

apprehension of his teaching in the minds of his disciples, if he had meant no more than that he himself would be spiritually present with them. Jesus distinguishes himself very explicitly from the Spirit, when, in xv. 26, he says that he will send to his disciples the Spirit of truth and that he shall bear witness concerning himself. The Spirit shall glorify Christ and shall take Christ's truth and declare it to his disciples (xvi. 14, 15). Again he says: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him unto you" (xvi. 7). On the interpretation under review these passages would mean: I will send you influences from myself; my presence in another form of its manifestation shall be with you; I will teach you concerning myself; in my spiritual form of existence I will glorify my historic mission; it is necessary that my bodily presence be withdrawn from you in order that my invisible presence may be realized.

It is, indeed, conceivable that Jesus should have said all this. But do the passages in question represent him as saying it? It appears to me impossible to sustain this view by exegesis. The Johannine discourses represent the Spirit as a self distinct from Christ. Even Reuss admits that this is the exegetical result which the passages yield.¹ His claim is that this is a case where the problem respecting the real meaning of Jesus lies behind exegesis. The text embodies a misconception. It makes a distinction where there is no difference. It treats a two-fold manifestation of Christ as if two different personalities were involved. He thinks that in the passages in which Christ and the Spirit are identified we have the clew to the real meaning of all the others; that as we have on the surface of the discourses two divergent representations, one describing identity, the other difference, we must decide which is the more rational and make that determining for the explanation of the other. Applying this test, Reuss concludes that the distinguishing of the Spirit from Christ is due to a speculative motive, and

¹ *Hist. Christ. Theol.* II. 472 (orig. II. 527).

that the original meaning of the teaching concerning the sending of the Spirit was that Jesus would manifest his own invisible presence to his disciples by spiritual influences.

The legitimacy of such a conclusion should not be denied on merely theoretical grounds. The question is whether there are ascertainable facts which require or justify it. If there is a real inconsistency between the terms which describe the nature and coming of the Spirit in some passages and those used in others, we must, no doubt, determine which conception of the subject is the more probably original and correct, and so decide between them. Something like this we were compelled to do in view of the divergent representations in the Synoptic accounts of the parousia. Let us then more closely compare the description of the Spirit as a distinct person with that which is believed to yield the opposite idea and test their alleged inconsistency.

When in connection with the promise of the Spirit Jesus speaks of himself as coming to his disciples and of their seeing him (xiv. 18, 19), there is some difficulty in determining to what sort of a *coming* he refers. Three views have been held, not to mention combinations of these. Some refer the words to the second advent; others to his appearance to his disciples after the resurrection; and others to the work of the Spirit. On either of the first two interpretations the passage would have no bearing upon our present inquiry. I regard the third interpretation, however, as more probably correct. The context seems to make it clear that by his coming he here means his coming in the gift and work of the Spirit, and that by their beholding him he means the clearer spiritual vision of him which the illumination of the Spirit will make possible. Assuming the correctness of this interpretation, does the passage identify the Spirit with the glorified Christ? I think not. The uniform representation of these discourses is that the Spirit continues Christ's work in the world, interpreting and applying his truth, and fostering in the disciples the spiritual life. He may there-

fore fitly say that he comes to men in the coming and power of the Spirit. The work of the Spirit is done in his name. It is built upon his revealing, redeeming work. His object in affirming that he will come to them is to assure them that they will not be left desolate; the loss of his bodily presence will not involve their abandonment; they will still be divinely guided and strengthened. In a true sense the whole teaching respecting the Spirit implies the continued presence of Christ with his disciples as over against their desertion. But the emphasis in such an assertion does not lie on the distinctionless identity of Christ and the Spirit, but on the certainty that they will still spiritually see and know him. The same may be said of xvi. 16: "A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while and ye shall see me," and xvi. 22. "But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice," — passages which I would also refer to the coming and work of the Spirit. Nor can the conclusion in question be legitimately drawn from the words of Jesus when he breathed on his disciples, and said: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (xx. 22). This saying is as easily construed in accordance with the view which makes a distinction between Christ and the Spirit as it is in accordance with that which supposes that "Holy Spirit" is here a name for Christ's own spirit, subjectively considered. If a distinction is clearly recognized elsewhere, the application of it here does no violence to the language. It is only by a misplaced emphasis that these passages can be regarded as excluding a distinction between Christ and the Spirit. That Christ reveals himself and continues his work in the world through the Spirit, no more excludes a distinction between himself and the Spirit than the presence and activity of God in the work of salvation wrought through Christ involves the absolute identity of the Father and the Son.¹

¹ The passage "I come again, and will receive you unto myself" (xiv. 3), is not brought into consideration here because I hold that it refers not to the coming of the Spirit, but either to the coming of Christ at the death of his disciples (so Tholuck, Lange, Holtzmann), or to the

The Spirit is sent in Christ's name (xiv. 26), that is, the Spirit's work lies in that realm of truth and life which the "name" of Christ symbolizes and comprehends. He is the interpreter of Christ. The revealing, saving activity of Jesus is a disclosure in terms of human life of those eternal spiritual truths and powers which the work of the Spirit will make real and effective in the hearts of men. The life and teaching of Jesus supplies, as it were, the materials, in forms which men can apprehend, upon which the Spirit works. He opened the Kingdom of heaven, he disclosed the nature of God, the meaning of life, and the way to peace with God. The Spirit does not bestow any new or different revelation, but rather opens the eyes of men to see ever deeper meanings in what Jesus Christ has revealed in his teaching and life. The connection, therefore, between Christ's historic action and the Spirit's work is a very close one. It is of him that the Spirit will bear witness (xv. 26); it is his truth into which the Spirit will guide the disciples. The Spirit's work is the invisible continually operative counterpart of the historic action of God in Christ. It is the perpetual action of divine love in carrying forward the work of salvation. The historic action of Christ was temporal; it began and it ceased. The Spirit's work goes on perpetually accomplishing the fulfilment of the great saving process. For this invisible but potent operation Jesus regarded his historic appearance as a preparation; hence he said: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him unto you" (xvi. 7).

More closely considered, the work of the Spirit is to foster the spiritual life in the individual. The faith and love of the first believers were largely sustained by the visible presence of Jesus with them. During his earthly life he was always leading their minds away from dependence upon his miracles and from mere attachment to his

parousia (so Lechler, Meyer, Weiss), — more probably to the former, at any rate, in its original intention. Reuss does not appeal to this passage in support of his view of the identity of the Spirit with Christ.

visible personality to a deeper apprehension of what he said and was. He sought to ground their faith upon deeper reasons than those which appeared so largely to the senses and would be quickly weakened when he should have disappeared from their sight. Only as faith penetrated into the heart of his spiritual truth and struck its roots into the life of God, could its persistence and growth be assured. Hence he said to Thomas: "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (xx. 29). This is the beatitude of those who have not seen Christ in the flesh, but who have seen him with the eye of the spirit and who have discerned in him the revelation of God and of the meaning and goal of life. It was only by such a deepening of faith that the spiritual vision of the first disciples could be gradually enlarged and clarified. Gradually their inherited prejudices gave way. They saw the work of Christ and the meaning of his Kingdom in a new light. Their own faith found broader and more secure foundations. That all this might happen it was necessary, he said, that he should withdraw from them his bodily presence. The veil of sense must be rent; the aid of sight must be surrendered in order that his disciples might walk by faith alone. The inner treasures of the gospel must be opened by the Spirit; its hidden depths must be fathomed; its lofty heights must be ascended. His followers must cease to know him after the flesh, for the lower easily becomes a hindrance to the higher. Under the guidance of the Spirit faith must assert its true power, realize its own true nature, adjust itself to that spiritual world to which it belongs, and go forth on its world-conquering mission.

It remains to consider the work of the Spirit on the unbelieving world. It is described in the following passage: "And he (the Paraclete), when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: in respect of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgement, because the prince of

this world hath been judged" (xvi. 8-11). The Spirit is here described by judicial analogies as appearing as an advocate against the unbelieving world which has rejected Christ. In respect to the matters of sin, righteousness, and judgment the Spirit will convict the world of being in the wrong and will pronounce upon it the verdict of *guilty*. There are three counts in the indictment against the world, and the causal clauses which are added to the statement of them give the reasons why on each of them the world stands condemned.

With respect to the matter of sin the Spirit will convict the world by showing that it was in the wrong in not welcoming and believing on Jesus Christ as its Saviour. The sinfulness of men in rejecting him will more and more plainly appear. The Spirit will demonstrate the sinfulness of opposition to Christ. The next element in the verdict is kindred to this. With regard to righteousness the Spirit will convict the world of its false position, because Jesus is going to the Father, and his disciples will see him no more. The righteousness which is here in question is probably the personal righteousness of Christ. The world has deemed him unrighteous, and has crucified him as such. The Spirit will accuse and convict the world of being in the wrong in its estimate of Christ. It will reverse the world's verdict by appealing to his ascension and glorification. When he ascends to heaven and exerts his rightful spiritual authority over the world, it will be seen that the world has misjudged him. The third element in the Spirit's conviction of the world is in respect to judgment. In the matter of judgment the Spirit will put the world in the wrong because he will show that the prince of the world stands condemned. The result of the Spirit's work will be a victory over Satan. This result is seen as already on the point of being accomplished. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (xii. 31). The Spirit will procure the verdict of history which will vindicate Christ and condemn the spirit of opposition to him. It is probable that this work of the Spirit is conceived of as wrought mediately

through the testimony and teaching of believers in whom he dwells.¹

This form of teaching concerning the Spirit is mainly peculiar to the fourth Gospel. The Synoptists speak of the Spirit of God as descending upon Jesus at his baptism (Mk. i. 10), as driving him into the wilderness to be tempted (Mk. i. 12), as speaking in his disciples (Mt. x. 20), and as pervading his life-work (Lk. iv. 18). But these expressions hardly carry us beyond the Old Testament idea of "the Spirit" as a name for the power or presence of God. The elaboration of the doctrine of the Spirit's personal nature and of his offices in redemption is characteristic of that form of Jesus' teaching which the fourth Gospel presents. It is the Johannine counterpart of that aspect of the Synoptic teaching concerning the parousia which is expressed in the words of Jesus: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt. xxviii. 20).

¹ The foregoing points are elaborated with more exegetical detail in my *Johannine Theology*, ch. viii.

CHAPTER VI

ETERNAL LIFE

THE phrase "eternal life" holds a place of prominence in the fourth Gospel similar to that which is occupied by the title "Kingdom of God" in the Synoptics. Their meaning is also essentially similar. To "see" or "enter into" the Kingdom of God (iii. 3, 5) is the same as to "have eternal life" (vv. 15, 16). Both terms express the realization of salvation — the appropriation of the saving benefits which Christ came to bestow. Our present purpose requires us to discuss the provision for the bestowment of eternal life through Christ, the method of its appropriation, and its essential nature and characteristics.

Jesus represents himself as the bread of life of which, if a man eat, he shall live forever — the spiritual nourishment for the permanent satisfaction of the soul (vi. 35, 50). When pressed for an explanation of these strange words, he said that men should obtain eternal life by eating his flesh and drinking his blood (vv. 51–56). What was his meaning? The interpretation which was adopted by many of the Church fathers and which obtains in the Roman Catholic church is that he referred to the impartation of his body and blood to the communicant in the eucharist. A considerable number of modern Protestant scholars apply the words to the Lord's supper.¹ The diffi-

¹ Briggs, *The Messiah of the Gospels*, p. 281, maintains this view on the ground that the discourse is predictive and that Jesus is speaking symbolically of his death and resurrection. If this is the case, it would more naturally lead to the interpretation given by Augustine and preferred by most Protestant scholars, that the reference is to the propitiatory death of Christ rather than specifically to the Lord's supper. The alleged "predictive element," however, is that which requires to be proved. Jesus

culties which confront this explanation appear to me to be very great. Jesus is discussing his mission with his enemies. That he should assert in reply to their criticisms that it is necessary for men to partake of a memorial supper which was to be founded some time afterwards, seems almost incredible. If that were the meaning of the discourse, it is difficult to see how it could have been in the slightest degree understood by those to whom he spoke. Moreover, the whole discourse appears to speak of a present gift of eternal life which is available for men by a believing reception of himself. It does not purport to speak of future events; it refers to what men may now do and, in consequence, have eternal life. Hence the great majority of recent interpreters¹ — correctly, as I believe — reject this application of the discourse.

Almost equally difficult, however, is the prevailing Protestant interpretation that Jesus here spoke specifically of his death. The giving of his flesh for the life of the world (*v.* 51) does not seem to denote a giving up of his body to death, but a continuous offering of himself to men as the living bread from heaven. The two expressions — to give his flesh to be eaten, and to offer himself as the bread of life — appear to be perfectly synonymous; but I do not see how the latter is capable of any specific application to his death. Moreover, it is almost as difficult to suppose that in a disputation with hostile Jews, Jesus would dwell so long in advance upon the saving significance of his death as it is to suppose that he would offer them a mystical exposition of the import of the eucharist. In view of these difficulties there is a strong tendency among recent interpreters to abandon these explanations and to seek an interpretation more in accord with the historic situation of the discourse, and with the natural meaning of the figure of “the bread of life,” which underlies this whole description of his saving mission.

says that the Father is now giving (*δίδωσιν*, *v.* 32) the true bread from heaven, which is his flesh (*v.* 51).

¹ So, *e.g.* Lücke, Meyer, Weiss, Beyschlag, Wendt, Westcott, and Godet.

To me it seems more natural to interpret the language of the discourse in a symbolic or mystical sense, as expressing the idea of the appropriation of Christ himself in faith and love. This explanation yields a natural meaning for the figures of eating and drinking, and agrees well with the historic circumstances in which the discourse was spoken. The Jews demanded a "sign" from him: "What, then, doest thou for a sign, that we may see and believe thee? What workest thou?" (v. 30). The substance of Jesus' reply was that he would give no "sign" except himself. He offers himself to the faith and love of men. His own person and work, when they are truly understood, constitute the true sign from heaven. To receive and appropriate him in heart and life is the true "work of God" (v. 29). This explanation also corresponds to the current use among the Jews of the figures of eating and drinking. Lightfoot has given abundant examples of this usage.¹ It also agrees in substance with the answer of Jesus to the demand for a sign, as recorded by the Synoptists. No sign, he said, should be given except the "sign of Jonah," that is, his own presentation of divine truth in his person and teaching (Mt. xvi. 4; xii. 39; Lk. xi. 29). "For as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites" (by bearing to them a divine message and promise), "so shall also the Son of man be to this generation" (Lk. xi. 29).² Whatever, therefore, be the exact meaning of "flesh" and of "blood" in our passage, and whatever may be the distinction between them, the discourse as a whole directly relates neither to the eucharist, nor to the death of Jesus, but to his person as the medium of the supreme self-revelation of God, from which his teaching is, of course, quite inseparable. Those who spiritually receive him as the bread of their souls, enter

¹ *Horæ Hebraicæ*, by John Lightfoot, D.D. (Oxford tr.), III. 307-309.

² Our passage furnishes incidental confirmation of the view that the "sign of Jonah" was Jesus' teaching or revelation of God, as represented in Luke, and not an experience analogous to Jonah's being three days in the belly of a sea-monster, as the first Gospel explains it (in xii. 39, though not in xvi. 4).

into loving fellowship with him and make him their guide and inspiration, thereby attain eternal life.¹

Elsewhere Jesus refers to his death on behalf of (*ὑπέρ*) men, that is, in order to secure their salvation. "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (x. 11, 15). Here the import of the allegory would suggest that, as the shepherd is ready to make great personal sacrifice to protect his sheep from danger, so Jesus undergoes a self-denying death for those whom he loves. To derive the expiatory idea from this passage, as Meyer does, by explaining the words "lays down his life" as meaning, "pays down his life as a ransom-price," appears to me exegetically untenable.² The death of Christ is here regarded as the supreme proof of self-renouncing love, as in the words: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (xv. 13). In what specific way the death of Jesus avails to secure the eternal life of men, these passages do not tell us. They rest upon analogies drawn from human experience. They are general and indefinite; yet they clearly speak of some unique service of love which Jesus discharges to the world by his death, to which they attribute a special saving significance and value.

Jesus described his work for men as involving a perfect self-giving which stopped not short of the yielding up of his life for them. "For their sakes," he said, "I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (xvii. 19). He consecrated himself absolutely to his saving mission in order to secure an analogous consecration to truth and duty on the part of his followers.³ That Jesus regarded his death as an essential element in this self-devotion to his mission is evident from the saying: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (xii. 24). But it is clear from the context of this

¹ Cf. my *Johannine Theology*, pp. 158-164.

² For a fuller discussion, see *The Johannine Theology*, pp. 172-175.

³ On the interpretation which assigns a specifically sacrificial sense to "sanctify" (*ἀγιάζειν*) here, see *The Johannine Theology*, pp. 178, 179.

passage that the dying which is spoken of is regarded as the culmination of service and self-giving. Jesus here formulates the law of serving love to which his disciples, as well as himself, are subject. They are to follow him in the life of self-renunciation and thus to win their true, eternal life (*vv.* 25, 26). Twice he refers to his being lifted up on the cross (*iii.* 14, 15; *xii.* 34). This is spoken of as necessary and as a means whereby men will be drawn to him and will obtain eternal life. It is probable that in the second of these passages the lifting up from the earth refers not only to the death on the cross, as John explains it (*xii.* 33), but to the consequent exaltation, after the analogy of *Phil.* ii. 8, 9. In any case the death of Christ is presented as the consummation of his work of love and the chief source of his matchless power in the world. Further than this the words of Jesus, as John reproduces them, do not carry us towards any philosophy of the relation between his death and the bestowment of eternal life. The fact of such a relation they do clearly presuppose.

The subjective factor in the procurement of eternal life is faith. This condition is emphasized in the discourse on the bread of life where believing on Christ, coming to him, and eating of the heavenly bread, are evidently equivalent phrases. Hence we find the concise formula: "He that believeth hath eternal life" (*vi.* 47). The sum of God's requirements is that men believe on Christ (*vi.* 29). What, then, is faith that it should be the gateway into eternal life? It is clear that it is something more than mere intellectual assent. The belief which was the result of some temporary impression Jesus did not highly esteem. Hence he said to certain Jews, which had believed him: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples" (*viii.* 31). Again, we are told that he did not yield his confidence to those who were chiefly influenced to believe on him by the miracles which he did (*ii.* 23, 24). A true, saving faith will rest upon more spiritual grounds, and will imply a more adequate appreciation of the deeper significance of his person and work. Hence he regarded faith as a growing thing. It may rest at first upon super-

ficial reasons, but if it is sincere, it is capable of such expansion and enrichment that it will find for itself a new and deeper basis. Hence it is said that after the miracle at Cana, in Galilee, in which Jesus "manifested his glory," "his disciples believed on him" (ii. 11), that is, entered on a new stage of faith in consequence of their clearer apprehension of his divine power and glory.

As I have already intimated, faith in the deeper sense of the word involves life-union with Christ. It is spiritual fellowship with the Redeemer.¹ To believe in this true sense is to come to Christ (vi. 35), and so to enter into the realization of eternal life (v. 47). Faith, therefore, involves one's whole spiritual attitude towards the divine truth and love which are supremely revealed in Christ. The condition of appropriating eternal life, which in so many places is called faith, is elsewhere described as abiding in Christ. The allegory of the Vine and the Branches (xv. 1-9) contains the most striking representation of this idea. As the branch obtains life only by remaining connected with the stock and root, so the disciple receives spiritual life and is enabled to bear its fruits only by abiding in Christ. The realization of this oneness with Christ is the life of faith; it is that impartation of spiritual life from God which makes one a participant in the Kingdom of God (iii. 3) and a possessor of eternal life.

The view which has just been expressed respecting the mystical significance of faith is confirmed by the passage: "And this is eternal life, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (xvii. 3). Whether we regard this statement as intended to define the essence of eternal life, or as stating the condition of attaining it, the words imply a close connection between eternal life and the knowledge of God and Christ. The practical difference between these views is not very great, since on the former interpretation it would hardly be maintained that the two terms in question are absolutely synonymous, but only that the knowl-

¹ Illustrations of this view and of the anti-mystical views of Weiss and Wendt are given in my *Johannine Theology*, pp. 228-232.

edge of God and of Christ is the root or subjective principle of eternal life. This explanation would closely resemble the view that the knowledge spoken of is the condition of sharing in the eternal life. The passage is probably to be explained after the analogy of such sayings as these: "I am the resurrection and the life" (xi. 25), that is, the means whereby these are secured, and: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (xiv. 6), that is, the one who guides men into the way, the truth, and the life. In like manner the knowledge of God and of Christ, that is, fellowship and sympathy with them, is the condition of realizing the eternal life. It is not an arbitrary condition, but one which is prescribed by the very nature of eternal life. That life is the realization of man's destiny as a son of God; it is the Godlike life and must therefore be realized in fellowship with God, involving love and obedience to him. The knowledge of God is communion with God; eternal life is the blessedness, the increasing perfection, which flows from that communion. Eternal life is a gift, a bestowment of God; the knowledge of God is the subjective appropriation, the entrance of man into that relation of obedience and receptivity which makes the realization of eternal life possible. They are related as faith to salvation; as conversion to regeneration. They are thus distinguishable but not separable.

The knowledge of which our passage speaks is a vital, spiritual apprehension of God as he is revealed in Christ. It is not a mere theoretic knowledge, but a knowledge which carries the whole nature with it so that God becomes the supreme object and the ruling power in the life. Its meaning is set in clear light by those passages which speak of those who do not possess it. The enemies of Jesus did not know God (viii. 55), that is, they were without appreciation of his nature and revelation and destitute of ethical likeness to him; "but I know him," said Jesus, meaning that he was in sympathetic intimacy with God. "If ye had known me," he said again, "ye would have known my Father also" (xiv. 7); that is, if they had truly appreciated the meaning of his person and work and

had put themselves under their power, they would have found him the way of entrance into fellowship with God.

But what is such a knowledge of God which involves the consent of the total man but the love of God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength which the Synoptic discourses (Mk. xii. 30, 31; Mt. xxii. 37, 38) designate as the first and great commandment? In a characteristic Scriptural use of words, to know is to love. "Every one that loveth knoweth" (1 Jn. iv. 7). The various terms by which the conditions of salvation are described meet and blend into perfect harmony and unity. Faith is trust in God; the knowledge of God means fellowship with him; love to God includes devotion, obedience, and service to him. Fundamentally considered, they are all the same. No doubt the greatest of all such terms is love; but there could be no love to God which did not embrace what we mean by faith in God and the knowledge of him. Eternal life is simply *the life*, — the life which is truly such, — life after the divine ideal. It is realized by coming into right relations to God. Entrance into these relations and the maintenance of them may be called by various terms, such as faith, obedience, fellowship, love. They all mean the same thing, or various aspects of the same thing. Salvation is a spiritual life; the conditions of its realization are spiritual. It is an eternal life. It has nothing to do with time or place. It is realized in this world, or in any world, where its spiritual conditions are fulfilled.

"Eternal life," as used in our source, represents an ethical or qualitative conception. It stands in contrast to perishing (iii. 16; x. 28), that is, to the ethical destruction of the soul, the forfeiture of man's true destiny as a son of God. This blessed life which is realized in fellowship with God is eternal, not merely in the sense of imperishable or endless, but in the higher sense of the true Godlike life, which by reason of its kinship to God is raised above all limits of time and place. It is life as opposed to the moral death of sin (v. 21, 25). "He that heareth my word," said Jesus, "and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of

the death (*ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου*, the death which is really such) into *the* life (*εἰς τὴν ζωὴν*, the life which is truly life).” While, therefore, the eternal life is by its very nature continuous, the emphasis of the phrase lies upon the source and nature of the life rather than upon its continuance. Eternal life is life like that of God, who is its source. The version of Jesus’ teaching concerning God which we have in the fourth Gospel lays its main stress, not upon the perpetuity of God’s existence, but upon his ethical nature. The life which consists in likeness to him is therefore correspondingly ethical. So far, then, as there is any “time-element” in the word “eternal,” as used in these discourses, it seems to be this, that the true, spiritual, divine life, being grounded in the very nature of God, is independent of all limitations of time or place. Hence it is often called simply “life,” or “the life” (*e.g.* iii. 36; v. 24; vi. 33; x. 10 *et al.*), as if it had a certain absolute character.

Whatever be the exact import of the word “eternal,” or the philosophy of its meaning, it is a noticeable fact that it is generally described as a present, rather than a future, possession of believers. In the Synoptics, on the contrary, the phrase has a future reference. It stands in contrast to “this time” (Lk. xviii. 30), and designates the promised blessedness of the “coming age” (Mk. x. 30). The two representations are to be understood and explained in the same way as are the two pictures of the Kingdom of God, as present and as future. Eternal life already belongs to him who fulfils the conditions of its realization, but it looks forward to the future for its completion. The present and the future aspects are combined in such words as these: “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (vi. 54). In this respect, as in others, the doctrine of eternal life proves itself to be the counterpart of the Synoptic doctrine of the Kingdom of God. Both illustrate the principle that salvation is not a matter of time and place, but of spiritual attitude and relation to God. It is unaffected by the change which we call death. “If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death” (viii. 52); he shall

pass through physical death unharmed; "though he die, yet shall he live" (xi. 25). Eternal life is fulness and richness of being, the realization of the divinely appointed goal of existence through union with God and likeness to Christ.

Eternal life is the life whose essence is love. It is the life from which all true fellowship springs. It is the basis of all true unity, harmony, and sympathy. Hence the chief requirement of the dispenser of life is that men should love one another as he loved them (xv. 12). Only on the principles of the eternal life can human society ever be perfected. No true social fellowship can exist except where mutual service and helpfulness, which spring out of love, are the law of action. Men realize the eternal life in proportion as they love one another as Christ has loved them. Redemption is accomplished in the degree in which men are brought into likeness to him whose very nature, as love, is the absolute norm of all goodness.

CHAPTER VII

ESCHATOLOGY

JOHN has not preserved to us any of those sayings of Jesus concerning the overthrow of Jerusalem and the end of the age which the Synoptists have apparently combined together in the "great eschatological discourse" (Mk. xiii.; Mt. xxiv.; Lk. xxi.). The language of our sources concerning Messiah's second advent is far less perplexing than is that of the Synoptics, even if it is by no means always easy of interpretation. The principal exegetical difficulty connected with the eschatological sayings of the fourth Gospel arises not from the apparent mingling of logia relating to different subjects, but from a blending of the physical and the spiritual. In general, however, we shall find a larger spiritual or symbolical element than appears on the surface of the Synoptics. This fact will have a bearing upon the validity of the conclusions which we adopted concerning the doctrine of the parousia in the Synoptic discourses.

One of the most striking sayings concerning Christ's coming is: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself" (xiv. 3). The context seems to favor the view that this *coming* is the second advent. Jesus has just spoken of going away, and his return to take them to the place which he is to prepare would seem to be the parousia.¹ But it must be admitted that the meaning is more congruous with the situation if the words are understood to refer to Christ's coming at death to the believer and taking him to his heavenly abode.² It is not easy to refer the promise to an

¹ So Ewald, Meyer, Luthardt, Weiss.

² So Tholuck, Lange, Reuss, Holtzmann.

eschatological event, unless it be assumed that Jesus believed that his second advent would occur within the lifetime of those to whom he was speaking. Considered as a word of comfort to the disciples whom he is about to leave, the passage seems most apposite and forcible if it is understood as describing the blissful death of believers. I, therefore, incline to the view that this was probably its original intention, although it must remain doubtful whether the words as reported were not understood by the evangelist as applying to the parousia. The theory of a composite meaning, and that which refers it to a spiritual coming to the disciples, are more difficult to reconcile with the context.¹

In xiv. 18 we read: "I will not leave you desolate (orphans): I come to you." In the immediate connection Jesus is speaking of the coming of the Spirit, and it is highly probable that to this coming the passage in question refers. It is equally probable that a spiritual coming of some kind is meant in verse 23 where he says that the Father and himself will come to the disciples, and also in verse 28 where he says: "Ye heard how I said to you, I go away and I come again to you." Since elsewhere (xvi. 7) his departure from them and the coming of the Comforter are presented as counterparts, it is probable that the coming to them here spoken of is his coming in the gift of the Spirit. These passages certainly give the impression that, according to John, Jesus spoke mainly of his coming in a spiritual sense; or, at any rate, that he spoke of it in other meanings than that which prevails in the Synoptics—a visible return to earth at the end of the present world-period.

In chapter xvi. Jesus speaks of his disciples and himself as seeing each other after his departure from earth: "A little while and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me" (xvi. 16). "Ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh from you" (xvi. 22). It is possible that these sayings refer to his

¹ Cf. my *Johannine Theology*, p. 332.

appearances to his disciples after the resurrection, and, indeed, this is the meaning which they at first most naturally suggest; but if they are considered in analogy with xiv. 18, it becomes probable that they also refer to some kind of spiritual fellowship which should continue and compensate for the withdrawal of his bodily presence. In the passage just cited the present physical sight (*θεωρεῖτε*) of him by "the world" is set in contrast to the spiritual vision of him (*ὄψεσθε*) by his disciples. The passages in chapter xvi. are therefore best understood as affirming a continuance of that mutual knowledge and communion which stands in contrast to the mere outward perception of him by others, which is soon to cease. The whole description, in the context, of the living relations which he will continue to sustain to them after his departure (*vv. 23-26*), seems to me strongly to reënforce this interpretation. Moreover, the promise of such a permanent fellowship would be far more adequate to comfort them in view of his approaching departure than would the assurance of a few temporary appearances to them in bodily form after the resurrection. I would therefore class these passages with those which refer to a spiritual mode of manifestation to his disciples, and would regard them as additional evidence that Jesus spoke of his future *coming* in manifold forms.¹

Another saying of no little difficulty is that which Jesus addressed to Peter concerning John: "If I will that he tarry (*μείνειν*) till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me" (*xxi. 22*). Jesus has just charged Peter to feed his sheep (*v. 17*). He then speaks to him of the martyr-death which he is to experience in his old age, and adds: "Follow me" (*v. 19*). Peter thereupon sees the beloved disciple following, and at once inquires of Jesus what his fate shall be. The passage cited is Jesus' reply. The point to be determined is: What is the meaning of the phrase, "till I come"? To me it seems clear that the writer understood the words to refer to the second advent.

¹ The spiritual interpretation of the word "see" in these passages is adopted by Lücke, Meyer, Reuss, Godet, Dwight, and Plummer.

Peter is told that he is to suffer a violent death before the parousia. He then asks the fate of John. Jesus replies that he need not concern himself about that question; if it should be his will that John live on till his second coming, that can make no difference with his (Peter's) divinely appointed course. Yet Jesus did not say that John should survive the parousia, and therefore the saying which went abroad, that the beloved disciple should not die (*v.* 23), was based upon an unwarranted inference. Jesus used the hypothetical statement with reference to John only to emphasize for Peter the truth that he need not concern himself about others, but only about his own calling and duty.¹ The explanation which applies the words "till I come" to John's natural death yields a less forcible and appropriate sense. It would represent Jesus as coming to John in death, but not to Peter; or else it would be the mere tautology of saying: "If I will that John live till he dies."² It is probable, then, that this passage is to be added to *xiv.* 3 as illustrating the idea of an eschatological coming of Christ in the Johannine memoranda of the Lord's words. But it must be frankly admitted that the original import of neither of these references is perfectly clear. All that can be confidently affirmed is that they seem to be treated by the tradition as references to a personal second coming. We are by no means warranted, however, in asserting, as Reuss does, that "the current eschatological ideas of primitive Christianity are not found in the Gospel of John,"³ especially in view of the numerous references to resurrection at the "last day" (*vi.* 39, 40, 44, 54; *xi.* 24; *xii.* 48), which can be no other than "the day of judgment" (*1 Jn.* *iv.* 17), that is, the day of Christ's consummate self-manifestation or parousia.

But the spiritual conception of Christ's coming stands out in much clearer relief in our discourses, and is entitled to be considered the characteristic idea of the

¹ So Lücke, DeWette, Meyer, Weiss, Holtzmann.

² Still other explanations are referred to in my *Johannine Theology*, pp. 337, 338.

³ *Hist. Christ. Theol.* II. 498 (orig. ii. 556).

fourth Gospel on the subject. In our examination of the Synoptic teaching we found reasons for believing that Jesus spoke of different "comings" or "days" of his manifestation — various epochs or stages in the progressive triumph of his Kingdom on earth. The language of the fourth Gospel accords with this view. The idea of the coming of Christ is mainly associated with the dispensation of the Spirit, and finds its chief fulfilment in that enlightenment and enrichment of the spiritual life which is to follow his ascension to heaven. And what is this but the meaning of Jesus' saying at his trial that from that time onward they would see him coming in triumph (Mk. xiv. 62; Mt. xxvi. 64; Lk. xxii. 69)? His mission was to be vindicated in the dispensation of the Spirit (xvi. 8-11; xvii. 1, 2), and his victory was to be assured. His enemies thought that when they lifted him up on the cross, they had defeated his cause; but Jesus saw that it was from that very event that his real triumph should begin. From that cross he would draw all men unto him (xii. 32). The way of the cross was to be the way to his glory and his crown. From the time when the world condemned and rejected him, the world's conviction of its sin began. From that hour, and more and more as time advanced, Jesus was seen to be sitting on the real throne of power. Thus he comes perpetually in his Kingdom on the clouds of heaven — a symbolic way of describing the majesty which is seen to belong to him, according to the vindication of the Spirit and the verdict of history.

The resurrection of the believer from the state of death is treated as a part of the bestowment of eternal life. "I will raise him up at the last day" is the refrain which we hear throughout the discourse on the bread of life (vi. 39, 40, 44, 54). The same subject is dwelt upon in the discourse which was called out by the sabbath-question (v. 19 *sq.*). Here the resurrection appears to be viewed, now as referring to the present realization of spiritual life, now as pertaining to the future consummation. As the Father quickens men from the death of sin, so the Son also quickens whom he will (v. 21). The believer who

now possesses eternal life is already victor over death. He belongs not to death but to life (*v.* 24). Already for such the hour is present when they hear the voice of the Son of God summoning them to the immortal life (*v.* 25). It is difficult to decide whether these sayings are purely figurative, referring entirely to an ethical resurrection, a spiritual quickening, or whether they refer to a future resurrection from death considered as guaranteed and as already realized by anticipation through the secure possession of eternal life. Verses 28 and 29 are quite certainly eschatological: "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment." The probability therefore is that to this resurrection or triumph over death the previous verses also refer. But the present possession of eternal life is regarded as including life from the dead because the eternal life completely transcends the relation of present and future. He who has received the gift of the life that is truly such is already in the secure possession of all which that life involves. He is already victor over death. Whatever particular experience or transformation may await him in the future, it is certain that the forces of life will triumph. He cannot, indeed, be exempt from the common lot of physical death, but for him physical death is only transition. Life is not thereby extinguished or impeded. "Though he die, yet shall he live" (*xi.* 25). Life triumphs over death by its very nature. Its victory may be marked by future events, but the larger truth is that it triumphs because of what it is — the true, the eternal life.

With this close correlation between the ideas of resurrection and eternal life agree the words of Jesus to Martha concerning the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus had said to her: "Thy brother shall rise again" (*xi.* 23). She replied: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (*v.* 24); to which Jesus answered: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on

me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (vv. 25, 26). It is evident that Martha's idea of the resurrection was that of a future eschatological event. Jesus expressed no objection to this idea, but gave to it its true setting and basis. He did not call in question her belief in a physical resurrection at the last day, but placed before her the more inclusive truth that he is the giver of life; that faith should be fixed upon him rather than upon some distant event; that the life which he bestows involves a present victory over death. Martha's thought was directed to one future crisis in which life should conquer death. Jesus declared that life wins a present and perpetual victory over death; that for the believer death is robbed of its significance and its power. It is as if Jesus had said: The truth is not merely that in some future æon thy brother shall rise from the state of death and attain immortality; I tell you that he is already death's conqueror; that at every stage of his existence and through all changes and transformations the eternal life shall triumph. It is possible that the saying of Jesus: "I am the resurrection," etc., was intended to point forward to the raising of Lazarus which followed. But if so, the larger meaning of his words is not thereby restricted. Such a resurrection would be but a special example of his life-giving power, illustrating the truth that the hope of future life should centre in him and in the gift of life which he bestows rather than in any single future event.

If this is the general import of the sayings under review, what then is the meaning of death and what the nature of the future resurrection "at the last day" which is not excluded by the language of Jesus on the subject? Since the life which conquers death is qualitative or ethical, it is probable that death bears a predominantly ethical character. As life is much more than the prolongation of existence, so death must be more than physical decay and dissolution. Death must be viewed in these discourses as including the forfeiture of the true ends of existence; as that state of deprivation, evil, and loss in which the per-

sonality in some way falls short of its true perfection. Resurrection, contemplated as a future event, is therefore more than a resuscitation or recovery of a body for the soul; it is the recovery of the total personality from the state of death. Under what form this state of death is conceived the language of the discourses does not inform us; but if it is conceived (as by Paul) after the manner of the Jewish doctrine of Sheol, then we should say that resurrection means primarily deliverance from the underworld. But there is no trace of these *local* conceptions in our sources. All is qualitative. Death is a state, and life is a character. Accordingly, resurrection, whatever else it involves, is primarily triumph over the defeat and evil of death through the realization of the destiny which is involved in eternal life. From this conception the narrowest idea of resurrection, as meaning the endowment of the soul with a suitable embodiment, is not excluded, but included, as the less is included in the greater. From these qualitative conceptions of life, death, and resurrection, it might seem natural to conclude that there could be no resurrection in any sense for unbelievers. We do not, however, find this conclusion confirmed by the language of the discourses, which speak of a resurrection of judgment or condemnation as well as of a resurrection of life (v. 29). We can only say, therefore, that while a resurrection, in some sense, of those who have "done ill" is affirmed, it must have a widely different meaning from that which is associated with the realization of eternal life. The elements of the "resurrection of life" we can conjecture with considerable plausibility from the nature of "life" and of "death" as described in our sources; but what meaning resurrection can have for those who have not the life we are not told and can only infer by subtracting from the idea of resurrection elements which belong to the very nature of eternal life. We certainly cannot conclude that there would be nothing left. At least the notions of a prolongation of existence and of a corporeal embodiment of the soul might remain.

In the doctrine of judgment we observe the same com-

bination of present and future, of continuous process and final crisis, which we have noticed in the study of the parousia and the resurrection. But the former aspect receives the greater emphasis. The future judgment seems to be regarded as the culmination of a process whereby divine light and truth are testing and separating men. Jesus speaks of judging men while he lived among them on earth (v. 30; viii. 16, 29; ix. 39). The principle which underlies this moral testing of men is most clearly expressed in the words: "This is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil" (iii. 19). Light tests all things by revealing them in their true character. Truth judges by its very nature, and its discriminations are in perfect accord with reality. In this sense of judgment it was an essential part of Christ's work to judge men (ix. 39). He divided men into those who accepted and those who rejected his truth. In this sense he occasioned separation and division, even among friends, as the Synoptic discourses assert (Lk. xii. 51-53; Mt. x. 34, 35).

Christ came to save men, but he could not save without judging. Salvation involves the application of tests and standards; conformity to these implies approbation as failure and refusal involve disapproval. He must condemn the evil of the world in seeking to lift men out of that evil and in bringing them into the realization of the good. Jesus sees the world saved only as he sees it tested and sifted and its evil repudiated. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (xii. 31). But this process by which the world is tested, its good approved and fostered and its evil condemned, by no means excludes the idea of a future final judgment. On the contrary, it requires it as any process implies a fulfilment, a consummation. Hence we read of a judgment which takes place "in the last day" (xii. 49) and of a "resurrection of judgment" (v. 29) which doubtless means, either a resurrection which issues in a condemnatory judgment, or a resurrection which results from the judgment which is

already outstanding against those who have rejected Christ (iii. 18). The final judgment is evidently regarded as the climax and issue of the process of testing which is continually going on through the operation of the truth upon the minds of men. The future is already implicit in the present; eternal life is already begun here, and by it the "resurrection of life" is already assured; God is already judging the world through Christ; those who refuse his truth are already disapproved, and the future judgment is viewed as the end of a process which is going forward constantly in the life of every man.

There is an apparent contradiction between two groups of sayings one of which represents Christ as asserting that he does not judge men; the other as stating that he does judge them: "I judge no man" (viii. 15); "If a man hear my sayings and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (xii. 47). Yet he says: "If I judge, my judgment is true" (viii. 16), and even: "For judgment came I into this world" (ix. 39). The discrepancy is partly resolved by distinguishing between Christ's primary object in coming into the world and an object which was secondary and incidental to that. His primary object was salvation, not judgment; to rescue, not to condemn. But in saving Christ was compelled to judge, that is, to test and to separate men, approving the good and condemning the evil in them. A further distinction which it is often useful to observe is that between judging in the neutral sense of testing, and judging in the sense of condemning. When, for example, in ix. 39, he says: "For judgement came I into this world," the context explains that he means for the purpose of testing men by requiring them to take up a definite attitude towards the divine truth which he had brought to them. To those who are willing to be led, he will give divine light and guidance which he will withhold from the spiritually proud and self-sufficient. He did not come to condemn but to save men. But since saving involves testing, and since testing necessitates moral approval and disapproval according as men stand the test, it is evident that indirectly and

incidentally Jesus is compelled to judge in a condemnatory sense those who wilfully refuse the truth. Hence the saying: "I judge no man. Yea and if I judge, my judgment is true" (viii. 15, 16).

Although the Son is primarily Saviour and not Judge, yet when the relations between salvation and judgment are considered, we are not surprised to read that all judgment has been committed to the Son (v. 22), and that just because he is the Son of man (v. 27). Judgment is inseparably bound up with his Messianic mission. He brings truth to men in definite, concrete form; he makes God apprehensible to men, so that their attitude towards him becomes one of definite obedience or disobedience. Yet, in spite of these sayings, it is still true that there is a sense in which Christ does not judge men. It is rather his word, his truth, which is represented as pronouncing the judgment of condemnation upon the disobedient. "If any man hear my sayings and keep them not, I judge him not; the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (xii. 47, 48). In one sense the Son does not judge men; his attitude ever remains that of Saviour. It is his truth which judges them; in other words, their attitude towards his truth itself involves their judgment. This is only another form of stating the distinction between the primary and the secondary aspects of his mission. He comes to save; but he brings to men an absolute standard of truth and goodness. By that they are tested. In that sense he judges men. If they repudiate that standard, he must disapprove and reject them. In that sense, also, his saving work involves a judgment; but as this judgment is inherent in men's attitude towards the truth, it might be said that it is the truth itself which judges them. Thus, despite the verbal variations with which the matter is presented, a consistent doctrine of judgment emerges from the passages.

PART III

THE PRIMITIVE APOSTOLIC TEACHING

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

IT will be our aim in this part of our work to present a brief sketch of the earlier and simpler forms of teaching which obtained in the Church of the apostolic age. But no sooner is this task undertaken than we find ourselves in the midst of the most divergent views respecting the materials to be employed. The questions at issue chiefly concern the epistles which bear the names of James and Peter. It is well known that, even in the early Church, the genuineness of 2 Peter was widely doubted, and this doubt has been shared, in modern times, by many critics of all schools. The Epistle of James and 1 Peter, on the contrary, have, until recent times, been regarded by most scholars as genuine. The Tübingen school denied the genuineness of both these writings, and referred them to the second century. The former was regarded as an illustration of a spiritualized Judaism, which aimed to avoid certain practical consequences of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith; the latter, as the work of a Pauline Christian who was seeking to compromise the Gentile and the Jewish tendencies of thought in the Church. Although these views have been largely modified by the successors of this school, these scholars still regard both these epistles as spurious, and as illustrating the later, rather than the primitive, teaching of the early Church. Harnack regards the Epistle of James as a compilation made about 130 A.D.,

and refers 1 Peter to the reign of Domitian (81–96), although he admits that it may have been written a decade or two earlier. He believes that it was written either by Paul or by one who had been strongly influenced by him.¹

Scholars who maintain the genuineness of both these writings are divided in opinion with respect to their relation to the Pauline epistles. In regard to James the principal question is, whether his discussion of faith and works presupposes Paul's teaching on those subjects or is independent of it. Certain coincidences are observable between 1 Peter and Paul's doctrinal letters. The question is, did Peter's language influence Paul's, or *vice versa*? Or, are these coincidences such as to establish any direct interdependence? Respecting the Epistle of James, the more usual opinion is that it is pre-Pauline. The more common view refers the first Epistle of Peter to the apostle's later life (60–67). Opinion is divided on the question, whether it is, in any proper sense, dependent upon Paul's writings.

It is outside the plan of the present work to enter at length into the discussion of these vexed and difficult questions. For such discussion I must refer the reader to the standard treatises on New Testament Introduction and the History of the Apostolic Age. The position of the more radical scholars of Germany will be found presented (not without important variations of view) in such works as Weizsäcker's *Apostolic Age*, Pfleiderer's *Das Urchristenthum*, the *Einleitungen* of Holtzmann and Jülicher, and the *Chronologie* of Harnack. Conclusions more in accord with tradition are maintained by Weiss, Salmon, Gloag, and Zahn in their Introductions. I would especially commend for its thoroughness the elaborate Introduction to the Epistle of James by Mayor, in his *Commentary*, in which he assigns to it an early date (40–50). Ramsay's discussion of the date of 1 Peter (about 80, as he believes), in his *Church in the Roman Empire* (pp. 279–294), presents the subject in a new light and is of special historical interest. This date would, indeed, preclude the genuine-

¹ *Chronologie*, pp. 451 sq.; 485 sq.

ness of the epistle if the tradition that Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome during the Neronian persecution (*ca.* 67, 68) be correct. But the traditions respecting Peter's residence at Rome are obscure and conflicting, and, in his opinion, some of the patristic statements respecting it would require us to suppose that he lived on to a much later time than that of Nero. On this supposition, the first Epistle might still be genuine, even if written so late as the year 80 A.D.

In view of these disputed questions, writers on the Theology of the New Testament differ considerably in their judgment respecting the sources of the teaching of the primitive Church which are available for their use. Those who adopt the conclusions of the radical school, as Immer and Holtzmann, find very scanty materials in the New Testament for the study of Christian teaching during the period between the life of Jesus and the epistles of Paul. The ideas which obtained among the early Christians during the first two decades after Christ (*ca.* 29-52) must be gathered from the early chapters of Acts (with generous allowances for later influences even here) and by inferences from writings which were composed long after this period. As compared with Paul, the other New Testament writings are relatively still further removed from the time of Jesus by Harnack and McGiffert, who date Paul's epistles four or five years earlier than the common view, assigning the great doctrinal letters to the years 52 or 53, instead of 57 or 58. Bovon uses only the narratives in Acts as sources for the knowledge of primitive Christianity.¹

Most English writers on the New Testament, and some of the ablest German scholars also, hold that we have in James and in 1 Peter, at any rate, examples of the earlier and more primitive types of apostolic teaching. Reuss and Lechler regard James as pre-Pauline, while Weiss,

¹ Dr. McGiffert thinks that the Epistle of James was written by some Hellenistic Jew, "where or by whom we do not know," and that 1 Peter was written by a Paulinist, possibly Barnabas. *Apos. Age*, pp. 579 sq.; 593 sq.

Beyschlag, and Zahn treat both James and 1 Peter as examples of primitive, apostolic doctrine. This use of these epistles does not necessarily involve the view that they were written before Paul wrote, but only that they represent the earlier and simpler form of teaching which prevailed among the first Christians before the content of Christian belief was subjected to analysis and argument, as in the writings of Paul and John, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Biblical theologian is confronted with the question how to proceed in view of this uncertainty respecting his sources. Desirable as it is that the points at issue should be determined, we must candidly admit that in the present state of our knowledge they cannot be decided with certainty. Meantime, it is necessary that the Biblical theologian should adopt a working hypothesis for his construction of the apostolic theology. He must follow that view of the literature which seems to him most probable until historical and critical research can reach conclusions which shall be entitled to take rank as assured results of science. To secure these results is the task of historical criticism. It is upon the literary critic and the historian of the apostolic period, primarily, that the difficulty presses. While the Biblical theologian is embarrassed by uncertainty on such questions, his embarrassment chiefly concerns the arrangement of his materials. His primary task is, not to trace the development of thought within the New Testament period (although every aid for so doing will be of great service to him), but to expound in systematic form the contents of the New Testament books. The doctrinal content of an epistle, for example, may be correctly and adequately exhibited, whatever view be held respecting its author or its date. It makes no essential difference for our purpose whether the Epistles of James and Peter are pre-Pauline or post-Pauline. What they teach must be depicted in substantially the same way, whether it be done in an earlier or a later part of our work. Indeed, the mere chronological relation of books is of comparatively small importance for Biblical theology. Of much greater

moment is the logical order—the order which may be supposed to represent the development of religious ideas from the more simple and elementary to their more elaborate and reasoned forms.

The Tübingen criticism looked upon the Book of Acts as a Paulinist production designed to harmonize the views of Peter and Paul, and assigned it to the second century. Their successors, however, have ceased to ascribe this doctrinal “tendency” to the book, and the drift of criticism has been moving steadily towards the recognition of an earlier date. Jülicher scouts the denial that the book was written by the author of the third Gospel, and dates it from about 100–105. Harnack rejects the “tendency” theory of the book, ascribes it to one who was familiar with Paul’s teaching, and assigns it to the period 80–93. Ramsay favors a date not far from 81; Sanday gives 80.¹ The view that the Acts is a “tendency” writing, full of artificial combinations and studied exaggerations, irreconcilable with the Pauline letters and generally untrustworthy as a source of history or theology in the apostolic age, is now so generally abandoned that one needs make no defence of his use of the book as presenting a substantially correct account of the events which it professes to record. Like the third Gospel, the Acts is, no doubt, based upon such documents and memoranda as were available for the author’s purpose. Just now critical scholarship is eagerly engaged in the pursuit of hypotheses respecting these sources, but our present task need not concern itself with them. I shall sketch the doctrinal contents of the “Petrine” portions of the Book of Acts (chs. i.–viii. and certain passages in x.–xv.) in this part of the volume, and occasionally refer to the narratives of Paul’s experiences and missionary teaching in connection with the study of the Pauline theology.

It must be admitted that the authorship of the Epistle of James is involved in some doubt. Eusebius places it among the *Antilegomena*. He says: “It is considered spurious; nevertheless it is used in most of the churches.”²

¹ Cf. his remarks on the general subject, *Inspiration*, pp. 318–330.

² *Ecc. Hist.* II. 23.

Jerome speaks of it as having gradually obtained authority. It appears not to have gained general acceptance until about the year 400 A.D. It is not in the Muratorian canon, nor is it quoted by Tertullian. On the other hand, there are apparent traces of an acquaintance with the epistle on the part of Clement of Rome, the *Didaché* and *Hermas*,¹ and Irenæus quite certainly alludes to it when he writes: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God" (*cf.* Jas. ii. 23).² The epistle is contained in the ancient Syriac version (*ca.* 150) and is quoted by the Syrian Church fathers. Origen is the first who refers to the name of the author: "For though it be called faith, if it be without works, it is dead as we read in the epistle current as that of James."³ Jerome ascribed it to James, the Lord's "brother," that is, in his view, his cousin, James the son of Alphæus.

At the Reformation doubts concerning its canonicity were revived. On account of the supposed divergence of its teaching from that of Paul respecting justification by faith, Luther pronounced it an epistle of straw, that is, worthless in comparison with those of Peter, Paul, and John. Erasmus, Grotius, and others formed a similar estimate of the epistle. To the views of the German radical school reference has already been made.

The question of authorship is also complicated by the well-known dispute as to the meaning of "the brethren" of Jesus in the Gospels. On that subject I adopt the so-called Helvidian theory that they were real brothers of Jesus, younger children of Joseph and Mary. I therefore hold that, according to the probabilities of the case, our epistle was written by James, the Lord's brother, mentioned in Gal. i. 19 and 1 Cor. xv. 7, and known in ecclesiastical tradition as the Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem and as James "the just." What we know from the New Testament of his prominence in the Jewish branch of the Church,

¹ *Cf.* Mayor, *Commentary*, p. 1. *sq.*

² *Against Heresies*, IV. 16. 2.

³ *Comm. in Johan. Opp.* IV. p. 306.

and from tradition respecting his life and character, would accord with this supposition. I think that the language and thought of the epistle also agrees well with the same conclusion.

No data exist for deciding the question whether the epistle was written with or without reference to Paul's discussion of justification by faith. An early date (within the period from about 45 to 50), involving independence of Paul, is maintained by such scholars as Ritschl, Weiss, Beyschlag, Mayor, and Zahn. Professor Sanday thinks the epistle should be put as late as possible (*ca.* 61), because, as he thinks, it implies a settled state of things in the churches addressed. He agrees, however, with Bishop Lightfoot, that James wrote without direct reference to Paul's arguments. His references to justification are thought to be sufficiently accounted for by the currency of questions on the subject in the Jewish schools.¹ Dr. Hort holds a similar view of the date, but thinks that the passage, ii. 14-26, must have had in view some misuse or misunderstanding of Paul's teaching.² To my mind the mere question of date is of minor interest. The one point which seems to me clear is that there is no polemic on either side between James and Paul. I quite agree with Sanday when he says: "If we suppose direct polemics between the two apostles, then both seem strangely to miss the mark. Each would be arguing against something which the other did not hold."³ The earlier date, however, seems to me to be favored by such considerations as the following: (*a*) The Jewish Christians of the dispersion who are addressed are still within Judaism. The church is still called a synagogue (ii. 2). (*b*) There is no reference to circumcision, the law, etc., — themes which became prominent and widely discussed within the decade 50-60. (*c*) What is said of faith and works so completely avoids the point of Paul's discussions that it is difficult to believe it to have been written with the knowledge of them. (*d*) The earlier

¹ *Inspiration*, p. 345.

² *Judaistic Christianity*, pp. 147-149.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 345.

date is favored by the Judaic tone of the epistle ; by the absence of any reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and its consequences, or to any of the questions which were rife from about the middle of the first century onwards concerning Gentile Christians.¹ Sanday's argument for a late date, to the effect that James would not be likely to write a doctrinal epistle unless influenced to do so by the example of Paul, seems to me to be of doubtful force. Even if we insist upon calling the writing in question a letter, and not, as many do, a practical treatise on Christian duties, there is no apparent reason why the relation of the "pillar" apostle James to the Jewish-Christian churches might not have been such as to make the writing to them of a message of comfort and instruction quite natural. I cannot see that the writing of a doctrinal epistle within the first generation of Christians is a fact which specially "needs to be accounted for," provided the relations between James and the Jewish Christians were such as we have reason to believe them to have been.²

The external evidence for the genuineness of 1 Peter is abundant. Renan justly says that this epistle is "one of the writings of the New Testament which are the most anciently and most unanimously cited as authentic." It is found in the most ancient versions, is cited as a *Homologoumenon* by Eusebius, and attested by the Church fathers from Papias and Polycarp onwards. With respect to the time of its composition most scholars hold that it exhibits a knowledge of Paul's epistles, especially of Romans and Ephesians. Weiss stands alone in assigning to it a date as early as 53 or 54. Most scholars who hold its genuineness have placed it between the years 60 and 67. Zahn in his *Einleitung*, p. 92, assigns it to 63 or 64. The argument of Ramsay, for a late date (*ca.* 80) already alluded to, which is derived from the supposed correspondence between the references to persecution in the epistle and the policy of the Flavian emperors towards the Church, is forcibly answered by Sanday, who adduces sufficient evidence that the methods

¹ Cf. Mayor, *Commentary*, p. cxx. sq.

² Cf. Sanday, *Inspiration*, p. 344.

and grounds of persecution presupposed in the epistle already obtained in the time of Nero, and that, so far as such considerations are concerned, the letter might have been written as early as 66.¹

To me the proof of a literary dependence of our epistle upon the Paulines seems quite inadequate. The supposed coincidences are mostly slight, the agreements extending only to a word or two. Several of the parallels may be explained by a common use of the Septuagint. There are no marked doctrinal correspondences with respect to such subjects, for example, as justification or the parousia. The "dogmatic watchwords" of Paul are entirely wanting in our epistle. So far as such considerations go, they leave the date as uncertain as are the place of writing and the nationality of the persons addressed.² The one point about which we may feel a high degree of confidence — and happily it is the only one of great importance for our present purpose — is that the epistle is genuine, and exhibits to us the more primitive type of apostolic teaching which preceded and, to some extent, continued to exist contemporaneously with the more developed theology of Paul.

Between the Epistle of Jude and 2 Peter there is obviously some kind of interdependence. It is therefore proper, for our purpose, to treat these two epistles together. The data for deciding the questions of their authorship, date, and purpose are peculiarly scanty. The former has been ascribed to each one of the Judes mentioned in the New Testament, — to the Jude of the apostolic list (Lk. vi. 15; Acts i. 13), who in Mark, and also in Matthew according to the more probable text, is called Thaddæus; to "Judas called Barsabbas," who was sent with Silas to Antioch (Acts xv. 22, 27, 32); but much more commonly to Judas the brother of Jesus (Mk. vi. 3; Mt. xiii. 55). The only reference to the author in the epistle itself is in verse 1, where he calls himself a brother

¹ *The Expositor*, June, 1893, pp. 406-412.

² To me it seems probable that the epistle was addressed to mixed congregations, in which Gentile converts predominated. See i. 14; ii. 10; iii. 6; iv. 3. So Lechler, Beyschlag, Farrar, Salmon.

of James. No argument favoring the writing of the letter by a primitive apostle can be drawn from combining this expression with Luke's designation 'Ιούδας 'Ιακώβου, since by that name is probably meant Judas the *son*, and not the *brother*, of James, that is, of a James otherwise unknown to us. If the writing of the Epistle of James by the Lord's natural brother be regarded as probable, then the most natural supposition is that our epistle was written by another brother. The prominence of James in the early Church might, not unnaturally, lead Jude to authenticate and commend his letter by naming himself as "the brother of James."

That the book is not mentioned by the earlier ecclesiastical writers may be due, in part, to its minor importance. It was included in the ancient Latin version, but omitted from the Peshito. Eusebius classed it among the disputed books, although he mentions its wide recognition. It is attested by the Muratorian fragment, by Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. Jerome tells us that objections were felt to it on account of its references to apocryphal writings. Similar scruples were entertained by Luther and Calvin. The Tübingen school held that the heresies which it opposes were those of second century Gnosticism and regarded it as a late Judaizing writing. Its apostolic authorship (in any sense) is denied by most German critics. Pfleiderer says it cannot be earlier than 150 A.D. Jülicher suggests the period 100-180 A.D.; Harnack, 100-130 A.D. Von Soden expresses doubts respecting its authorship, but says that the possibility that a younger brother of Jesus, whose missionary labors had led him into Gentile-Christian circles, may have written the letter about 80-90, cannot be disproved. Among recent writers who are favorable to the genuineness of our epistle are Weiss, Beyschlag, Salmon, Plummer, and Sanday.

It is well known that 2 Peter is the most weakly attested of all the New Testament books. No clear recognition of its canonicity before Origen has been made out, and he mentions the fact that its genuineness was

doubted. Eusebius says that the epistle was not generally embodied among the sacred books; but since it appeared useful to many, it was studiously read with the other Scriptures.¹ The councils of Laodicea and Carthage (363 and 397 A.D.) adopted the epistle into their lists, and from about that period we may date its general reception.

It would lead me too far to rehearse the arguments which are employed in the controversy over the genuineness of the epistle. They are briefly summarized by Dr. Sanday in his lectures on Inspiration, pp. 382-385. Two points to which prominence has recently been given may be noticed. Dr. Edwin A. Abbott² and Canon Farrar³ have sought to show that the author borrowed from the *Antiquities* of Josephus (published 93 A.D.) — a supposition which would be fatal to its genuineness. This contention has been ably answered by Warfield⁴ and Salmon,⁵ who show that the coincidences are in words rather than in ideas, and in not very unusual words, and that they are not found in brief compass or in the same sequence or connection. It has been pointed out that between the recently discovered *Apocalypse of Peter* and 2 Peter there were noticeable resemblances. The suggestion lies near to hand that they are by the same author. Dr. Sanday inclines to this supposition.

The obvious interdependence between 2 Peter and Jude has more commonly been explained by supposing the priority of the latter. Spitta, however, elaborately defends the contrary view.⁶ In either case the interdependence is not necessarily inconsistent with the apostolic authorship of both writings. It is not impossible that the apostle might appropriate, with adaptations, the language of the shorter epistle as fitly describing the false teachers whom he wishes to rebuke. The suggestion of Jerome is

¹ *Ecc. Hist.* iii. 3.

² *The Expositor*, 1882, p. 49.

³ *The Early Days of Christianity*, Bk. ii. ch. ix.

⁴ *Southern Presb. Review*, 1883.

⁵ *Int. to N. T.* Lect. xxv.

⁶ *Der zweite Brief d. Petrus u. der Brief Judas*, 1885.

an interesting one, that in view of Peter's probable deficiency in the knowledge of Greek, the differences between his two epistles are to be explained by his employment in their composition of different interpreters. The most recent German writers pronounce almost unanimously against its genuineness. Among other recent scholars who incline to the same conclusion are Hatch, Sanday, and Ramsay. The genuineness is defended by Plumptre, Lumby, Plummer, Salmon, and Spitta. Huther, Weiss, and Farrar remain undecided. For my part, I find the difficulties in the way of belief in its genuineness quite insurmountable. They are such as these: The author quotes the errorists as referring to the first generation of Christians as "the fathers" (iii. 4), thereby betraying the late date of the epistle, since such a mode of expression could not have been in use within the lifetime of Peter. He also betrays the late date of his writing by reckoning Paul's epistles among the *γραφαί*, thus placing them upon a level with the Old Testament (iii. 15, 16). He refers to widespread doubt respecting the near return of Christ as existing in his time (iii. 3, 4). He describes the heresies which he rebukes, now as if already present, and now as if future (*cf.* iii. 3 with iii. 4, 5), as though he was really living in the midst of them, but was trying to place himself back in thought into the apostolic age and to speak of them as future. It is extremely difficult to imagine Peter using the language of this epistle on any of these subjects. The marked difference in style and ideas between this epistle and 1 Peter also creates a very considerable difficulty.

As I have already intimated, the Biblical theologian cannot help feeling somewhat embarrassed in his work by the existing uncertainty respecting the authorship and date of some of the books which constitute his material. He can only follow what seems to him to be the probabilities and adopt a working hypothesis. He can, at least, expound the contents of the books themselves, although he may feel restricted in drawing confident conclusions in regard to certain points of history and comparative the-

ology in the early Church. I shall accordingly summarize the teaching of the books which I have noticed in this chapter as representing, at least approximately, the primitive apostolic teaching. The writings may not all be so early as the traditional view supposes. It is possible that some of them fall outside the apostolic age. In any case, they are the principal sources of our knowledge of the simpler and less elaborated style of teaching which the New Testament presents and which must, on that account, stand in a certain contrast with the other apostolic writings.

CHAPTER II

THE DISCOURSES IN THE ACTS

THE material of which we have now to take account consists mainly of fragmentary reports of certain discourses and defences of the apostle Peter. To these must be added a prayer of the congregation (iii. 24 *sq.*), Philip's conversation with the Ethiopian chamberlain (viii. 30 *sq.*), and the defence of the almoner Stephen before the Sanhedrin (ch. vii.). Of importance for our purpose also are the forms and customs of the first Christians and, especially, the differences which arose over the terms on which Gentile converts should be admitted to the Church, and the deliberations of the apostolic convention at which those differences were adjusted. The first part of the Book of Acts is the principal source of our knowledge of the life and teaching of the early Church, and, while these chapters do not tell us all that we should like to know, they do furnish us a clear idea of the relations of the earliest Christians to their ancestral religion and of the principal points which they emphasized in their efforts to win men to belief in the messiahship of Jesus.

We have seen, in our study of the Gospels, that the immediate disciples of Christ did not suppose that in becoming Christians they had ceased to be adherents of the Jewish religion. They continued their attendance upon the worship of the synagogue and temple and their conformity, in general, to the requirements of the Jewish law. Their Master had, indeed, taught them the minor importance of all ceremonial observances, but he had not required them to discontinue the practice of Jewish rites. He had given them principles — such as that of the fulfilment of the law in the gospel — which were destined to

lead to the discontinuance of their practice of the Jewish ceremonial; but he preferred that this result should be accomplished gradually through the processes of their own growth and experience. He did not wish the old customs and forms to be destroyed except by being replaced by more adequate beliefs and practices.

It was impossible, however, for the disciples to continue indefinitely in the attitude which they at first assumed. They had adopted the belief that Jesus was the Messiah. This belief made the difference between Christians and Jews and would be certain to compel their ultimate separation from Judaism. The natural development of their Christian faith, and the course of events which was certain to issue from it, would make it inevitable that they must either go forward and carry out the principles of Christ to their logical issue, or go backward and imperil their allegiance to Christ by adhering to the legal system. And such proved to be the logic of events. One of the most interesting points in the history of the primitive Church is the development of the Church's consciousness of its Christian genius; the gradual realization of what its relation to Christ and his salvation involved and required. It was inevitable that the emergence from Judaism into Christianity, in its full import, should be slow, and attended by many perplexities. Some would accomplish it more readily than others; some would seek to maintain the two inconsistent standpoints. The great historical interest attaching to the early chapters of Acts arises from the fact that they enable us to trace the steps of this process by which the Church developed its Christian consciousness.

We learn from the Gospels that the two principal points in which the disciples failed to understand their Master's mission were, first, the nature of his Kingdom, and, second, the necessity of his death. Their difficulties in regard to both were largely due to their Jewish training. They had grown up in the belief that the Messianic Kingdom was to be an emancipated and triumphant Israel, and that the Messiah who should found it was to be a mighty King. The idea that he should suffer and die was contrary to all

their inherited beliefs. Hence we find the first disciples, notwithstanding their belief in Jesus' messiahship, protesting against his death, and wondering when the time would come when his real kingly power should be manifested in the restitution of the nation. The representations of Acts on this subject accord entirely with the description given in the Gospels, and enable us to see how the Christian community gradually came to apprehend the principles of Jesus concerning his work and Kingdom.

The time soon came when the death of Jesus at the hands of the Jewish authorities put an end to all doubt and protest on the part of his followers. It was to them a bewildering and disheartening event. Up to the last they had continued to hope that the Messianic kingship lay veiled under the meek and quiet appearance of their Master, and would, on a sudden, assert itself and vanquish their enemies. But when the rulers, without hindrance, and almost without protest, put him to death, their hearts were struck with dismay. At first they considered his death to be also the death of all their hopes and the failure of the promised redemption of Israel (Lk. xxiv. 19, 20). While they brooded over their disappointment, they learned that he had risen from the grave. To one and another, and even to assembled companies of his disciples, he "manifested himself after his passion by many proofs" (Acts i. 3). It was the resurrection which rescued them from despair and kindled hope again in their hearts. There might still be a possibility of Israel's redemption, now that he had appeared as victor over death. In some way the expected Messianic deliverance might yet be accomplished. Perhaps his death was, after all, a part of the divine plan. Luke records how, after his resurrection, Jesus assured them that the Old Testament picture of Messiah represented him as suffering and dying (Lk. xxiv. 26, 27, 44-46), and describes the attempts which the disciples made to find a place for this idea of Messiah's experience in the prophetic descriptions of his work (Acts ii. 25-28, 34, 35). These passages exhibit the first efforts which — so far as we know — the disciples made to adjust their minds to the

view that the Messiah's death was necessary and divinely ordained, though we shall soon see that the idea was by no means clear to them, or free from perplexing difficulties. To adopt it as a fact, however, was an important step. It meant the surrender of their earlier conviction that the Messiah should not, must not, die. The way was now open for the recognition of Messiah's sufferings and death as an integral part of his saving work. The early apostolic discourses enable us to see this changed view of Jesus' death in process of formation. But before pursuing this subject further, we must note the effect of the death and resurrection of Jesus upon the first disciples' idea of the Kingdom of God.

In his life on earth Jesus had failed to establish his Kingdom as his disciples conceived it. His resurrection and ascension were events which were certainly adapted to suggest to them higher and more spiritual views of his work than they had been cherishing. They knew him now as belonging to a higher world — as exalted to the right hand of God. Their thoughts turned to the promise of the Spirit, of whose presence and power he had assured them. Here, certainly, are the elements of a new and higher view of the Kingdom. Yet we find that this conception was but slowly realized. Especially persistent in the minds of the early disciples was the idea that his visible presence was essential to the consummation of his work. Hence the expectation which had formerly been directed to the reconstruction of the nation was now turned towards his return to earth. He had, indeed, as they thought, left his Messianic work unfinished, but he would soon return to earth to complete it. Hence Luke's narrative aptly pictures the company as intently gazing after him into the skies, and as receiving the assurance that he would visibly return to them (Acts i. 10, 11). The gospels make it very clear that the idea of the Lord's speedy return to earth had received among the first disciples a great development, and that his teaching about the future progress of his Kingdom had been chiefly understood to refer to that event. The Book of Acts confirms

this view of the matter, and enables us to trace with greater confidence the genesis and growth of the parousia-expectation. It was rooted in a Jewish view of the Kingdom, while its more immediate occasion was the disappointment produced by Jesus' death, on the one hand, and, on the other, the living hope which was begotten in their hearts by his resurrection. The whole development of the disciples' thoughts on the subject is perfectly natural, and, when the facts are impartially viewed, admits of a most reasonable explanation.

There can be no doubt that the idea of the Lord's speedy return to consummate his work operated as a check upon the development of the true doctrine of the Kingdom. So long as the thought of the community was concentrated upon the early restoration of the Kingdom to Israel, no very large conception of the mission and extent of the Kingdom in the world would be likely to obtain. Yet, in spite of this limitation, the view of the Kingdom gradually enlarged under the logic of events and the guidance of the Spirit until, at length, a Paul could entertain the idea of the gospel for the world and strive heroically for its realization, notwithstanding the fact that he looked for the crisis of human history in his own lifetime. A certain measure of inconsistency is inseparable from a process of transition from one standpoint to another. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the early Church remained in part entangled in its inherited Jewish ideas and in the interpretations of Christianity which were shaped by those ideas, while, at the same time, in other respects, it grasped the characteristic truths of its new faith with clearness and force. The first disciples were at least sure of the messiahship of Jesus, of his resurrection and glorified life in heaven, and of the reality of their relations with him. These convictions were certain ultimately to carry with themselves everything else which was an essential part of the gospel.

The picture which the Acts furnishes of the life of the primitive Christian community is an interesting and graphic one, despite its fragmentary character. We find the dis-

ciples collected in Jerusalem. They early choose a new apostle to take the place of Judas. At the feast of Pentecost, a few days after the departure of Jesus, occurred an event whose main significance is clear, notwithstanding the peculiar difficulties which attend the explanation of the accompanying phenomena described in the narrative (ch. ii.). It was a signal realization of the promise of the Spirit in the confirmation of the faith of the disciples and the increase of their number. It was attended with ecstatic excitement and prophetic utterances, which were understood, on the one hand, as the wild ravings of drunken men, and, on the other, as a speaking in various languages. In a powerful discourse Peter declared that the experience was a fulfilment of the Old Testament predictions of the Messianic blessing. The occasion formed an epoch in the life of the infant community, not only on account of its powerful effect on the original disciples, but because a large number, from various countries, was added to their company.

This primitive community had no formal organization. The apostles were, of course, its natural leaders, and Peter, especially, is represented as the spokesman of the assembly. At first the company resided together in an upper chamber (Acts i. 13), but this arrangement must soon have become impracticable. They frequently met together — or, when the community became larger, probably in groups — for prayer, mutual encouragement and instruction, and “the breaking of bread” (Acts i. 14; ii. 42, 46), that is, the celebration of the Lord’s supper in the form of a common meal. A certain community of property also existed among them. None counted what he possessed to be his own, but held it subject to the needs of his fellow-Christians. Some expressions in Acts, taken by themselves, would lead us to suppose that all the disciples contributed their entire property to a common fund (i. 44; iv. 34, 35); but it is evident from certain circumstances which are mentioned that the arrangement did not involve the general abolition of private possessions. Ananias is said to have been perfectly free to retain the full price of his property

without thereby giving offence to the community (v. 4). Mary the mother of Mark continued to possess her own house in Jerusalem (xii. 12). If a universal community of goods had prevailed, it would be strange that the act of Barnabas in selling his field and delivering up the price to the apostles should be singled out for special mention (iv. 36, 37). Moreover, had there been a common purse and a corporate, instead of an individual, administration of all property, it is almost inconceivable that we should hear nothing of it in the New Testament outside the early chapters of Acts. We must conclude that no actual communistic system was adopted, but that all held their possessions subject to the needs of their brethren. It was a fraternal sharing together, born of generosity and love, a moral and not a legal communism. The immediate occasion of the arrangement was the extreme poverty of most of the Jerusalem Christians, to which Paul's epistles also bear witness. Doubtless the expectation that the parousia was near, may have had its influence. At any rate, this primitive method of sharing seems not to have been of long duration — probably in consequence of the increasing poverty of the Judæan Christians, which made it necessary for them to look to the Gentile churches for aid. The custom is an interesting example of the fruit of Christian love — as is also the willingness with which the Gentile churches afterwards sent their contributions to the mother congregation.

It was in connection with this distribution of gifts to the poor that the first Church officers were chosen. Among the primitive Christians were certain Greek-speaking Jews. They complained that "their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" (vi. 1). Whether this complaint was just or not we are not told; but it is not impossible that the prejudice which existed against foreign Jews may have made itself felt even within the Christian congregation. Up to this time the alms seem not to have been officially administered. The apostles could not well assume the labor involved, and they therefore recommended the appointment of seven almoners who should have charge of the distri-

bution of alms. This committee has generally been regarded as the germ of the later diaconate. It is quite certain that the Church did not yet possess a board of elders. The Church offices sprang out of practical necessities, and were not determined by any preconceived plan of organization.

These circumstances, which are recounted in the early chapters of Acts, afford us a very realistic picture of the life of the early Church. Everywhere we note the power of its intense and vital convictions and hopes. Ardently attached to the person of Jesus, and sincerely believing in his presence and guidance, the first Christians contended with extreme poverty, braved the contempt and persecution of their countrymen, and searched the Old Testament, the arsenal of Judaism, for weapons of defence with which to meet their opponents in argument. The picture which is thus furnished us in these fragmentary narratives bears all the marks of a sketch from life.

We now turn to the doctrine of Jesus' messiahship as presented in our sources. Here, too, as in the Gospels, it is Peter who is the chief confessor and who continues to prove himself the rock of the Church. The belief that God had anointed Jesus with special power (iv. 27; x. 38) now gave rise to the compound name Jesus Christ, while the term *ὁ Χριστός* continued to be used, as in the Gospels, as a title and not as a proper name (ii. 38). Respecting his person the principal declarations are as follows: He was divinely attested as the Messiah by his miracles, resurrection, and exaltation (ii. 22-24, 33). He is the living power which works in his followers (iii. 16; iv. 10), and he will come to set right all conditions and relations which stand connected with the realization of the divine ideal of the Kingdom (iii. 21). He is the divine Messenger of peace, is specially anointed with the Holy Ghost, and is ordained to be the Judge of all (x. 36, 38, 42). In addition to being named the Christ, he is called Lord (*κύριος*, ii. 36), God's holy Servant (*παῖς*, iii. 13; iv. 27, 30), — a reference to the "Servant of Jehovah" in Second Isaiah, — the holy and righteous One, the Prince (*ἀρχη-*

γός) of life (iii. 14, 15), a Prince and Saviour (v. 31), and the great Prophet, like unto Moses, whom God had promised to raise up (Deut. xviii. 15-19).

This is a very simple Christology. It pictures Jesus as the holy Prophet of God, the Messenger of the divine mercy to Israel, the innocent sufferer whose experiences were divinely appointed, and who is now the exalted bearer of salvation. The term "Son of man" occurs but once in our sources (vii. 56), and the term "Son of God" not at all.¹ Nor is anything said in these discourses of the pre-existence of Christ. In fact, there is no explicit teaching here respecting his inner nature or essential relation to God. It is therefore easy to remark how little is said here, and to conclude, as Beyschlag does, that the primitive Church conceived the relation of Jesus to God as that of a purely human dependence.²

It was certainly quite beyond the purpose of these discourses, and equally foreign to the thoughts of the first disciples, to enter upon any speculative consideration of their Master's inner relation to God. We must not credit them with a theory of the mystery of his person. The question at this point is not, Did the primitive apostles believe in the pre-existence or essential divineness of Jesus? but, What view of his person is *for us* naturally involved in the *facts* which they believed and asserted? If Jesus is not called Son of God in our sources, he is clothed with Messianic dignity, and is described as seated at the right hand of God, participating in the divine glory, and sharing the government of the world (v. 31; x. 36, 42). If his pre-existence is not here mentioned, his lordship over all things is repeatedly asserted (ii. 20, 25, 35; iv. 26; x. 36, etc.). In view of the Septuagint use of κύριος as a name for Jehovah, it is difficult to see how a Jewish mind could attach to the κυριότης which is ascribed to Jesus any meaning not implying his superhuman character.³ To these representations must be added the strong

¹ viii. 37 is spurious.

² *N. T. Theol.* I. 309 (Bk. III. ch. ii. § 2).

³ In his effort to break the force of this consideration Beyschlag (I. 309, Bk. III. ch. ii. § 2) notices but one passage (ii. 34), neglecting all the

assertion of his sinless holiness (iii. 14; iv. 27) and the teaching that he is the true object of faith (iii. 16; x. 43), the giver of salvation (iv. 12; v. 31; x. 43), and the Judge of the world (x. 42).

In the teaching which we are reviewing the primitive apostles were dwelling on the historical facts of which they were cognizant, and their practical significance. No general theory of Christ's person in explanation of these facts could, as yet, have been clearly developed in their minds. The absence of any traces of such a theory from these early chapters of Acts is one of the marks of verisimilitude which they exhibit. But the descriptions which they give of Christ's absolutely unique character and work appear to me to be quite irreconcilable with the humanitarian theory of his person. If they did not yet hold a definite supernatural view of his person, it is quite certain that they did not hold the humanitarian view, and to me it seems almost equally certain that they could never have derived it from the facts which they allege or harmonize it with them. We know that as a matter of fact the apostolic theology early developed a definite doctrine of the preëxistence and essential divinity of Christ. I leave it to the reader to judge whether this doctrine is a legitimate deduction from such ideas as his sinlessness, exaltation to lordship over all things, and sole function as Saviour and Judge or a groundless speculation unwarranted by these conceptions. I believe that the true conclusion is that to which we were led in the study of the self-testimony of Jesus, namely, that the facts of his teaching and life, as his immediate disciples knew them, warrant the doctrine of his essential divinity which was early developed in the apostolic Church. If this doctrine did not exist in the primitive Church, it was not because the elements of it are not found in the testimony of the first preachers. The expressions, bearing upon the idea of

rest. His argument is: *Jesus is made Lord* by his exaltation, therefore must be a temporal being. But does this conclusion follow? Compare Paul's doctrine of Christ's exaltation with his emphatic assertion of his divine form of existence and equality with God (Phil. ii. 5-9).

Christ's person which are used, are not less, but more, significant for being incidental. They show that if no effort had yet been made to define his person, it was at least assumed by his followers to be absolutely unique. I therefore agree with Weiss when he says: "The Messiah who is exalted to this *κυριότης* must certainly be a divine Being. But we do not thereby mean that there was any occasion for the earliest preaching to reflect upon the question how far such exaltation was grounded in the original nature of his person."¹

We have seen that the assertion which stood in the forefront of the apostles' earliest preaching was that Jesus was the Messiah. This they steadfastly maintained in the face of the nation which had rejected him. But they were now confronted with a perplexing question: How could the death of Jesus, which was so contrary to their own inherited ideas of Messiah's experience and work, be shown to be a part of the divine plan? Jesus had completely failed to realize the nation's expectation. Could the disciples show that he did, nevertheless, fulfil the true prophetic ideal of the Messiah, and that his death, so far from being inconsistent with his messiahship, was the culmination of his Messianic mission?

The earliest references to the death of Jesus in our sources speak of it as a great crime on the part of the Jewish people (ii. 22, 23; iii. 13-15). The Jews tried to destroy Jesus, but God thwarted their effort by raising him from the dead (ii. 24; iii. 15). By his resurrection he was shown to be the Messiah (ii. 25-32). But this cannot be the whole truth. It is not sufficient simply to maintain that, although his death is an obstacle to belief in his messiahship, his resurrection overbears the force of that objection. The death itself must be a part of his Messianic work. In this connection the apostles must have recalled words of Jesus about the necessity of his death and the conformity of it to the Scriptural picture of Messiah's experience (Mk. viii. 31 and parallels; Lk.

¹ *N. T. Theol.* § 40, c.

xxiv. 26, 27). Such words would now shine in a new light. The apostles now began to search the Scriptures in order to see whether the prophetic view of Messiah contemplated his death. In these efforts to show from Scripture that Messiah's death was a part of the divine plan, we see the beginnings of the apostolic doctrine of the redemptive significance of his death. No inconsistency was felt to exist between this idea and the idea that his death was a great crime on the part of the Jews on account of which they were to be urgently exhorted to repent. The two conceptions are found side by side (ii. 23; iii. 13-15, 18). It is true that their guilt was somewhat mitigated by their ignorance of the real nature of their action (iii. 17), but this fact would furnish no means of harmonizing the two ideas. How the apostles adjusted them we are not told, but we may well suppose that the action of the Jews — which was a sin from the standpoint of its motive — was held to have served the purposes of the divine counsel, and thus regarded as subordinate to God's redemptive plan. As time goes on the event is less and less contemplated from the former point of view and is more exclusively regarded as a part of his Messianic work. Thus we see that the burden of the apostles' earliest preaching to their countrymen was this: You killed the Messiah, but God thwarted your purpose to destroy him by raising him from the dead; indeed, your very act fulfilled his counsel. Yet you did it from hatred and your sin remains. Repent now while the divine mercy waits. Soon Christ will come to judgment. Become his friends that his coming may be to you a day of gladness and not of doom (ii. 13-21; iv. 10, 11, 27, 28; v. 30, 31; x. 36-43).

But here a further question arises: If the primitive apostles clearly recognized the death of Jesus as a part of the Messianic idea, did they have any view of its significance as such? In other words, could they believe that it was necessary, as a part of Messiah's work, that he should die without attaching a redemptive meaning to his death? His death as a part of the divine plan must have meant

something to the first disciples. What could it have meant?

When we turn to our sources we find no explicit teaching respecting the purpose or object of Messiah's death in the divine economy. It is certainly not presented as an atonement for sin—a fact of which Beyschlag eagerly avails himself as a makeweight against that idea.¹ But it is just as certain that it is not presented as a moral example—a fact which, on Beyschlag's method of argument, would be available against his view of the meaning of the event. The *argumentum e silentio* is as precarious as it is convenient.

One will search these discourses in vain for any answer to the question: Why was it necessary that Jesus should die? The historical relations only, and not the inner significance of the event, are dwelt upon. It is possible to hold that the apostles had not yet arrived at any view of that significance. But this supposition is not without serious difficulties. We have seen that the apostles, most probably, recalled the words of Christ respecting the necessity of his death. Would they not be as likely to recall those which related to its significance? He had spoken of giving his life as a ransom for many (Mk. x. 45), and of his blood of the covenant which is shed for many (xiv. 24). Is it natural to suppose that the explanations of the Scriptures which Jesus gave to his disciples after his resurrection, to the effect "that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Lk. xxiv. 46, 47),—however little they may have been understood at the time,—should not now be recalled as suggesting that his death and resurrection were a part of his saving work? There is a further consideration. Paul says that among the primary points (*ἐν πρώτοις*) embodied in the tradition which he received (from the primitive apostles) was the fact "that Christ died on behalf of our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3).

¹ *N. T. Theol.* I. 312, 313 (Bk. III. ch. ii. § 3).

Here the apostle distinctly testifies to the recognition by the primitive Christian community of the saving significance of Christ's death as a cardinal point of doctrine.¹

As the Messiah Jesus is the sole bearer of the Messianic salvation (iv. 12). This salvation is conceived of as both national and personal, and as including both spiritual and temporal good. The condition of its appropriation is repentance. It is not too late for the nation to realize its divine destiny as foretold in prophecy. They may now repent, accept the Messiah, and be saved. The promise to them and to their children still holds good (ii. 38, 39; v. 31). If the Jewish people fulfil this condition, they will realize the Messianic blessedness at the return of the Lord (iii. 19-21). But if they reject this final opportunity, their destiny is sealed (iii. 23). It is evident from these representations that the consummation of the Kingdom of God and the realization of salvation are predominantly thought of as future; yet not to the exclusion of a present bestowment of forgiveness and blessedness. The gift of the Spirit is already available; forgiveness of sin may be received at once; yet we note, as in the Gospels, the prominence of eschatological expectations (iii. 19-21).

It is a mooted question whether the earliest discourses contemplate the extension of the Messianic salvation beyond the limits of Judaism. To me it seems clear that

¹ Cf. Holtzmann, *Neutest. Theol.* I. 366: "Zum Sichersten, was wir wissen, gehört, dass nach 1 Kor. xv. 3 schon die Urgemeinde den Tod Jesu in Beziehung zur Sünde gesetzt hat." So also Weizsäcker, *Apos. Age*, I. 130 (Eng. tr.): "The primitive Church already taught, and proved from Scripture, that the death of Jesus exerted a saving influence in the forgiveness of sins." Beyschlag's interpretation (*N. T. Theol.* I. 313), that what Paul received (*παρέλαβον*) was simply the *fact* that Christ died, to which he added *ex suis* a religious significance, seems singularly arbitrary. Its statement is its sufficient refutation. It involves the supposition that when Paul wrote: *ὁ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς*, his thought of what he had received ceased with *ἀπέθανεν*, and with *ὑπὲρ* began the statement of his own interpretation of the fact. It would have been fairer, and quite as plausible, for Beyschlag to have maintained that Paul claimed to have received from the first disciples an interpretation of Jesus' death as possessing redemptive significance, but that in this he had mistaken his personal belief for historical information.

this question is to be answered affirmatively.¹ Peter understands the divine promise as relating not only to Israel, but to "all that are afar off," — outside the limits of theocracy, — that is, to the heathen (ii. 39). He sees in the outpouring of the Spirit upon men "from every nation under heaven" (ii. 5) the fulfilment of the prophet's words that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (ii. 21). Through the Jewish nation all peoples of the earth are to be blessed (iii. 25). To the Jews, indeed, is salvation first (*πρῶτον*) offered (iii. 26), but this *first* implies a *second*, so that we have here the sense of Paul's maxim: "To the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16). These indications of a universal gospel in the earliest discourses are confirmed by subsequent events such as the conversion of the Ethiopian, of Cornelius and many other Gentiles (viii. 26 *sq.*; x. 1 *sq.*; x. 45), and by the testimony of Paul in Galatians to the effect that the "pillar" apostles approved his mission to the Gentiles, and that Peter himself recognized the heathen converts, and commonly associated with them at meals without scruple (Gal. ii. 9, 12; *cf.* Acts xi. 3).

But sooner or later the question must arise: Are the forms of the Jewish religion to be preserved under Christianity? Is Christianity simply a species of Judaism, or is it to replace the law? The almoner Stephen seems to have been the first definitely to face and answer this question. He declared that the temple-worship and the Mosaic law were to be done away. They were, indeed, false witnesses who said that he expressed himself blasphemously against the temple and the law (vi. 11-14), but from his address it is evident that he had entered into the meaning of the teaching of Jesus about the fulfilment of the law and the cessation of the ceremonial system.

The speech of Stephen was spoken before the Sanhedrin

¹ It is a maxim with the radical school that any recognition by the Judeo-Christian apostles of the idea of the gospel for the world must be unhistorical. They therefore ascribe all statements of such a recognition to the dogmatic bias of the author of Acts. See, *e.g.* Cone, *The Gospel and its Earliest Transformations*, ch. ii.

in answer to the charge of blasphemy. He shows, in the first place, by a recital of the events of Israel's history, how, in rejecting the Prophet whom Moses foretold, they are but repeating their earlier action in refusing the messengers of God and disobeying the divine voice which had spoken to the nation. This is a kind of counter-accusation. Then more directly answering the charge against himself, he shows that the idea of the cessation of the temple-cultus is not blasphemous. "The Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands" (vi. 48). God dwelt with his people when they wandered in the wilderness; he revealed his presence in the tabernacle, which was carried from place to place. His presence is not confined to one locality, but is spiritual. The speaker had grasped the thought of Jesus, that because God is spirit, his worship should be in spirit and in truth, and may be offered anywhere. He insisted that in so teaching he was but reaffirming the deepest lesson of their own history, and that in refusing Jesus and his spiritual truth, they were but persisting in their preference for the formal and external in their religion, to the neglect of its spiritual essence. We have here a partial anticipation of Paul's doctrine, that Christ is the end of the law, although we have no trace of that form of argument by which the apostle deduces this conclusion. To the mind of Stephen it seemed to follow simply from the nature of God's revelation and the essential spirituality of all true worship.

There was no question among the primitive apostles about the right of the Gentiles to the blessings of the gospel. But what should be required of them in the way of observance of the Jewish ceremonial was a point over which there was sure to be sharp difference of opinion. So long as there was no large number of conversions from heathenism, the question was not raised, although we early see it foreshadowed in the complaint of some of the Jerusalem Christians that Peter had freely associated with the uncircumcised converts (xi. 2, 3). When, however, in consequence of persecution, the Christians were scattered, and some of them began a flourishing mission at

Antioch, which soon resulted in the conversion of many Gentiles, certain Jewish Christians came and demanded the circumcision of these converts as necessary to their salvation (xv. 1). For our present purpose it is sufficient to observe that the primitive apostles did not sustain this demand. The narratives in Acts xv. and in Gal. ii. agree perfectly in asserting that the Jerusalem convention, which met to pronounce upon this question, refused to sanction any such requirement. Peter declared that faith in Christ was the sufficient condition of salvation (xv. 9-11). James repudiated the demand of the Judaizers, and counselled laying no burden of requirement upon the Gentile Christians, except abstinence from certain practices into which heathen converts might be especially liable to fall, and which were naturally and justly abhorrent to Jewish feeling (xv. 24, 28, 29). According to Paul, James, Peter, and John approved the work of himself and Barnabas, gave them the right hand of fellowship, disclaimed all desire to modify or supplement their teaching and practice, and stipulated only that they should procure collections for the poor Judean Christians (Gal. ii. 6-10). Thus a great gain was made for the doctrine of the sufficiency and adequacy of Christianity, and a long step taken towards the realization by the Church of her freedom from the Jewish law.

This whole course of events which we have thus briefly traced is of the greatest importance for Biblical Theology. It is an outline history of the emancipation of the infant Church from the prejudices and practices of Judaism. The wonder is not that the Church's progress was slow and gradual, but that it was so sure and continuous. It was a long way from the perplexity and dismay occasioned by the death of Jesus, to the conviction that the acceptance of him and his spiritual truth was the whole of religion. Men who had been so long used to the old wine of Judaism would not straightway desire the new wine of a free, spiritual gospel (Lk. v. 39). The principal steps in the transition from the old to the new may be recapitulated thus: (1) Jesus is the Messiah who has

triumphed over death and now lives and reigns in the glory of the Father. (2) His death, maliciously accomplished by the Jews, must have a place in the divine plan and be a part of his saving work. The Old Testament justifies this claim. (3) Men are to be urged to repent and to believe in him for salvation. (4) These conditions may be fulfilled irrespective of one's nationality. The Messianic salvation is available for all. (5) If repentance and faith are the terms of salvation, then no ritual requirements, such as circumcision, can be necessary in addition to them. (6) Hence the gospel is for all men on equal terms, and those terms are purely spiritual.

To this conclusion the thoughts of the primitive apostles and the course of events described in Acts inevitably tended. But it was reserved for the apostle Paul to be the champion of this principle and to elaborate the ethical and historical grounds on which it rests.

CHAPTER III

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

THIS epistle is addressed to the Jewish Christians of the Dispersion (i. 1). It is evident from the author's language that his readers were composed of the poorer and humbler classes (ii. 5) who were, most of them, in the employ of their richer fellow-countrymen. They were subject to oppression and injustice at the hands of their non-Christian employers (ii. 6; v. 4). The writer echoes the thought of Jesus (Lk. vi. 20; vii. 22; xiv. 21), that the poor are more receptive of his truth than the rich, although he shows no enmity to the rich as such. He insists upon the perishableness of riches (i. 10, 11), but assumes that the rich man may live the life of humility and love (i. 10). That life supplies the true ground of harmony between the two classes, elevating the poor to a sense of their spiritual riches, despite their hard outward conditions, and humbling the rich by teaching them the vanity of worldly wealth and the sole permanency of moral and spiritual good (i. 9-11).

In the situation which the epistle contemplates it was not strange that the Christians were tempted to court the favor of the rich. If a rich man came into the Christian assembly, it would be natural to show him special favor; to treat him with a fawning partiality as compared with a poor man who might enter (ii. 1-3). Such an attitude James discountenances on the ground that it is inconsistent with the real equality of all men before God and with the principle that only spiritual good has real worth in his sight. A faith which is combined with such partiality would be sadly adulterated with worldliness. It would be the faith of a double-minded man (i. 8) who is no longer

clear in his consent to Christ's idea that riches do not avail before God, and who has partially given himself over to false reasonings respecting the honor due the rich and to servile behavior in their presence (ii. 1, 4).

The author breaks out in severe denunciation of the injustice which his readers were suffering at the hands of their employers (v. 1-6). He predicts their impending doom. He sees their wealth consumed by rust and their rich vestments by moths. The day of the Messianic judgment hastens. The wages of the poor laborers whom they have defrauded cries out for vengeance upon them. They have lived in selfish ease, like animals, fattening themselves, but doing it for the slaughter. The righteous have suffered without resistance, but their cries have been heard by the Lord of Hosts, and the day of vengeance is hastening on. "The judge standeth before the doors" (v. 9).

The evils which the author rebukes, or warns his readers to avoid, and the virtues which he commends are chiefly such as are especially appropriate to the situation which has just been sketched. The readers were subject to severe trials (*πειρασμοί*) arising from their circumstances. These trials would naturally operate as discouragements to faith and zeal. It would be hard to maintain a belief in the messiahship of Jesus and to preserve a certain separateness from Judaism when to do so involved the disfavor and contempt of their fellow-countrymen. Hence the burden of James's message is an exhortation to patience and steadfastness. He urges that the process of testing to which they are subject, if heroically endured, will result, not in the weakening, but in the strengthening of faith. The testing process will but confirm them in their steadfast adherence to their faith and contribute to their completeness in the Christian life (i. 2-4). But if the sufferings of their present lot are to have this effect, faith must be preserved unalloyed. The man who wavers between the principles of Christ and the favor of the selfish world need not expect any such blessing. He must seek the true wisdom to guide him—the wisdom of Jesus, who placed the true good in the inner life. His faith

must not be weakened by a half-hearted devotion to spiritual truth. He must not doubt or be divided in his allegiance, half consenting to the wisdom of Jesus and half to the wisdom of the world. If he does, he will be "like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed" (i. 6). His life will be divided and will lose its unity, its concentration, and its true reward (i. 5-8). We seem to hear in these words an echo of the teaching of Jesus about the distraction of life through anxiety for the things of the world and the impossibility of serving two masters (Mt. vi. 24, 25).

In addition to the evil of sycophancy towards their rich employers, the readers would inevitably be tempted to hate their oppressors. Hence they are urged to be "slow to wrath," for although God cherishes a righteous indignation against wicked men, "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (i. 19, 20). Man's methods of taking vengeance are not the same as God's, and God does not delegate his judgment to man. Hence the readers are exhorted to obey the "royal law" of love (ii. 8), and to wait in patience for the day of divine judgment, as the husbandman waits on the processes of nature (v. 7-9).

Another evil to which these Christians were liable was an excessive eagerness to assume the *rôle* of teachers. They had become a relatively separate community. So far as we can judge from the epistle their assembly was not yet organized. They were not subject to precedent or the restraining power of an established *régime* in the conduct of their meetings. Under these conditions an undesirable liberty would easily develop itself. Such seems to have been the fact. Many were not "slow to speak" (i. 19), and their speech often lacked the "meekness of wisdom." This excessive liberty seems to have led to many abuses. It gave rise to an exaggerated emphasis upon speaking and hearing as compared with practice (i. 22). In some cases it ministered to pride and contention. The author thinks that among his readers too many are aspiring to be teachers, and reminds them of the solemn responsibility which teachers assume and of the

heavier judgment to which they are subject if they fail in their work. "In many things we all stumble," he says, and adds that there is nothing in which one is so liable to stumble as in speech. How difficult and how responsible, then, is the work of a teacher (iii. 1, 2)! This reflection leads him off into a general description of the difficulty and importance of controlling the tongue.

Such considerations as the foregoing put us in possession of the general situation which the epistle presupposes. It contains an extremely practical message, adapted to the trying circumstances of its readers. It is simple and straightforward and without any formal logical structure. The two peculiarities of the epistle which strike one most forcibly are the Old Testament form, of its thoughts and the resemblance of many of the ideas to those of Jesus. It reads like a Jewish sapiential book, but the wisdom which is commended is the wisdom of Jesus. From these general comments I advance to a more particular consideration of the doctrinal contents of the epistle.

After the manner of the Old Testament, James's favorite name for God is *ὁ κύριος* (iv. 15; v. 11, 12). He is also called "Lord of Sabaoth" (v. 4). Three times the term "Father" is applied to God. He is "our God and Father" (i. 27), "the Lord and Father" (iii. 9), and "the Father of lights" (i. 17), that is, the Creator of the heavenly bodies, and figuratively called their Father, because they are thought of as sources of light and blessing, and as kindred to him in this respect. James pictures the goodness of God in various forms. He is the bountiful giver of wisdom who does not, like a reluctant benefactor, chide those who apply to him (i. 5). He is himself the absolutely good, and gives only good gifts to men. All moral evil is completely foreign to his nature. He cannot be enticed to evil, nor can he entice men into sin. He is the pure and perpetual fountain of goodness. There is with him "no variation, neither shadow cast by turning." Unlike the sun and moon, his light suffers no eclipse. He bestows the spiritual life by sowing the word of truth in the heart (i. 13-18).

The Old Testament ideas of the "jealousy" of God and of the divine judgment are prominent in our epistle. To become a "friend of the world" — that is, to give oneself up to sinful pleasures and passions — is to become, so far, hostile to God; and God wants no divided or partial allegiance. The spirit which he implants in men yearns over them enviously, that is, God is anthropopathically represented as begrudging the partial transfer of men's devotion to another than himself. Hence such faithlessness is represented, as in the Old Testament, as adultery. God requires an undivided heart (iv. 1-5). He will severely judge oppression and injustice, yet towards the humble and patient "the Lord is full of pity and merciful" (v. 11). To me it seems evident that we have here a clear reflection of Jesus' idea of God as the bountiful and ungrudging giver of all good, the heavenly Father who is perfect (*τέλειος*) in love (Mt. v. 43-48), the *εἰς ἀγαθός* whose goodness is absolute and therefore excludes all becoming good (Mk. x. 18). Here we see the God of the Old Covenant clothed in the qualities which distinguish Jesus' conception of the Father in heaven.

As in the Old Testament, man is described as made in the image of God (iii. 9). It is obvious from the context that all men, despite their sinfulness, are regarded as still bearing the divine likeness. The argument is: Do not curse your enemies; reverence man as man, because he is made in the image of God. This idea is the key to all that our author says concerning mankind. As in Genesis, man, whom God has made for himself, is subjected to temptation to forfeit his true relation to his Maker. The world makes its appeal to his heart, and claims at least a part of his interest and devotion. The term "world" is not defined, but its use makes it evident that it bears an ethical sense. The readers are bidden to "keep themselves unspotted from the world" (i. 27). The tongue is identified with the "world of iniquity" in the body (iii. 6), the idea apparently being that the tongue is the organ of the world of evil in man. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God" (iv. 4). The world is moral evil, without or

within. It may be our environment, so far as that supplies occasion and furnishes stimulus to evil appetites and passions. It may be — and in the last analysis must be — the subject-matter of our own thoughts. Now this evil world enters, as it were, into competition with God for the possession of the soul of man. The division of the life between the world and God results in that instability and distraction which the author likens to the restless motion of the sea (i. 6). It is this division which makes the “doubting” (*διακρινόμενος*) man — the “two-minded” (*δίψυχος*) man, who is “unstable in all his ways” (i. 6–8). As I have already intimated, we have here a probable echo of Jesus’ teaching upon the single purpose and supreme choice of life (Mt. vi. 19 *sq.*).

To be “unspotted from the world” is certainly akin to the life of merciful ministration which is cited as illustrating the nature of “pure and undefiled religion” (i. 27). The opposite of this piety (*θρησκεία*) is seen from the context to be a self-assertive ambition, a greed for prominence which leads to an extravagant freedom of speech — a reckless use of the tongue either in wrathful denunciation or in self-assumed authority and importance. The passage i. 19–27 would yield us this idea as illustrating what James means by that worldliness which imperils faith and breaks up the unity and concentration of the religious life. The passage on the wrong use of the tongue (iii. 1–12) yields a similar idea. When the tongue is made the organ of wrathful or impure passion, the whole evil world in the heart of man is roused to utter itself by it. To allow such free expression to evil thoughts is to make friends with the “world of iniquity” and to put oneself under its overmastering power. To do this is the dictate of a base and not of a true wisdom (iii. 13–18). Such a life of unrestrained passion will be likely to give rise to every kind of evil deeds, and thus to lead on to the full result of that “friendship of the world” which is “enmity with God” — a faithlessness to his love from which he yearns to win back those whose supreme devotion he craves (iv. 4, 5).

These considerations disclose to us the author's conception of sin. God and the world compete for the affections of man. Faith — devotion to God and to the world of spiritual and eternal reality — is the root of goodness. Surrender to the enticements of evil is sin. The nearest approach to a philosophy of sin is found in the passage: "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death" (i. 14, 15). Evil desire (*ἐπιθυμία*) is the principle of sin. Forsaking devotion to God man transfers his allegiance to the courtesan *ἐπιθυμία*, and of this union sin is born. "Thus sin is an unlawful child of the desire and the will" (Beyschlag). When it is fullgrown sin produces death, the moral death of the soul. In this description the author seems to have in mind the warning of Gen. ii. 17: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" but he attaches to death an ethical rather than a physical meaning (*cf.* v. 20).¹ It does not follow from the figure which is here used that James places sin in sensuous passion alone. He speaks of perverted desire in general including all the ends and aims which are inconsistent with supreme love to God. Hence it follows that he really places sin in a perversion of the will and the affections. Formally considered, sin is a false choice.

What now is the material principle of sin? What is the object of this false choice? Although James gives us no explicit answer to this question, we need not go wrong in inferring the answer which is implied in his language. Here, as elsewhere in the New Testament, sin is selfish-

¹ The context of these passages, especially that of v. 20, seems to show that *θάνατος* has for James primarily an ethical meaning. Still it is not to be forgotten that, according to the Biblical idea, death is the opposite of life in the largest sense of that term, and that the elements which constitute fulness of life are not so sharply distinguished in Scripture as in modern thought. The term "death" may be used, now in a narrower, now in a wider, sense, and may emphasize now one, now another, phase of the forfeiture of life. See Ernesti, *Ursprung der Sünde*, u. s. w. p. 180; Schmidt, *Lehrgehalt des Jacobus-Briefes*, pp. 86, 87.

ness. By James, as by Paul, the natural bodily appetites and passions are emphasized as the seat and occasion of sin. Sinful actions spring from the "pleasures which strive for conquest in the members" (iv. 1). Sensuous passion is a powerful incentive to sin, but sin is not identical with sensuousness. The physical impulses become sinful only when they are perverted by the consent of the will. Moreover, James has much more to say of spiritual than of physical sins. The only sins on which he dwells at length are servile obsequiousness towards the rich—having its root in selfish worldliness—and the unbridled use of the tongue. Both these forms of evil are more due to pride, the subtlest form of selfishness, than to sensuousness. The author particularly specifies hatred, wrath, envy, and rivalry (*ἐπιθεία*) (i. 19, 20; iv. 9, 14, 16). Even failure to do one's duty is sin, since it springs from selfish indifference. Examples of such "sins of omission" would be an idle hearing of the word without corresponding action (i. 22-24), a cold and half-hearted recognition of God and spiritual good without deeds of benevolent service (ii. 14-26), and, in general, the failure to try to fulfil in action one's own knowledge of what he ought to do: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (iv. 17).

All these types of sin are forms of selfish desire. In sensuous sin man seeks the gratification of his lower nature; in pride, envy, and wrath he yields to the impulses of selfish ambition and of a false self-assertion; in indifference to the needs of others he falls into a selfish love of ease, in which his own personal enjoyment is treated as the only good. There is thus a real philosophy underlying our author's treatment of sin. It is based upon an inner law or principle, that of selfish prudence, and is called a base and earthly "wisdom" (iii. 15). It stands over against the true wisdom of a good life which seeks after chastity, instead of sensual indulgence; after peace, instead of envy, rivalry, and hatred; after the rewards of forbearance, gentleness, and compassion, instead of the fruits of anger, hate, and covetousness (iii.

17). This false wisdom is earthly (*ἐπίγειος*), as opposed to heavenly or divine—it partakes the nature of this lower, passing, evil world; it is psychical (*ψυχική*) or natural, that is, it consists in giving chief place to man's lower nature (*ψυχή*), especially his animal appetites and passions, instead of laying chief stress upon the higher nature (*πνεῦμα*) in which man is most nearly kindred to God, and it is “demoniacal” (*δαιμονιώδης*), as partaking the nature of the “unclean spirits,” who in the Gospels are represented as possessing the souls of men and driving them to madness (iii. 15). This spurious wisdom of the selfish life gives rise to egotism, boasting, cursing, and every blind and stormy passion. It destroys the social life of man. It is the fruitful mother of confusion (*ἀκαταστασία*) and of every evil deed (iii. 16).

Nothing is said of the origin of sin, or of its consequences, beyond the mention of death—the moral deterioration or loss of the soul—as its result (i. 15; v. 20). In one place only is Satan spoken of (iv. 7): “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Here Satan is quite certainly thought of as inciting men to hatred and discord, and his flight from him who victoriously resists his solicitations is, not improbably, conceived of according to the picture of Jesus' conflict with the devil in the wilderness. Our author was familiar with the conception of “demoniacal possession” which meets us in the Synoptics. The statement that the “demons believe, and shudder” (ii. 19) in the presence of God, is probably a reminiscence of the belief and terror of the demoniacs in the presence of Christ, which the Gospels describe (Lk. iv. 41; Mt. viii. 29).

As the absolutely good, God demands goodness in man. He reveals his own purity and its requirements in his law. This law is for James the Mosaic law, as is shown by the examples of it which he gives from the Decalogue (ii. 11). But it is not conceived after the manner of Rabbinism, but as a spiritual unity. Its essence is love, which is the “royal law” (ii. 8). In that principle its specific requirements are so comprehended that a violation of any one

commandment is, at the same time, an infraction of the one indissoluble law (ii. 10). James thus unifies and spiritualizes the legal system. It has become for him a "perfect law" (*νόμος τέλειος*, i. 25), a law fulfilled and perfected by Jesus. It is a "law of liberty" (*νόμος τῆς ἐλευθερίας*, i. 25; ii. 12), that is, a law which is not merely felt as a constraining force from without, but as an inspiration within. It is a law which the heart freely obeys. It cannot be fulfilled by mere outward compliance, as many human laws can be, but the duties which it enjoins must be freely chosen. Its essence is in the spirit or principle which underlies it. That principle is love. Hence men will be "judged by the law of liberty" (ii. 12) which regards the motive as well as the deed. The rule of life is not merely an outer word; it is an inner word engrafted in the heart (*λόγος ἔμφυτος*, i. 21) and bringing forth fruit in the life.

Here, then, we have the doctrine of righteousness set forth in Old Testament terms, but in unmistakable agreement with the ethical and spiritual teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The Old Testament law is still thought of as binding upon the Christian, but the author has penetrated to its essence and spirit and makes the true obedience to consist in the motives which rule the inner life. What is this but the righteousness which Jesus demanded? The way in which this righteousness is to be distinguished from the Old Testament system *as such* is not yet discerned. Christianity is still in the green ear. But the principle — namely, that of the free inner life — has been apprehended, and that principle will at length set the gospel free from Judaism. In our epistle also, God appears, quite in Jewish fashion, as the strict law-giver and judge (iv. 12); yet it is evident that he is not conceived of as rewarding men in strict equivalence for their sins, since he is "full of pity and merciful" (v. 11). Where men fulfil the moral conditions on which God can bless and save them, "mercy boasts itself superior to judgment" (ii. 13), that is, triumphs over all fear of judgment. Although God is not a mere merciless accountant in his

dealings with men, he does require the fulfilment of appropriate conditions in order that men may be recipients of his mercy. "Judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy" (ii. 13). This is the principle of Jesus: "The merciful shall obtain mercy" (Mt. v. 7; cf. Mt. vi. 14 and vii. 1). God is benevolent and generous (i. 5; v. 11). No adjustment of the judicial and the benevolent aspects of the divine character is attempted. There is no reason to suppose that the problem of making such an adjustment was present to the mind of the author.

These considerations open the way to a right understanding of our author's view of salvation. The provision for salvation is grounded in the gracious will of God: "Of his own will (*βουληθεΐς*) he brought us forth by the word of truth" (i. 18). God chose them that are "poor as to this world to be rich in faith" (ii. 5). This choice is not conceived of as an eternal decree, but as a historical action. His gracious action is in accord with his goodness as the giver of all good gifts (i. 17), and his choice of the poor is presented in contrast to the servility to the rich which he is reproofing. The whole epistle shows that it was chiefly the poor in the communities in question who were susceptible to the gospel-call. The rich were proud, hard, and self-sufficient.

James teaches the doctrine of spiritual renewal. God brings men forth into a new life by means of "the word of truth" (i. 18), which is elsewhere described as the word that is implanted (*ἐμφυτος*) in the heart (i. 21). This is the truth of the Kingdom which Jesus described as sown upon the different soils, and as growing or perishing according to the reception with which it met. The figure of i. 18 (*βουληθεΐς ἀπεκύησεν*) reminds us of the phrase, "begotten of God" (Jn. i. 13), and of Jesus' words to Nicodemus respecting the new birth (Jn. iii. 3-5). The salvation thus bestowed is a present fact. The readers are described as a "kind of first fruits of God's creatures" (i. 18), that is, as an especial possession of God. The new life is to be lived and enjoyed here and now in faith and action (i. 22 sq.; ii. 14 sq.). Still, the future

aspect of salvation is also strongly emphasized. The contrast between this world of suffering and the coming Kingdom of blessedness is strongly marked. The great comfort which is offered the readers is that they are "heirs of the kingdom which God promised to those that love him" (ii. 5), and that after they have faithfully endured the trials to which they are subject in this world, they shall "receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him" (i. 12). It is evident that this consummation is associated in the mind of James with the Lord's second coming, for which the readers are exhorted patiently to wait (v. 7), and which is declared to be near (v. 8). With the apostolic Church in general our author believes that he is living "in the last days" (v. 3). "The judge standeth before the doors" (v. 9).

Not much is explicitly said respecting the person of Christ in our epistle, yet much is implied. Not only is the title Lord (*κύριος, ὁ κύριος*) applied to him (i. 1; ii. 1), but the author designates himself as "a servant (*δούλος*) of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (i. 1) in such a way as to imply that his relation to Christ is like his relation to God. Moreover, Jesus the Messiah is the true object of faith (ii. 1) and "the Lord of glory." Whether the defining *τῆς δόξης* means that he personally shares the divine glory, or is now exalted to a heavenly sphere, or will reappear in glory at his parousia, it certainly attributes to Jesus a superhuman character. His is "the honorable name" (*τὸ καλὸν ὄνομα*, ii. 7) which was named over the readers in baptism. He is the Mediator of salvation. The "word of truth," "the implanted word" (i. 18, 21), which the Christian readers have received, has come to them through Christ, who by his life and teaching has transformed the outer law into an inner law, and made it a law which rules in the heart and is obeyed in freedom and with delight. If God is called judge (iv. 12), so also is Christ (v. 9), from which we must deduce the idea that God is to judge the world through Christ by the law of liberty (ii. 12), because what one freely chooses

and does is the measure of what he is. It is a sufficient explanation of the meagreness of this Christology to say that neither the circumstances of his readers nor the purpose of the writer called for any developed doctrine of Christ's person. Probably the author possessed no elaborate doctrine. But this much he possessed: Jesus is the exalted Messiah, the author of salvation, and the judge of the world. These ideas are not dwelt upon at length, but they underlie the whole purpose of the epistle, and give point and force to all its arguments and exhortations. Can it fairly be said in view of these elements of doctrine that for James "Christ had not yet become the central point of doctrinal thought"?¹

But it is the passage on justification (ii. 14-26) which has occasioned the liveliest interest and the widest differences of opinion which are to be observed in the treatment of our epistle. We can best represent its general drift in a free paraphrase. The argument runs thus: We have seen that the mere hearing of the truth is valueless without obedience to it (i. 22 *sq.*) What God requires is a life of unselfish love and helpfulness. Now it is equally profitless for a man to possess a faith which does not manifest itself in works of mercy and love. Such a faith can have no saving value (14). Suppose a Christian should declare that he possessed the sentiments of benevolence and pity, and yet when he met with a fellow-Christian naked and hungry, should merely express the wish that his need might be supplied, and do nothing at all for the relief of the person. What a valueless philanthropy that would be (15, 16)! Equally valueless is a faith which does not express itself in deeds and services. Such a faith is "dead in itself" (*νεκρὰ καθ' ἑαυτήν*); it has within it no principle of life or movement (17). Let us put the matter very clearly. Suppose that one who is not a party to any dispute about "faith and works" should meet the question under consideration. Suppose him to encounter a man such as I have described (v. 14) who professes "faith" alone, and suppose this outsider,

¹ Beyschlag, *N. T. Theol.* I. 354 (Bk. III. ii. ch. iii. § 3).

in turn, to take up the claim to possess "works." How, now, will he be likely to view the relation of the two principles? Will he not say: You claim to have faith; give me a proof that you possess it *apart from works*, if you can. I, on the other hand, will prove *by my works* that I possess faith also (18). The result will be that a faith which does not utter itself in deeds will be found unable even to prove its own existence. Christian acts and services are the necessary expression of a true and vital faith. The imaginary party whom we introduced might pursue his argument further, thus: You who profess to have faith would probably quote as an example of it your belief that God is one. It is a correct opinion; but I would remind you that the demons also hold the same opinion and are not the better for it (19).

What folly, then (James continues), to claim that any so-called faith which does not lead to action and express itself in deeds of mercy and love, is useful or saving. True faith leads to works (20). Take the typical Old Testament example of faith, that of Abraham. He is described, not merely as believing, but also as doing a great act of self-sacrifice, which was the fruit of his faith. For this act he was as really approved of God as for his faith, out of which the action sprang. God requires, not only a right disposition of mind and heart towards himself, but also the appropriate conduct to which such a disposition should lead. This conduct is, indeed, proof of the right disposition and is inseparable from it. Where the conduct is wanting, it will be found that the inner disposition fails to fill out the true idea of religious faith (21-24). The example of Rahab also shows that the faith which God approves is an active principle (25). Thus we reach the conclusion that a faith which does not lead to a good life is "the mere corpse of religion" (Mayor) (26).

It is evident that "works" are here conceived, not as meritorious deeds of legal obedience (*ἔργα νόμου*), but as acts of Christian mercy and love. Nor are they set over against faith as a conceivable rival condition of God's approval. On the contrary, they are regarded as the evi-

dence and fruit of true faith — its natural and necessary expression. Faith and works do not, therefore, represent two independent principles. They are related to each other as the tree is to its fruit. The spurious or “dead” faith which James describes may be likened to a barren tree. Only in “works” does faith fulfil its true nature. Where they are wanting, faith must be so rudimentary that it no longer answers to its true idea. “By works is faith made perfect” (ii. 22); faith is never its true and complete self except when it is a principle of life and action leading to the deeds and services which are its natural fruitage.

What, then, was James’s conception of faith? Some scholars have urged the necessity of seeking a definition of the subject which is large enough to accommodate all the allusions to faith which are made in the epistle. As a result of such an effort Beyschlag says that the notion of faith in James is the same as that found in Heb. xi. 1: “The conviction of the reality of supersensuous facts and blessings.”¹ This view seems to attribute to James a more abstract mode of thought than his epistle illustrates, and to overlook the fact that faith is a large idea and has many sides and phases. When, for example, James is opposing faith to doubting or wavering (i. 6), he seems to be thinking of faith as a firm conviction of the superior value of spiritual good. When he exhorts his readers not to join with their faith in Christ partiality to the rich (ii. 1), he appears to be thinking of the warnings which Jesus gave respecting the dangers of a love of riches, and to mean that Christian faith involves fidelity to the principles which Jesus had enunciated on that subject. In the section on justification (ii. 14–26), however, a different aspect of faith comes into view. The barren or dead faith is mere belief or opinion, while the true faith is a full consent of the will to the principles of Christ who enjoins a life of service. Even the former is really faith in the sense that it is an element of faith; yet it falls far short of being faith in its full meaning and true nature. To me it seems natural to

¹ *N. T. Theol.* I. 359 (Bk. III. ii. ch. iv. § 2).

suppose that the shading of thought in the use of the word "faith" varies according to the phase of the subject under consideration and the special aim of the writer in the different passages. It is wholly unnecessary to suppose that James possessed some abstract definition of the subject which was general enough to include both the false and true faith of ii. 14-26. True faith is the living and active spirit of serving love; dead faith is a mere theoretic assent of the mind which does not move the will or shape the conduct.

The question which James is answering in our passage is: What are the conditions, on man's part, of obtaining the divine approval? What does God require of men? His answer is substantially that of the prophet (Micah, vi. 8): God requires a good life. He understands and insists that this life is an inner, as well as an outer, life. He lays no exaggerated emphasis upon outward conduct. A true faith is the root of the religious life, but if it is a true faith, it will express itself in action. There is no conflict of ideas between the teachings of James and of Paul. Both hold that God accepts men on condition of a true faith. The active faith of James is the faith that worketh by love (Gal. v. 6), of which Paul speaks. James insists that a dead faith—a mere holding of things for ~~time~~—cannot save. There is not a word in Paul's writings which is contrary to this position. With Paul true faith is vital union with Christ, and he shows at length how it involves the holy life upon which James insists. When Paul declares that men are not saved "by works," he means that they are not saved by deeds of obedience to the Mosaic law considered as so inherently meritorious that they can found a claim to salvation. His aim is to exalt the mercy of God as the ground of salvation. There is not a word in the Epistle of James which is in the least inconsistent with this doctrine. When Paul says: "No salvation by works," and James says: "Justified by works," the term "works" is used with entirely different associations. To Paul it means: deeds of obedience to the law considered as inherently meritorious and saving;

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suppose that the shading of thought in the use of the word "faith" varies according to the phase of the subject under consideration and the special aim of the writer in the different passages. It is wholly unnecessary to suppose that James possessed some abstract definition of the subject which was general enough to include both the false and true faith of ii. 14-26. True faith is the living and active spirit of serving love; dead faith is a mere theoretic assent of the mind which does not move the will or shape the conduct.

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to James it means a good life, the fruit of faith. When Paul says: "Salvation is by faith," and James says: "Faith cannot save," Paul means that a true faith is the condition of salvation, and James means that a false faith ("that faith," i. 14 — the meagre, barren faith under consideration) is not. The two apostles also use "justification" differently. With Paul it relates to the acceptance of the sinner. With James it is used comprehensively of God's approval of men. Paul is discussing the initiative of salvation, and faith is the door to the Kingdom of God's grace. James is asking what God in general requires of men — what are the nature and demands of true religion. Naturally, therefore, Paul dwells on faith, which stands logically first, while James insists upon the consequences and fruit of faith. But James does not more strenuously urge the necessity of a good life than does Paul in Rom. v.-viii. The discrepancies between them are purely verbal, and are readily resolved when one penetrates to the real meaning of each.

Our epistle inculcates the virtues of purity (i. 21), humility, and kindness (iv. 9-11). The Christian should recognize the uncertainty of life (iv. 14-17), confess his faults to his brethren (v. 16), seek to reclaim the wandering (v. 20), and commit his cares and interests to God in prayer (v. 13-15). The Christianity of our epistle is the religion of meekness and quietness, of submission and of trust in God. Its view of the religious life is simple and undogmatic, but it has much of the depth of the wisdom of Jesus which it often echoes. Its ideal of the wise and understanding man is that he should "show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom" (iii. 13).

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

WE have seen that the Epistle of James conceives of the gospel as a spiritualized law. 1 Peter regards it rather as a fulfilment of prophecy. This conception underlies the Petrine discourses in the Acts, and is further elaborated in our epistle. Like the Epistle of James, 1 Peter is a practical letter, designed to cheer and strengthen its readers in the endurance of persecution. Both writers seek the edification of their readers in the Christian life rather than their instruction in doctrine. Hence the dogmatic elements of both letters are incidental, and are introduced for a purely practical purpose. The subjects of justification, the Jewish law, and circumcision are not touched upon in our epistle. In a greater degree than James, Peter dwells upon the sufferings, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ, but he regards these chiefly as furnishing an example and as a motive of amendment. These are the marks of an earlier and simpler theology which befits the primitive apostolic age.

The epistle bears throughout an Old Testament impress. The religion of Christ is the realization of the hope of Israel. The Saviour is the fulfilment of the prophetic visions. Hence the writer's thought is largely cast into Jewish forms. Christ is the spotless lamb (i. 19); the corner-stone of God's spiritual house (ii. 6-8). Christians are the true elect race (ii. 9); they are living stones built up into a holy temple (ii. 4, 5); they are a royal priesthood, a peculiar possession of God (ii. 9, 10). But our author is well aware of the real separation between Judaism and Christianity. To the former, Christ has become a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offence"

(ii. 8). The theocratic people have forfeited their birth-right, and those "who in time past were no people" (ii. 10), the Gentiles, have through faith and obedience inherited the promised blessing. We hear in such references to the disobedience of the Jewish nation an echo of Peter's discourses in the Acts, in which he charges upon the people the guilt of rejecting the Messiah.

As has been intimated, the primary purpose of 1 Peter was the same as that of the Epistle of James, to comfort the readers in their sufferings for Christ's sake. The allusions to these heavy trials form the dark background on which the author paints the bright hope of the gospel. The two key-words of the letter are *suffering* and *hope*. Present trials are to be patiently endured (i. 6; ii. 19; iii. 14; iv. 12 *sq.*); a glorious deliverance awaits those who suffer unjustly, because of their loyalty to Christ (i. 7, 13; ii. 21; iv. 13, 14). This thought furnishes the occasion for the various doctrinal allusions in the letter, especially those to the sufferings of Christ and the glories which followed them (i. 11). The resurrection, which is strongly emphasized, is regarded, as in the discourses, as a ground of comfort and hope (i. 3; iii. 21). The glorious appearing of Christ is presented, as before, as the object of the believer's eager expectation — the event in which his hope of salvation shall be realized (i. 5, 13; iv. 13; v. 4).

It has been remarked that the idea of the Messianic glory remained throughout his Christian life the central thought of the apostle Peter.¹ The relation of that glory to suffering was the principal problem with which his mind sought to deal. In the first period of his life, represented by the Gospels, it was impossible for him to reconcile the two ideas. The Messiah must not suffer. "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall never be unto thee," he exclaimed (Mt. xvi. 22) when Jesus had predicted his death; and when, later, he entered the shadow of the cross, he denied his Lord and fled. In the second period, represented by the discourses in Acts, he has made an

¹ See Lechler, *Das apos. u. nachapos. Zeitalter*, pp. 442, 443.

effort to combine the two ideas. The Old Testament foretells Messiah's sufferings. It must have been a part of the divine plan that he should suffer. But the two things are rather externally combined. They must somehow belong together, but the inner ground of their unity is not yet apparent. In the third period, represented by our epistle, the two conceptions are no longer regarded as incompatible. The way of the cross is the way of light and blessedness, — *via crucis, via lucis*. Suffering is a part of that testing process, without which no moral destiny can be complete. The path of humiliation was the way to the Messiah's true glory and crown, and he has left us an example that we should follow his steps (ii. 21).

Peter grounds the work of salvation in the gracious purpose of God. Here, again, his mode of thought and expression is quite Jewish. The "elect" are, however, no longer the Jewish people only, but include men of many nations (i. 1, 2; ii. 4, 9). The appearance of Christ in history (i. 20), and the bestowment of an inheritance of blessedness through him (i. 4), were contemplated in the eternal plan of God. Of this idea of the divine foreknowledge Peter makes a purely practical use. The saving work of Christ, and the extension of God's mercy beyond Israel, were no after-thought. They had their place in the counsels of divine love.

In three passages the name "Father" is applied to God. He is called "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (i. 3). Peter also speaks of the Christians calling on God "as Father" (i. 17), that is, in distinction from others, recognizing his paternal character. He is also called "the Father" (i. 2), without further definition, in connection with his gracious purpose of salvation, so that we recognize here the idea of Jesus that fatherhood is a name for God's ethical character — his universal and holy love. Strong emphasis is laid in our epistle upon the moral perfections of God. As in the Old Testament, God is holy, and his holiness is the prototype of all goodness in man (i. 15, 16). He is the impartial judge of men who does not estimate or treat them according to

any external standard (i. 17). But the complementary attribute of mercy is even more strongly emphasized. This mercy is the source of hope and salvation (i. 3). God is "the God of all grace" (v. 10). All the blessings of the gospel are the gifts of the "varied grace (*ποικίλη χάρις*) of God" (iv. 10). These blessings are the product and expression of his "virtues" (*ἀρεταί*, ii. 9). Holy love best summarizes Peter's doctrine of God.

His doctrine of salvation is also expressed in Old Testament terms. It is an "inheritance" (i. 4), the fulfilment of a hope which had been divinely discerned and partially expressed by the prophets (i. 10-12). This *κληρονομία* corresponds to the "Kingdom of God" in the Synoptics, and to "eternal life" in the fourth Gospel—terms which are not found in our epistle.¹ Our author describes, mainly in Old Testament language, the refusal of their birthright by the Jews. They have rejected the Messiah, the chief corner-stone on which God would build his spiritual temple (ii. 4-8). He had dwelt on the same fact in one of his discourses, and had described it in the same Old Testament words (Acts iv. 11, 12). He does not discuss the problems to which this lapse of the nation gives rise, as Paul does (Rom. ix.-xi.). He only says that the Jews, being disobedient, "were appointed" (*ἐτέθησαν*) unto stumbling. The reference is to the prophetic description (Is. viii. 14, 15) of many taking offence at God's word, and of their consequent confusion. The meaning seems to be that their stumbling is the penalty which God has attached to their disobedience. Peter's view is the same as Paul's, that Israel lost his place as the elect race by unbelief (Rom. xi. 20). Not descent from Jewish stock, but faithfulness to God is the condition on which participation in the election is assured. The prophetic word still holds good: "To him that believeth" (Is. xxviii. 16). With Peter as with Paul (Gal. iii. 8), it is the believing who are the true sons of Abraham. There is no respect of persons with God (*cf.* Acts x. 34, 35). Men of any nation who will heed his word and receive his

¹ He once (iii. 7) uses *ζωή* as a designation of salvation.

Son may become part of the elect race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation (ii. 9). Thus Jews and Gentiles have, to a great extent, changed places. The despised heathen, the "no people" (ii. 10), have obtained the Messianic blessing which the "peculiar people" of God by disobedience forfeited. These passages express the conclusion to which the apostle was driven by his experience as an *ἀπόστολος τῆς περιτομῆς* (Gal. ii. 9). They are in entire accord with the course of events in Peter's career as described in Acts, and with the references made by Paul in Galatians to Peter's customary attitude and action in regard to the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles.

The references to sin in our epistle are chiefly made in connection with the description of the pre-Christian condition of the Gentile readers. As with James and Paul, strong emphasis is laid upon the flesh as a source and seat of sin. The author beseeches his readers to "abstain from fleshly lusts (*σαρκικαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι*), which war against the soul" (ii. 11), and describes their former manner of life as a living in the flesh (*ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι*) when they "walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries" (iv. 2, 3). But sensuous sins are not the only ones of which our author speaks. He cautions against malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and malignant speech (ii. 1). It does not seem to me that *σάρξ* is used, in our epistle, in that wider ethical sense which it bears in Paul "as the real ground of all sin."¹ Only in ii. 11 and iv. 2 is *σάρξ* spoken of as a source of sin, and there only sensuous sins are mentioned. In all the other passages where *σάρξ* occurs (i. 24; iii. 18, 21; iv. 1, 6) it is used, in a non-ethical sense, to denote the material of the body. Here, then, we find a different usage from that of Paul, as we do also (quite in accord with the usage in the Synoptics, Mt. x. 28; Mk. viii. 35, 36) in the employment of *ψυχὴ* to denote the higher life in which man is akin to God (ii. 11), where Paul would have employed *πνεῦμα* or *ἔσω ἄνθρωπος*.

Much more is said of the person and work of Christ in

¹ Beyschlag, *N. T. Theol.* I. 388 (Bk. III. iii. ch. ii. § 3).

our epistle than in that of James. As in James, so here, *Χριστός* has ceased to be a title and has become a proper name. It is appended to the name "Jesus" without the article (i. 2, 3, 7, 13; ii. 5; iii. 21; iv. 11), but is much more commonly used alone (i. 11, 19; ii. 21; iii. 15, 18; iv. 1 *et al.*). As in the discourses of Acts and in James, the title *κύριος* is several times applied to him (i. 3; ii. 13; iii. 15). Christ is the bearer of salvation, the chief cornerstone of God's spiritual temple, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls (i. 2; ii. 4 *sq.*, 25; v. 4). He is sinless. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (ii. 22). He is the "Lamb without blemish and without spot" (i. 19); the "righteous" who died "on behalf of the unrighteous" (iii. 18). He is not directly called Son of God, but his sonship is certainly implied when God is spoken of as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (i. 3). In the view of our epistle, Jesus is Messiah, Lord, the sinless author of salvation, and Son of God. Do not these predicates involve the ascription to him of a superhuman character?

Two other passages must be more particularly considered in their bearing upon this question. They are i. 11 and i. 20. In the first passage the author is describing the glorious salvation which has been provided in Christ. It surpassed, he says, the brightest visions of prophets. They but partially discerned its greatness. They groped, as it were, after its meaning, "searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them (*τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ*) did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (i. 11). In the second passage the writer, after mentioning the moral value of Christ's death and his sinless perfection, adds: "Who was fore-known indeed before the foundation of the world (*προ-εγνωσμένου πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου*), but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake" (i. 20). The question to be considered is whether these passages imply a real, or only an ideal, preëxistence of Christ.¹ I will summarize

¹ Among writers on Biblical Theology who find the idea of real preëxistence in these passages are Lechler, Gloag, Pfeleiderer, Bovon, and Holtz-