
a *Grace Notes* course

History of the Christian Church

By Philip Schaff

VOLUME 1. First Period – Apostolic Christianity¹

Chapter 5: St. Paul and the Conversion of the Gentiles

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History of the Christian Church

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VOL 1: Chapter 5. St. Paul and the Conversion of the Gentiles

1.29 Sources and Literature on St. Paul and his Work

I. SOURCES

1. The *authentic* sources:

The Epistles of Paul, and the Acts of the Apostles 9:1–30 and 13 to 28. Of the Epistles of Paul the four most important Galatians, Romans, two Corinthians—are universally acknowledged as genuine even by the most exacting critics; the Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians are admitted by nearly all critics; the Pastoral Epistles, especially First Timothy, and Titus, are more or less disputed, but even they bear the stamp of Paul’s genius.

On the coincidences between the Acts and the Epistles see the section on the Acts. Comp. also § 22, pp. 213 sqq.

2. The *legendary and apocryphal* sources:

ACTA PAULI ET THECLAE, edition in Greek by *E. Grabe* (from a Bodleian MS. in *Spicileg. SS. PP.*, Oxon. 1698, tom. I. pp. 95–128; republished by *Jones*, 1726), and by *Tischendorf* (from three Paris MSS, in *Acta Apost. Apocrypha*, Lips. 1851); in Syriac, with an English version by *W. Wright* (in *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, Lond. 1871); Engl. transl. by *Alex. Walker* (in Clark’s “Ante-Nicene Christian Library,” vol. XVI. 279 sqq.). Comp. *C. SCHLAU: Die Acten des Paulus und der Thecla und die ältere Thecla-Legende*, Leipz. 1877.

The Acts of Paul and Thecla strongly advocate celibacy. They are probably of Gnostic origin and based on some local tradition. They were originally written, according to Tertullian (*De Bapt. cap. 17, comp. Jerome, Catal. cap. 7*), by a presbyter in Asia “out of love to Paul,” and in support of the heretical opinion that women have the right to preach and to baptize after the example of Thecla; hence the author was deposed. The book was afterwards purged of its most obnoxious features and extensively used in the Catholic church.

Thecla is represented as a noble virgin of Iconium, in Lycaonia, who was betrothed to Thamyris, converted by Paul in her seventeenth year, consecrated herself to perpetual virginity, was persecuted, carried to the stake, and thrown before wild beasts, but miraculously delivered, and died 90 years old at

Seleucia. In the Greek church she is celebrated as the first female martyr.

Paul is described at the beginning of this book (*Tischend.* p. 41) as “little in stature, bald-headed, bow-legged, well-built (or vigorous), with knitted eye-brows, rather long-nosed, full of grace, appearing now as a man, and now having the face of an angel.” From this description Renan has borrowed in part his fancy-sketch of Paul’s personal appearance.

ACTA PAULI (Πράξεις Παύλου), used by Origen and ranked by Eusebius with the Antilegomena (or νόθα rather). They are, like the *Acta Petri* (Πράξεις, or Περίοδοι Πέτρου), a Gnostic reconstruction of the canonical Acts and ascribed to the authorship of St. Linus. Preserved only in fragments.

ACTA PETRI ET PAULI. A Catholic adaptation of an Ebionite work. The Greek and Latin text was published first in a complete form by *Thilo, Halle, 1837–’38*, the Greek by *Tischendorf* (who collated six MSS.) in his *Acta Apost. Apoc.* 1851, 1–39; English transl. by *Walker* in “Ante-Nicene Libr.,” XVI. 256 sqq. This book records the arrival of Paul in Rome, his meeting with Peter and Simon Magus, their trial before the tribunal of Nero, and the martyrdom of Peter by crucifixion, and of Paul by decapitation. The legend of Domine quo vadis is here recorded of Peter, and the story of Perpetua is interwoven with the martyrdom of Paul.

The pseudo-CLEMENTINE HOMILIES, of the middle of the second century or later, give a malignant Judaizing caricature of Paul under the disguise of Simon Magus (in part at least), and misrepresent him as an antinomian arch-heretic; while Peter, the proper hero of this romance, is glorified as the apostle of pure, primitive Christianity.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF PAUL AND SENECA, mentioned by Jerome (*De vir. ill. c. 12*) and Augustin (*Ep. ad Maced. 153, al. 54*), and often copied, though with many variations, edited by *Fabricius, Cod. Apocr. N. T.*, and in several editions of Seneca. It consists of eight letters of Seneca and six of Paul. They are very poor in thought and style, full of errors of chronology and history, and undoubtedly a forgery. They arose from the correspondence of the moral maxims of Seneca with those of Paul, which is more apparent than real, and from the desire to recommend the Stoic philosopher to the esteem of the Christians, or to recommend Christianity to the students of Seneca and the Stoic philosophy. Paul was protected at Corinth by Seneca’s brother, Gallio (*Acts 18:12–16*), and might have become acquainted with the philosopher who committed suicide at Rome

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in 65, but there is no trace of such acquaintance. Comp. AMÉDÉE FLEURY: *Saint-Paul et Sénèque* (Paris, 1853, 2 vols.); C. AUBERTIN: *Étude critique sur les rapports supposé entre Sénèque et Saint-Paul* (Par. 1887); F. C. BAUR: *Seneca und Paulus*, 1858 and 1876; REUSS: art. Seneca in Herzog, vol. XIV. 273 sqq.; LIGHTFOOT: Excursus in *Com. on Philippians*, pp 268–331; art. Paul and Seneca, in “Westminster Review,” Lond. 1880, pp. 309 sqq.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL

Bishop PEARSON (d. 1686): *Annales Paulini*. Lond. 1688. In the various editions of his works, and also separately: *Annals of St. Paul*, transl. with geographical and critical notes. Cambridge, 1825.

Lord LYTTLETON (d. 1773): *The Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul*. 3d ed. Lond. 1747. Apologetic as an argument for the truth of Christianity from the personal experience of the author.

Archdeacon WILLIAM PALEY (d. 1805): *Horae Paulinae: or The Truth of the Scripture History of Paul evinced by a comparison of the Epistles which bear his name, with the Acts of the Apostles and with one another*. Lond. 1790 (and subsequent editions). Still valuable for apologetic purposes.

J. HEMSEN: *Der Apostel Paulus*. Gött. 1830.

CARL SCHRADER: *Der Apostel Paulus*. Leipz. 1830–’36. 5 Parts. Rationalistic.

F. CHR. BAUR (d. 1860): *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi*. Tüb. 1845, second ed. by E. Zeller, Leipzig, 1866–’67, in 2 vols. Transl. into English by Allan Menzies. Lond. (Williams & Norgate) 1873 and ’75, 2 vols. This work of the great leader of the philosophico-critical reconstruction of the Apostolic Age (we may call him the modern Marcion) was preceded by several special treatises on the Christ-Party in Corinth (1831), on the Pastoral Epistles (1835), on the Epistle to the Romans (1836), and a Latin programme on Stephen’s address before the Sanhedrin (1829). It marks an epoch in the literature on Paul and opened new avenues of research. It is the standard work of the Tübingen school of critics.

CONYBEARE AND HOWSON: *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*. Lond. 1853, 2 vols., and N. York, 1854; 2d ed. Lond. 1856, and later editions; also an abridgment in one vol. A very useful and popular work, especially on the geography of Paul’s travels. Comp. also Dean HOWSON: *Character of St. Paul* (Lond. 1862; 2d ed. 1864); *Scenes from the Life of St. Paul* (1867); *Metaphors of St. Paul* (1868); *The*

Companions of St. Paul (1871). Most of these books were republished in America.

AD. MONOD (d. 1856): *Saint Paul. Six sermons*. See *his Sermons*, Paris, 1860, vol. II. 121–296. The same in German and English.

W. F. BESSER: *Paulus. Leipz. 1861. English transl. by F. Bultmann, with Introduction by J. S. Howson*. Lond. and N. York, 1864.

F. BUNGENER: *St. Paul, sa vie, son oeuvre et ses épîtres*. Paris, 1865.

A. HAUSRATH: *Der Apostel Paulus*. Heidelb. 1865; 2d ed. 1872. Comp. also his *N. T. liche Zeitgeschichte*, Part III.

M. KRENKEL: *Paulus, der Apostel der Heiden*. Leipz. 1869.

ERNEST RENAN: *Saint Paul*. Paris, 1869. Transl. from the French by J. Lockwood, N. York, 1869. Very fresh and entertaining, but full, of fancies and errors.

THOMAS LEWIN (author of “Fasti Sacri”) *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, new ed. Lond. and N. York, 1875, 2 vols. A magnificent work of many years’ labor, with 370 illustrations.

Canon F. W. FARRAR: *The Life and Work of St. Paul*. Lond. and N. York, 1879, 2 vols. Learned and eloquent.

W. M. TAYLOR: *Paul as a Missionary*. N. York, 1881. As biographies, the works of Conybeare and Howson, Lewin, and Farrar are the most complete and instructive. Also the respective sections in the *Histories of the Ap. Age* by Neander, Lechler, Thiersch, Lange, Schaff (226–347 and 634–640), Pressensé.

III. CHRONOLOGICAL.

THOMAS LEWIN: *Fasti Sacri, a Key to the Chronology of the New Testament*. London, 1865. Chronological Tables from B.C. 70 to A.D. 70.

WIESELER: *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*. Göttingen, 1848.

IV. DOCTRINAL AND EXEGETICAL.

L. USTERI: *Entwicklung des Paulinischen Lehrbegriffs*. Zürich, 1824, 6th ed. 1851.

A. P. DÄHNE: *Entwicklung des Paulinischen Lehrbegriffs*. Halle, 1835.

BAUR: *Paulus*. See above.

R. A. LIPSIIUS: *Die Paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre*. Leipz. 1853.

C. HOLSTEN: *Zum Evangelium des Paulus und des Petrus*. Rostock, 1868. *This book, contains: 1. An*

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essay on the Christvision des Paulus und die Genesis des paulinischen Evangeliums, which had previously appeared in Hilgenfeld's "Zeitschrift," 1861, but is here enlarged by a reply to Beyschlag; 2. Die Messiasvision des Petrus (new); 3. An analysis of the Epistle to the Galatians (1859); 4. A discussion of the meaning of in Paul's system (1855). By the same: Das Evangelium des Paulus. Part I. Berlin, 1880.

TH. SIMAR (R. C.): *Die Theologie des heil. Paulus*. Freiberg, 1864.

ERNESTI: *Die Ethik des Ap. Paulus*. Braunschweig, 1868; 3d ed. 1880.

R. SCHMIDT: *Die Christologie des Ap. Paulus*. Gött., 1870.

MATTHEW ARNOLD: *St. Paul and Protestantism*. Lond. 1870; 3d ed. 1875.

WILLIAM I. IRONS (Episcop.): *Christianity as taught by St. Paul*. Eight Bampton Lectures for 1870. Oxf. and Lond. 1871; 2d ed. 1876.

A. SABATIER: *L'apôtre Paul. Esquisse d'une histoire de sa pensée*. Strasb. and Paris, 1870.

OTTO PFLEIDERER (Prof. in Berlin): *Der Paulinismus*. Leipzig, 1873. Follows Baur and Holsten in developing the doctrinal system of Paul from his conversion. English translation by E. Peters. Lond. 1877, 2 vols. *Lectures on the Influence of the Apostle Paul on the Development of Christianity (The Hibbert Lectures)*. Trsl. by J. Fr. Smith. Lond. and N. Y. 1885. Also his *Urchristenthum*, 1887.

C. WEIZSÄCKER: *D. Apost. Zeitalter* (1886), pp. 68–355.

FR. BETHGE: *Die Paulinischen Reden der Apostelgesch.* Göttingen, 1887.

V. COMMENTARIES.

The *Commentators* on Paul's Epistles (in whole or in part) are so numerous that we can only mention some of the most important:

1. On *all* the Pauline Epp.: CALVIN, BEZA, ESTIUS (B.C.), CORN. A LAPIDE (R. C.), GROTIUS, WETSTEIN, BENGEL, OLSHAUSEN, DE WETTE, MEYER, LANGE (AM. ED. ENLARGED), EWALD, VON HOFMANN, REUSS (FRENCH), ALFORD, WORDSWORTH, SPEAKER'S *Com.*, ELLICOTT (POP. *Com.*), SCHAFF (*Pop. Com.*, vol. III. 1882). Compare also P. J. GLOAG: *Introduction to the Pauline Epistles*. Edinburgh, 1874.

2. On *single* Epp.: *Romans* by THOLUCK (5th ed. 1856), Fritzsche (3 vols. in Latin), Reiche, Rückert, Philippi (3d ed. 1866, English transl. by Banks,

1878–'79, 2 vols.), MOS. STUART, TURNER, HODGE, FORBES, JOWETT, SHEDD (1879), Godet (*L'épître aux Romains, 1879 and 1880, 2 vols.*).—*Corinthians* by NEANDER, OSIANDER, HODGE, STANLEY, HEINRICI, EDWARDS, GODET, ELLICOTT.—*Galatians* by LUTHER, WINER, WIESELER, HILGENFELD, HOLSTEN, JOWETT, EADIE, ELLICOTT, LIGHTFOOT.—*Ephesians* by HARLESS, MATTHIES, STIER, HODGE, EADIE, ELLICOTT, J. L. DAVIES.—Other *minor* Epp. explained by BLEEK (*Col., Philemon, and Eph.*), KOCH (*Thess.*), VAN HENGEL (*Phil.*), EADIE (*Col.*), ELLICOTT (*Phil., Col., Thess., Philem.*), LIGHTFOOT (*Phil., Col., Philemon*).—PASTORAL EPP. BY MATTHIES, MACK (R. C.), Beck (ed. Lindenmeyer, 1879), Holtzmann (1880), Fairbairn, Ellicott, Weiss (1886), Knoke (1887), KÖLLING (1887).

3. The *Commentaries* on the second part of *Acts* by DE WETTE, MEYER, BAUMGARTEN, ALEXANDER, HACKETT, LECHLER, GLOAG, PLUMPTRE, JACOBSON, LUMBY, HOWSON AND SPENCE.

1.30 Paul before His Conversion

HIS NATURAL OUTFIT

We now approach the apostle of the Gentiles who decided the victory of Christianity as a universal religion, who labored more, both in word and deed, than all his colleagues, and who stands out, in lonely grandeur, the most remarkable and influential character in history. His youth as well as his closing years are involved in obscurity, save that he began a persecutor and ended a martyr, but the midday of his life is better known than that of any other apostle, and is replete with burning thoughts and noble deeds that can never die, and gather strength with the progress of the gospel from age to age and country to country.

Saul or Paul was of strictly Jewish parentage, but was born, a few years after Christ, in the renowned Grecian commercial and literary city of Tarsus, in the province of Cilicia, and inherited the rights of a Roman citizen.

He received a learned Jewish education at Jerusalem in the school of the Pharisean Rabbi, Gamaliel, a grandson of Hillel, not remaining an entire stranger to Greek literature, as his style, his dialectic method, his allusions to heathen religion and

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philosophy, and his occasional quotations from heathen poets show. Thus, a “Hebrew of the Hebrews,” yet at the same time a native Hellenist, and a Roman citizen, he combined in himself, so to speak, the three great nationalities of the ancient world, and was endowed with all the natural qualifications for a universal apostleship.

He could argue with the Pharisees as a son of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, and as a disciple of the renowned Gamaliel, surnamed “the Glory of the Law.” He could address the Greeks in their own beautiful tongue and with the convincing force of their logic. Clothed with the dignity and majesty of the Roman people, he could travel safely over the whole empire with the proud watchword: *Civis Romanus sum*.

This providential outfit for his future work made him for a while the most dangerous enemy of Christianity, but after his conversion its most useful promoter. The weapons of destruction were turned into weapons of construction. The engine was reversed, and the direction changed; but it remained the same engine, and its power was increased under the new inspiration.

The intellectual and moral endowment of Saul was of the highest order. The sharpest thinking was blended with the tenderest feeling, the deepest mind with the strongest will. He had Semitic fervor, Greek versatility, and Roman energy. Whatever he was, he was with his whole soul. He was *totus in illis*, a man of one idea and of one purpose, first as a Jew, then as a Christian. His nature was martial and heroic. Fear was unknown to him—except the fear of God, which made him fearless of man. When yet a youth, he had risen to high eminence; and had he remained a Jew, he might have become a greater Rabbi than even Hillel or Gamaliel, as he surpassed them both in original genius and fertility of thought.

Paul was the only scholar among the apostles. He never displays his learning, considering it of no account as compared with the

excellence of the knowledge of Christ, for whom he suffered the loss of all things, but he could not conceal it, and turned it to the best use after his conversion. Peter and John had natural genius, but no scholastic education; Paul had both, and thus became the founder of Christian theology and philosophy.

HIS EDUCATION

His training was thoroughly Jewish, rooted and grounded in the Scriptures of the Old Covenant, and those traditions of the elders which culminated in the Talmud. He knew the Hebrew and Greek Bible almost by heart. In his argumentative epistles, when addressing Jewish converts, he quotes from the Pentateuch, the Prophets, the Psalms, now literally, now freely, sometimes ingeniously combining several passages or verbal reminiscences, or reading between the lines in a manner which betrays the profound student and master of the hidden depths of the word of God, and throws a flood of light on obscure passages.

He was quite familiar with the typical and allegorical methods of interpretation; and he occasionally and incidentally uses Scriptural arguments, or illustrations rather, which strike a sober scholar as far-fetched and fanciful, though they were quite conclusive to a Jewish reader. But he never bases a truth on such an illustration without an independent argument; he never indulges in the exegetical impositions and frivolities of those “letter-worshipping Rabbis who prided themselves on suspending dogmatic mountains by textual hairs.”

Through the revelation of Christ, the Old Testament, instead of losing itself in the desert of the Talmud or the labyrinth of the Kabbalah, became to him a book of life, full of types and promises of the great facts and truths of the gospel salvation. In Abraham he saw the father of the faithful, in Habakkuk a preacher of justification by faith, in the paschal lamb a type of Christ slain for the sins of the world, in the passage of Israel through the Red Sea a prefigurement of Christian

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baptism, and in the manna of the wilderness a type of the bread of life in the Lord's Supper.

The Hellenic culture of Paul is a matter of dispute, denied by some, unduly exalted by others. He no doubt acquired in the home of his boyhood and early manhood a knowledge of the Greek language, for Tarsus was at that time the seat of one of the three universities of the Roman empire, surpassing in some respects even Athens and Alexandria, and furnished tutors to the imperial family. His teacher, Gamaliel, was comparatively free from the rabbinical abhorrence and contempt of heathen literature.

After his conversion he devoted his life to the salvation of the heathen, and lived for years at Tarsus, Ephesus, Corinth, and other cities of Greece, and became a Greek to the Greeks in order to save them. It is scarcely conceivable that a man of universal human sympathies, and so wide awake to the deepest problems of thought, as he, should have under such circumstances taken no notice of the vast treasures of Greek philosophy, poetry, and history. He would certainly do what we expect every missionary to China or India to do from love to the race which he is to benefit, and from a desire to extend his usefulness.

Paul very aptly, though only incidentally, quotes three times from Greek poets, not only a proverbial maxim from Menander, and a hexameter from Epimenides, which may have passed into common use, but also a half-hexameter with a connecting particle, which he must have read in the tedious astronomical poem of his countryman, Aratus (about B.C. 270), or in the sublime hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter, in both of which the passage occurs. He borrows some of his favorite metaphors from the Grecian games; he disputed with Greek philosophers of different schools and addressed them from the Areopagus with consummate wisdom and adaptation to the situation; some suppose that he alludes even to the terminology of the

Stoic philosophy when he speaks of the "rudiments" or "elements of the world."

He handles the Greek language, not indeed with classical purity and elegance, yet with an almost creative vigor, transforming it into an obedient organ of new ideas, and pressing into his service the oxymoron, the paronomasia, the litotes, and other rhetorical figures. Yet all this does by no means prove a regular study or extensive knowledge of Greek literature, but is due in part to native genius. His more than Attic urbanity and gentlemanly refinement which breathe in his Epistles to Philemon and the Philippians, must be traced to the influence of Christianity rather than his intercourse with accomplished Greeks.

His Hellenic learning seems to have been only casual, incidental, and altogether subordinate to his great aim. In this respect he differed widely from the learned Josephus, who affected Attic purity of style, and from Philo, who allowed the revealed truth of the Mosaic religion to be controlled, obscured, and perverted by Hellenic philosophy. Philo idealized and explained away the Old Testament by allegorical impositions which he substituted for grammatical expositions; Paul spiritualized the Old Testament and drew out its deepest meaning. Philo's Judaism evaporated in speculative abstractions, Paul's Judaism was elevated and transformed into Christian realities.

HIS ZEAL FOR JUDAISM

Saul was a Pharisee of the strictest sect, not indeed of the hypocritical type, so witheringly rebuked by our Saviour, but of the honest, truth-loving and truth-seeking sort, like that of Nicodemus and Gamaliel. His very fanaticism in persecution arose from the intensity of his conviction and his zeal for the religion of his fathers. He persecuted in ignorance, and that diminished, though it did not abolish, his guilt. He probably never saw or heard Jesus until he appeared to him at Damascus.

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He may have been at Tarsus at the time of the crucifixion and resurrection. But with his Pharisaic education he regarded Jesus of Nazareth, like his teachers, as a false Messiah, a rebel, a blasphemer, who was justly condemned to death. And he acted according to his conviction. He took the most prominent part in the persecution of Stephen and delighted in his death.

Not satisfied with this, he procured from the Sanhedrin, which had the oversight of all the synagogues and disciplinary punishments for offences against the law, full power to persecute and arrest the scattered disciples. Thus armed, he set out for Damascus, the capital of Syria, which numbered many synagogues. He was determined to exterminate the dangerous sect from the face of the earth, for the glory of God. But the height of his opposition was the beginning of his devotion to Christianity.

HIS EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE

On the subordinate questions of Paul's external condition and relations we have no certain information. Being a Roman citizen, he belonged to the respectable class of society, but must have been poor; for he depended for support on a trade which he learned in accordance with rabbinical custom; it was the trade of tent-making, very common in Cilicia, and not profitable except in large cities.

He had a sister living at Jerusalem whose son was instrumental in saving his life.

He was probably never married. Some suppose that he was a widower. Jewish and rabbinical custom, the completeness of his moral character, his ideal conception of marriage as reflecting the mystical union of Christ with his church, his exhortations to conjugal, parental, and filial duties, seem to point to experimental knowledge of domestic life. But as a Christian missionary moving from place to place, and exposed to all sorts of hardship and persecution, he felt it his duty to

abide alone. He sacrificed the blessings of home and family to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

His "bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible" (of no value), in the superficial judgment of the Corinthians, who missed the rhetorical ornaments, yet could not help admitting that his "letters were weighty and strong." Some of the greatest men have been small in size, and some of the purest souls forbidding in body. Socrates was the homeliest, and yet the wisest of Greeks. Neander, a converted Jew, like Paul, was short, feeble, and strikingly odd in his whole appearance, but a rare humility, benignity, and heavenly aspiration beamed from his face beneath his dark and bushy eyebrows. So we may well imagine that the expression of Paul's countenance was highly intellectual and spiritual, and that he looked "sometimes like a man and sometimes like an angel."

He was afflicted with a mysterious, painful, recurrent, and repulsive physical infirmity, which he calls a "thorn in the flesh," and which acted as a check upon spiritual pride and self-exultation over his abundance of revelations. He bore the heavenly treasure in an earthly vessel and his strength was made perfect in weakness.² But all the more must we admire the moral heroism which turned weakness itself into an element of strength, and despite pain and trouble and persecution carried the gospel salvation triumphantly from Damascus to Rome.

1.31 The Conversion of Paul

Εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός ... ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν Gal. 1:15, 16.

The conversion of Paul marks not only a turning-point in his personal history, but also an important epoch in the history of the apostolic church, and consequently in the history of mankind. It was the most fruitful event since the miracle of Pentecost, and secured the universal victory of Christianity.

The transformation of the most dangerous persecutor into the most successful promoter of Christianity is nothing less than a miracle of divine grace. It rests on the greater miracle of the resurrection of Christ. Both are inseparably connected; without the resurrection the conversion would have been impossible, and on the other hand the conversion of such a man and with such results is one of the strongest proofs of the resurrection.

The bold attack of Stephen—the forerunner of Paul—upon the hard, stiff-necked Judaism which had crucified the Messiah, provoked a determined and systematic attempt on the part of the Sanhedrin to crucify Jesus again by destroying his church. In this struggle for life and death Saul the Pharisee, the bravest and strongest of the rising rabbis, was the willing and accepted leader.

After the martyrdom of Stephen and the dispersion of the congregation of Jerusalem, he proceeded to Damascus in suit of the fugitive disciples of Jesus, as a commissioner of the Sanhedrin, a sort of inquisitor-general, with full authority and determination to stamp out the Christian rebellion, and to bring all the apostates he could find, whether they were men or women, in chains to the holy city to be condemned by the chief priests.

Damascus is one of the oldest cities in the world, known in the days of Abraham, and bursts upon the traveler like a vision of paradise amidst a burning and barren wilderness of sand; it is watered by the never-failing rivers Abana and Pharpar (which Naaman of old preferred to all the waters of Israel), and embosomed in luxuriant gardens of flowers and groves of tropical fruit trees; hence glorified by Eastern poets as “the Eye of the Desert.”

But a far higher vision than this earthly paradise was in store for Saul as he approached the city. A supernatural light from heaven, brighter than the Syrian sun, suddenly flashed around him at midday, and

Jesus of Nazareth, whom he persecuted in his humble disciples, appeared to him in his glory as the exalted Messiah, asking him in the Hebrew tongue: “Shaûl, Shaûl, why persecutest thou Me?”

It was a question both of rebuke and of love, and it melted his heart. He fell prostrate to the ground. He saw and heard, he trembled and obeyed, he believed and rejoiced. As he rose from the earth he saw no man. Like a helpless child, blinded by the dazzling light, he was led to Damascus, and after three days of blindness and fasting he was cured and baptized—not by Peter or James or John, but—by one of the humble disciples whom he had come to destroy.

The haughty, self-righteous, intolerant, raging Pharisee was changed into an humble, penitent, grateful, loving servant of Jesus. He threw away self-righteousness, learning, influence, power, prospects, and cast in his lot with a small, despised sect at the risk of his life. If there ever was an honest, unselfish, radical, and effective change of conviction and conduct, it was that of Saul of Tarsus. He became, by a creative act of the Holy Spirit, a “new creature in Christ Jesus.”

We have three full accounts of this event in the Acts, one from Luke, two from Paul himself, with slight variations in detail, which only confirm the essential harmony. Paul also alludes to it five or six times in his Epistles. In all these passages he represents the change as an act brought about by a direct intervention of Jesus, who revealed himself in his glory from heaven, and struck conviction into his mind like lightning at midnight. He compares it to the creative act of God when He commanded the light to shine out of darkness. He lays great stress on the fact that he was converted and called to the apostolate directly by Christ, without any human agency; that he learned his gospel of free and universal grace by revelation, and not from the older apostles, whom he did not even see till three years after his call.

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The conversion, indeed, was not a moral compulsion, but included the responsibility of assent or dissent. God converts nobody by force or by magic. He made man free, and acts upon him as a moral being. Paul might have “disobeyed the heavenly vision.” He *might* have “kicked against the goads,” though it was “hard” (not impossible) to do so. These words imply some psychological preparation, some doubt and misgiving as to his course, some moral conflict between the flesh and the spirit, which he himself described twenty years afterwards from personal experience, and which issues in the cry of despair: “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”⁵

On his journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, which takes a full week on foot or horseback—the distance being about 140 miles—as he was passing, in the solitude of his own thoughts, through Samaria, Galilee, and across Mount Hermon, he had ample time for reflection, and we may well imagine how the shining face of the martyr Stephen, as he stood like a holy angel before the Sanhedrin, and as in the last moment he prayed for his murderers, was haunting him like a ghost and warning him to stop his mad career.

Yet we must not overrate this preparation or anticipate his riper experience in the three days that intervened between his conversion and his baptism, and during the three years of quiet meditation in Arabia. He was no doubt longing for truth and for righteousness, but there was a thick veil over his mental eye which could only be taken away by a hand from without; access to his heart was barred by an iron door of prejudice which had to be broken in by Jesus himself.

On his way to Damascus he was “yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,” and thinking he was doing “God service;” he was, to use his own language, “beyond measure” persecuting the church of God and endeavoring to destroy it, “being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers” than many of his age,

when “it pleased God to reveal his Son in him.”

Moreover it is only in the light of faith that we see the midnight darkness of our sin, and it is only beneath the cross of Christ that we feel the whole crushing weight of guilt and the unfathomable depth of God’s redeeming love. No amount of subjective thought and reflection could have brought about that radical change in so short a time. It was the objective appearance of Jesus that effected it.

This appearance implied the resurrection and the ascension, and this was the irresistible evidence of His Messiahship, God’s own seal of approval upon the work of Jesus. And the resurrection again shed a new light upon His death on the cross, disclosing it as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, as the means of procuring pardon and peace consistent with the claims of divine justice. What a revelation!

That same Jesus of Nazareth whom he hated and persecuted as a false prophet justly crucified between two robbers, stood before Saul as the risen, ascended, and glorified Messiah! And instead of crushing the persecutor as he deserved, He pardoned him and called him to be His witness before Jews and Gentiles!

This revelation was enough for an orthodox Jew waiting for the hope of Israel to make him a Christian, and enough for a Jew of such force of character to make him an earnest and determined Christian. The logic of his intellect and the energy of his will required that he should love and promote the new faith with the same enthusiasm with which he had hated and persecuted it; for hatred is but inverted love, and the intensity of love and hatred depends on the strength of affection and the ardor of temper.

With all the suddenness and radicalness of the transformation there is nevertheless a bond of unity between Saul the Pharisee and Paul the Christian. It was the same person with the same end in view, but in opposite directions. We must remember that he was

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not a worldly, indifferent, cold-blooded man, but an intensely religious man. While persecuting the church, he was “blameless” as touching the righteousness of the law. He resembled the rich youth who had observed the commandments, yet lacked the one thing needful, and of whom Mark says that Jesus “loved him.”

He was not converted from infidelity to faith, but from a lower faith to a purer faith, from the religion of Moses to the religion of Christ, from the theology of the law to the theology of the gospel. How shall a sinner be justified before the tribunal of a holy God? That was with him the question of questions before as well as after his conversion; not a scholastic question merely, but even far more a moral and religious question. For righteousness, to the Hebrew mind, is conformity to the will of God as expressed in his revealed law, and implies life eternal as its reward.

The honest and earnest pursuit of righteousness is the connecting link between the two periods of Paul’s life. First he labored to secure it by works of the law, then by obedience of faith. What he had sought in vain by his fanatical zeal for the traditions of Judaism, he found gratuitously and at once by trust in the cross of Christ: pardon and peace with God. By the discipline of the Mosaic law as a tutor he was led beyond its restraints and prepared for manhood and freedom. Through the law he died to the law that he might live unto God. His old self, with its lusts, was crucified with Christ, so that henceforth he lived no longer himself, but Christ lived in him.

He was mystically identified with his Saviour and had no separate existence from him. The whole of Christianity, the whole of life, was summed up to him in the one word: Christ. He determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified for our sins, and risen again for our justification.²

His experience of justification by faith, his free pardon and acceptance by Christ were to him the strongest stimulus to gratitude and

consecration. His great sin of persecution, like Peter’s denial, was overruled for his own good: the remembrance of it kept him humble, guarded him against temptation, and intensified his zeal and devotion. “I am the least of the apostles,” he said in unfeigned humility, “that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” This confession contains, in epitome, the whole meaning of his life and work.

The idea of justification by the free grace of God in Christ through a living faith which makes Christ and his merits our own and leads to consecration and holiness, is the central idea of Paul’s Epistles. His whole theology, doctrinal, ethical, and practical, lies, like a germ, in his conversion; but it was actually developed by a sharp conflict with Judaizing teachers who continued to trust in the law for righteousness and salvation, and thus virtually frustrated the grace of God and made Christ’s death unnecessary and fruitless.

Although Paul broke radically with Judaism and opposed the Pharisaical notion of legal righteousness at every step and with all his might, he was far from opposing the Old Testament or the Jewish people. Herein he shows his great wisdom and moderation, and his infinite superiority over Marcion and other ultra- and pseudo-Pauline reformers. He now expounded the Scriptures as a direct preparation for the gospel, the law as a schoolmaster leading to Christ, Abraham as the father of the faithful.

As to his countrymen after the flesh, he loved them more than ever before. Filled with the amazing love of Christ who had pardoned him, “the chief of sinners,” he was ready for the greatest possible sacrifice if thereby he might save them. His startling language in the ninth chapter of the Romans is not rhetorical

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exaggeration, but the genuine expression of that heroic self-denial and devotion which animated Moses, and which culminated in the sacrifice of the eternal Son of God on the cross of Calvary.

Paul's conversion was at the same time his call to the apostleship, not indeed to a place among the Twelve (for the vacancy of Judas was filled), but to the independent apostleship of the Gentiles. Then followed an uninterrupted activity of more than a quarter of a century, which for interest and for permanent and ever-growing usefulness has no parallel in the annals of history, and affords an unanswerable proof of the sincerity of his conversion and the truth of Christianity.³

ANALOGOUS CONVERSIONS

God deals with men according to their peculiar character and condition. As in Elijah's vision on Mount Horeb, God appears now in the mighty rushing wind that uproots the trees, now in the earthquake that rends the rocks, now in the consuming fire, now in the still small voice. Some are suddenly converted, and can remember the place and hour; others are gradually and imperceptibly changed in spirit and conduct; still others grow up unconsciously in the Christian faith from the mother's knee and the baptismal font.

The stronger the will the more force it requires to overcome the resistance, and the more thorough and lasting is the change. Of all sudden and radical conversions that of Saul was the most sudden and the most radical. In several respects it stands quite alone, as the man himself and his work. Yet there are faint analogies in history. The divines who most sympathized with his spirit and system of doctrine, passed through a similar experience, and were much aided by his example and writings. Among these Augustine, Calvin, and Luther are the most conspicuous.

St. Augustine, the son of a pious mother and a heathen father, was led astray into error and

vice and wandered for years through the labyrinth of heresy and skepticism, but his heart was restless and homesick after God. At last, when he attained to the thirty-third year of his life (Sept., 386), the fermentation of his soul culminated in a garden near Milan, far away from his African home, when the Spirit of God, through the combined agencies of the unceasing prayers of Monica, the sermons of Ambrose, the example of St. Anthony, the study of Cicero and Plato, of Isaiah and Paul, brought about a change not indeed as wonderful—for no visible appearance of Christ was vouchsafed to him—but as sincere and lasting as that of the apostle.

As he was lying in the dust of repentance and wrestling with God in prayer for deliverance, he suddenly heard a sweet voice as from heaven, calling out again and again: "Take and read, take and read!" He opened the holy book and read the exhortation of Paul: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." It was a voice of God; he obeyed it, he completely changed his course of life, and became the greatest and most useful teacher of his age.

Of Calvin's conversion we know very little, but he himself characterizes it as a sudden change (*subita conversio*) from papal superstition to the evangelical faith. In this respect it resembles that of Paul rather than Augustine. He was no skeptic, no heretic, no immoral man, but as far as we know, a pious Romanist until the brighter life of the Reformation burst on his mind from the Holy Scriptures and showed him a more excellent way. "Only one haven of salvation is left for our souls," he says, "and that is the mercy of God in Christ. We are saved by grace—not by our merits, not by our works." He consulted not with flesh and blood, and burned the bridge after him.

He renounced all prospects of a brilliant career, and exposed himself to the danger of persecution and death. He exhorted and strengthened the timid Protestants of France,

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usually closing with the words of Paul: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He prepared in Paris a flaming address on reform, which was ordered to be burned; he escaped from persecution in a basket from a window, like Paul at Damascus, and wandered for two years as a fugitive evangelist from place to place until he found his sphere of labor in Geneva. With his conversion was born his Pauline theology, which sprang from his brain like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. Paul never had a more logical and theological commentator than John Calvin.

But the most Paul-like man in history is the leader of the German Reformation, who combined in almost equal proportion depth of mind, strength of will, tenderness of heart, and a fiery vehemence of temper, and was the most powerful herald of evangelical freedom; though inferior to Augustine and Calvin (not to say Paul) in self-discipline, consistency, and symmetry of character. Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, though not a grammatical or logical exposition, is a fresh reproduction and republication of the Epistle against the self-righteousness, and bondage of the papacy. Luther's first conversion took place in his twenty-first year (1505), when, as a student of law at Erfurt, on his return from a visit to his parents, he was so frightened by a fearful thunder-storm and flashes of lightning that he exclaimed: "Help, dear St. Anna, I will become a monk!"

But that conversion, although it has often been compared with that of the apostle, had nothing to do with his Paulinism and Protestantism; it made him a pious Catholic, it induced him to flee from the world to the retreat of a convent for the salvation of his soul. And he became one of the most humble, obedient, and self-denying of monks, as Paul was one of the most earnest and zealous of Pharisees. "If ever a monk got to heaven by monkery," says Luther, "I ought to have gotten there." But the more he sought righteousness and peace by ascetic self-denial

and penal exercises, the more painfully he felt the weight of sin and the wrath of God, although unable to mention to his confessor any particular transgression.

The discipline of the law drove him to the brink of despair, when by the kind interposition of Staupitz he was directed away from himself to the cross of Christ, as the only source of pardon and peace, and found, by implicit faith in His all-sufficient merits, that righteousness which he had vainly sought in his own strength. This, his second conversion, as we may call it, which occurred several years later (1508), and gradually rather than suddenly, made him an evangelical freeman in Christ and prepared him for the great conflict with Romanism, which began in earnest with the nailing of the ninety-five theses against the traffic in indulgences (1517). The intervening years may be compared to Paul's sojourn in Arabia and the subordinate labors preceding his first great missionary tour.

FALSE EXPLANATIONS

Various attempts have been made by ancient heretics and modern rationalists to explain Paul's conversion in a purely natural way, but they have utterly failed, and by their failure they indirectly confirm the true view as given by the apostle himself and as held in all ages by the Christian church.

1. **THE THEORY OF FRAUD.**—The heretical and malignant faction of the Judaizers was disposed to attribute Paul's conversion to selfish motives, or to the influence of evil spirits.

The Ebionites spread the lie that Paul was of heathen parents, fell in love with the daughter of the high priest in Jerusalem, became a proselyte and submitted to circumcision in order to secure her, but failing in his purpose, he took revenge and attacked the circumcision, the Sabbath, and the whole Mosaic law.

In the pseudo-Clementine Homilies, which represent a speculative form of the Judaizing

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heresy, Paul is assailed under the disguise of Simon Magus, the arch-heretic, who smuggled antinomian heathenism into the church. The manifestation of Christ was either a manifestation of his wrath, or a deliberate lie.

2. THE RATIONALISTIC THEORY OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.—It attributes the conversion to physical causes, namely, a violent storm and the delirium of a burning Syrian fever, in which Paul superstitiously mistook the thunder for the voice of God and the lightning for a heavenly vision. But the record says nothing about thunderstorm and fever, and both combined could not produce such an effect upon any sensible man, much less upon the history of the world. Who ever heard the thunder speak in Hebrew or in any other articulate language? And had not Paul and Luke eyes and ears and common sense, as well as we, to distinguish an ordinary phenomenon of nature from a supernatural vision?

3. THE VISION-HYPOTHESIS resolves the conversion into a natural psychological process and into an honest self-delusion. It is the favorite theory of modern rationalists, who scorn all other explanations, and profess the highest respect for the intellectual and moral purity and greatness of Paul. It is certainly more rational and creditable than the second hypothesis, because it ascribes the mighty change not to outward and accidental phenomena which pass away, but to internal causes.

It assumes that an intellectual and moral fermentation was going on for some time in the mind of Paul, and resulted at last, by logical necessity, in an entire change of conviction and conduct, without any supernatural influence, the very possibility of which is denied as being inconsistent with the continuity of natural development. The miracle in this case was simply the mythical and symbolical reflection of the commanding presence of Jesus in the thoughts of the apostle.

That Paul saw a vision, he says himself, but he meant, of course, a real, objective, personal appearance of Christ from heaven, which was visible to his eyes and audible to his ears, and at the same time a revelation to his mind through the medium of the senses. The inner spiritual manifestation was more important than the external, but both combined produced conviction. The vision-theory turns the appearance of Christ into a purely subjective imagination, which the apostle mistook for an objective fact.

It is incredible that a man of sound, clear, and keen mind as that of Paul undoubtedly was, should have made such a radical and far-reaching blunder as to confound subjective reflections with an objective appearance of Jesus whom he persecuted, and to ascribe solely to an act of divine mercy what he must have known to be the result of his own thoughts, if he thought at all.

The advocates of this theory throw the appearances of the risen Lord to the older disciples, the later visions of Peter, Philip, and John in the Apocalypse, into the same category of subjective illusions in the high tide of nervous excitement and religious enthusiasm. It is plausibly maintained that Paul was an enthusiast, fond of visions and revelations, and that he justifies a doubt concerning the realness of the resurrection itself by putting all the appearances of the risen Christ on the same level with his own, although several years elapsed between those of Jerusalem and Galilee, and that on the way to Damascus.

But this, the only possible argument for the vision-hypothesis, is entirely untenable. When Paul says: "*Last of all, as unto an untimely offspring, Christ appeared to me also,*" he draws a clear line of distinction between the personal appearances of Christ and his own later visions, and closes the former with the one vouchsafed to him at his conversion. Once, and once only, he claims to have seen the Lord in visible form and to have heard his voice; last, indeed, and out of due

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time, yet as truly and really as the older apostles. The only difference is that they saw the risen Saviour still abiding on earth, while he saw the ascended Saviour coming down from heaven, as we may expect him to appear to all men on the last day. It is the greatness of that vision which leads him to dwell on his personal unworthiness as "the least of the apostles and not worthy to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the church of God." He uses the realness of Christ's resurrection as the basis for his wonderful discussion of the future resurrection of believers, which would lose all its force if Christ had not actually been raised from the dead.

Moreover his conversion coincided with his call to the apostleship. If the former was a delusion, the latter must also have been a delusion. He emphasizes his direct call to the apostleship of the Gentiles by the personal appearance of Christ without any human intervention, in opposition to his Judaizing adversaries who tried to undermine his authority.

The whole assumption of a long and deep inward preparation, both intellectual and moral, for a change, is without any evidence, and cannot set aside the fact that Paul was, according to his repeated confession, at that time violently persecuting Christianity in its followers. His conversion can be far less explained from antecedent causes, surrounding circumstances, and personal motives than that of any other disciple.

While the older apostles were devoted friends of Jesus, Paul was his enemy, bent at the very time of the great change on an errand of cruel persecution, and therefore in a state of mind most unlikely to give birth to a vision so fatal to his present object and his future career. How could a fanatical persecutor of Christianity, "breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," stultify and contradict himself by an imaginative conceit which

tended to the building up of that very religion which he was laboring to destroy!

But supposing (with Renan) that his mind was temporarily upset in the delirium of feverish excitement, he certainly soon recovered health and reason, and had every opportunity to correct his error; he was intimate with the murderers of Jesus, who could have produced tangible evidence against the resurrection if it had never occurred; and after a long pause of quiet reflection he went to Jerusalem, spent a fortnight with Peter, and could learn from him and from James, the brother of Christ, their experience, and compare it with his own.

Everything in this case is against the mythical and legendary theory which requires a change of environment and the lapse of years for the formation of poetic fancies and fictions.

Finally, the whole life-work of Paul, from his conversion at Damascus to his martyrdom in Rome, is the best possible argument against this hypothesis and for the realness of his conversion, as an act of divine grace. "By their fruits ye shall know them." How could such an effective change proceed from an empty dream? Can an illusion change the current of history? By joining the Christian sect Paul sacrificed everything, at last life itself, to the service of Christ. He never wavered in his conviction of the truth as revealed to him, and by his faith in this revelation he has become a benediction to all ages.

The vision-hypothesis denies objective miracles, but ascribes miracles to subjective imaginations, and makes a lie more effective and beneficial than the truth.

All rationalistic and natural interpretations of the conversion of Paul turn out to be irrational and unnatural; the supernatural interpretation of Paul himself, after all, is the most rational and natural.

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REMARKABLE CONCESSIONS

Dr. BAUR, the master-spirit of skeptical criticism and the founder of the "Tübingen School," felt constrained, shortly before his death (1860), to abandon the vision-hypothesis and to admit that "no psychological or dialectical analysis can explore the inner mystery of the act in which God revealed his Son in Paul. In the same connection he says that in, "the sudden transformation of Paul from the most violent adversary of Christianity into its most determined herald" he could see "nothing short of a miracle (*Wunder*);" and adds that "this miracle appears all the greater when we remember that in this revulsion of his consciousness he broke through the barriers of Judaism and rose out of its particularism into the universalism of Christianity."

This frank confession is creditable to the head and heart of the late Tübingen critic, but is fatal to his whole anti-supernaturalistic theory of history. *Si falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*. If we admit the miracle in one case, the door is opened for all other miracles which rest on equally strong evidence.

The late Dr. KEIM, an independent pupil of Baur, admits at least spiritual manifestations of the ascended Christ *from heaven*, and urges in favor of the objective reality of the Christophanies as reported by Paul, 1 Cor. 15:3 sqq., "the whole character of Paul, his sharp understanding which was not weakened by his enthusiasm, the careful, cautious, measured, simple form of his statement, above all the favorable total impression of his narrative and the mighty echo of it in the unanimous, uncontradicted faith of primitive Christendom."

Dr. SCHENKEL, of Heidelberg, in his latest stage of development, says that Paul, with full justice, put his Christophany on a par with the Christophanies of the older apostles; that all these Christophanies are not simply the result of psychological processes, but "remain in many respects psychologically inconceivable," and point back to the historic

background of the person of Jesus; that Paul was not an ordinary visionary, but carefully distinguished the Christophany at Damascus from his later visions; that he retained the full possession of his rational mind even in the moments of the highest exaltation; that his conversion was not the sudden effect of nervous excitement, but brought about by the influence of the divine Providence which quietly prepared his soul for the reception of Christ; and that the appearance of Christ vouchsafed to him was "no dream, but reality."

Professor REUSS, of Strasburg, likewise an independent critic of the liberal school, comes to the same conclusion as Baur, that the conversion of Paul, if not an absolute miracle, is at least an unsolved psychological problem. He says: "*La conversion de Paul, après tout ce qui en a été dit de notre temps, reste toujours, si ce n'est un miracle absolu, dans le sens traditionnel de ce mot (c'est-à-dire un événement qui arrête ou change violemment le cours naturel des choses, un effet sans autre cause que l'intervention arbitraire et immédiate de Dieu), du moins un problème psychologique aujourd'hui insoluble. L'explication dite naturelle, qu'elle fasse intervenir un orage ou qu'elle se retranche dans le domaine des hallucinations ... ne nous donne pas la clef de cette crise elle-même, qui a décidé la métamorphose du pharisien en chrétien.*"

Canon Farrar says (I. 195): "One fact remains upon any hypothesis and that is, that the conversion of St. Paul was in the highest sense of the word a miracle, and one of which the spiritual consequences have affected every subsequent age of the history of mankind."

1.32 The Work of Paul

The conversion of Paul was a great intellectual and moral revolution, yet without destroying his identity. His noble gifts and attainments remained, but were purged of selfish motives, inspired by a new principle, and consecrated to a divine end. The love of

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Christ who saved him, was now his all-absorbing passion, and no sacrifice was too great to manifest his gratitude to Him. The architect of ruin became an architect of the temple of God.

The same vigor, depth and acuteness of mind, but illuminated by the Holy Spirit; the same strong temper and burning zeal, but cleansed, subdued and controlled by wisdom and moderation; the same energy and boldness, but coupled with gentleness and meekness; and, added to all this, as crowning gifts of grace, a love and humility, a tenderness and delicacy of feeling such as are rarely, if ever, found in a character so proud, manly and heroic.

The little Epistle to Philemon reveals a perfect Christian gentleman, a nobleman of nature, doubly ennobled by grace. The thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians could only be conceived by a mind that had ascended on the mystic ladder of faith to the throbbing heart of the God of love; yet without inspiration even Paul could not have penned that seraphic description of the virtue which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopes all things, endures all things, which never fails, but will last for ever the greatest in the triad of celestial graces: faith, hope, love.

Saul converted became at once Paul the missionary. Being saved himself, he made it his life-work to save others. "Straight way" he proclaimed Christ in the synagogues, and confounded the Jews of Damascus, proving that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God. But this was only a preparatory testimony in the fervor of the first love.

The appearance of Christ, and the travails of his soul during the three days and nights of prayer and fasting, when he experienced nothing less than a spiritual death and a spiritual resurrection, had so shaken his physical and mental frame that he felt the need of protracted repose away from the noise and turmoil of the world. Besides there must have been great danger threatening his

life as soon as the astounding news of his conversion became known at Jerusalem.

He therefore went to the desert of Arabia and spent there three years, not in missionary labor (as Chrysostom thought), but chiefly in prayer, meditation and the study of the Hebrew Scriptures in the light of their fulfillment through the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. This retreat took the place of the three years' preparation of the Twelve in the school of Christ. Possibly he may have gone as far as Mount Sinai, among the wild children of Hagar and Ishmael.

On that pulpit of the great lawgiver of Israel, and in view of the surrounding panorama of death and desolation which reflects the terrible majesty of Jehovah, as no other spot on earth, he could listen with Elijah to the thunder and earthquake, and the still small voice, and could study the contrast between the killing letter and the life-giving spirit, between the ministration of death and the ministration of righteousness. The desert, like the ocean, has its grandeur and sublimity, and leaves the meditating mind alone with God and eternity.

"Paul was a unique man for a unique task." His task was twofold: practical and theoretical. He preached the gospel of free and universal grace from Damascus to Rome, and secured its triumph in the Roman empire, which means the civilized world of that age. At the same time he built up the church from within by the exposition and defense of the gospel in his Epistles. He descended to the humblest details of ecclesiastical administration and discipline, and mounted to the heights of theological speculation. Here we have only to do with his missionary activity; leaving his theoretical work to be considered in another chapter.

Let us first glance at his missionary spirit and policy.

His inspiring motive was love to Christ and to his fellow-men. "The love of Christ," he says, "constrains us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died: and He

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died for all that they who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." He regarded himself as a bondman and ambassador of Christ, entreating men to be reconciled to God. Animated by this spirit, he became "as a Jew to the Jews, as a Gentile to the Gentiles, all things to all men that by all means he might save some."

He made Antioch, the capital of Syria and the mother church of Gentile Christendom, his point of departure for, and return from, his missionary journeys, and at the same time he kept up his connection with Jerusalem, the mother church of Jewish Christendom. Although an independent apostle of Christ, he accepted a solemn commission from Antioch for his first great missionary tour. He followed the current of history, commerce, and civilization, from East to West, from Asia to Europe, from Syria to Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and perhaps as far as Spain. In the larger and more influential cities, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, he resided a considerable time. From these salient points he sent the gospel by his pupils and fellow-laborers into the surrounding towns and villages. But he always avoided collision with other apostles, and sought new fields of labor where Christ was not known before, that he might not build on any other man's foundation. This is true independence and missionary courtesy, which is so often, alas! violated by missionary societies inspired by sectarian rather than Christian zeal.

His chief mission was to the Gentiles, without excluding the Jews, according to the message of Christ delivered through Ananias: "Thou shalt bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

Considering that the Jews had a prior claim in time to the gospel, and that the synagogues in heathen cities were pioneer stations for Christian missions, he very naturally addressed himself first to the Jews and proselytes, taking up the regular lessons of the Old Testament Scriptures, and

demonstrating their fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. But almost uniformly he found the half-Jews, or "proselytes of the gate," more open to the gospel than his own brethren; they were honest and earnest seekers of the true religion, and formed the natural bridge to the pure heathen, and the nucleus of his congregations, which were generally composed of converts from both religions.

In noble self-denial he earned his subsistence with his own hands, as a tent-maker, that he might not be burthensome to his congregations (mostly belonging to the lower classes), that he might preserve his independence, stop the mouths of his enemies, and testify his gratitude to the infinite mercy of the Lord, who had called him from his headlong, fanatical career of persecution to the office of an apostle of free grace. He never collected money for himself, but for the poor Jewish Christians in Palestine. Only as an exception did he receive gifts from his converts at Philippi, who were peculiarly dear to him. Yet he repeatedly enjoins upon the churches to care for the liberal temporal support of their teachers who break to them the bread of eternal life. The Saviour of the world a carpenter! the greatest preacher of the gospel a tent-maker! Of the innumerable difficulties, dangers, and sufferings which he encountered with Jews, heathens, and false brethren, we can hardly form an adequate idea; for the book of Acts is only a summary record. He supplements it incidentally.

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Three times was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, three times I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren: in labor and toil, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold

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and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presses upon me daily, the anxious care for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?"

Thus he wrote reluctantly to the Corinthians, in self-vindication against his calumniators, in the year 57, before his longest and hardest trial in the prisons of Caesarea and Rome, and at least seven years before his martyrdom. He was "pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not in despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed." His whole public career was a continuous warfare. He represents the church militant, or "marching and conquering Christianity." He was "*unus versus mundum*," in a far higher sense than this has been said of Athanasius the Great when confronted with the Arian heresy and the imperial heathenism of Julian the Apostate.

Yet he was never unhappy, but full of joy and peace. He exhorted the Philippians from his prison in Rome: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." In all his conflicts with foes from without and foes from within Paul was "more than conqueror" through the grace of God which was sufficient for him.

"For I am persuaded," he writes to the Romans in the strain of a sublime ode of triumph, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And his dying word is an assurance of victory: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved his appearing."

1.33 Paul's Missionary Labors

The public life of Paul, from the third year after his conversion to his martyrdom, A.D.

40-64, embraces a quarter of a century, three great missionary campaigns with minor expeditions, five visits to Jerusalem, and at least four years of captivity in Caesarea and Rome. Some extend it to A.D. 67 or 68. It may be divided into five or six periods, as follows:

1. **A.D. 40-44.** The period of preparatory labors in Syria and his native Cilicia, partly alone, partly in connection with Barnabas, his senior fellow-apostle among the Gentiles.

On his return from the Arabian retreat Paul began his public ministry in earnest at Damascus, preaching Christ on the very spot where he had been converted and called. His testimony enraged the Jews, who stirred up the deputy of the king of Arabia against him, but he was saved for future usefulness and let down by the brethren in a basket through a window in the wall of the city.

Three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of Peter and spent a fortnight with him. Besides him he saw James the brother of the Lord. Barnabas introduced him to the disciples, who at first were afraid of him, but when they heard of his marvelous conversion they "glorified God" that their persecutor was now preaching the faith he had once been laboring to destroy. He did not come to learn the gospel, having received it already by revelation, nor to be confirmed or ordained, having been called "not from men, or through man, but through Jesus Christ."

Yet his interview with Peter and James, though barely mentioned, must have been fraught with the deepest interest. Peter, kind-hearted and generous as he was, would naturally receive him with joy and thanksgiving. He had himself once denied the Lord—not malignantly but from weakness—as Paul had persecuted the disciples—ignorantly in unbelief. Both had been mercifully pardoned, both had seen the Lord, both were called to the highest dignity, both could say from the bottom of the heart: "Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." No doubt they would exchange

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their experiences and confirm each other in their common faith.

It was probably on this visit that Paul received in a vision in the temple the express command of the Lord to go quickly unto the Gentiles. Had he stayed longer at the seat of the Sanhedrin, he would undoubtedly have met the fate of the martyr Stephen.

He visited Jerusalem a second time during the famine under Claudius, in the year 44, accompanied by Barnabas, on a benevolent mission, bearing a collection of the Christians at Antioch for the relief of the brethren in Judaea. On that occasion he probably saw none of the apostles on account of the persecution in which James was beheaded, and Peter imprisoned.

The greater part of these four years was spent in missionary work at Tarsus and Antioch.

2. A.D. 45–50. First missionary journey. In the year 45 Paul entered upon the first great missionary journey, in company with Barnabas and Mark, by the direction of the Holy Spirit through the prophets of the congregation at Antioch. He traversed the island of Cyprus and several provinces of Asia Minor. The conversion of the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, at Paphos; the rebuke and punishment of the Jewish sorcerer, Elymas; the marked success of the gospel in Pisidia, and the bitter opposition of the unbelieving Jews; the miraculous healing of a cripple at Lystra; the idolatrous worship there offered to Paul and Barnabas by the superstitious heathen, and its sudden change into hatred against them as enemies of the gods; the stoning of the missionaries, their escape from death, and their successful return to Antioch, are the leading incidents of this tour, which is fully described in Acts 13 and 14.

This period closes with the important apostolic conference at Jerusalem, A.D. 50, which will require separate consideration in the next section.

3. From A.D. 51–54. Second missionary journey. After the council at Jerusalem and

the temporary adjustment of the difference between the Jewish and Gentile branches of the church, Paul undertook, in the year 51, a second great journey, which decided the Christianization of Greece. He took Silas for his companion. Having first visited his old churches, he proceeded, with the help of Silas and the young convert, Timothy, to establish new ones through the provinces of Phrygia and Galatia, where, notwithstanding his bodily infirmity, he was received with open arms like an angel of God.

From Troas, a few miles south of the Homeric Troy and the entrance to the Hellespont, he crossed over to Greece in answer to the Macedonian cry: "Come over and help us!" He preached the gospel with great success, first in Philippi, where he converted the purple dealer, Lydia, and the jailor, and was imprisoned with Silas, but miraculously delivered and honorably released; then in Thessalonica, where he was persecuted by the Jews, but left a flourishing church; in Berea, where the converts showed exemplary zeal in searching the Scriptures.

In Athens, the metropolis of classical literature, he reasoned with Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, and unveiled to them on Mars' Hill (Areopagus), with consummate tact and wisdom, though without much immediate success, the "unknown God," to whom the Athenians, in their superstitious anxiety to do justice to all possible divinities, had unconsciously erected an altar, and Jesus Christ, through whom God will judge the world in righteousness. In Corinth, the commercial bridge between the East and the West, a flourishing centre of wealth and culture, but also a sink of vice and corruption, the apostle spent eighteen months, and under almost insurmountable difficulties he built up a church, which exhibited all the virtues and all the faults of the Grecian character under the influence of the gospel, and which he honored with two of his most important Epistles.

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In the spring of 54 he returned by way of Ephesus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem to Antioch.

During this period he composed the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, which are the earliest of his literary remains excepting his missionary addresses preserved in the Acts.

4. A.D. 54–58. Third missionary tour.

Towards the close of the year 54 Paul went to Ephesus, and in this renowned capital of proconsular Asia and of the worship of Diana, he fixed for three years the centre of his missionary work. He then revisited his churches in Macedonia and Achaia, and remained three months more in Corinth and the vicinity.

During this period he wrote the great doctrinal Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans, which mark the height of his activity and usefulness.

5. A.D. 58–63. The period of his two imprisonments, with the intervening winter voyage from Caesarea to Rome. In the spring of 58 he journeyed, for the fifth and last time, to Jerusalem, by way of Philippi, Troas, Miletus (where he delivered his affecting valedictory to the Ephesian presbyter-bishops), Tyre, and Caesarea, to carry again to the poor brethren in Judaea a contribution from the Christians of Greece, and by this token of gratitude and love to cement the two branches of the apostolic church more firmly together.

But some fanatical Jews, who bitterly bated him as an apostate and a seducer of the people, raised an uproar against him at Pentecost; charged him with profaning the temple, because he had taken into it an uncircumcised Greek, Trophimus; dragged him out of the sanctuary, lest they should defile it with blood, and would undoubtedly have killed him had not Claudius Lysias, the Roman tribune, who lived near by, come promptly with his soldiers to the spot. This officer rescued Paul, out of respect for his Roman citizenship, from the fury of the mob, set him the next day before the Sanhedrin, and after a tumultuous and fruitless session

of the council, and the discovery of a plot against his life, sent him, with a strong military guard and a certificate of innocence, to the procurator Felix in Caesarea.

Here the apostle was confined two whole years (58–60), awaiting his trial before the Sanhedrin, uncondemned, occasionally speaking before Felix, apparently treated with comparative mildness, visited by the Christians, and in some way not known to us promoting the kingdom of God.

After the accession of the new and better procurator, Festus, who is known to have succeeded Felix in the year 60, Paul, as a Roman citizen, appealed to the tribunal of Caesar and thus opened the way to the fulfillment of his long-cherished desire to preach the Saviour of the world in the metropolis of the world. Having once more testified his innocence, and spoken for Christ in a masterly defense before Festus, King Herod Agrippa II. (the last of the Herods), his sister Bernice, and the most distinguished men of Caesarea, he was sent in the autumn of the year 60 to the emperor.

He had a stormy voyage and suffered shipwreck, which detained him over winter at Malta. The voyage is described with singular minuteness and nautical accuracy by Luke as an eye-witness. In the month of March of the year 61, the apostle, with a few faithful companions, reached Rome, a prisoner of Christ, and yet freer and mightier than the emperor on the throne. It was the seventh year of Nero's reign, when he had already shown his infamous character by the murder of Agrippina, his mother, in the previous year, and other acts of cruelty.

In Rome Paul spent at least two years till the spring of 63, in easy confinement, awaiting the decision of his case, and surrounded by friends and fellow-laborers "in his own hired dwelling." He preached the gospel to the soldiers of the imperial body-guard, who attended him; sent letters and messages to his distant churches in Asia Minor and Greece; watched over all their spiritual

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affairs, and completed in bonds his apostolic fidelity to the Lord and his church.

In the Roman prison he wrote the Epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon.

6. A.D. 63 and 64. With the second year of Paul's imprisonment in Rome the account of Luke breaks off, rather abruptly, yet appropriately and grandly. Paul's arrival in Rome secured the triumph of Christianity. In this sense it was true, "*Roma locuta est, causa finita est.*" And he who spoke at Rome is not dead; he is still "preaching (everywhere) the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all boldness, none forbidding him."

But what became of him after the termination of those two years in the spring of 63? What was the result of the trial so long delayed? Was he condemned to death? or was he released by Nero's tribunal, and thus permitted to labor for another season? This question is still unsettled among scholars. A vague tradition says that Paul was acquitted of the charge of the Sanhedrin, and after travelling again in the East, perhaps also into Spain, was a second time imprisoned in Rome and condemned to death.

The assumption of a second Roman captivity relieves certain difficulties in the Pastoral Epistles; for they seem to require a short period of freedom between the first and a second Roman captivity, and a visit to the East, which is not recorded in the Acts, but which the apostle contemplated in case of his release. A visit to Spain, which he intended, is possible, though less probable.² If he was set at liberty, it must have been before the terrible persecution in July, 64, which would not have spared the great leader of the Christian sect. It is a remarkable coincidence that just about the close of the second year of Paul's confinement, the celebrated Jewish historian, Josephus, then in his 27th year, came to Rome (after a tempestuous voyage and shipwreck), and effected through the influence of Poppaea (the wife of Nero and a

half proselyte of Judaism) the release of certain Jewish priests who had been sent to Rome by Felix as prisoners. It is not impossible that Paul may have reaped the benefit of a general release of Jewish prisoners.

The martyrdom of Paul under Nero is established by the unanimous testimony of antiquity. As a Roman citizen, he was not crucified, like Peter, but put to death by the sword. The scene of his martyrdom is laid by tradition about three miles from Rome, near the Ostian way, on a green spot, formerly called *Aquae Salviae*, afterwards *Tre Fontane*, from the three fountains which are said to have miraculously gushed forth from the blood of the apostolic martyr. His relics were ultimately removed to the basilica of San Paolo-fuori-le-Mura, built by Theodosius and Valentinian in 388, and recently reconstructed. He lies outside of Rome, Peter inside. His memory is celebrated, together with that of Peter, on the 29th and 30th of June. As to the year of his death, the views vary from A.D. 64 to 69.

The difference of the place and manner of his martyrdom suggests that he was condemned by a regular judicial trial, either shortly before, or more probably a year or two after the horrible wholesale massacre of Christians on the Vatican hill, in which his Roman citizenship would not have been regarded. If he was released in the spring of 63, he had a year and a half for another visit to the East and to Spain before the outbreak of the Neronian persecution (after July, 64); but tradition favors a later date. Prudentius separates the martyrdom of Peter from that of Paul by one year. After that persecution the Christians were everywhere exposed to danger.

Assuming the release of Paul and another visit to the East, we must locate the First Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus between the first and second Roman captivity, and the Second Epistle to Timothy in the second captivity. The last was evidently

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written in the certain view of approaching martyrdom; it is the affectionate farewell of the aged apostle to his beloved Timothy, and his last will and testament to the militant church below in the bright prospect of the unfading crown in the church triumphant above.

Thus ended the earthly course of this great teacher of nations, this apostle of victorious faith, of evangelical freedom, of Christian progress. It was the heroic career of a spiritual conqueror of immortal souls for Christ, converting them from the service of sin and Satan to the service of the living God, from the bondage of the law to the freedom of the gospel, and leading them to the fountain of life eternal.

He labored more abundantly than all the other apostles; and yet, in sincere humility, he considered himself "the least of the apostles," and "not meet to be called an apostle," because he persecuted the church of God; a few years later he confessed: "I am less than the least of all saints," and shortly before his death: "I am the chief of sinners." His humility grew as he experienced God's mercy and ripened for heaven. Paul passed a stranger and pilgrim through this world, hardly observed by the mighty and the wise of his age. And yet how infinitely more noble, beneficial, and enduring was his life and work than the dazzling march of military conquerors, who, prompted by ambitions absorbed millions of treasure and myriads of lives, only to die at last in a drunken fit at Babylon, or of a broken heart on the rocks of St. Helena! Their empires have long since crumbled into dust, but St. Paul still remains one of the foremost benefactors of the human race, and the pulses of his mighty heart are beating with stronger force than ever throughout the Christian world.

NOTE ON THE SECOND ROMAN CAPTIVITY OF PAUL

The question of a second Roman captivity of Paul is a purely historical and critical problem, and has no doctrinal or ethical

bearing, except that it facilitates the defense of the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles. The best scholars are still divided on the subject. Neander, Gieseler, Bleek, Ewald, Lange, Sabatier, Godet, also Renan (*Saint Paul*, p. 560, and *L'Antechrist*, p. 106), and nearly all English biographers and commentators, as Alford, Wordsworth, Howson, Lewin, Farrar, Plumptre, Ellicott, Lightfoot, defend the second captivity, and thus prolong the labors of Paul for a few years.

On the other hand not only radical and skeptical critics, as Baur, Zeller, Schenkel, Reuss, Holtzmann, and all who reject the Pastoral Epistles (except Renan), but also conservative exegetes and historians, as Niedner, Thiersch, Meyer, Wieseler, Ebrard, Otto, Beck, Pressensé, deny the second captivity. I have discussed the problem at length in my *Hist. of the Apost. Church*, § 87, pp. 328–347, and spin in my annotations to Lange on *Romans*, pp. 10–12. I will restate the chief arguments in favor of a second captivity, partly in rectification of my former opinion.

1. The main argument are the Pastoral Epistles, if genuine, as I hold them to be, notwithstanding all the objections of the opponents from De Wette (1826) and Baur (1835) to Renan (1873) and Holtzmann (1880). It is, indeed, not impossible to assign them to any known period in Paul's life *before* his captivity, as during his three years' sojourn in Ephesus (54–57), or his eighteen months' sojourn in Corinth (52–53), but it is very difficult to do so. The Epistles presuppose journeys of the apostle not mentioned in Acts, and belong apparently to an advanced period in his life, as well as in the history of truth and error in the apostolic church.

2. The release of Timothy from a captivity in Italy, probably in Rome, to which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (13:23) alludes, may have some connection with the release of Paul, who had probably a share in the inspiration, if not in the composition, of that remarkable production.

3. The oldest post-apostolic witness is Clement of Rome, who wrote about 95: "Paul ... *having come to the limit of the West* (ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθων) and borne witness before the magistrates (μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, which others translate, "having suffered martyrdom under the rulers"), departed from the world and went to the holy place, having furnished the sublimest model of endurance" (*Ad Corinth.* c. 5). Considering that Clement wrote in Rome, the most natural interpretation of τέρμα τῆς δύσεως, "the extreme west," is Spain or Britain; and as Paul *intended* to carry the gospel to Spain, one would first think of that country, which was in constant commercial intercourse with Rome, and had produced distinguished statesmen and writers like Seneca and Lucan. Strabo (II. 1) calls the pillars of Hercules πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης; and Velleius Paterc. calls Spain "*extremus nostri orbis terminus.*" See Lightfoot, *St. Clement*, p. 50.

The inference is weakened by the absence of any trace or tradition of Paul's visit to Spain. Still less can he have suffered martyrdom there, as the logical order of the words would imply. And as Clement wrote to the Corinthians, he *may*, from *their* geographical standpoint, have called the Roman capital the end of the West. At all events the passage is rhetorical (it speaks of *seven* imprisonments, ἐπτὰκις δεσμὰ φορέσας), and proves nothing for further labors in the East.

4. An incomplete passage in the fragmentary Muratorian canon (about A.D. 170): "*Sed profectionem Pauli ab urbe ad Spaniam proficiscentis ...*" seems to imply a journey of Paul to Spain, which Luke has omitted; but this is merely a conjecture, as the verb has to be supplied. Comp., however, Westcott, *The Canon of the N. Test.*, p. 189, and Append. C., p. 467, and Renan, *L'Antechrist*, p. 106 sq.

5. Eusebius (d. 310) first clearly asserts that "there is a tradition (λόγος ἔχει) that the apostle, after his defence, again set forth to the ministry of his preaching and having entered a second time the same city [Rome],

was perfected by his martyrdom before him [Nero]." *Hist. Eccl.* II. 22 (comp. ch. 25). But the force of this testimony is weakened first by its late date; secondly, by the vague expression λόγος ἔχει, "it is said," and the absence of any reference to older authorities (usually quoted by Eusebius); thirdly, by his misunderstanding of 2 Tim. 4:16, 17, which he explains in the same connection of a deliverance from the first imprisonment (as if ἀπολογία were identical with αἰχμαλωσία); and lastly by his chronological mistake as to the time of the first imprisonment which, in his "*Chronicle*," he misdates A.D. 58, that is, three years before the actual arrival of Paul in Rome. On the other hand he puts the conflagration of Rome two years too late, A.D. 66, instead of 64, and the Neronian persecution, and the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, in the year 70.

6. Jerome (d. 419): "Paul was dismissed by Nero that he might preach Christ's gospel also in the regions of the West (*in Occidentis quoque partibus*). *De Vir. ill. sub Paulus*. This echoes the τέρμα τῆς δύσεως of Clement. Chrysostom (d. 407), Theodoret, and other fathers assert that Paul went to Spain (Rom. 15:28), but without adducing any proof.

These post-apostolic testimonies, taken together, make it very probable, but not historically certain, that Paul was released after the spring of 63, and enjoyed an Indian summer of missionary work before his Martyrdom. The only remaining monuments, as well as the best proof, of this concluding work are the Pastoral Epistles, if we admit them to be genuine. To my mind the historical difficulties of the Pastoral Epistles are an argument for rather than against their Pauline origin. For why should a forger invent difficulties when he might so easily have fitted his fictions in the frame of the situation known from the Acts and the other Pauline Epistles? The linguistic and other objections are by no means insurmountable, and are overborne by the evidence of the Pauline spirit which animates these last productions of his pen.

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1.34. The Synod of Jerusalem, and the Compromise between Jewish and Gentile Christianity

LITERATURE.

I. Acts 15, and Gal. 2, and the Commentaries thereon.

II. Besides the general literature already noticed (in §§ 20 and 29), compare the following special discussions on the Conference of the Apostles, which tend to rectify the extreme view of Baur (*Paulus*, ch. V.) and Overbeck (*in the fourth edition of De Wette's Com. on Acts*) on the conflict between Acts 15 and Gal. 2, or between Petrinism and Paulinism, and to establish the true historic view of their essential unity in diversity.

Bishop LIGHTFOOT: *St. Paul and the Three, in Com. on Galat.*, London, 1866 (second ed.), pp. 283–355. The ablest critical discussion of the problem in the English language.

R. A. LIPSIUS: *Apostelconvent, in Schenkel's Bibel-Lexikon, I. (1869), pp. 194–207. A clear and sharp statement of eight apparent contradictions between Acts 15 and Gal. 2. He admits, however, some elements of truth in the account of Acts, which he uses to supplement the account of Paul. Schenkel, in his Christusbild der Apostel, 1879, p. 38, goes further, and says, in opposition to Overbeck, who regards the account of Acts as a Tendenz-Roman, or partisan fiction: "The narrative of Paul is certainly trustworthy, but one-sided, which was unavoidable, considering his personal apologetic aim, and passes by in silence what is foreign to that aim. The narrative of Acts follows oral and written traditions which were already influenced by later views and prejudices, and it is for this reason unreliable in part, yet by no means a conscious fiction."*

OTTO PFLEIDERER: *Der Paulinismus*. Leipzig, 1873, pp. 278 sqq. and 500 sqq. He tones down the differences to innocent inaccuracies of the Acts, and rejects the idea of "intentional invention."

C. WEIZSÄCKER (successor of Dr. Baur in Tübingen, but partly dissenting from him): *Das Apostelconcil in the "Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie" for 1873, pp. 191–246. And his essay on Paulus und die Gemeinde in Korinth, ibid., 1876, pp. 603–653. In the last article he concludes (p. 652) that the real opponents of Paul, in Corinth as well as in Galatia, were not the primitive apostles (as asserted by Baur, Schwegler, etc.), but a set of fanatics who*

abused the authority of Peter and the name of Christ, and imitated the agitation of Jewish proselytizers, as described by Roman writers.

K. SCHMIDT: *Der Apostel-Konvent, in Herzog and Plitt, R. E. I. (1877), 575–584. Conservative.*

THEOD. KEIM: *Aus dem Urchristenthum. Zürich, 1879, Der Apostelkonvent, pp. 64–89. (Comp. Hilgenfeld's review in the "Zeitschrift für wissenschaftl. Theologie," 1879, pp. 100f sqq.) One of the last efforts of the author of the Leben Jesu von Nazara. Keim goes a step further than Weizsäcker, strongly maintains the public as well as the private character of the apostolic agreement, and admits the circumcision of Timothy as a fact. He also entirely rejects the view of Baur, Weizsäcker, and Overbeck that the author of Acts derived his information from the Ep. to the Galatians, and perverted it for his irenic purpose.*

F. W. FARRAR: *The Life and Work of Paul* (Lond., 1879), chs. XXII.–XXIII. (I. 398–454).

WILIBALD GRIMM: *Der Apostelconvent, in the "Theol. Studien und Kritiken" (Gotha), for 1880, pp. 405–432. A critical discussion in the right direction. The exegetical essay of WETZEL on Gal. 2:14, 21, in the same periodical, pp. 433 sqq., bears in part on the same subject.*

F. GODET: *Com. on the Ep. to the Romans*, vol. I. (1879), pp. 3742, English translation. Able and sound.

KARL WIESELER: *Zur Gesch. der N. T. lichen Schrift und des Urchristenthums*. Leipzig, 1880, pp. 1–53, on the Corinthian parties and their relation to the errorists in the Galatians and the Nicolaitans in the Apocalypse. Learned, acute, and conservative.

Comp. above § 22, pp. 213 sqq.; my *Hist. of the Apost. Church*, §§ 67–70, pp. 245–260; and *Excursus on the Controversy between Peter and Paul, in my Com. on the Galat. 2:11–14.*

The question of circumcision, or of the terms of admission of the Gentiles to the Christian church, was a burning question of the apostolic age. It involved the wider question of the binding authority of the Mosaic law, yea, the whole relation of Christianity to Judaism. For circumcision was in the synagogue what baptism is in the church, a divinely appointed sign and seal of the covenant of man with God, with all its privileges and responsibilities, and bound the circumcised person to obey the whole law on

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pain of forfeiting the blessing promised. Upon the decision of this question depended the peace of the church within, and the success of the gospel without.

With circumcision, as a necessary condition of church membership, Christianity would forever have been confined to the Jewish race with a small minority of proselytes of the gate, or half-Christians; while the abrogation of circumcision and the declaration of the supremacy and sufficiency of faith in Christ ensured the conversion of the heathen and the catholicity of Christianity. The progress of Paul's mission among the Gentiles forced the question to a solution and resulted in a grand act of emancipation, yet not without great struggle and temporary reactions.

All the Christians of the first generation were converts from Judaism or heathenism. It could not be expected that they should suddenly lose the influence of opposite kinds of religious training and blend at once in unity. Hence the difference between Jewish and Gentile Christianity throughout the apostolic age, more or less visible in all departments of ecclesiastical life, in missions, doctrine, worship, and government.

At the head of the one division stood Peter, the apostle of the circumcision; at the head of the other, Paul, to whom was entrusted the apostleship of the uncircumcision. In another form the same difference even yet appears between the different branches of Christendom. The Catholic church is Jewish-Christian or Petrine in its character; the Evangelical church is Gentile or Pauline. And the individual members of these bodies lean to one or the other of these leading types.

Wherever there is life and motion in a denomination or sect, there will be at least two tendencies of thought and action—whether they be called old and new school, or high church and low church, or by any other party name. In like manner there is no free government without parties. It is only stagnant waters that never run and overflow, and corpses that never move.

The relation between these two fundamental forms of apostolic Christianity is in general that of authority and freedom, law and gospel, the conservative and the progressive, the objective and the subjective. These antithetic elements are not of necessity mutually exclusive. They are complementary, and for perfect life they must co-exist and co-operate. But in reality they often run to extremes, and then of course fall into irreconcilable contradiction. Exclusive Jewish Christianity sinks into Ebionism; exclusive Gentile Christianity into Gnosticism. And these heresies were by no means confined to the apostolic and post-apostolic ages; pseudo-Petrine and pseudo-Pauline errors, in ever-varying phases, run more or less throughout the whole history of the church.

The Jewish converts at first very naturally adhered as closely as possible to the sacred traditions of their fathers. They could not believe that the religion of the Old Testament, revealed by God himself, should pass away. They indeed regarded Jesus as the Saviour of Gentiles as well as Jews; but they thought Judaism the necessary introduction to Christianity, circumcision and the observance of the whole Mosaic law the sole condition of an interest in the Messianic salvation. And, offensive as Judaism was, rather than attractive, to the heathen, this principle would have utterly precluded the conversion of the mass of the Gentile world. The apostles themselves were at first trammelled by this Judaistic prejudice, till taught better by the special revelation to Peter before the conversion of Cornelius.²

But even after the baptism of the uncircumcised centurion, and Peter's defence of it before the church of Jerusalem, the old leaven still wrought in some Jewish Christians who had formerly belonged to the rigid and exclusive sect of the Pharisees. They came from Judaea to Antioch, and taught the converts of Paul and Barnabas: "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

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They no doubt appealed to the Pentateuch, the universal Jewish tradition, the circumcision of Christ, and the practice of the Jewish apostles, and created a serious disturbance. These ex-Pharisees were the same whom Paul, in the heat of controversy, more severely calls "false brethren insidiously or stealthily foisted in," who intruded themselves into the Christian brotherhood as spies and enemies of Christian liberty. He clearly distinguishes them not only from the apostles, but also from the great majority of the brethren in Judaea who sincerely rejoiced in his conversion and glorified God for it.

They were a small, but very active and zealous minority, and full of intrigue. They compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. They were baptized with water, but not with the Holy Spirit. They were Christians in name, but narrow-minded and narrow-hearted Jews in fact. They were scrupulous, pedantic, slavish formalists, ritualists, and traditionalists of the malignant type. Circumcision of the flesh was to them of more importance than circumcision of the heart, or at all events an indispensable condition of salvation.

Such men could, of course, not understand and appreciate Paul, but hated and feared him as a dangerous radical and rebel. Envy and jealousy mixed with their religious prejudice. They got alarmed at the rapid progress of the gospel among the unclean Gentiles who threatened to soil the purity of the church. They could not close their eyes to the fact that the power was fast passing from Jerusalem to Antioch, and from the Jews to the Gentiles, but instead of yielding to the course of Providence, they determined to resist it in the name of order and orthodoxy, and to keep the regulation of missionary operations and the settlement of the terms of church membership in their own hands at Jerusalem, the holy centre of Christendom and the expected residence of the Messiah on his return.

Whoever has studied the twenty-third chapter of Matthew and the pages of church history, and knows human nature, will understand perfectly this class of extra-pious and extra-orthodox fanatics, whose race is not dead yet and not likely to die out. They serve, however, the good purpose of involuntarily promoting the cause of evangelical liberty.

The agitation of these Judaizing partisans and zealots brought the Christian church, twenty years after its founding, to the brink of a split which would have seriously impeded its progress and endangered its final success.

THE CONFERENCES IN JERUSALEM

To avert this calamity and to settle this irrepressible conflict, the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch resolved to hold a private and a public conference at Jerusalem. Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas as commissioners to represent the Gentile converts.

Paul, fully aware of the gravity of the crisis, obeyed at the same time an inner and higher impulse. He also took with him Titus, a native Greek, as a living specimen of what the Spirit of God could accomplish without circumcision. The conference was held A.D. 50 or 51 (fourteen years after Paul's conversion). It was the first and in some respects the most important council or synod held in the history of Christendom, though differing widely from the councils of later times. It is placed in the middle of the book of Acts as the connecting link between the two sections of the apostolic church and the two epochs of its missionary history.

The object of the Jerusalem consultation was twofold: first, to settle the personal relation between the Jewish and Gentile apostles, and to divide their field of labor; secondly, to decide the question of circumcision, and to define the relation between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. On the first point (as we learn from Paul) it effected a complete and final, on the second point (as we learn from Luke) a partial and temporary settlement. In

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the nature of the case the public conference in which the whole church took part, was preceded and accompanied by private consultations of the apostles.

1. Apostolic Recognition. The pillars of the Jewish Church, James, Peter, and John—whatever their views may have been before—were fully convinced by the logic of events in which they recognized the hand of Providence that Paul as well as Barnabas by the extraordinary success of his labors had proven himself to be divinely called to the apostolate of the Gentiles. They took no exception and made no addition to his gospel. On the contrary, when they saw that God who gave grace and strength to Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision, gave grace and strength to Paul also for the conversion of the uncircumcision, they extended to him and to Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, with the understanding that they would divide as far as practicable the large field of labor, and that Paul should manifest his brotherly love and cement the union by aiding in the support of the poor, often persecuted and famine-stricken brethren of Judaea.

This service of charity he had cheerfully done before, and as cheerfully and faithfully did afterward by raising collections among his Greek congregations and carrying the money in person to Jerusalem. Such is the unequivocal testimony of the fraternal understanding among the apostles from the mouth of Paul himself. And the letter of the council officially recognizes this by mentioning “beloved” Barnabas² and Paul, as “men who have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This double testimony of the unity of the apostolic church is quite conclusive against the modern invention of an irreconcilable antagonism between Paul and Peter.

2. As regards the **question of circumcision** and the status of the Gentile Christians, there was a sharp conflict of opinions in open debate, under the very shadow of the inspired apostles. There was strong conviction and

feeling on both sides, plausible arguments were urged, charges and countercharges made, invidious inferences drawn, fatal consequences threatened. But the Holy Spirit was also present, as he is with every meeting of disciples who come together in the name of Christ, and overruled the infirmities of human nature which will crop out in every ecclesiastical assembly.

The circumcision of Titus, as a test case, was of course strongly demanded by the Pharisaical legalists, but as strongly resisted by Paul, and not enforced. To yield here even for a moment would have been fatal to the cause of Christian liberty, and would have implied a wholesale circumcision of the Gentile converts, which was impossible.

But how could Paul consistently afterwards circumcise Timothy? The answer is that he circumcised Timothy as a Jew, not as a Gentile, and that he did it as a voluntary act of expediency, for the purpose of making Timothy more useful among the Jews, who had a claim on him as the son of a Jewish mother, and would not have allowed him to teach in a synagogue without this token of membership; while in the case of Titus, a pure Greek, circumcision was demanded as a principle and as a condition of justification and salvation. Paul was inflexible in resisting the demands of false brethren, but always willing to accommodate himself to weak brethren, and to become as a Jew to the Jews and as a Gentile to the Gentiles in order to save them both. In genuine Christian freedom he cared nothing for circumcision or uncircumcision as a mere rite or external condition, and as compared with the keeping of the commandments of God and the new creature in Christ.²

In the debate Peter, of course, as the ecumenical chief of the Jewish apostles, although at that time no more a resident of Jerusalem, took a leading part, and made a noble speech which accords entirely with his previous experience and practice in the house of Cornelius, and with his subsequent

endorsement of Paul’s doctrine. He was no logician, no rabbinical scholar, but he had admirable good sense and practical tact, and quickly perceived the true line of progress and duty. He spoke in a tone of personal and moral authority, but not of official primacy.⁴ He protested against imposing upon the neck of the Gentile disciples the unbearable yoke of the ceremonial law, and laid down, as clearly as Paul, the fundamental principle that “Jews as well as Gentiles are saved only by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

After this bold speech, which created a profound silence in the assembly, Barnabas and Paul reported, as the best practical argument, the signal miracles which God had wrought among the Gentiles through their instrumentality.

The last and weightiest speaker was James, the brother of the Lord, the local head of the Jewish Christian church and bishop of Jerusalem, who as such seems to have presided over the council. He represented as it were the extreme right wing of the Jewish church bordering close on the Judaizing faction. It was through his influence chiefly no doubt that the Pharisees were converted who created this disturbance.

In a very characteristic speech he endorsed the sentiments of Symeon—he preferred to call Peter by his Jewish name—concerning the conversion of the Gentiles as being in accordance with ancient prophecy and divine fore-ordination; but he proposed a compromise to the effect that while the Gentile disciples should not be troubled with circumcision, they should yet be exhorted to abstain from certain practices which were particularly offensive to pious Jews, namely, from eating meat offered to idols, from tasting blood, or food of strangled animals, and from every form of carnal uncleanness. As to the Jewish Christians, they knew their duty from the law, and would be expected to continue in their time-honored habits.

The address of James differs considerably from that of Peter, and meant restriction as

well as freedom, but after all it conceded the main point at issue—salvation without circumcision. The address entirely accords in spirit and language with his own epistle, which represents the gospel as law, though “the perfect law of freedom,” with his later conduct toward Paul in advising him to assume the vow of the Nazarites and thus to contradict the prejudices of the myriads of converted Jews, and with the Jewish Christian tradition which represents him as the model of an ascetic saint equally revered by devout Jews and Christians, as the “Rampart of the People” (Obliam), and the intercessor of Israel who prayed in the temple without ceasing for its conversion and for the aversion of the impending doom.

He had more the spirit of an ancient prophet or of John the Baptist than the spirit of Jesus (in whom he did not believe till after the resurrection), but for this very reason he had most authority over the Jewish Christians, and could reconcile the majority of them to the progressive spirit of Paul.

The compromise of James was adopted and embodied in the following brief and fraternal pastoral letter to the Gentile churches. It is the oldest literary document of the apostolic age and bears the marks of the style of James: “The apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard, that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, to whom we gave no commandment, it seemed good unto us, having come to be of one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from meats sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from

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things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Farewell.”

The decree was delivered by four special messengers, two representing the church at Antioch, Barnabas and Paul, and two from Jerusalem, Judas Barsabbas and Silas (or Silvanus), and read to the Syrian and Cilician churches which were agitated by the controversy. The restrictions remained in full force at least eight years, since James reminded Paul of them on his last visit to Jerusalem in 58. The Jewish Christians observed them no doubt with few exceptions till the downfall of idolatry,⁴ and the Oriental church even to this day abstains from blood and things strangled; but the Western church never held itself bound to this part of the decree, or soon abandoned some of its restrictions.

Thus by moderation and mutual concession in the spirit of peace and brotherly love a burning controversy was settled, and a split happily avoided.

ANALYSIS OF THE DECREE

The decree of the council was a compromise and had two aspects: it was emancipatory, and restrictive.

(1.) It was a decree of emancipation of the Gentile disciples from circumcision and the bondage of the ceremonial law. This was the chief point in dispute, and so far the decree was liberal and progressive. It settled the question of *principle* once and forever. Paul had triumphed. Hereafter the Judaizing doctrine of the necessity of circumcision for salvation was a heresy, a false gospel, or a perversion of the true gospel, and is denounced as such by Paul in the Galatians.

(2.) The decree was restrictive and conservative on questions of *expediency* and comparative indifference to the Gentile Christians. Under this aspect it was a wise and necessary measure for the apostolic age, especially in the East, where the Jewish element prevailed, but not intended for

universal and permanent use. In Western churches, as already remarked, it was gradually abandoned, as we learn from Augustine. It imposed upon the Gentile Christians abstinence from meat offered to idols, from blood, and from things strangled (as fowls and other animals caught in snares). The last two points amounted to the same thing.

These three restrictions had a good foundation in the Jewish abhorrence of idolatry, and every thing connected with it, and in the Levitical prohibition. Without them the churches in Judaea would not have agreed to the compact. But it was almost impossible to carry them out in mixed or in purely Gentile congregations; for it would have compelled the Gentile Christians to give up social intercourse with their unconverted kindred and friends, and to keep separate, like the Jews, who from fear of contamination with idolatrous associations never bought meat at the public markets. Paul takes a more liberal view of this matter—herein no doubt dissenting somewhat from James—namely, that the eating of meat sacrificed to idols was in itself indifferent, in view of the vanity of idols; nevertheless he likewise commands the Corinthians to abstain from such meat out of regard for tender and weak consciences, and lays down the golden rule: “All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but his neighbor’s good.”

It seems strange to a modern reader that with these ceremonial prohibitions should be connected the strictly moral prohibition of fornication. But it must be remembered that the heathen conscience as to sexual intercourse was exceedingly lax, and looked upon it as a matter of indifference, like eating and drinking, and as sinful only in case of adultery where the rights of a husband are invaded. No heathen moralist, not even Socrates, or Plato, or Cicero, condemned fornication absolutely. It was sanctioned by the worship of Aphrodite at Corinth and

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Paphos, and practiced to her honor by a host of harlot-priestesses!

Idolatry or spiritual whoredom is almost inseparable from bodily pollution. In the case of Solomon polytheism and polygamy went hand in hand. Hence the author of the Apocalypse also closely connects the eating of meat offered to idols with fornication, and denounces them together.³ Paul had to struggle against this laxity in the Corinthian congregation, and condemns all carnal uncleanness as a violation and profanation of the temple of God.

In this absolute prohibition of sexual impurity we have a striking evidence of the regenerating and sanctifying influence of Christianity. Even the ascetic excesses of the post-apostolic writers who denounced the second marriage as “decent adultery” (εὐπρεπῆς μοιχείᾳ), and glorified celibacy as a higher and better state than honorable wedlock, command our respect, as a wholesome and necessary reaction against the opposite excesses of heathen licentiousness.

So far then as the Gentile Christians were concerned the question was settled.

The status of the Jewish Christians was no subject of controversy, and hence the decree is silent about them. They were expected to continue in their ancestral traditions and customs as far as they were at all consistent with loyalty to Christ. They needed no instruction as to their duty, “for,” said James, in his address to the Council, “Moses from generations of old has in every city those who preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.” And eight years afterwards he and his elders intimated to Paul that even he, as a Jew, was expected to observe the ceremonial law, and that the exemption was only meant for the Gentiles.²

But just here was a point where the decree was deficient. It went far enough for the temporary emergency, and as far as the Jewish church was willing to go, but not far enough for the cause of Christian union and

Christian liberty in its legitimate development.

NOTES

1. THE APOSTOLIC CONFERENCE AT JERUSALEM.—This has been one of the chief battle-fields of modern historical criticism. The controversy of circumcision has been fought over again in German, French, Dutch, and English books and essays, and the result is a clearer insight both into the difference and into the harmony of the apostolic church. We have two accounts of the Conference, one from Paul in the second chapter of the Galatians, and one from his faithful companion, Luke, in Acts 15. For it is now almost universally admitted that they refer to the same event. They must be combined to make up a full history. The Epistle to the Galatians is the true key to the position, the Archimedean πῶν στῶν.

The accounts agree as to the contending parties—Jerusalem and Antioch—the leaders on both sides, the topic of controversy, the sharp conflict, and the peaceful result.

But in other respects they differ considerably and supplement each other. Paul, in a polemic vindication of his independent apostolic authority against his Judaizing antagonists in Galatia, a few years after the Council (about 56), dwells chiefly on his personal understanding with the other apostles and their recognition of his authority, but he expressly hints also at public conferences, which could not be avoided; for it was a controversy between the churches, and an agreement concluded by the leading apostles on both sides was of general authority, even if it was disregarded by a heretical party.

Luke, on the other hand, writing after the lapse of at least thirteen years (about 63) a calm and objective history of the primitive church, gives (probably from Jerusalem and Antioch documents, but certainly not from Paul’s Epistles) the official action of the public assembly, with an abridgment of the preceding debates, without excluding private

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conferences; on the contrary he rather includes them; for he reports in Acts 15:5, that Paul and Barnabas “were received by the church and the apostles and elders and declared all things that God had done with them,” *before* he gives an account of the public consultation, ver. 6.

In all assemblies, ecclesiastical and political, the more important business is prepared and matured by Committees in private conference for public discussion and action; and there is no reason why the council in Jerusalem should have made an exception. The difference of aim then explains, in part at least, the omissions and minor variations of the two accounts, which we have endeavored to adjust in this section.

2. The CIRCUMCISION OF TITUS.—We hold with most commentators that Titus was *not* circumcised. This is the natural sense of the difficult and much disputed passage, Gal. 2:3–5, no matter whether we take δέ in 2:4 in the explanatory sense (*nempe, and that*), or in the usual adversative sense (*autem, sed, but*). In the former case the sentence is regular, in the latter it is broken, or designedly incomplete, and implies perhaps a slight censure of the other apostles, who may have first *recommended* the circumcision of Titus as a measure of prudence and conciliation out of regard to conservative scruples, but desisted from it on the strong remonstrance of Paul. If we press the ἠναγκάσθη *compelled*, in 2:3, such an inference might easily be drawn, but there was in Paul’s mind a conflict between the duty of frankness and the duty of courtesy to his older colleagues. So Dr. Lightfoot accounts for the broken grammar of the sentence, “which was wrecked on the hidden rock of the counsels of the apostles of the circumcision.”

Quite another view was taken by Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.*, V. 3), and recently by Renan (ch. III. p. 89) and Farrar (I. 415), namely, that Titus *voluntarily* submitted to circumcision for the sake of peace, either in spite of the remonstrance of Paul, or rather with his

reluctant consent. Paul *seems* to say that Titus was *not* circumcised, but implies that he *was*. This view is based on the omission of οἷς οὐδέ in 2:5.

The passage then would have to be supplemented in this way: “But not even Titus was *compelled* to be circumcised, but [he submitted to circumcision *voluntarily*] on account of the stealthily introduced false brethren, to whom we yielded by way of submission for an hour [i.e., temporarily].” Renan thus explains the meaning: “If Titus was circumcised, it is not because he was forced, but on account of the false brethren, to whom we might yield for a moment without submitting ourselves in principle.” He thinks that πρὸς ὥραν is opposed to the following διαμείνη.

In other words, Paul stooped to conquer. He yielded for a moment by a stretch of charity or a stroke of policy, in order to save Titus from violence, or to bring his case properly before the Council and to achieve a permanent victory of principle. But this view is entirely inconsistent not only with the frankness and firmness of Paul on a question of principle, with the gravity of the crisis, with the uncompromising tone of the Epistle to the Galatians, but also with the addresses of Peter and James, and with the decree of the council. If Titus was really circumcised, Paul would have said so, and explained his relation to the fact. Moreover, the testimony of Irenæus and Tertullian against οἷς οὐδέ must give way to the authority of the best uncials (Ⲙ B A C, etc.) and versions in favor of these words. The omission can be better explained from carelessness or dogmatic prejudice than the insertion.

1.35 The Conservative Reaction, and the Liberal Victory—Peter and Paul at Antioch

The Jerusalem compromise, like every other compromise, was liable to a double construction, and had in it the seed of future troubles. It was an armistice rather than a final settlement. Principles must and will

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work themselves out, and the one or the other must triumph.

A liberal construction of the spirit of the decree seemed to demand full communion of the Jewish Christians with their uncircumcised Gentile brethren, even at the Lord's table, in the weekly or daily agapae, on the basis of the common saving faith in Christ, their common Lord and Saviour. But a strict construction of the letter stopped with the recognition of the general Christian character of the Gentile converts, and guarded against ecclesiastical amalgamation on the ground of the continued obligation of the Jewish converts to obey the ceremonial law, including the observance of circumcision, of the Sabbath and new moons, and the various regulations about clean and unclean meats, which virtually forbid social intercourse with unclean Gentiles.

The conservative view was orthodox, and must not be confounded with the Judaizing heresy which demanded circumcision from the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and made it a term of church membership and a condition of salvation. This doctrine had been condemned once for all by the Jerusalem agreement, and was held hereafter only by the malignant pharisaical faction of the Judaizers.

The church of Jerusalem, being composed entirely of Jewish converts, would naturally take the conservative view; while the church of Antioch, where the Gentile element prevailed, would as naturally prefer the liberal interpretation, which had the certain prospect of ultimate success. James, who perhaps never went outside of Palestine, far from denying the Christian character of the Gentile converts, would yet keep them at a respectful distance; while Peter, with his impulsive, generous nature, and in keeping with his more general vocation, carried out in practice the conviction he had so boldly professed in Jerusalem, and on a visit to Antioch, shortly after the Jerusalem Council (A.D. 51), openly and habitually communed at

table with the Gentile brethren. He had already once before eaten in the house of the uncircumcised Cornelius at Caesarea, seeing that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."

But when some delegates of James arrived from Jerusalem and remonstrated with him for his conduct, he timidly withdrew from fellowship with the uncircumcised followers of Christ, and thus virtually disowned them. He unwittingly again denied his Lord from the fear of man, but this time in the persons of his Gentile disciples. The inconsistency is characteristic of his impulsive temper, which made him timid or bold according to the nature of the momentary impression. It is not stated whether these delegates simply carried out the instructions of James or went beyond them. The former is more probable from what we know of him, and explains more easily the conduct of Peter, who would scarcely have been influenced by casual and unofficial visitors.

They were perhaps officers in the congregation of Jerusalem; at all events men of weight, not Pharisees exactly, yet extremely conservative and cautious, and afraid of miscellaneous company, which might endanger the purity and orthodoxy of the venerable mother church of Christendom. They did, of course, not demand the circumcision of the Gentile Christians, for this would have been in direct opposition to the synodical decree, but they no doubt reminded Peter of the understanding of the Jerusalem compact concerning the duty of Jewish Christians, which he above all others should scrupulously keep.

They represented to him that his conduct was at least very hasty and premature, and calculated to hinder the conversion of the Jewish nation, which was still the object of their dearest hopes and most fervent prayers. The pressure must have been very strong, for even Barnabas, who had stood side by side with Paul at Jerusalem in the defense of the

rights of the Gentile Christians, was intimidated and carried away by the example of the chief of the apostles.

The subsequent separation of Paul from Barnabas and Mark, which the author of Acts frankly relates, was no doubt partly connected with this manifestation of human weakness.

The sin of Peter roused the fiery temper of Paul, and called upon him a sharper rebuke than he had received from his Master. A mere look of pity from Jesus was enough to call forth bitter tears of repentance. Paul was not Jesus. He may have been too severe in the manner of his remonstrance, but he knew Peter better than we, and was right in the matter of dispute, and after all more moderate than some of the greatest and best men have been in personal controversy.

Forsaken by the prince of the apostles and by his own faithful ally in the Gentile mission, he felt that nothing but unflinching courage could save the sinking ship of freedom. A vital principle was at stake, and the Christian standing of the Gentile converts must be maintained at all hazards, now or never, if the world was to be saved and Christianity was not to shrink into a narrow corner as a Jewish sect.

Whatever might do in Jerusalem, where there was scarcely a heathen convert, this open affront to brethren in Christ could not be tolerated for a moment at Antioch in the church which was of his own planting and full of Hellenists and Gentiles. A public scandal must be publicly corrected. And so Paul confronted Peter and charged him with downright hypocrisy in the face of the whole congregation.

He exposed his misconduct by his terse reasoning, to which Peter could make no reply.

“If thou,” he said to him in substance, “who art a Jew by nationality and training, art eating with the Gentiles in disregard of the ceremonial prohibition, why art thou now, by the moral force of thy example as

the chief of the Twelve, constraining the Gentile converts to Judaize or to conform to the ceremonial restraints of the elementary religion? We who are Jews by birth and not gross sinners like the heathen, know that justification comes not from works of the law, but from faith in Christ.

It may be objected that by seeking gratuitous justification instead of legal justification, we make Christ a promoter of sin. Away with this monstrous and blasphemous conclusion! On the contrary, there is sin in returning to the law for justification after we have abandoned it for faith in Christ. I myself stand convicted of transgression if I build up again (as thou doest now) the very law which I pulled down (as thou didst before), and thus condemn my former conduct.

For the law itself taught me to exchange it for Christ, to whom it points as its end. Through the Mosaic law as a tutor leading me beyond itself to freedom in Christ, I died to the Mosaic law in order that I might live a new life of obedience and gratitude to God. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer my old self that lives, but it is Christ that lives in me; and the new life of Christ which I now live in this body after my conversion, I live in the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if the observance of the law of Moses or any other human work could justify and save, there was no good cause of Christ's death his atoning sacrifice on the cross was needless and fruitless.”

From such a conclusion Peter's soul shrank back in horror. He never dreamed of denying the necessity and efficacy of the death of Christ for the remission of sins. He and Barnabas stood between two fires on that trying occasion. As Jews they seemed to be bound by the restrictions of the Jerusalem

compromise on which the messengers of James insisted; but by trying to please the Jews they offended the Gentiles, and by going back to Jewish exclusiveness they did violence to their better convictions, and felt condemned by their own conscience. They no doubt returned to their more liberal practice.

The alienation of the apostles was merely temporary. They were too noble and too holy to entertain resentment. Paul makes honorable mention afterwards of Peter and Barnabas, and also of Mark, who was a connecting link between the three. Peter in his Epistles endorses the teaching of the "beloved brother Paul," and commends the wisdom of his Epistles, in one of which his own conduct is so severely rebuked, but significantly adds that there are some "things in them hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction."³

The scene of Antioch belongs to these things which have been often misunderstood and perverted by prejudice and ignorance in the interest both of heresy and orthodoxy. The memory of it was perpetuated by the tradition which divided the church at Antioch into two parishes with two bishops, Evodius and Ignatius, the one instituted by Peter, the other by Paul. Celsus, Porphyry, and modern enemies of Christianity have used it as an argument against the moral character and inspiration of the apostles. The conduct of Paul left a feeling of intense bitterness and resentment in the Jewish party which manifested itself even a hundred years later in a violent attack of the pseudo-Clementine *Homilies and Recognitions* upon Paul, under the disguise of Simon Magus. The conduct of both apostles was so unaccountable to Catholic taste that some of the fathers substituted an unknown Cephas for Peter; while others resolved the scene into a hypocritical farce gotten up by the apostles themselves for dramatic effect upon the ignorant congregation.⁵

The truth of history requires us to sacrifice the orthodox fiction of moral perfection in the apostolic church. But we gain more than we lose. The apostles themselves never claimed, but expressly disowned such perfection. They carried the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels, and thus brought it nearer to us. The infirmities of holy men are frankly revealed in the Bible for our encouragement as well as for our humiliation. The bold attack of Paul teaches the right and duty of protest even against the highest ecclesiastical authority, when Christian truth and principle are endangered; the quiet submission of Peter commends him to our esteem for his humility and meekness in proportion to his high standing as the chief among the pillar-apostles; the conduct of both explodes the Romish fiction of papal supremacy and infallibility; and the whole scene typically foreshadows the grand historical conflict between Petrine Catholicism and Pauline Protestantism, which, we trust, will end at last in a grand Johannean reconciliation.

Peter and Paul, as far as we know, never met afterwards till they both shed their blood for the testimony of Jesus in the capital of the world.

The fearless remonstrance of Paul had probably a moderating effect upon James and his elders, but did not alter their practice in Jerusalem. Still less did it silence the extreme Judaizing faction; on the contrary, it enraged them. They were defeated, but not convinced, and fought again with greater bitterness than ever.

They organized a countermission, and followed Paul into almost every field of his labor, especially to Corinth and Galatia. They were *a thorn, if not the thorn*, in his flesh. He has them in view in all his Epistles except those to the Thessalonians and to Philemon. We cannot understand his Epistles in their proper historical sense without this fact. The false apostles were perhaps those very Pharisees who caused the original trouble, at all events men of like spirit. They boasted of

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their personal acquaintance with the Lord in the days of his flesh, and with the primitive apostles; hence Paul calls these “false apostles” sarcastically “super-eminent” or “over-extra-apostles.”

They attacked his apostolate as irregular and spurious, and his gospel as radical and revolutionary. They boldly told his Gentile converts that they, must submit to circumcision and keep the ceremonial law; in other words, that they must be Jews as well as Christians in order to *insure* salvation, or at all events to occupy a position of pre-eminence over and above mere proselytes of the gate in the outer court.

They appealed, without foundation, to James and Peter and to Christ himself, and abused their name and authority for their narrow sectarian purposes, just as the Bible itself is made responsible for all sorts of heresies and vagaries. They seduced many of the impulsive and changeable Galatians, who had all the characteristics of the Keltic race. They split the congregation in Corinth into several parties and caused the apostle the deepest anxiety. In Colossae, and the churches of Phrygia and Asia, legalism assumed the milder form of Essenic mysticism and asceticism. In the Roman church the legalists were weak brethren rather than false brethren, and no personal enemies of Paul, who treats them much more mildly than the Galatian errorists.

This bigoted and most persistent Judaizing reaction was overruled for good. It drew out from the master mind of Paul the most complete and most profound vindication and exposition of the doctrines of sin and grace. Without the intrigues and machinations of these legalists and ritualists we should not have the invaluable Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. Where error abounded, truth has still more abounded.

At last the victory was won. The terrible persecution under Nero, and the still more terrible destruction of Jerusalem, buried the circumcision controversy in the Christian

church. The ceremonial law, which before Christ was “alive but not life-giving,” and which from Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem was “dying but not deadly,” became after that destruction “dead and deadly.” The Judaizing heresy was indeed continued outside of the Catholic church by the sect of the Ebionites during the second century; and in the church itself the spirit of formalism and bigotry assumed new shapes by substituting Christian rites and ceremonies for the typical shadows of the Mosaic dispensation. But whenever and wherever this tendency manifests itself we have the best antidote in the Epistles of Paul.

1.36 Christianity in Rome

I. On the general, social, and moral condition of Rome under the Emperors:

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ROD. LANCIANI: *Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries*. Boston, 1889 (with 100 illustrations).

II. On the Jews in Rome and the allusions of Roman Writers to Them:

RENAN: *Les Apôtres*, 287–293; MERIVALE: *History of the Romans*, VI., 203 sqq.; FRIEDLÄNDER: *l. c.* III., 505 sqq.; HAUSRATH: *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte*, III., 383–392 (2d ed.); SCHÜRER: *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschichte*, pp. 624 sq., and *Die Gemeindeverfassung der Juden in Rom in der Kaiserzeit*, Leipz., 1879; HUIDEKOPER: *Judaism at Rome*, 1876. Also JOHN GILL: *Notices of the Jews and their Country by the Classic Writers of Antiquity*. 2d ed. London, 1872. On Jewish Roman inscriptions see GARRUCCI (several articles in Italian since 1862), von Engeström (in a Swedish work, Upsala, 1876), and Schürer (1879).

III. On the Christian Congregation in Rome:

The Histories of the Apostolic Age (see pp. 189 sqq.); the Introductions to the Commentaries on *Romans* (mentioned p. 281), and a number of critical essays on the origin and composition of the Church of Rome and the aim of the Epistle to the Romans, by BAUR (*Ueber Zweck und Veranlassung des Römerbriefs*, 1836; reproduced in *his Paul*, I., 346 sqq., Engl. transl.), BEYSCHLAG (*Das geschichtliche Problem des Römerbriefs* in the “Studien und Kritiken” for 1867), HILGENFELD

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From "Roma Sotterranea," by Northcote and Brownlow.

THE CITY OF ROME

The city of Rome was to the Roman empire what Paris is to France, what London to Great Britain: the ruling head and the beating heart. It had even a more cosmopolitan character than these modern cities. It was the world in miniature, "*orbis in urbe*." Rome had conquered nearly all the nationalities of the then civilized world, and drew its population from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South.

All languages, religious, and customs of the conquered provinces found a home there. Half the inhabitants spoke Greek, and the natives complained of the preponderance of this foreign tongue, which, since Alexander's conquest, had become the language of the Orient and of the civilized world. The palace of the emperor was the chief centre of Oriental and Greek life. Large numbers of the foreigners were freedmen, who generally took the family name of their masters. Many

of them became very wealthy, even millionaires. The rich freedman was in that age the type of the vulgar, impudent, bragging upstart.

According to Tacitus, "all things vile and shameful" were sure to flow from all quarters of the empire into Rome as a common sewer. But the same is true of the best elements: the richest products of nature, the rarest treasures of art, were collected there; the enterprising and ambitious youths, the men of genius, learning, and every useful craft found in Rome the widest field and the richest reward for their talents.

With Augustus began the period of expensive building. In his long reign of peace and prosperity he changed the city of bricks into a city of marble. It extended in narrow and irregular streets on both banks of the Tiber, covered the now desolate and feverish Campagna to the base of the Albanian hills, and stretched its arms by land and by sea to the ends of the earth. It was then (as in its ruins it is even now) the most instructive and interesting city in the world. Poets, orators, and historians were lavish in the praises of the *urbs aeterna*, "*qua nihil posis visere majus*."

The estimates of the population of imperial Rome are guesswork, and vary from one to four millions. But in all probability it amounted under Augustus to more than a million, and increased rapidly under the following emperors till it received a check by the fearful epidemic of 79, which for many days demanded ten thousand victims a day. Afterwards the city grew again and reached the height of its splendor under Hadrian and the Antonines.²

THE JEWS IN ROME

The number of Jews in Rome during the apostolic age is estimated at twenty or thirty thousand souls. They all spoke Hellenistic Greek with a strong Hebrew accent. They had, as far as we know, seven synagogues and three cemeteries, with Greek and a few Latin inscriptions, sometimes with Greek words in

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Latin letters, or Latin words with Greek letters.

They inhabited the fourteenth region, beyond the Tiber (Trastevere), at the base of the Janiculum, probably also the island of the Tiber, and part of the left bank towards the Circus Maximus and the Palatine hill, in the neighborhood of the present Ghetto or Jewry. They were mostly descendants of slaves and captives of Pompey, Cassius, and Antony. They dealt then, as now, in old clothing and broken ware, or rose from poverty to wealth and prominence as bankers, physicians, astrologers, and fortunetellers. Not a few found their way to the court. Alityrus, a Jewish actor, enjoyed the highest favor of Nero. Thallus, a Samaritan and freedman of Tiberius, was able to lend a million denarii to the Jewish king, Herod Agrippa. The relations between the Herods and the Julian and Claudian emperors were very intimate.

The strange manners and institutions of the Jews, as circumcision, Sabbath observance, abstinence from pork and meat sacrificed to the gods whom they abhorred as evil spirits, excited the mingled amazement, contempt, and ridicule of the Roman historians and satirists. Whatever was sacred to the heathen was profane to the Jews. They were regarded as enemies of the human race. But this, after all, was a superficial judgment. The Jews had also their friends.

Their indomitable industry and persistency, their sobriety, earnestness, fidelity and benevolence, their strict obedience to law, their disregard of death in war, their unshaken trust in God, their hope of a glorious future of humanity, the simplicity and purity of their worship, the sublimity and majesty of the idea of one omnipotent, holy, and merciful God, made a deep impression upon thoughtful and serious persons, and especially upon females (who escaped the odium of circumcision).

Hence the large number of proselytes in Rome and elsewhere. Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, as well as Josephus, testify that many

Romans abstained from all business on the Sabbath, fasted and prayed, burned lamps, studied the Mosaic law, and sent tribute to the temple of Jerusalem. Even the Empress Poppea was inclined to Judaism after her own fashion, and showed great favor to Josephus, who calls her "devout" or "God-fearing" (though she was a cruel and shameless woman). Seneca, who detested the Jews (calling them *sceleratissima gens*), was constrained to say that this conquered race gave laws to their conquerors.

The Jews were twice expelled from Rome under Tiberius and Claudius, but soon returned to their transtiberine quarter, and continued to enjoy the privileges of a *religio licita*, which were granted to them by heathen emperors, but were afterwards denied them by Christian popes.

When Paul arrived in Rome he invited the rulers of the synagogues to a conference, that he might show them his good will and give them the first offer of the gospel, but they replied to his explanations with shrewd reservation, and affected to know nothing of Christianity, except that it was a sect everywhere spoken against. Their best policy was evidently to ignore it as much as possible. Yet a large number came to hear the apostle on an appointed day, and some believed, while the majority, as usual, rejected his testimony.

CHRISTIANITY IN ROME

From this peculiar people came the first converts to a religion which proved more than a match for the power of Rome. The Jews were only an army of defense, the Christians an army of conquest, though under the despised banner of the cross.

The precise origin of the church of Rome is involved in impenetrable mystery. We are informed of the beginnings of the church of Jerusalem and most of the churches of Paul, but we do not know who first preached the gospel at Rome. Christianity with its missionary enthusiasm for the conversion of the world must have found a home in the

capital of the world at a very early day, before the apostles left Palestine. The congregation at Antioch grew up from emigrant and fugitive disciples of Jerusalem before it was consolidated and fully organized by Barnabas and Paul.

It is not impossible, though by no means demonstrable, that the first tidings of the gospel were brought to Rome soon after the birthday of the church by witnesses of the pentecostal miracle in Jerusalem, among whom were "sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes." In this case Peter, the preacher of the pentecostal sermon, may be said to have had an *indirect* agency in the founding of the church of Rome, which claims him as the rock on which it is built, although the tradition of his early visit (42) and twenty or twenty-five years' residence there is a long exploded fable. Paul greets among the brethren in Rome some kinsmen who had been converted before him, i.e., before 37. Several names in the list of Roman brethren to whom he sends greetings are found in the Jewish cemetery on the Appian Way among the freedmen of the Empress Livia. Christians from Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece must have come to the capital for various reasons, either as visitors or settlers.

THE EDICT OF CLAUDIUS

The first historic trace of Christianity in Rome we have in a notice of the heathen historian Suetonius, confirmed by Luke, that Claudius, about A.D. 52, banished the Jews from Rome because of their insurrectionary disposition and commotion under the instigation of "Chrestus" (misspelled for "Christus").

This commotion in all probability refers to Messianic controversies between Jews and Christians who were not yet clearly distinguished at that time. The preaching, of Christ, the true King of Israel, would naturally produce a great commotion among the Jews, as it did at Antioch, in Pisidia, in Lystra, Thessalonica, and Berea; and the ignorant heathen magistrates would as naturally infer that Christ was a political pretender and

aspirant to an earthly throne. The Jews who rejected the true Messiah looked all the more eagerly for an imaginary Messiah that would break the yoke of Rome and restore the theocracy of David in Jerusalem. Their carnal millenarianism affected even some Christians, and Paul found it necessary to warn them against rebellion and revolution. Among those expelled by the edict of Claudius were Aquila and Priscilla, the hospitable friends of Paul, who were probably converted before they met him in Corinth.

The Jews, however, soon returned, and the Jewish Christians also, but both under a cloud of suspicion. To this fact Tacitus may refer when he says that the Christian superstition which had been suppressed for a time (by the edict of Claudius) broke out again (under Nero, who ascended the throne in 54).

PAUL'S EPISTLE

In the early part of Nero's reign (54-68) the Roman congregation was already well known throughout Christendom, had several meeting places and a considerable number of teachers. It was in view of this fact, and in prophetic anticipation of its future importance, that Paul addressed to it from Corinth his most important doctrinal Epistle (A.D. 58), which was to prepare the way for his long desired personal visit. On his journey to Rome three years later he found Christians at Puteoli (the modern Puzzuolo at the bay of Naples), who desired him to tarry with them seven days. Some thirty or forty miles from the city, at Appii Forum and Tres Tabernae (The Three Taverns), he was met by Roman brethren anxious to see the writer of that marvelous letter, and derived much comfort from this token of affectionate regard.

PAUL IN ROME

His arrival in Rome, early in the year 61, which two years later was probably followed by that of Peter, naturally gave a great impulse to the growth of the congregation.

He brought with him, as he had promised, "the fullness of the blessing of Christ." His

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very bonds were overruled for the progress of the gospel, which he was left free to preach under military guard in his own dwelling. He had with him during the whole or a part of the first Roman captivity his faithful pupils and companions: Luke, "the beloved physician" and historian; Timothy, the dearest of his spiritual sons; John Mark, who had deserted him on his first missionary tour, but joined him at Rome and mediated between him and Peter; one Jesus, who is called Justus, a Jewish Christian, who remained faithful to him; Aristarchus, his fellow-prisoner from Thessalonica; Tychicus from Ephesus; Epaphras and Onesimus from Colossae; Epaphroditus from Philippi; Demas, Pudens, Linus, Eubulus, and others who are honorably mentioned in the Epistles of the captivity.³

They formed a noble band of evangelists and aided the aged apostle in his labors at Rome and abroad. On the other hand his enemies of the Judaizing party were stimulated to counter-activity, and preached Christ from envy and jealousy; but in noble self-denial Paul rose above petty sectarianism, and sincerely rejoiced from his lofty standpoint if only Christ was proclaimed and his kingdom promoted. While he fearlessly vindicated Christian freedom against Christian legalism in the Epistle to the Galatians, he preferred even a poor contracted Christianity to the heathenism which abounded in Rome.

The number which were converted through these various agencies, though disappearing in the heathen masses of the metropolis, and no doubt much smaller than the twenty thousand Jews, must have been considerable, for Tacitus speaks of a "vast multitude" of Christians that perished in the Neronian persecution in 64; and Clement, referring to the same persecution, likewise mentions a "vast multitude of the elect," who were contemporary with Paul and Peter, and who, "through many indignities and tortures, became a most noble example among ourselves" (that is, the Roman Christians).

COMPOSITION AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE ROMAN CHURCH

The composition of the church of Rome has been a matter of much learned controversy and speculation. It no doubt was, like most congregations outside of Palestine, of a mixed character, with a preponderance of the Gentile over the Jewish element, but it is impossible to estimate the numerical strength and the precise relation which the two elements sustained to each other.

We have no reason to suppose that it was at once fully organized and consolidated into one community. The Christians were scattered all over the immense city, and held their devotional meetings in different localities. The Jewish and the Gentile converts may have formed distinct communities, or rather two sections of one Christian community.

Paul and Peter, if they met together in Rome (after 63), would naturally, in accordance with the Jerusalem compact, divide the field of supervision between them as far as practicable, and at the same time promote union and harmony. This may be the truth which underlies the early and general tradition that they were the joint founders of the Roman church. No doubt their presence and martyrdom cemented the Jewish and Gentile sections. But the final consolidation into one organic corporation was probably not effected till after the destruction of Jerusalem.

This consolidation was chiefly the work of Clement, who appears as the first presiding presbyter of the one Roman church. He was admirably qualified to act as mediator between the disciples of Peter and Paul, being himself influenced by both, though more by Paul. His Epistle to the Corinthians combines the distinctive features of the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and James, and has been called "a typical document, reflecting the comprehensive principles and large sympathies which had been impressed upon the united church of Rome."

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In the second century we see no more traces of a twofold community. But outside of the orthodox church, the heretical schools, both Jewish and Gentile, found likewise an early home in this rendezvous of the world. The fable of Simon Magus in Rome reflects this fact. Valentinus, Marcion, Praxeas, Theodotus, Sabellius, and other arch-heretics taught there. In heathen Rome, Christian heresies and sects enjoyed a toleration which was afterwards denied them by Christian Rome, until, in 1870, it became the capital of united Italy, against the protest of the pope.

LANGUAGE

The language of the Roman church at that time was the Greek, and continued to be down to the third century. In that language Paul wrote to Rome and from Rome; the names of the converts mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Romans, and of the early bishops, are mostly Greek; all the early literature of the Roman church was Greek; even the so-called Apostles' Creed, in the form held by the church of Rome, was originally Greek. The first Latin version of the Bible was not made for Rome, but for the provinces, especially for North Africa. The Greeks and Greek speaking Orientals were at that time the most intelligent, enterprising, and energetic people among the middle classes in Rome. "The successful tradesmen, the skilled artisans, the confidential servants and retainers of noble houses—almost all the activity and enterprise of the common people, whether for good or for evil, were Greek."

SOCIAL CONDITION

The great majority of the Christians in Rome, even down to the close of the second century, belonged to the lower ranks of society. They were artisans, freedmen, slaves. The proud Roman aristocracy of wealth, power, and knowledge despised the gospel as a vulgar superstition. The contemporary writers ignored it, or mentioned it only incidentally and with evident contempt. The Christian spirit and the old Roman spirit were sharply

and irreconcilably antagonistic, and sooner or later had to meet in deadly conflict.

But, as in Athens and Corinth, so there were in Rome also a few honorable exceptions.

Paul mentions his success in the praetorian guard and in the imperial household.

It is possible, though not probable, that Paul became passingly acquainted with the Stoic philosopher, Annaeus Seneca, the teacher of Nero and friend of Burrus; for he certainly knew his brother, Annaeus Gallio, proconsul at Corinth, then at Rome, and had probably official relations with Burrus, as prefect of the praetorian guard, to which he was committed as prisoner; but the story of the conversion of Seneca, as well as his correspondence with Paul, are no doubt pious fictions, and, if true, would be no credit to Christianity, since Seneca, like Lord Bacon, denied his high moral principles by his avarice and meanness.

Pomponia Graecina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, who was arraigned for "foreign superstition" about the year 57 or 58 (though pronounced innocent by her husband), and led a life of continual sorrow till her death in 83, was probably the first Christian lady of the Roman nobility, the predecessor of the ascetic Paula and Eustochium, the companions of Jerome. Claudia and Pudens, from whom Paul sends greetings (2 Tim. 4:21), have, by an ingenious conjecture, been identified with the couple of that name, who are respectfully mentioned by Martial in his epigrams; but this is doubtful.

A generation later two cousins of the Emperor Domitian (81-96), T. Flavius Clemens, consul (in 95), and his wife, Flavia Domitilla, were accused of "atheism," that is, of Christianity, and condemned, the husband to death, the wife to exile (A.D. 96). Recent excavations in the catacomb of Domitilla, near that of Callistus, establish the fact that an entire branch of the Flavian family had embraced the Christian faith. Such a change was wrought within fifty or sixty years after Christianity had entered Rome.⁴

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