their doctrine at defiance, and have propounded, in entire independence, a novel doctrine of his own. Nor would he have been able to preach such doctrine for seventeen years uninterfered with by the central body, and then have managed to give it currency among them and elsewhere acceptably. Whatever may be said of the Paul of the Acts, the Paul of the Galatians is an imaginary character with a career attributed to him that could not have had occurrence. The doctrine of the epistle of course in some way sprung up, and the writer of the epistle is an earnest advocate of it, but the framework through which he seeks to impress it upon his readers with authority, namely, a direct revelation from the risen Jesus to the depicted Paul, is unreal. The writer thinks to recommend his doctrine under the shelter of the name of Paul. It is a doctrine peculiarly Gentile in its complexion, and Paul was the reputed opener of the gospel to the Gentiles. He constitutes him, accordingly, the "apostle" "of the uncircumcision," makes him set his face against all Jewish pretensions, and endows him for the Gentiles with a distinct independent commission from above. He does not hesitate to make an appeal to the Deity for the truth of his asserted facts, and denounces as "accursed" all who differ from him.

We have thus before us two several Pauls, and sundry others are fairly traceable. I associate with

the Paul of the Galatians the Paul of the Epistles to the Corinthians, because of parity of spirit and of doctrine. The Paul of the Epistle to the Romans I take to be a third Paul. He is of a far calmer and more philosophic temperament than the writer of the Epistle to the Galatians, who is characterized by impulse and violence. He avows his beginnings to have been from the alleged region of the apostles, saying, "that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum," he had "fully preached the gospel of Christ;" and he shows that he had maintained constant connection with that region (Rom. xv., 19, 25, 31). He therefore cannot be the Paul of the Galatians, who made a merit of having kept himself aloof from the asserted locality of the apostles and their influence. I class the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians together. Those epistles I have hitherto noticed hold to the strict humanity of Jesus while in the flesh; but these latter assert for him a pre-existence before the world was formed (Eph. i. 4, 5, 19-23; iii. 9; Col. i. 15, 19; ii. 9). This gives these epistles a distinct standing-ground. At one time they assert the same doctrine in the very same words (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14), which could scarcely happen in an epistle save when it is the same author expressing himself. Nor can the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians be associated with that of the Epistle to the Galatians, for, far from maintaining an independent course for himself, and especially an absence of reliance on apostolic support, he acknowledges that the church has been "built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets;" and says that the dispensation of the Gentiles, which the other alleges had been committed to himself specially and solely, had, in fact, been "now revealed" by Christ "unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 20; iii. 5). We are thus provided with a fourth Paul. A fifth occurs in the Epistle to the Philippians. This writer has advanced to the recognition

of the absolute divinity of Jesus (ii. 6), which places him on a platform for doctrine distinct from that of the writers of the epistles I have hitherto dealt with. Lastly, in the Epistles to Timothy we have a sixth Paul, who may also have been the author of the parallel Epistle to Titus. The Paul of the Epistle to the Philippians, as also the Pauls of some of the other epistles, had raised Timothy to his own level, using him in co-ordinate ministry as qualified equally with himself to hold forth and enforce doctrine upon others; but the writer of the Epistles to Timothy has to remind him of his own authority, saying that he stood as an apostle of Jesus by the "commandment" and the "will" of God. "I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle," he declares, "and lie not; a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." The two, it is clear, could not have been working together in joint and equal authority. This Paul furthermore reduces Timothy to a state of tutelage, and builds him up and exhorts and stimulates him with sundry instructions for his guidance. In point of doctrine, however, the Epistles to Timothy stand associated with that to the Philippians, and divided from the other epistles, in maintaining the essential divinity of Jesus (1 Tim. ii. 13; iii. 16).

With the Epistles to the Thessalonians and that to Philemon, I do not occupy myself, as they throw no light in judging of their writers by the scale of doctrine; and I make no use of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as it does not bear the name of Paul, and is ordinarily excluded by critics from the Pauline collection.

The grand result at which we arrive from this examination of the Pauline Epistles is, that Christianity, as it is, is traceable to them, and not to the teaching ascribed to Jesus and his first disciples, and that it is impossible, by any fair treatment of the subject, to reconcile the two lines of doctrine with one another. The author of the Epistle to the Galatians gives the key-note to

this discrimination. He defiantly trumpets forth his own doctrine as distinct in itself, and as distinctly derived by him from an independent source, and he accounts those who have gone before him as teachers of Christianity as "nothing," and is prepared to hold them and all others as "accursed" who may venture to differ from him. Another subsidiary result we arrive at is, that the novel doctrines of the Pauline epistles are of Gentile character and origin, coming to us from no better source than the religious conceptions that were current in Grecian circles. So that the Christianity that has ripened to the accepted form is not expressive of the spirituality and the maturity of the Jewish faith, but is a mere exhibition of easily-to-be-recognized Paganism.

GREAT MALVERN,  
*March 1875.*