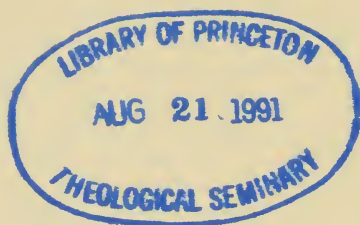
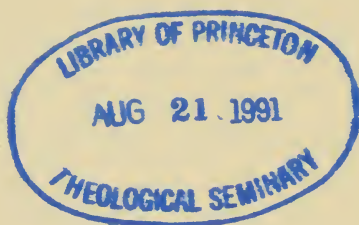


THE LITERATURE AND
HISTORY OF
NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

JOHN GRESHAM MACHEN



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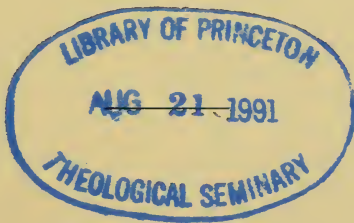
THE LITERATURE AND HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

PART I:

The Historical Background of
Christianity

The Early History of
Christianity

By John Gresham Machen



PHILADELPHIA, PA.
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INTRODUCTION

The general purpose of this course of lessons has been set forth in the introduction to the Student's Text Book. There is a tendency in the modern Church to neglect the study of Bible history. Such neglect will inevitably result in a loss of power. The gospel is a record of something that has happened, and uncertainty about the gospel is fatal weakness. Furthermore the historical study of the apostolic age—that age when divine revelation established the great principles of the Church's life—is the best corrective for a thousand vagaries. Much can be learned from modern pedagogy; but after all what is absolutely fundamental, both for teacher and for student, is an orderly acquaintance with the Bible facts.

The Teacher's Manual, therefore, is intended not merely to offer suggestions as to methods of teaching, but primarily to supplement the teacher's knowledge. A teacher who knows only what he actually imparts to the class is inevitably dull. The true teacher brings forth out of his treasure things new and old.

The sections in the Teacher's Manual, since they are intended to be supplementary, should not be read until after careful attention has been paid to the corresponding sections in the Student's Text Book. Moreover, both sections together are of course in themselves insufficient. They should be supplemented by other reading. Suggestions about reading have been put at the end of every lesson. Here, however, a few general remarks may be made.

Davis' "Dictionary of the Bible" and Purves' "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," which have been recommended even to the student, will be to the teacher almost invaluable. The earnest teacher will also desire to refer to good commentaries on The Acts. The commentaries which have been mentioned in connection with the individual lessons are based upon the English Bible; but every teacher who has any knowledge of Greek, however slight, should use, instead, the commentary of Knowling, in "The Expositor's Greek Testament." For the life of Paul, Lewin's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul" and the similar book of Conybeare and Howson are still very valuable for their vivid and extended descriptions of the scenes of the missionary journeys. A similar

service is rendered, in more up-to-date form, by the various works of Ramsay. Stalker's "Life of St. Paul" is a good handbook. M'Clymont's "New Testament and Its Writers" contains instructive, though very brief, introductions to all of the New Testament books. Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" and "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels" number among their contributors many writers of many opinions. They are rich in references to the vast literature of modern Biblical discussion.

The writer of this course has derived information from many quarters. Definite acknowledgment of indebtedness, since no originality is claimed, may be regarded as unnecessary. It is a pleasure, however, to render special thanks to Rev. Professor William Park Armstrong, D. D., of Princeton Theological Seminary, whose wise counsel has been of incalculable assistance at many points.

The actual presentation of the lessons will, of course, vary according to the needs of the classes and the preferences of the teachers. The Student's Text Book may often provide a convenient order of presentation. That book is intended not merely to be read, but also to be studied. It is to be regarded as a sort of outline of the course.

The "topics for study" are intended to serve a double purpose. In the first place, they will test the student's knowledge of the lesson material; in the second place, they will afford encouragement to special investigation. Individual topics may often be assigned for thorough treatment to individual students, while the class as a whole may use all the topics as guides to a general knowledge.

Personal interest in the individual students is of the utmost importance. Instruction has a tenfold value when it is backed by friendship. The relation of the students to the Church should be a matter of especial concern. If any member of the class has not confessed his faith in Christ, the study of this year offers abundant opportunity for a word in season. Our study reveals the Church as a divine institution. Shall we then stand aloof?

In this course the teacher has the opportunity of introducing young people of maturing minds to the historical study of the New Testament. There could be no more inspiring task. Carried about with every wind of doctrine, the Church is sadly in need of an assured anchorage. That anchorage should be sought in history. Ignorance is weak; sound knowledge, sought with prayer, and blessed by the Spirit of God, will lead to a more stalwart and more intelligent faith.

LESSON I

THE NEW TESTAMENT

This is an introductory lesson. It should be used, first of all, to answer intelligent general questions about the New Testament. Some of these questions will be discussed briefly under Sections 1 to 3, below.

The historical study of the New Testament, based upon a study of the circumstances under which the individual books were written, will probably be new to many of the students. The new point of view should be used to awaken interest. The climax of the lesson should, however, be a presentation of the unity of the New Testament as the very Word of God to us. Historical study should be made—and can be made—subservient to reverent and thankful obedience.

1. THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE NAME

The English word “testament” comes from a Latin word. The equivalent Greek word is hard to translate. As used in the Greek Bible it may mean either “covenant” or “testament.” Usually it should probably be translated “covenant.”

The phrase “new covenant” occurs about five times in the New Testament. In none of these passages does the phrase refer to the “New Testament” in our sense. It designates a new relationship into which men have been received with God. The old covenant was made, through the mediatorship of Moses, with the Hebrew nation; the new covenant, hinted at in prophecy, Jer. 31 : 31, and instituted by the Lord Jesus, I Cor. 11 : 25, was made with all those, of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, who should through faith accept the salvation offered by Christ. Those who believe become, like Israel of old, God’s chosen people, and enter into the warmth and joy of the divine communion. The names “old and new covenants,” then, were applied first to these two special relationships into which God entered with men. Afterwards the names were applied to the books in which the conditions of those relationships were set forth. Perhaps it would have been

better if we had started to say "New Covenant" where we now say "New Testament." At any rate the idea alluded to in the name is the inspiring idea, realized in Christ, of an alliance with God. The New Testament is the divine treaty by the terms of which God has received us rebels and enemies into peace with himself.

2. ONE BOOK, OR A COLLECTION OF BOOKS?

In the first place, the New Testament may be treated in every respect as a single book. That course is adopted by many of the most devoted lovers of the Bible. By them the Bible is treated simply as a textbook of religion. Passages are quoted indiscriminately from all parts of it, without much regard to the context. The wide differences of form and of spirit among the various books are ignored. The historical implications of the books are of course accepted as true, but practically they are left quite unassimilated.

Now let us be quite plain about one thing. The men who use the Bible in this way are right in the main point. They treat the Bible as the guide of life for time and for eternity. And if by the use of the Bible we can come into communion with God, we can afford to miss a good many other things. Nevertheless, the Bible is as a matter of fact not a mere textbook of religion, and if we treat it as such we miss much of its richness. If the Bible were merely a systematic treatise, it would be far easier to interpret. The interpreter would be spared a great deal of trouble, but the burden would be heaped upon the preacher. As it is, the Bible is itself a preacher, because it is in such close contact with the actual experience of men of flesh and blood. Its general teachings are given us in large measure only through the medium of history, through the medium of example. In order to arrive at the general truths, therefore, intellectual labor is often necessary. God has made things harder for the intellect that he may strike home the more surely to the heart. If Paul had written a systematic theology, the New Testament way of salvation might in some ways have been plainer than it is. It would have been plain to the intellect, but it would have needed interpretation to the heart. Conviction can be wrought only by the immediate impact of personal life. The theology of Paul, of itself, might be a dead thing; the religious experience of Paul, interwoven with his theology, and bared before us in the epistles, is irresistible.

In the second place, the historical form of the Bible may be

considered at the expense of its spiritual content. The Bible may be treated simply as a storybook. Such a method of treatment is exceedingly common to-day. "The Bible as literature" is its slogan. This treatment has simply missed the main point altogether. It is incomparably inferior to that treatment which takes the Bible as a mere textbook of religion. The Bible as an addition to the world's history or the world's literature has, indeed, considerable educational value. But it does not give eternal life.

A third method is possible, and that third method is right. The historical and literary form of the Bible is recognized to the full. But it is regarded not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. Historical study is necessary not only to establish to the modern man the saving facts of the gospel, but also to do justice to the dramatic narrative form in which God has revealed to us his eternal will.

It is nearer the truth, then, to say that the New Testament is a single book than to say that it is a collection of books. Its parts differ widely among themselves, in authorship, in date, in circumstances, in aim. Those differences must be studied carefully, if the full meaning is to be obtained. But widely as the New Testament writings differ among themselves, they differ yet far more widely from all other books. They presented themselves originally to the Church with a divine authority, which is foreign to the ordinary writings of men. That authority has been confirmed through the Christian centuries. Those who have submitted their lives to the New Testament have never been confounded. The New Testament has been to them the voice of God.

3. THE FOUR DIVISIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

(1) THE GOSPELS.—Christianity is based upon historical facts. Attempts, it is true, are often made to separate it from history. But they are bound to result in failure. Give up history, and you can retain some things. But you can never retain a gospel. For "gospel" means "good news," and "good news" means tidings, information derived from the witness of others. In other words, it means history. The question whether religion can be independent of history is really just the old question whether we need a gospel. The gospel is news that something has happened—something that puts a different face upon life. What that something is is told us in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(2) **THE BOOK OF THE ACTS.**—The Book of The Acts is a history of the extension of Christianity from Jerusalem out into the Gentile world. It represents that extension as guided by the Spirit of God, and thus exhibits the divine warrant for the acceptance of us Gentiles, and for the development of the Christian Church. It provides the outline of apostolic history without which we could not understand the other New Testament books, especially the epistles of Paul. It illustrates to the full what has been said above about the value of the historical form in which the Bible teaching is presented. By reading this vivid narrative we obtain an impression of the power of the Holy Spirit which no systematic treatise could give.

(3) **THE EPISTLES.**—The Epistles of the New Testament are not just literature put in an epistolary form, but real letters. It is true that the addresses of some of them are very broad, for example, those of James and of I Peter; and that some of them contain no specific address at all, for example, Hebrews and I John. But the great majority of them, at least, were written under very special circumstances and intended to be read first by very definite people.

The chief letter-writer of the New Testament was the apostle Paul. To a certain extent he used the forms of letter-writing of his time, just as everyone to-day begins a letter with "Dear Sir." Within the last twenty years a great number of Greek private letters, dating from about the time of Paul, have been discovered in Egypt, where they have been preserved by the dry climate. It is interesting to compare them with the letters of Paul. There are some striking similarities in language; for both these letter-writers and Paul used the natural language of daily life rather than the extremely artificial language of the literature of that period. To a certain extent, also, Paul used the same epistolary forms. The differences, however, are even more instructive than the resemblances. It is true, the Pauline epistles are not literary treatises, but real letters. But on the other hand they are not ordinary private letters intended to be read and thrown away, like the letters that have been discovered in Egypt. Most of them were intended to be read originally in churches. It is natural, then, that they should have been written in a loftier style than is to be found in mere business communications and the like. And if Paul uses the epistolary forms of his time he uses them in an entirely new way. Even the mere openings of the epistles are made the

vehicle of Christian truth. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"—there is nothing like that in contemporary letter-writing. The openings of the Pauline epistles form an interesting study. They are varied with wonderful skill to suit the varied character and subject matter of the letters that follow. Paul is never merely formal.

The letters of Paul differ widely among themselves. The Epistle to the Romans is almost a systematic exposition of the plan of salvation. Philemon is concerned with a little personal matter between Paul and one of his converts. But even where Paul is most theological he is personal, and even where he is most personal, he is faithful to his theology. Theology in him is never separate from experience, and experience never separate from theology. Even petty problems he settles always in the light of eternal principles. Hence his letters, though the specific circumstances that gave rise to them are past and gone, will never be antiquated.

(4) THE APOCALYPSE.—The Christian life is a life of hope. Inwardly we are free, but our freedom is not yet fully realized. We are in danger of losing our hope in the trials or in the mere humdrum of life. To keep it alive, the Apocalypse opens a glorious vision of the future. The vision is presented in symbolical language. It is not intended to help in any calculation of the times and seasons. But it shows us the Lamb upon the throne—and that is enough.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Bible," "Canon of the New Testament," "Covenant," "New Testament," and "Testament."

LESSON II

THE ROMAN BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is not a human product. It is not to be explained by what preceded it on the earth. It is a new beginning in history, an immediate exercise of the divine power.

But though Christianity was not produced by men, it operates upon men, and upon men subject to all the ordinary conditions of earthly life. Primitive Christianity, then, which we shall study this year, cannot be understood fully without an examination of the historical conditions under which it arose.

In the class, the lesson should probably be approached through the New Testament examples of the general principles which are outlined in the lesson helps. Examples will be found in the passages assigned in the Student's Text Book, and others should be sought for elsewhere.

1. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EMPIRE

By the middle of the first century before Christ the power of the Roman republic extended around the Mediterranean Sea. Victories abroad, however, were accompanied by serious troubles at home. The increase of wealth and the importation of slave labor had produced unfortunate social conditions. The realm had become too large to be administered adequately by the old republican government. Individuals sometimes obtained practical control of affairs, and the state was torn by civil wars. Finally, in 49 B. C., Julius Cæsar entered Rome at the head of an army, and Roman liberty was at an end. After the assassination of Cæsar in 44 B. C., there was a succession of civil wars, and then, by the victory of Actium in 31 B. C., Octavius, who later assumed the name of Augustus, became sole ruler. Augustus died in A. D. 14.

Subsequent emperors during the first century were: Tiberius (A. D. 14-37), Caligula (A. D. 37-41), Claudius (A. D. 41-54), Nero (A. D. 54-68), Galba, Otho and Vitellius (A. D. 69), Vespasian (A. D. 69-79), Titus (A. D. 79-81), Domitian (A. D. 81-96), Nerva (A. D. 96-98), Trajan (A. D. 98-117).

2. ROMAN ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE EMPIRE

The general advantages of the Roman imperial government have been considered in the Student's Text Book. It will here be advisable to consider one or two features a little more in detail. Much of what follows can be illustrated from the New Testament; for the acquaintance of New Testament writers, especially of Luke, with Roman administration is not only accurate but also minute. The students should be encouraged to seek New Testament illustrations for themselves.

(1) THE PROVINCES.—The provinces of the empire are to be distinguished from the territories of subject kings or princes. The latter were quite subservient to Rome, but were given more independence of administration. A good example of such a subject king, theoretically an ally, but in reality a vassal, was Herod the Great, who ruled over all Palestine till 4 B. C.

The provinces themselves were divided into two great classes—imperial provinces and senatorial provinces.

The imperial provinces were under the immediate control of the emperor. They were governed by "legates," who had no regular term of office, but served at the emperor's pleasure. The imperial provinces were those in which, on account of unsettled conditions, or for the defense of the empire, large bodies of troops had to be maintained. Thus, by keeping the appointment of the legates exclusively in his own hands, the emperor retained the direct control of the all-important power of the army. A good example of an imperial province is the great province of Syria, with capital at Antioch. Palestine was more or less under the supervision of the Syrian legate.

Districts different from the great imperial provinces, but, like them, under the immediate control of the emperor, were governed by "procurators." Judea, from A. D. 6 to A. D. 41, and from A. D. 44 on, is an example.

The senatorial provinces were governed by "proconsuls," chosen by lot from among the members of the Senate. The proconsuls served for only one year. Even over these provinces and their governors the emperor retained the fullest supervisory authority. The senatorial provinces composed the central and more settled portions of the empire, where large standing armies would not be needed. Examples are Achaia, with capital at Corinth, and Cyprus with capital at Paphos. Proconsuls of both of these provinces are mentioned in the New Testament by name.

(2) LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The Romans did not attempt to introduce perfect uniformity throughout the empire. The original Greek unit of political life was the city, and Greek cities were scattered over the east before the Roman conquest. With regard to local affairs, many of the cities retained a certain amount of independence. It is interesting to observe the local peculiarities of the cities described in The Acts.

In addition to the Greek cities, many of which were more or less "free" in local affairs, many "Roman colonies" had been established here and there throughout the empire. The original colonists were often veterans of the Roman armies. Of course the populations soon came to be mixed, but Roman traditions were cultivated in the colonies more than elsewhere. A number of the cities of The Acts were colonies, and one, Philippi, is expressly declared to be such. Acts 16 : 12. In that city the Roman character of the magistrates appears clearly from the Lucan narrative. There were "prætors" and "lictors."

(3) ROMAN CITIZENSHIP.—Before New Testament times Roman citizenship had been extended to all Italy. Italy, therefore, was not a province or group of provinces, but was regarded as a part of Rome. Outside of Italy Roman citizenship was a valuable special privilege. It raised a man above the mass of the provincial population. Some of the advantages of it appear clearly in the New Testament narrative. Because Paul was a Roman citizen he was legally exempt from the most degrading forms of punishment, and had a right to appeal to the court of the emperor. Roman citizenship was sometimes acquired by money, but Paul inherited it from his father.

3. ROMAN RELIGION

Under the empire, Rome was possessed of a state religion. The ancient gods of the republic were retained. There were great divinities like Jupiter and Mars, and there were numberless private divinities of individual households. The ancient religion had, indeed, undergone modifications. New divinities in plenty had been received. But the reception of the new did not involve abolition of the old. On the contrary, the gods of other peoples could be accepted just because they were regarded as nothing but the Roman gods under different names. Thus, long before the Christian era, there had been a thoroughgoing identification of the gods of Greece with the gods of Rome. The Greek Zeus, for example, was

identified with the Roman Jupiter; the Greek Ares with the Roman Mars. The gods of countries other than Greece were also received, though, as far as the city of Rome was concerned, with some conservatism.

In the Roman world, religion was a national affair. Worship of the national gods was not only piety, but also patriotism. Patriotism and religion were inseparably connected. Support of the gods of Rome, even where personal faith in them had been undermined, was considered to be the duty of every loyal citizen.

The political aspect of Roman religion appears most clearly in the worship of the Roman emperors. This remarkable development appears from the beginning of the empire. Augustus, indeed, refused to receive divine honors, at least in the west. But in the east even he was worshiped, and as time went on the reluctance of the emperors disappeared. Some of the worst of the emperors were most insistent upon their own divinity.

Perhaps the first impulse of the modern man is to regard the Cæsar cult simply as a particularly despicable form of flattery. In reality it was more than that. It was not established by imperial edict. It was not dictated primarily by servile fear. The Greek inhabitants of the empire really regarded Augustus as their saviour. And so he was, as far as any man could be. He saved them from the miseries of civil war, and from the rapacity of the degenerate republic; he gave them peace and happiness. And they responded by regarding him as a god.

To them it was natural. To them it was nothing new. Alexander the Great had been regarded as a god long before the Christian era. His successors in Syria and in Egypt had also received divine honors. To the genuine Romans, the thing did not come so easy. The Cæsar cult, at least at first, was not developed in the west. But even the Romans could worship the emperor's "genius" or spirit, and from that to the actual worship of the emperor was but a step. Essential to the whole process of deification, both in Rome and in the east, was the close connection in ancient thinking between deity and humanity, and between religion and the state. If patriotism is religion, then the king is a god.

The Cæsar cult was the most palpable incorporation of the state religion. Worship of the emperor, therefore, might well be the test of loyalty to Rome. It could be practiced by skeptics and philosophers. It could be practiced by the devotees of all religions—

save two. Jews and Christians alone could not bow at the emperor's shrine, for their God was a God who could brook no rival. He was not merely the greatest among many. He was the only Lord, Maker of heaven and earth.

4. THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND SUBSEQUENT HISTORY

Between Christianity and the Roman state, with its official religion, a life-and-death struggle was inevitable. But in the providence of God it was delayed. The empire was used not to crush Christianity but to open the world before it.

But was the empire really identical with the world? It seemed so to the Romans and to the Greeks. To them the empire was the world. And they were right. Not, of course, in a literal sense. In the first century after Christ, vast civilizations—for example the civilization of China—were already in existence. There were great peoples of whom the Romans had never heard. But Roman arrogance has at last been vindicated. For Rome was in reality the key to subsequent history. Rome was the parent of Europe, and Europe is moving the world. Even China is at last being opened to the civilization of Rome. The Romans were right. He who could master Rome would be master, one day, of the world.

It has been a long process. But God's plans are sure. Christianity appeared at the one time when the world was open before it. By the power of the divine Spirit it conquered the empire. The empire dominated its barbarian conquerors. The barbarians are the parents of modern civilization. Modern civilization is invading the earth's remotest bounds. China, at last, is within our ken. Realms long closed have at last been opened. Another great opportunity! An opportunity for greed and selfishness! An opportunity for a dismal skepticism! And an opportunity for the Church of God!

IN THE LIBRARY.—Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Adeney, article on "Cæsar"; Gwatkin, articles on "Roman Empire," and "Rome." Hastings, "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics": Iverach, article on "Cæsarism." Westcott, "The Two Empires," in "The Epistles of St. John," pp. 250-282. Ramsay, "The Cities of St. Paul," pp. 48-81.

LESSON III

THE GREEK BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIANITY

The purpose of the present lesson is to make the student feel that the gospel was from the beginning a real gospel in a real world. If we isolate the early preaching from its environment, we make it seem like an unreal thing. Study of New Testament times makes the New Testament itself become a more living, a more interesting book.

In the Student's Text Book an outline of the Hellenistic age has been provided. It has been supplemented below by illustrative material. But in the class the lesson can probably be best approached from the side of the New Testament itself. In what languages is the Bible written? How did the New Testament come to be written in Greek? What other languages are mentioned in the New Testament? What light do these passages shed upon the linguistic conditions of the time? What is the attitude of the apostles toward Greek thought? Is that attitude altogether unfavorable, or did the early missionaries ever lay hold upon the higher aspirations of their Gentile hearers (Athens)? Where did the missionaries come into contact with heathen superstition? (Several fine examples in The Acts). What was the moral condition of the Greco-Roman world? How was the Hellenistic age like our own? Why did God send our Lord just in the first century? What was the social condition of the early Christians? Do you think that was an advantage or a disadvantage? What men of higher position are mentioned in the New Testament? Questions like these will serve to relate the general expositions in the lesson helps to the New Testament itself. The lesson helps are intended to provide merely the pre-suppositions necessary for intelligent study. God working for real men in a real world—that is the subject of the lesson.

1. THE HELLENISTIC AGE

The Greek world culture which prevailed after the conquest of Alexander was widely different from the Greek life of the classical period. The earlier period is called the "Hellenic" period, the later period is designated as "Hellenistic." When Greek thought made

itself master of the world, it became mingled with numberless foreign elements. The mixture appears most clearly, perhaps, in the sphere of religion. Polytheism was capable of indefinite expansion. New gods could easily be identified with the old, or else be received along with them without a conflict. The religion of the Greco-Roman world is therefore different from that of ancient Greece. It is a curious mixture of the most diverse beliefs. Nevertheless, the whole deserves to be called Hellenistic, because even the most strikingly non-Grecian elements were usually subjected more or less to the subtle molding of the Greek spirit.

The Hellenistic age used to be despised, but among modern scholars it is coming into its own. Its literary products are admittedly inferior to the glories of the earlier age, but even in literature its achievements are not to be despised, and in other spheres it is supreme. Notably in mathematics and in natural science it was the golden age. Euclid, the geometrician, lived three centuries before Christ.

The learning of the Hellenistic age was centered in Alexandria in Egypt, a city which had been founded by Alexander the Great. Athens had, perhaps, ceased to possess the primacy. That fact is typical of the time. Greek culture had ceased to belong to Greece in the narrower sense. It had become a possession of the world. The great library of Alexandria was a sign of the times. The Hellenistic age was an age of widespread learning.

When Rome became master of the eastern world, conditions were not fundamentally changed. Rome merely hastened a process that was already at work. Already the nations had been brought together by the spread of Greek culture; Roman law merely added the additional bond of political unity. The Roman legions were missionaries of an all-pervading Hellenism.

The Greco-Roman world was astonishingly modern. It was modern in its cosmopolitanism. In our own time the nations have again been brought together. The external agencies for their welding are far more perfect to-day than they were under the empire. Even the Roman roads would be but a poor substitute for the railroad and the telegraph and the steamship. But on the other hand we lack the bond of a common language. In some ways the civilized world was even more of a unit in the first century than it is to-day.

The cosmopolitanism of the Roman Empire was a God-given opportunity for the Church. In a cosmopolitan age, if a man has

something to say, he will not lack for an audience. His message will be understood in one place as well as in another. The lesson is obvious for the Church of to-day. Again God has opened the world before us. If we have a message, in God's name let us proclaim it while yet there is time.

2. THE GREEK BIBLE

The Church originated in Palestine. The first missionaries were native Jews. Yet even they had been affected by the cosmopolitanism of the time. Even they could use Greek, in addition to their native language. And Paul, the greatest of the missionaries, though a Jew, was a citizen of a Greek city. The Church from the beginning was able to speak to the larger world.

One difficulty might possibly have arisen. The Christian mission was not carried on merely by the oral word. From the beginning Christianity was a religion with a Book. And that Book was not Greek. On the contrary it was intensely un-Grecian. The Old Testament is intolerant of heathen ideas. It is deeply rooted in the life of the chosen people. How could a Hebrew book be used in the Greek world?

The difficulty might have been serious. But in the providence of God it had been overcome. The Old Testament was a Hebrew book, but before the Christian era it had been translated into Greek. From the beginning Christianity was provided with a Greek Bible. It is always difficult to make a new translation of the Bible. Every missionary knows that. The introduction of a new translation takes time. It was fortunate, then, that a Greek-speaking Church had a Greek Bible ready to hand.

Everything was prepared for the gospel. God's time had come. Roman rule had brought peace. Greek culture had produced unity of speech. There was a Greek world, there were Greek-speaking missionaries, and there was a Greek Bible. In the first century, the salvation that was of the Jews could become a salvation for the whole world.

3. THE PYPYRI

The world in which the gospel was proclaimed is deserving of careful study. How shall it be investigated?

The most obvious way is to study the literature of the period. Until recent years that was almost the only way. But that method is partial at best. For literature is after all but an imperfect measure

of any age. The society that is found in books is an idealized society, or at any rate it is the society of the great. The plain man is unrecorded. His deeds are not deemed worthy of a place in history.

Within the last thirty years, however, the plain people of the ancient world have come remarkably into view. They are revealed to us in the "non-literary papyri."

"Papyri" are pieces of papyrus. Papyrus was the common writing material of antiquity up to about A. D. 300, when vellum, or parchment, came into general use. Unfortunately papyrus, which was made from the pith of the papyrus plant, is not a very durable substance, so that ancient papyri have been preserved until modern times only under exceptionally favorable conditions. These conditions are found in Egypt, where the dry climate has kept the papyrus from disintegration.

In Egypt, within the last thirty years, have been discovered large numbers of papyrus sheets with Greek writing. Of these the "literary papyri" contain simply parts of books. They differ from other copies of the works in question only in that they are usually older than the vellum manuscripts. The "non-literary papyri," on the other hand, are unique. They are private documents of all sorts—receipts, petitions, wills, contracts, census returns, and most interesting of all, private letters. It was usually not intended that these documents should be preserved. They were simply thrown away upon rubbish heaps or used as wrappings of mummies. They have been preserved only by chance.

The non-literary papyri are important first of all in the study of language. They exhibit the language of everyday life, as distinguished from the language of literature. The language of literature always differs more or less from the language used on the street, and the difference was particularly wide in the Greek of the Hellenistic period. The books of the time were modeled to a considerable extent upon the ancient classics, but the actual spoken language had been changing. Hence the literary language had become exceedingly artificial.

Up to within the last few years, the literary language alone could be studied. The books of the period were preserved, but the language of daily life was gone. Now, however, the papyri supply what was lacking. In them there is no attempt at style. They are composed in the language which was employed in the ordinary affairs of life and preserve the actual spoken language of every day.

At this point a remarkable fact must be noticed. The language of the New Testament is more like the language of the non-literary papyri than it is like the language of contemporary literature. The papyri indicate, therefore, that the New Testament is composed in the natural living language of the time rather than according to the canons of an artificial rhetoric. The artlessness of the New Testament has sometimes been regarded as a reproach. Instead, it is a cause for rejoicing. The simplicity of the gospel would only be concealed by niceties of style. The greatness of the New Testament is independent of literary art. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the New Testament, because it is composed in the language of the people, is characterized by anything like cheapness or vulgarity. On the contrary its simplicity is the noble simplicity of truth. In the New Testament the spoken language of the Greco-Roman world, in all its living freshness, becomes a worthy vehicle for the sublimest thoughts.

The non-literary papyri, then, reproduce for us the spoken language of the time as distinguished from the artificial language of literature. But that does not exhaust their importance. They afford a knowledge not only of language, but also of life. Through them ordinary people are revealed in the ordinary relations of every day. In them, the ancient world has been made to live again.

A few examples (see the book of Professor Milligan mentioned at the end of the lesson) will serve to indicate the character of the papyrus letters.

The following boy's letter (of the second or the third century after Christ) is written in very bad grammar, but is for that reason all the more lifelike. (The translation is taken from Grenfell and Hunt, "Oxyrhynchus Papyri," Part i., p. 186.)

"Theon to his father Theon, greeting. It was a fine thing of you not to take me with you to the city! If you won't take me with you to Alexandria I won't write you a letter or speak to you or say good-by to you; and if you go to Alexandria I won't take your hand nor ever greet you again. That is what will happen if you won't take me. Mother said to Archalaus, 'It quite upsets him to be left behind (?).' It was good of you to send me presents . . . on the 12th, the day you sailed. Send me a lyre, I implore you. If you don't, I won't eat, I won't drink; there now!"

The following invitation to dinner, of the second century after Christ, throws light upon I Corinthians (the translation taken from Professor Milligan):

"Antonius, son of Ptolemæus, invites you to dine with him at the table of the lord Serapis in the house of Claudius Serapion on the 16th at 9 o'clock."

"The lord Serapis" is a god. Even an ordinary dinner party seems thus to be regarded as the table of Serapis. Under such conditions the Christian life must have been hard to lead. No wonder the Corinthian Christians had to ask Paul questions. Even the ordinary affairs of life were intimately connected with a false religion. What should the attitude of the Christians be? Where should they draw the line in associating with their heathen friends?

4. A REAL GOSPEL IN A REAL WORLD

The people that are introduced to us so intimately in the papyri are probably very fair representatives of the people among whom the gospel was first proclaimed. In that cosmopolitan age the society of Egyptian towns was probably not so very different from that of Corinth. The people of the papyri are not the great men of the time; they are just plain folk. But the early Christians were also usually not of exalted social position, though there were exceptions. "Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" were called. I Cor. 1 : 26. Many of the early Christians were slaves, many were humble tradesmen. The same classes appear in the papyri. In the papyri we are introduced into the private lives of the men to whom the gospel was proclaimed. Seeing, but unseen, hidden as by a magic cap, we watch them in their most intimate affairs. And we come away with a new feeling of the reality of early Christian history. These men were not so very different from ourselves. They were real men and women, living in a real world. And they needed a real gospel.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible," extra volume: Ramsay, article on "Religion of Greece," pp. 109-156, especially pp. 135-156. Milligan, "Selections from the Greek Papyri," (with translations). Deissmann, "The Philology of the Greek Bible," pp. 1-63, 144-147. Ramsay, "The Cities of St. Paul," pp. 1-47. Browning, "Cleon," (vol. iv, pp. 115-122 of the Riverside Edition.)

LESSON IV

THE JEWISH BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIANITY

I. PALESTINIAN JUDAISM

1. SOURCES

The New Testament is one of the chief sources of information about the Palestinian Judaism of the first century. Other important sources are the works of Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, and the Mishna. The Mishna is a collection of Jewish interpretations of the Mosaic law. In its written form it is thought to have been produced at the end of the second century, but it contains a mass of earlier material which had been preserved by oral tradition.

2. OUTLINE OF JEWISH HISTORY

After the conclusion of the Old Testament period the Jewish nation had undergone important changes. If, therefore, the Judaism of the first century is to be understood, the student must have in mind at least a bare outline of the history between the Testaments.

Old Testament history closes with the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the reorganization of the national life which took place under Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century before Christ. At that time Judah, or "Judea," was the only part of Palestine which was occupied by the Jews, and they occupied it only as vassals—though with independence in internal affairs—of the kings of Persia.

The Persian dominion continued for over a century. Then, in the latter part of the fourth century before Christ, Judea was conquered by Alexander the Great. For some hundred years after the death of Alexander, the country was a bone of contention between the kings of Egypt and the kings of Syria—that is, between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. At the beginning of the second century before Christ the king of Syria won a permanent victory.

Under the Ptolemies and at first under the Seleucids, as well as under the Persians, the Jews enjoyed a considerable measure of independence in the management of their own affairs. Their re-

ligion, in particular, was left quite unmolested. But the assimilation which was not being accomplished by force was being accomplished by peaceful influences. The all-pervasive Greek culture of the period was making itself felt in Palestine as well as elsewhere. Judea seemed to be in danger of being Hellenized.

Under the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria (175-164 B. C.), however, the policy of toleration was suddenly interrupted. Antiochus tried to stamp out the Jewish religion by force. The result was a heroic uprising led by Mattathias and his sons, who are called the Maccabees. The tyranny of Antiochus had caused a mighty popular reaction against the Hellenizing party among the Jews. Devotion to the religion of Israel with exclusion of foreign influences was ever afterwards the dominant tendency in Jewish history.

The Maccabees were at first wonderfully successful against overwhelming odds; and when the opposing forces seemed at last to have become too powerful, internal conflicts at the Syrian court gave the Jewish patriots that independence which they could probably not otherwise have maintained. Rulers belonging to the Maccabean dynasty governed the Jewish nation for about a hundred years, during most of which period they were independent. Their territory at first embraced only Judea, but was gradually enlarged over the other parts of Palestine. Galilee, which—since the destruction of the northern Israelitish kingdom centuries before—had become predominantly Gentile, was Judaized under Aristobulus I in 104-103 B. C. Before the time of Christ it had become thoroughly Jewish.

Unfortunately the worldly power of the Maccabees had brought worldliness of spirit. The first revolt had been undertaken from a lofty religious motive, in order to maintain the worship of Jehovah. As the years went on, the Maccabean rulers became increasingly engrossed in the extension of political power. Allying themselves with the aristocratic party among the Jews, they came to favor the extension of those Greek influences—though not in the sphere of religion—which at first they had opposed. Under Queen Alexandra (76-67 B. C.) it is true, there was a reaction. The strictly Jewish, anti-Hellenistic party again became dominant. But under Alexandra's successors there was civil strife, and the all-conquering Romans found the country an easy prey. Pompey took possession of Jerusalem in 63 B. C.

The years that followed saw the gradual rise of the family of Herod the Great, who, as vassal of the Romans, became king of all

Palestine in 37 B. C. and ruled until 4 B. C. Herod was an Idumæan, not a genuine Jew. Idumæa, however, the country to the south of Judah, had been Judaized some time before. Herod was at heart a Hellenist. He built Greek theaters and amphitheaters not only in the numerous Greek cities in or near Palestine, but also in Jerusalem itself. Nevertheless he was wise enough to support the Jewish religion and generally to respect the customs of the people. His magnificent rebuilding of the temple was probably intended chiefly to win popular favor.

At Herod's death, his territory was divided among his sons. Archelaus was given Judea, Antipas—the "Herod" of Jesus' public ministry—received Galilee and Perea, with the title of "Tetrarch," and Philip received certain territories to the east of Galilee. Archelaus was banished in A. D. 6, Antipas was banished in A. D. 39, and Philip died in A. D. 33. After the banishment of Archelaus, Judea was administered by Roman procurators till A. D. 41, when all Palestine was given to Herod Agrippa I. Acts 12: 1-4, 18-23. After A. D. 44, procurators were again in control.

The misgovernment of the procurators led to the great revolt in A. D. 66. After four years of war, Jerusalem was taken by the Roman army in A. D. 70. The temple was destroyed, and the offering of sacrifices ceased. The destruction of the temple marks an epoch in Jewish history. Henceforth the national center was gone.

There was another uprising in A. D. 132-135, but that was the last. A Gentile city was erected on the ruins of Jerusalem, and for a considerable time at least the Jews were forbidden even to enter its precincts.

3. ADMINISTRATION AND PARTIES

After the return from the Exile, the priests occupied a position of leadership. The high priest, whose office was hereditary, was practically head of the Jewish state. With him was associated a council, composed of members of the priestly aristocracy. This state of affairs prevailed during the Persian and Greek periods. Under the Maccabees the power of the high priest reached its highest point. For after a time the Maccabean rulers themselves assumed the title of high priest, and still later the title of king. The high priest, then, under the Maccabees, was also king. Under Herod the Great, on the contrary, the high priesthood sank to its lowest ebb. Herod made and unmade high priests at pleasure.

The council associated with the high priest was, under Alexandra, opened to the members of the strict anti-Hellenistic party. At the time of Christ it included both Pharisees and Sadducees.

These parties became distinct at the time of the Maccabees. The Sadducees—the origin of the name is not altogether clear—were the aristocratic party, hospitable to Greek culture. The Pharisees were the strict Jewish party, devoted to the law, and opposed to foreign influences. The name “Pharisee” means “separated.” The Pharisees were “separated” from the mass of the people by a stricter observance of the Mosaic law. At first the Pharisees supported the Maccabean leaders; for the Maccabean revolt was in the interests of the Jewish religion. But when the Maccabees became engrossed in worldly politics and susceptible to Greek influences the Pharisees opposed them. At the time of Christ the essential characteristics of the parties remained unchanged.

4. LANGUAGE

Some centuries before Christ, Hebrew had ceased to be the ordinary language of Palestine. As the language of the Old Testament it continued to be studied. Old Testament passages in Hebrew were read in the synagogue. Hebrew was used also to some extent as the language of learned discussion. But for all ordinary purposes its place had been taken by Aramaic, a language of the Semitic family closely related to Hebrew. At the time of Christ Aramaic was the spoken language of the Palestinian Jews. Even in the synagogues, the Old Testament passages, after having been read in Hebrew, were translated orally into the language which the people could understand.

But, since the time of Alexander the Great, another language had made its way into Palestine along with Aramaic. This was the Greek. The kingdoms into which Alexander's empire was divided were Greek kingdoms. Two of them, Syria and Egypt, bore rule alternately over Palestine. With the Greek government came Greek culture and the Greek language. Then, under Antiochus Epiphanes, there was a mighty reaction. Thereafter religion, at least, was kept altogether free from Greek influences.

In other spheres, however, under the Maccabean kings and still more under the Romans, Greek culture effected an entrance. At the time of Christ there were typical Greek cities not only to the east of the Jordan in Decapolis, where magnificent ruins even to-day attest the ancient Greco-Roman civilization, and not only

along the coast of the Mediterranean, but even within the confines of Palestine proper. With some truth Palestine in the first century may be called a bilingual country. Greek and Aramaic were both in use.

Aramaic was the language of the mass of the people. Many, no doubt, could speak no other language. But if a man desired to make his way in the world in any public capacity or in trade he would be obliged to learn the cosmopolitan language of the time. No doubt very many could speak both languages.

Jesus and his apostles belonged to those circles which were least affected by the encroachments of Greek civilization. The whole atmosphere of the Gospels is as un-Greek as could be imagined. As is proved by the presence of Aramaic words even in our Greek Gospels, Aramaic was undoubtedly the language in which the gospel was originally proclaimed. Aramaic was the language of Jesus' boyhood home, and Aramaic was the language of his intercourse with the disciples and of his public preaching.

It is perfectly possible, however, that even Jesus may have used Greek upon rare occasions, for example in conversation with Pilate, the Roman procurator. His disciples, after the resurrection, found themselves at the head of a Greek-speaking community. The early Church in Jerusalem was composed not only of "Hebrews," but also of "Grecians," or Hellenists. Acts 6:1. The Hellenists were Greek-speaking Jews of the dispersion who were sojourning more or less permanently in the holy city. The apostles seem to have entered upon their new functions without difficulty. Some knowledge of Greek, no doubt, all of them brought with them from their Galilean homes, and their knowledge would be increased through practice. It is not surprising then that several of the original apostles and two of the brothers of Jesus were the authors of Greek books of the New Testament.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Riggs, "A History of the Jewish People," especially pp. 105-116, 143-153, 215-231. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Council," "Pharisees," "Sadducees," "Synagogue," "School," "Scribe," "Aramaic," and "Hebrew." The outline of Jewish history and institutions which is provided in the lesson helps for this lesson and the following is dependent especially upon the large German work of Schürer.

LESSON V

THE JEWISH BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIANITY

II. THE JUDAISM OF THE DISPERSION

The presentation of the lesson in class may be begun somewhat in the manner suggested in the Student's Text Book. The student should be made to appreciate the practical problem of a missionary in a new city. Various solutions of the problem may be adopted. The missionary may simply engage in conversation with individuals in the street, or he may hire a room and advertise his preaching. In any case the securing of an audience is usually no easy matter. It is difficult to know how to begin.

The case might naturally have been the same with Paul and his companions when, for example, after the journey up from Perga they arrived at Pisidian Antioch. Complete strangers were perhaps not much better received in those days than they are now. How could the missionaries get a hearing for their message? In some cases, they might simply take their stand in the market place and talk to the passers-by. Paul tried that method in Athens. It might do when nothing better offered. But fortunately there was usually a far better opportunity. The synagogue offered an audience. What is more, it offered just exactly the most promising audience that could possibly have been secured.

The scene in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch is typical of what happened again and again. The student should be made to appreciate the remarkable liberality and informality of the synagogue customs. There seem to have been no set preachers. Any Jew who really had a message could be heard. He needed only to go in and sit down. Acts 13 : 14. Paul and Barnabas had no difficulty in making their fitness known. "Brethren," said the rulers of the synagogue, "if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." Acts 13 : 15. They had a word of exhortation indeed. "Jesus is the Messiah for whom you are waiting. He has died for your sins. He has risen from the dead, and is now alive to save you." It was a powerful word, and it bore fruit.

The native Jews, it is true, soon came out in opposition. The

reasons for their opposition are not far to seek. Jealousy was an important factor. Christianity was evidently too radical a thing to be simply a sect of Judaism. If allowed to continue, it would destroy the prerogatives of Israel. It could not be controlled. Its success was too great. On that next Sabbath in Pisidian Antioch, "almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God." The Jewish mission had never had a success like that. "When the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy." Christianity had taken away the heritage of Israel.

In one way the Jewish opposition displayed genuine insight into the situation. Christianity was really destined to be a fatal rival to the older Judaism. What took place on a small scale at Antioch was repeated on the larger stage of history. When the Christian mission began, Judaism was a successful missionary religion. Soon afterwards it had withdrawn hopelessly into its age-long isolation. Various causes contributed to this result. The destruction of the national life in Palestine and the increasing influence of the strict rabbinical schools both had an important part. But at least one factor in the process was the competition of the Christian Church. Christianity offered the world everything that Judaism could offer, and more. It offered the knowledge of the one God, and the lofty morality, and the authoritative Book. In addition, it offered a way of redemption—and the men of that time were preëminently seekers after redemption—through the sacrifice of Christ. It offered all these things, moreover, without requiring any relinquishment of purely national characteristics. Christianity did not demand union with any one race. It had a gospel for the world.

No wonder, then, that those who had been attracted by Judaism now became adherents of Christianity. The Jews were filled with envy. It was natural from their point of view, but it was a sad mistake. Had they themselves accepted the gospel, the gospel would have been to their glory. How glorious was the mission of Israel! A blessing to the whole world! Far better than any narrow particularism! But they were not willing to accept the message. Nevertheless, despite their opposition, the Church should not forget the debt which she owes to Israel. The dispersion was like the Judaism of Palestine. In both cases the men themselves were opposed to the gospel. But in both cases they had preserved the deposit of divine truth. Judaism, despite itself, opened the way for the Christian Church.

One service which the dispersion rendered to Christianity has been illustrated by the scene at Pisidian Antioch. That service was the providing of an audience. Another service was the assurance of legal protection. This may be illustrated by another incident in The Acts—the appeal to Gallio. Acts 18 : 12-17. There the opposition of the Jews appears in all its bitterness. No doubt that opposition was a serious hindrance to the work of the Church. Just because Christianity was regarded as a Jewish sect, the Christians were subject to persecution by the Jewish authorities. But persecutions by the Jews, annoying though they were, were far less serious than opposition on the part of the Roman authorities. And the latter was, at first, conspicuously absent. Gallio's decision is a fair example of the general attitude of the Roman magistrates. Christianity, as a Jewish sect, was allowed to go its way. Judaism, despite itself, afforded the Church legal protection.

Beginning with these two striking scenes, the teacher may proceed to the more general presentation of the lesson. In what follows, the outline of the Student's Text Book will be supplemented at one or two points.

1. THE CAUSES AND EXTENT OF THE DISPERSION

Deportations of Jews to foreign countries took place at various times. The most famous of those deportations was carried out by Nebuchadnezzar after his conquest of Judah, about 600 B. C. Many of Nebuchadnezzar's captives did not join in the return under the Persian monarchy, but remained permanently in the east and formed the nucleus of the large Jewish population of Mesopotamia. When Pompey conquered Palestine in the first century before Christ, he carried many Jews as slaves to Rome. Afterwards they were liberated, and formed a large Jewish colony at the capital of the empire. These are merely examples. Part of the dispersion was due to forcible exile.

Other causes have been mentioned in the Student's Text Book. It is a question, however, whether all of these causes combined are sufficient to account for the extraordinary growth of the dispersion. Schürer believes that the vastness of the Jewish population presupposes the merging of large bodies of proselytes into the Jewish people. He also believes, however, that these thoroughgoing conversions were less numerous in New Testament times than they had been before.

Harnack calculates that at the time of the death of Augustus

there were from four million to four and a half million Jews in the Roman Empire, including about seven hundred thousand in Palestine, and that, if that estimate be correct, then the Jews formed perhaps some seven per cent of the total population. Of course, Harnack is himself the first to admit that such calculations are exceedingly uncertain. But so much at least is clear—the Jews in the first century were surprisingly numerous.

2. THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATION AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The name "Septuagint," derived from the Latin word for "seventy," has been applied to the Alexandrian translation of the Old Testament in reference to an ancient story about its origin. According to this story, the translation was made by seventy-two men summoned from Jerusalem by Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, in order to add the Jewish law to the royal library at Alexandria. The story is certainly not true in details, and is probably not even correct in representing the translation as destined primarily for the royal library. More probably the translation was intended for the Greek-speaking Jews of Egypt.

The Septuagint is a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek world language of the period, and into the popular, spoken form of that language, not into the literary form. The translation differs widely in character in the different books, for many different translators had a part in it. Some of the books are translated with such slavish literalness as to be almost unintelligible to a Greek. Everywhere, indeed, the influence of the Hebrew original makes itself felt to some degree. Hebrew idioms are often copied in the translation instead of being remolded according to the peculiarities of the Greek language.

The Septuagint exerted an important influence upon the language of the New Testament. The Septuagint was the Greek Bible of the New Testament writers, and the influence of a Bible upon language is very strong. A good example is afforded by the influence of the King James Version upon the whole development of modern English. It is not surprising, therefore, that as the Septuagint was influenced by Hebrew, so the language of the New Testament also displays a Semitic coloring. That coloring was induced partly by the Septuagint, but it was also induced in other ways. Part of the New Testament, for example the words of Jesus, goes back ultimately to an Aramaic original. All the New Testament

writers except one were Jews, and had spoken Aramaic as well as Greek. No wonder, then, that their Greek was influenced by the Semitic languages. This Semitic influence upon the language of the New Testament is not so great as was formerly supposed, but it cannot be ignored. The New Testament is written in the natural, non-literary form of the Greek world language. That is the main thing to be said. But upon this base is superposed an appreciable influence of Hebrew and Aramaic.

The importance of the Septuagint for the early Christian mission was inestimable. Every pioneer missionary knows how difficult it is to create the vocabulary necessary to express new religious ideas. In the case of the earliest Christian mission, that labor had already been done. It had been done by the Jews of Alexandria. By the Septuagint, the great ideas of the Old Testament—and upon these ideas Christianity was based—had already been put into a Greek form. The Christian Church needed only to develop what had been begun. The Church made good use of her opportunity. The influence of the Septuagint upon the religious vocabulary of the New Testament writers was profound. The Septuagint had provided a vocabulary which was understood already by great masses of people—by the Jews of the dispersion and by the hosts of the “God-worshippers” who attended the synagogues. Naturally the Christian missionaries used the words which people could understand.

3. CONCLUSION

The Judaism of the dispersion was a wonderful preparation for the gospel. Israel ought to be regarded with gratitude and sympathy. But the ultimate object of gratitude is God.

The Church was founded in a time of opportunity. The Roman Government had brought peace. The Greek language had welded the nations together. The dispersion of the Jews had prepared the way. These things did not come by chance. The nations were instruments in the hand of God. But instruments for what? A mighty, age-long plan! Centuries of preparation! At last the Saviour came. But did he come for naught? Or is he Saviour of you and me?

IN THE LIBRARY.—Edersheim (revised by White), “History of the Jewish Nation,” pp. 45-79. “The Jewish Encyclopedia”: Reinach, article on “Diaspora.” Hastings, “Dictionary of the Bible”: Schürer, article on “Diaspora,” extra volume, pp. 91-109.

LESSON VI

THE MESSIAH

The teaching of this lesson may be begun with Acts 2 : 17-21. Surely the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was something new. Yet even that was explained by a reference to prophecy. And the reference is of remarkable aptness and beauty.

The Pentecostal speech of Peter is full of the appeal to prophecy. Primarily, indeed, the claims of Jesus are supported by the direct testimony to his resurrection. Without the facts, of course appeal to prophecy would have been useless; for it was just the wonderful correspondence of the facts with the prophecies that could induce belief. Along with the direct testimony to the facts went the appeal to prophecy. The promised king of David's line at last has come. Acts 2 : 30; II Sam. 7 : 12, 13; Ps. 89 : 3, 4; 132 : 11. And David's son is David's Lord—David's Lord and ours. Acts 2 : 34, 35; Ps. 110 : 1; compare Matt. 22 : 41-46.

1. THE NEW TESTAMENT APPEAL TO PROPHECY

This speech of Peter is typical of the preaching of the early Church. The appeal to prophecy was absolutely central in the presentation of the gospel. Proof of that fact does not need to be sought. It is written plain on the pages of the New Testament. Old Testament prophecy was found to apply not merely to one side of the work of Christ, but to all sides. Israel had looked not merely for a king, but also for a prophet and a priest. Peter, after his first arrest, for example, could appeal to the notable prophecy of Deuteronomy: "A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me." Acts 3 : 22; Deut. 18 : 15, 19. The author of Hebrews could appeal to the priest after the order of Melchizedek, Heb. 5 : 6; Ps. 110 : 4, and to the symbolic sacrifices of the temple which found their fulfillment on Calvary.

The appeal to prophecy extended even to those things which were most distinctive of the Christian message. "I delivered unto you first of all," says Paul, "that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was

buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures." I Cor. 15 : 3, 4. Here the death and the resurrection of Christ are both declared to be according to the Scriptures. That means that they were the subject of prophecy. But the death and the resurrection of Christ were the fundamental elements of the gospel. The gospel, then, in the form of prophecy, is to be found in the Old Testament.

What Old Testament passages has Paul here in mind? With regard to the death for our sins, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was probably in his mind. That passage was being read by the Ethiopian when Philip met him, and Philip made the passage a basis for preaching about Jesus. Acts 8 : 27-35. With regard to the resurrection, it is natural to think of Ps. 16 : 10. Paul himself quoted that passage in his speech at Pisidian Antioch. Acts 13 : 34-37.

The appeal to prophecy did not begin with the apostles. It was initiated by Jesus himself. "To-day," said Jesus at Nazareth after the reading of Isa. 61 : 1, 2, "hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." A large claim! No wonder they found it difficult to accept. When John the Baptist asked, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" it was to "the works of the Christ" that Jesus appealed. Matt. 11 : 2-6; Isa. 35 : 5, 6; 61 : 1. These are merely examples. Throughout, Jesus represented himself and his kingdom as the fulfillment of the ancient promise. "O foolish men," he said to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, "and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke 24 : 25-27.

2. THE MESSIANIC HOPE A PREPARATION FOR THE GOSPEL

When the gospel was preached to pure Gentiles, a great deal of preliminary labor had to be done. Under what title should the claims of the Saviour be presented? "Christ" to the Gentiles was almost meaningless, till explained. "Son of God" was open to sad misconception. There were "sons of God" in Greek mythology, but they were not what the early Christians meant to show that Jesus was. These difficulties were overcome, and speedily. Gentile Christians were imbued with a lofty and adequate conception of the Lord. The labor was great, but it was gloriously accomplished.

In this labor, however, the missionaries were assisted by the

synagogues of the Jews. In the synagogues, "Christ" was no new term, and no new conception. In the synagogues, one proposition needed first to be proved, "This Jesus . . . is the Christ." Acts 17 : 3. If that were proved, then the rest would follow. The Jews knew that the Messiah was Lord and Master. Identify Jesus with him, and all the lofty claims of Jesus would be substantiated. How the identity was established may be observed in the speech of Peter on the day of Pentecost, or in the speech of Paul at Pisidian Antioch. Acts 13 : 16-43.

It will be remembered that the synagogues attracted not merely Jews but also Gentiles. The Gentile "God-fearers," as well as the Jews, were acquainted with the Messianic hope. Even the Gentile mission, therefore, was prepared for by the prophets of Israel.

3. THE PERMANENT VALUE OF PROPHECY

The appeal to prophecy, however, was not merely valuable to the early Church. It is of abiding worth. It represents Jesus as the culmination of a divine purpose. The hope of Israel was in itself a proof of revelation, because it was so unlike the religious conceptions of other nations. The covenant people, the righteous king, the living God, the world-wide mission—that is the glory of Israel. The promise is itself a proof. But still more the fulfillment. The fulfillment was an unfolding. Wonderful correspondence in detail—and far more wonderful the correspondence of the whole! The promise was manifold. Sometimes the Messiah is in the foreground. Sometimes he is out of sight. Sometimes there is a human king, sometimes Jehovah himself coming to judgment; sometimes a kingdom, sometimes a new covenant in the heart; sometimes a fruitful Canaan, sometimes a new heaven and a new earth. But manifold though the promise, Christ is the fulfillment of it all. "How many soever be the promises of God," in Christ is the yea. II Cor. 1 : 20. There is the wonder. In Christ the apparent contradictions of the promise become glorious unity, in Christ the deeper mysteries of the promise are revealed. Christ the keystone of the arch! Christ the culmination of a divine plan! That is the witness of the prophets. It is a witness worth having.

4. THE MESSIANIC HOPE OF LATER JUDAISM

After the close of the Old Testament, the promise did not die. It was preserved in the Scriptures. It continued to be the life of

the Jewish nation. But it was not only preserved. It was also interpreted. Some of the interpretation was false, but much of it was true. The Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament promise is worthy of attention. What did the Jews of the first century mean by the Messiah, and what did they mean by the Messianic age?

In the first place, they retained the hope of a king of David's line—a human king who should conquer the enemies of Israel. When it was held in a one-sided form this was a dangerous hope. It led logically to materialistic conceptions of the kingdom of God and to political unrest. It led to the effort of the Jews to take Jesus by force and make him a king. John 6 : 15. It led to the quarrel of the disciples about the chief places in the kingdom. Matt. 18 : 1-4; Mark 9 : 33-35; Luke 9 : 46, 47. This conception of the Messiah had to be corrected by Jesus. "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18 : 36.

Yet even where the Messiah was conceived of as an earthly ruler, the spiritual hope was by no means always and altogether lost. The "Psalms of Solomon," for example, Pharisaic psalms of the first century before Christ, though they look for an earthly ruler, picture him as one who shall rule in righteousness. "And a righteous king and taught of God is he that reigneth over them; And there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their king is the Lord Messiah" (Ps. Sol. xvii, 35, 36. See Ryle and James, "Psalms of the Pharisees," especially pp. 137-147). No iniquity in the days of the Messiah! That is true understanding of the Old Testament, even joined with the political ideal.

In the second place, however, the Messianic age is sometimes in later Judaism conceived of as purely supernatural. The Messiah is not an earthly ruler, merely helped by God, but himself a heavenly being, a preëxistent "Son of Man," judge of all the earth. The Messianic age is ushered in not by human warfare, but by a mighty catastrophic act of God. Not a liberated Canaan is here the ideal, but a new heaven and a new earth.

This transcendental, supernaturalistic form of the Messianic hope appears in the "Book of Enoch" and other "apocalypses." Its details are fantastic, but it was by no means altogether wrong. In many respects it was a correct interpretation of the divine promise. The new heavens and the new earth are derived from Isa. 65 : 17. The doctrine of the two ages was accepted by Jesus and by Paul—for example Matt. 12 : 32; Gal. 1 : 4; Eph. 1 : 21.

The heavenly "Son of Man" goes back to Dan. 7 : 13, 14. The Book of Enoch was not altogether wrong. Its use of the title "Son of Man" prepared for the title which Jesus used.

Finally, the Messianic hope was held in a pure and lofty form by the "poor of the land"—simple folk like those who appear in the first two chapters of Luke. In the hymns of Mary and Zacharias and Simeon, purely political and materialistic conceptions are in the background, and the speculations of the apocalypses do not appear. The highest elements of prophecy are made prominent. "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke 2 : 30-32. In those circles, the hope of Israel burned still and pure.

Later Judaism thus preserved the manifoldness of prophecy. There was exaggeration and there was one-sidedness; but in Judaism as a whole the promise was preserved. One element at most was forgotten—the suffering servant and his sacrificial death. The death of the Messiah was no easy conception. The disciples had difficulty with it. When Peter heard of it, he took Jesus, and began to rebuke him. Matt. 16 : 22. The lesson was not easy, but it had to be learned. And it was worth learning. The cross is the heart of the gospel.

Thus in Jesus nothing was left out, except what was false. The whole promise was preserved. The revealer of God, the ruler of the kingdom, the great high priest, the human deliverer, the divine Lord—these are the elements of the promise. They find their union in Christ. Leave one out, and the promise is mutilated. Such mutilation is popular to-day. The whole Christ seems too wonderful. But the Church can be satisfied with nothing less.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Beecher, "The Prophets and the Promise," pp. 173-420.

LESSON VII

THE BOOK OF THE ACTS

The teaching of the lesson may be begun with some very simple questions. If rightly put, they will open up a fresh way of looking at a New Testament book. The way will thus be prepared for considering the deeper elements of the lesson. If interest can be aroused in the book itself, the contents of the book, in the lessons which follow, will be studied with much livelier attention.

1. AUTHORSHIP

Who wrote the book of The Acts? How do you know? The former question will probably be answered without difficulty, but the latter may reveal difference of opinion. Many of the students will know that The Acts was written by the same man as the Gospel of Luke. But that does not settle the question. How do you know that Luke was written by Luke? The name does not occur in the Gospel itself. The title, "According to Luke," was probably added later. So, in order to determine the authorship both of Luke and of The Acts, recourse must be had to Christian tradition.

Fortunately, however, tradition in this case is quite unimpeachable.

In the first place, although the author of The Acts is not named in the book, yet the book is not an anonymous work. Undoubtedly the name of the author was known from the beginning. For the book is dedicated to an individual, Theophilus. Evidently Theophilus knew who the author was. Information about the author could thus be had from the start. If, therefore, Luke did not really write The Acts, some one has removed the name of the true author and substituted "Luke" in place of it. That is an exceedingly unlikely supposition.

In the second place, it is evident quite independently of any tradition that the book was written by an eyewitness of part of Paul's missionary journeys. This fact appears from the so-called "we-sections" of the book. In certain portions of the narrative the author uses the first person instead of the third. Of this pe-

culiarity there is only one satisfactory explanation. The author uses the first person when he is describing the experiences in which he himself had a part. When, for example, the author says, not, "They made a straight course to Samothrace," but "We made a straight course," Acts 16 : 11, he means that he was present on that voyage. This natural supposition is confirmed by the character of the "we-sections." These sections are full of such a wealth of artless detail that no one but an eyewitness could possibly have written them.

The only possible way of avoiding the conclusion that a companion of Paul wrote the book of The Acts is to maintain that although such a man wrote the "we-sections" some one else wrote the rest of the book. But that is unlikely in the extreme. If a later author had been simply using as a source a diary of a companion of Paul, he would surely either have told us he was quoting, or else have changed the first person to the third. By leaving the third person in he would simply have been producing nonsense. Everyone knew who the author of the book was. The book is dedicated to a definite man. The author evidently could not have palmed himself off as a companion of Paul even if he would. And if he desired to do it, he would not have chosen this remarkable way of doing it. Of course if he had been a mere thoughtless compiler he might have copied his source with such slavish exactness as to leave the "we" in without noticing that in the completed work it would produce nonsense. But he was most assuredly not a mere compiler. If he used sources, he did not use them that way. The book shows a remarkable unity of style. Modern research has demonstrated that fact beyond peradventure. There is a remarkable similarity of style between the "we-sections" and the rest of the book. Only one hypothesis, then, does justice to the facts. The author of the "we-sections" was also the author of the whole book. When he comes to those parts of the narrative in which he himself had a part, he says very naturally "we," instead of "they."

The book of The Acts, then, was written by a companion of Paul. That fact stands firm, even apart from any tradition. And that is the really important fact. If the book was written by an eyewitness, the particular name of the eyewitness is comparatively unimportant. But the tradition as to the name is without doubt correct. There is not the slightest reason for calling it in question. What the book of The Acts itself says about its author fits exactly what Paul says about Luke.

2. DATE

The authorship of The Acts is certain. The date, however, is not so clear. The book was written by Luke. But when was it written? The latter question cannot be answered with perfect precision. At least, however, since the book was written by Luke, it must have been written during the lifetime of a companion of Paul. A. D. 100, for example, would be too late, and A. D. 90 would be unlikely. A good deal can be said for putting the date at about A.D. 63. This early date would explain the abrupt ending of the book.

One of the most curious things about The Acts is that the narrative is suddenly broken off just at the most interesting point. The trial of Paul is narrated at very great length, but we are not told how it came out. The final decision, the climax of the whole long narrative, is just at hand; but with regard to it we are left altogether in suspense. Was Paul released? Was he condemned and executed? The author does not say. His silence requires an explanation.

The simplest explanation would be that Luke wrote his book at the very point of time where the narrative is broken off. Of course he could not tell us any more if nothing more had happened. He brought his narrative right up to date. Nothing more was possible.

It is true, other explanations may be proposed.

(a) It has been suggested, for example, that The Acts closes so abruptly because the author was saving something for another work. As The Acts is the continuation of the Gospel of Luke, so a third work, it is said, was planned as the continuation of The Acts. But even so, it seems rather strange that the author should not have given at least a hint of the outcome of that trial in order to take the edge off our curiosity. He has done something like that at the conclusion of his Gospel; why not also at the conclusion of The Acts?

(b) But perhaps the ending is not so abrupt as it looks. The author's purpose, it is said, was not to write a biography of Paul, but to show how the gospel spread from Jerusalem to Rome. When Rome was reached, then the narrative was broken off. Biographical details—even the most interesting details about the most interesting character—were ruthlessly excluded. The plan of the book had been accomplished. For this explanation there is much to be said. But the trouble with it is that especially in the latter part of the book the author as a matter of fact does show considerable interest in

biographical details. The trial and shipwreck of Paul are narrated with a fullness which is quite out of proportion to the rest of the history. After such a full account of the trial, it remains rather strange that the author has said not a word about the outcome.

Either of these last two explanations is perfectly possible. Possibly The Acts was written as late as A. D. 80. But the early date at least explains the peculiar ending best of all.

3. SOURCES

Where did Luke get the materials for his work? Did he use written sources as well as oral information? The question has been discussed at very great length, but without much uniformity in the results. If he used written sources, at least he used them skillfully, placing upon them the imprint of his own style. The book possesses genuine unity.

The really important fact about the sources of the book of The Acts is a negative fact. Whatever the sources were, the Pauline epistles were not among them. Compare the passages where Paul and Luke narrate the same events—for example Gal., chs. 1, 2, with the corresponding passages in The Acts—and it becomes evident that the two narratives are entirely independent. Luke did not use the Pauline epistles in writing his book. That is an exceedingly significant fact. It shows that The Acts is an independent witness. What is more, it strengthens materially the argument for the early date of The Acts. The Pauline epistles at a very early time began to be collected and used generally in the Church. In A. D. 100, for example, they would certainly have been used by anyone who was writing an account of Paul's life. Since, therefore, the book of The Acts does not use them, that book must have been written earlier, and probably very much earlier. Even in A. D. 80, it would perhaps have been strange that the epistles should not have been used.

4. PURPOSE

The proper purpose of a historian is to tell the truth. And Luke was a genuine historian. His own account of his method, Luke 1 : 1-4, shows that he knew the meaning of historical research, and the character of his books bears this out. Luke did not permit any desire of putting Christianity in a good light, or of defending one kind of Christianity against another, to interfere with the primary duty of truthfulness.

That does not mean, however, that the book of The Acts is like some modern university dissertations—written simply and solely in order to say some new thing, whether interesting or no. No great historian goes to work that way. Of course Luke had an interest in his subject matter. Of course he was convinced that Christianity was a great thing, and was full of enthusiasm in narrating its history. In that he was perfectly right. Christianity really was a great thing. The best celebration of its greatness was a narration of the facts. Christian faith is based on fact. Luke wrote, not only in the Gospel but also in The Acts, in order that his readers might know the certainty concerning the things wherein they were instructed. Luke 1 : 4.

5. LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS

The author of The Acts was well acquainted with the Old Testament. He was able to catch the spirit of the primitive Palestinian church. His books exhibit the influence of the Semitic languages. But he was also capable of a Greek style which would have passed muster in the schools of rhetoric. Luke 1 : 1-4, for example, is a typical Greek sentence. Evidently Luke could move with ease in the larger Greek world of his time. His references to political and social conditions are extraordinarily exact. His narrative is never lacking in local color. He knows the proper titles of the local officials, and the peculiar quality of the local superstitions. His account of the shipwreck is a mine of information about the seafaring of antiquity. Evidently he was a keen observer, and a true traveler of a cosmopolitan age. His narrative is characterized by a certain delightful urbanity—an urbanity, however, which is deepened and ennobled by profound convictions.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Warfield, "Acts, Timothy, Titus and Philemon," in "The Temple Bible," pp. i-xxvii. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves, article on "Acts of the Apostles." Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 1-8. M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," in "The Guild Text Books," pp. 41-46. Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Headlam, article on "Acts of the Apostles."

LESSON VIII

THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION THE FOUNDATION OF APOSTOLIC PREACHING

1. THE RESURRECTION A FACT OF HISTORY

Which of the books of the New Testament contain the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus? That question will serve to begin the teaching of the lesson. In answer to it, the students will probably mention the four Gospels. To the Gospels, however, should be added especially the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

The passage in First Corinthians is deserving of very careful attention. For, unlike the Gospels, that epistle can be dated to within a year or so. It was written only about twenty-five years after the crucifixion. Even though possibly some of the Gospels were written still earlier, the precision with which the epistle can be dated makes its witness particularly valuable. Furthermore, the author of the epistle is well known. No one doubts that First Corinthians was written by Paul, and Paul is the best-known man of apostolic times. Evidently his witness to the facts is of the utmost value.

Paul himself was a direct witness of the resurrection. He saw the risen Lord. I Cor. 9 : 1; 15 : 8. In I Cor. 15 : 1-8, however, he does not content himself with his own witness, but reproduces the testimony of others in an extended list. That testimony had come to Paul by ordinary word of mouth. "I delivered unto you first of all," says Paul, "that which also I received." In what follows there is a list of the appearances of the risen Christ. "He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also." Evidently these appearances are not conceived of merely as "visions," but as events in the external world. The mention of the burial, v. 4, is a plain hint that what Peter and the rest saw was the body of Jesus raised from the tomb.

That view of the matter is amply confirmed in the Gospels and in the book of The Acts. In the Gospels, we are told that the tomb was found empty on the morning of the third day after the crucifixion. It was found empty by some women and by Peter and John. Since the tomb was empty, the body which appeared to the disciples had some connection with the body which had been taken down from the cross. Furthermore, the Gospels and The Acts make the bodily character of the appearances abundantly plain. Jesus did not merely appear to the disciples at a distance. He walked with them on the road to Emmaus. He broke bread with them. He came into the very midst of them when they were assembled in a room. Thomas could even touch his hands and his side. These are merely examples. Clearly the testimony of the disciples is testimony not to mere spiritual experiences, but to the bodily presence of the Lord. It may be admitted that the body was a glorified body. After his resurrection Jesus was freed from the limitations of his earthly life. Nevertheless, he was not merely a "spirit." Luke 24 : 39. There was some real, though mysterious, connection between the glorified body and the body that had been laid in the tomb. The New Testament attests not merely the immortality of Jesus, but his resurrection.

The resurrection, in these days, is hard to accept. For it is a miracle. Against any miracle there is a tremendous presumption. In this case, however, the presumption has been overcome. It has been overcome by the character of Jesus. It is in the highest degree unlikely that an ordinary man should rise from the dead; but it is not unlikely that Jesus should have risen. The resurrection is unique. But so is the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The two wonders support one another. Explain away the testimony to the resurrection, and your task is not done. You must also explain away that sinless life. If Jesus rose from the dead he had a unique experience. But that is to be expected. For Jesus himself was unlike any other of the children of men. There are mysteries in his life that have never been explained.

The resurrection of Jesus is a well-attested fact of history. The proof of it is cumulative. Any one of the proofs might be regarded as insufficient when taken alone, but when taken together they are overpowering. The sinless, unearthly character of Jesus separates him from the rest of men, so that probabilities which apply to others do not apply to him. His mysterious self-consciousness involves so lofty a claim, that if he was not divine he was a megalomaniac.

maniac—he whose calmness and strength have left an impression which the centuries have done nothing to efface! The specific testimonies to the empty tomb and to the plain bodily appearances of the risen Lord are independent and varied. Finally, unless the resurrection be a fact, the very origin of the Christian Church becomes an insoluble mystery. The resurrection alone can explain the sudden transformation of a company of weak, discouraged men into the conquerors of the world.

The resurrection of Jesus is a fact of history. It is not an aspiration of the heart. It comes ultimately through the testimony of the senses. The apostles came forward with a piece of plain information. They were witnesses to a fact in the external world. That fact has put a new face upon life. It is good news of salvation.

2. THE RESURRECTION CONFIRMED BY EXPERIENCE

The resurrection is a fact of history. Accept it as true, and you can have hope for time and for eternity. At this point, however, some men experience a difficulty. How can the acceptance of a historical fact satisfy the longing of our souls? Must we stake our salvation upon the intricacies of historical research? Surely some more immediate certitude is required.

The objection would be valid if history stood alone. But history does not stand alone. It has suffered from a false isolation. A Christian certitude that is founded solely upon history is insufficient. History is necessary, but not sufficient. We need history, but we need something else as well.

A historical conviction of the resurrection of Jesus is not the end of faith, but only the beginning. If faith stops there, it will never stand the fires of criticism. We are told that Jesus lives. So much is a matter of testimony, a matter of history. If we believe the witness, then we can have hope. But the religious problem of our lives has not yet been solved. Jesus lives. But what good is it to us? If he lives, we need to find him. We need to find him, and we can find him. We accept the message of the resurrection enough to make trial of it. And making trial of it, we find that it is true. Jesus is found to be alive, for he makes answer to our prayer, and heals us. We never could have come to him unless we had accepted the historical evidence for the resurrection. But starting with that historical belief we went on to the blessed experience of salvation. Christian experience cannot do without

history. But it adds to history that directness, that immediateness, that simplicity of conviction, which delivers us from fear. We began with history. But we went on to experience. "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

3. THE DEATH

Jesus is alive. If we find him, he will heal us. But how shall we find him? In the New Testament we receive instruction.

In the New Testament a strange fact stares us in the face. The New Testament seems far more concerned with the death of Jesus than with the details of his life. Learned men have tried in vain to explain that curious fact. In elaborate treatises they have sought the explanation. But it is really very simple. The New Testament emphasizes the death of Jesus because that is what Jesus did for us—or rather, coming after his perfect obedience to the law, it is the culmination of what he did for us. In the account of Jesus' life we are told what Jesus did for others. That account is absolutely necessary. Without it we should never have been interested in Jesus at all. But it is to us a means to an end, not an end in itself. We read in the Gospel what Jesus did for others. For one he placed his fingers in the ears and said, "Be opened"; to another he said, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk"; to another, "Thy sins are forgiven." These things are what Jesus did for others. But what has he done for us? The answer of the New Testament is plain. For us he does not say, "Arise and walk." For us—he died. That mysterious thing which was wrought on Calvary—that was his work for us. The cross of Christ is a mystery. In the presence of it theology walks after all with but trembling, halting footsteps. Learning will never unlock its meaning. But to the penitent sinner, though mysterious, though full of baffling riddles, it is plain enough. On the cross Jesus dealt with our sin. Our dreadful guilt, the condemnation of God's law—it is wiped out by an act of grace. It seemed inseparable from us. It was a burden no earthly friend could bear. But Christ is Master of the innermost secrets of the moral world. He has accomplished the impossible, he has borne our sins.

By the cross he has healed us. But through whom does he apply the healing touch? Through no one, save his Spirit. For he is here himself. If we are seekers for him, then this day our search is over.

The death of Christ, in the modern Church, is often subordinated. Exclusive emphasis is laid upon the holy example and teaching of the Galilean prophet. The modern theologians would be right if there were no such thing as sin. If there were no such thing as guilt, and if there were no such thing as a dreadful enslaving power of evil, then a noble ideal might be sufficient. But to talk about an ideal to a man under the thralldom of sin is a cruel mockery.

Sin may indeed be glossed over. Let us make the best of our condition, we are told, let us do the best we can, let us simply trust in the all-conquering love of God. Dangerous advice! By it a certain superficial joy of life may be induced. But the joy rests upon an insecure foundation. It is dangerous to be happy on the brink of the abyss. Permanent joy can come only when sin has been faced honestly, and destroyed. It has been destroyed by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is true that God is loving. He has manifested his love, however, better than by complacency toward sin. He has manifested it by the gracious gift of a Saviour.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Denney, "The Death of Christ." Orr, "The Resurrection of Jesus." Crawford, "The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement."

LESSON IX

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The author of The Acts has given a wonderful picture of the early days of the Christian Church. The teacher should endeavor to present the picture before the mental vision of the class. History should not be studied merely as a dry record of events. The events should be seen as well as understood. They can be seen by what is called the historical imagination. The term "imagination" often contains a suggestion of unreality. But that is a secondary use of the word. "Imagination" means "picturing." You can make a picture of what really happened as well as of what happened only in fiction. The historical imagination is a very important faculty in the student of the New Testament. In many persons it is almost wholly lacking. But fortunately it may be acquired.

In the lessons that follow, great stress should be laid upon the simple memorizing of the course of events. Advanced study, or topical study, is useless unless it is based upon an orderly acquaintance with the contents of The Acts. History comes first—then the interpretation of the history.

The dominant note in the early chapters of The Acts is the note of joy. After the three dark days of discouragement, after the quiet period of waiting, the life of the Church suddenly bursts forth with power. Everything is fresh and new. Difficulties and dangers have not yet emerged. Even persecution is lacking. The Church enjoys favor with the people. Thousands are converted in a day.

1. THE GIFT OF TONGUES

The gift of tongues, as it was exercised on the day of Pentecost, is not altogether an isolated phenomenon. It appears also elsewhere in The Acts, Acts 10 : 46; 19 : 6, though it may be doubted whether in all three cases it assumed exactly the same form. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul discusses the gift at considerable length. I Cor., ch. 14. It is interesting to compare that passage with the passage in the second chapter of The Acts.

There are a number of resemblances between the two. Both Paul and Luke represent the gift of tongues as a supernatural thing,

a special endowment from the Spirit of God. Both Paul and Luke, furthermore, represent the gift as an ecstatic, temporary expression of spiritual exultation rather than as a faculty intended to be practically useful in the work of the Church. On the other hand, there are such marked differences between the two accounts as to make it evident that the gift as it was manifested at Pentecost was very considerably different from that which was exercised in the church at Corinth.

The speaking with tongues as Paul describes it was a kind of ejaculation, expressive of the religious life of the speaker, but incomprehensible to others. In order, therefore, to make the gift edifying to the congregation at large there had to be some one else present who was in possession of another gift, the gift of interpretation. The speaking with tongues at Pentecost, however, was a miraculous use of various languages. Some have supposed that Luke is describing rather a new language, which possessed the supernatural quality of being understood by men of various nationalities. The most natural interpretation of the passage, however, is that which has just been suggested. The disciples, filled with the Spirit, spoke some in one language and some in another, or perhaps the same individuals used different languages at successive moments. The outsiders received various impressions of the strange phenomenon. Some, mocking, declared that the disciples were drunk. These, we may suppose, were men who came into contact with those disciples who were speaking some language known only to another group among the hearers. The general impression seems to have been wonder at the miraculous gift. The gift of tongues provided an opportunity for the first Christian preaching. In just this form it was perhaps never repeated. It was a unique gift provided for an absolutely unique occasion.

2. THE SPEECHES

Ancient historians often put imaginary speeches into the mouths of their characters. The speeches were intended to represent not what was actually said but what might have been said under the circumstances. This procedure of the historians was not intended to deceive the readers. It was merely a literary form, a method of vivid description.

Luke, however, seems not to have allowed himself even the license which was regarded as allowable by the best historians of antiquity. The speeches in *The Acts* are apparently either verbatim reports

of what was actually said, or else summaries based upon trustworthy tradition. If they had been composed freely by the historian himself their characteristic differences and their perfect adaptation to different occasions would be difficult to explain.

The speeches of Peter and of the earliest disciples, in particular, are very different from those of Paul. They contain a number of features which occur either not at all or only rarely in the rest of the New Testament. The designation of Jesus as "the Servant," for example, a designation taken from the latter part of Isaiah, is characteristic of these speeches. Another characteristic designation of Jesus is "Prince" or "Prince of life." Acts 3 : 15; 5 : 31. In general, the representation of Jesus in the early chapters of The Acts is just what might have been expected under the circumstances. At the beginning of the Church's life, everything is simple and easy of comprehension even by outsiders. The apostles represented Jesus first as a man approved of God by the miracles which he had wrought. To have delivered up such a man to death was itself a grievous sin. But that was not all. This Jesus who was crucified had been raised from the dead; and both in his death and in his resurrection he had fulfilled the Messianic predictions of the ancient prophets. He was then nothing less than the Christ. Now, too, his period of humiliation was over. He had been given the full powers of Lordship. From him had come the wonder-working Spirit. It will be observed that these speeches, though they begin with what is simplest and easiest of acceptance by an outsider, really contain, at least in germ, the full doctrine of the divine Christ.

3. THE CONVERTS

The body of disciples who were assembled before the day of Pentecost consisted of only about one hundred and twenty persons. Acts 1 : 15. After the notable sermon of Peter, which was spoken in explanation of the gift of tongues, three thousand were converted. A little later the Church possessed five thousand men. Acts 4 : 4.

The outward sign of conversion was baptism. "Repent ye," said Peter, "and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Baptism was not altogether new. It had been practiced not only among converts to Judaism, but especially by John the Baptist. Christian baptism, however, is sharply distinguished from the baptism of John. Mark 1 : 7, 8; Acts 18 : 25; 19 : 1-6. Both were expressive of repentance. But Christian

baptism was connected specifically with Jesus, and also with the bestowal of the Spirit.

Baptism was "in the name of Jesus Christ," or "into the name of the Lord Jesus." It was the sacrament by which the convert signified his cleansing from sin and his entrance into that peculiarly close relation to Christ which is of the essence of Christian experience. In itself, of course, the rite of baptism is useless. But when accompanied by faith it is a means of real blessing. Baptism, like the other Christian sacrament, the Lord's Supper, was instituted by Christ himself. Matt. 28 : 19. In The Acts the full trinitarian formula of baptism is not given. "In the name of Jesus Christ" is sufficient to designate the sacrament.

4. JOY AND FEAR

The mysterious power that was working among the disciples was beneficent. It accomplished miracles of healing. As in the case of Jesus himself so now among his disciples the Spirit of God was manifested in the expulsion of demons. Matt. 12 : 28; Acts 5 : 16. The Spirit was manifested also in the healing of disease.

One cure, in particular, is narrated with a wealth of vivid detail. The healing of the lame man led to the opposition of the Sanhedrin. It led also to favor among the people. All the people ran together in Solomon's porch greatly wondering. Acts 3 : 11. Peter and John took no credit for what they had done. They attributed the miracle solely to the power of Jesus. It was the same Jesus against whom the crowd had shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him," only a few weeks before. Surely a reason for remorse rather than joy! But God is gracious. Through Jesus, the crucified One, salvation was offered even to the murderers. Repentance was followed by rejoicing. The envy of the Sanhedrin was held in check. A notable miracle had been wrought.

That miracle was not isolated. Many signs and wonders were wrought by the hands of the apostles. The people even "carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them." Acts 5 : 12-15. Perhaps we are to understand that that method of seeking cure was actually successful. Certainly it was an unusual method. But God adopts unusual methods at unusual times. He adapts his mercy to the needs of men.

The general impression left by the early chapters of The Acts is an impression of light and gladness. There is opposition, but

it is powerless against triumphant joy. One incident, however, introduces a discordant note. It is the incident of Ananias and Sapphira.

The early Church was animated by a spirit of self-sacrifice. Many of the disciples sold their possessions and devoted the price to the common good. One of those who did so was Joseph Barnabas, who was to be prominent in the subsequent history.

A certain man, Ananias, however, and Sapphira his wife, after they had sold their possession kept back part of the price. In itself that was not necessarily wrong. Their sin was the sin of deception. They pretended to have given all, though they had really given only a part. A more destructive sin could scarcely have been imagined. They had lied unto the Holy Spirit. Such conduct would bring contempt upon the Church. Ananias and Sapphira discovered that God cannot be trifled with. And the judgment wrought upon them inspired fear in all who heard.

It is well that this incident has been recorded. It prevents a one-sided impression of the Church's life. The power that animated the Church was beneficent. But it was also terrible and mysterious and holy. In the presence of it there was joy. But that joy was akin to fear. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The lesson is of permanent value. The Spirit of God must be received with joy. But not with a common joy. Not with the joy of familiarity. But rather with the wondering, trembling joy of adoration.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 21-46. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Weeks, Feast of" and "Temple." "The Cambridge Bible for Schools": Lumby, "The Acts of the Apostles," 1880, pp. 1-61. "The Bible Commentary," vol. ii: Cook, "The Acts of the Apostles," pp. 351-386. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. ii: Plumptre, "The Acts of the Apostles," pp. 1-28. Rackham, "The Acts of the Apostles," pp. 1-69. These commentaries will be designated hereafter by the names of the authors only.

LESSON X

THE FIRST PERSECUTION

The persecution which arose in connection with Stephen marks a turning point in the history of the Church. Up to that time, the disciples had been content, for the most part, with laboring in Jerusalem. Now they were forced out into a broader field. One result of the persecution was the geographical extension of the Church.

Another result was perhaps even more important. The extension caused by persecution was not merely geographical; it was also, perhaps, intellectual and spiritual. The Church was really from the beginning in possession of a new religious principle, but at first that principle was not fully understood. Persecution probably helped to reveal the hidden riches. The Pharisees were keener than the disciples themselves. Hostility sharpened the vision. The disciples themselves were still content to share in the established forms of Jewish worship; but the Pharisees saw that they were really advocates of a new principle. Christianity, unless it were checked, would supersede Judaism. The Pharisees were right. Jealous fear detected what ancestral piety had concealed.

The hostility of the Jews perhaps helped to open the eyes of the Church. No doubt, a development was already at work. Persecution was the result as well as the cause of the new freedom. Stephen was persecuted possibly just because his preaching went beyond that of Peter. With or without persecution, the Church would have transcended the bounds of the older Judaism. It contained a germ of new life which was certain to bear fruit. But persecution hastened the process. It scattered the Church abroad, and it revealed the revolutionary character of the Church's life.

With the coming of Jesus a new era had begun. Judaism had before been separate from the Gentile world. That separation had been due not to racial prejudice, but to a divine ordinance. It had served a useful purpose. Jewish particularism should never be despised; it should be treated with piety and gratitude. It had preserved the precious deposit of truth in the midst of heathenism. But its function, though useful, was temporary. It was a

preparation for Christ. Before Christ it was a help; after Christ it became a hindrance.

Persecution was not the beginning of the new freedom. Freedom was based upon the words of Jesus. It had become plainer again, perhaps, in the teaching of Stephen. Furthermore, if freedom was not begun by the persecution, it was also not completed by it. The emancipation of the Church from Judaism was a slow process. The unfolding of that process is narrated in The Acts. Even after the Church was scattered abroad through Judea and Samaria, much remained to be done. Cornelius, Antioch, Paul were still in the future. Nevertheless, the death of Stephen was an important event. It was by no means the whole of the process; but it marks an epoch.

The gradual rise of persecution should be traced in class—first the fruitless arrest of Peter and John and their bold defiance; then the arrest of the apostles, the miraculous escape, the preaching in the temple, the re-arrest, the counsel of Gamaliel, the scourging; then the preaching of Stephen and the hostility of the Pharisees. The opposition of the Sadducees was comparatively without significance. The Sadducees were not Jews at heart. They might persecute the Church just because the Church was patriotically Jewish. But the Pharisees were really representative of the existing Judaism. Pharisaic persecution meant the hostility of the nation. And it implied the independence of the Church. If the disciples were nothing but Jews, why did the Jews persecute them?

In what follows, a few details will be discussed.

1. THEUDAS AND JUDAS

Judas the Galilean, mentioned by Gamaliel, Acts 5 : 37, appears also in Josephus. His insurrection occurred at the time of the great enrollment under Quirinius, the Syrian legate. This enrollment was different from that which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem at the time of the birth of Jesus. Luke 2 : 2-5. That former enrollment occurred before the death of Herod the Great in 4 B. C. Luke 1 : 5; Matt. 2 : 1. The enrollment to which Gamaliel referred was carried out after the deposition of Archelaus in A. D. 6.

With regard to Judas all is clear. But Theudas is known only from Acts 5 : 36. The Theudas who is mentioned in Josephus is different, for his insurrection did not occur till about A. D. 44, after the time of Gamaliel's speech. Gamaliel was referring to

some insurrection of an earlier period. The name Theudas was common, and so were tumults and insurrections.

2. THE SEVEN

It has been questioned whether the seven men who were appointed to assist the apostles were "deacons." The title is not applied to them. The narrative does, indeed, imply that they were to "serve tables," Acts 6 : 2, and the Greek word here translated "serve" is the verb from which the Greek noun meaning "deacon" is derived; but the same word is also used for the "ministry [or service] of the word" in which the apostles were to continue. V. 4. The special technical use of the word "deacon" appears in the New Testament only in Phil. 1 : 1; I Tim. 3 : 8, 12. Compare Rom. 16 : 1.

Nevertheless, though the word itself does not occur in our passage, it is perhaps not incorrect to say that the seven were "deacons." Their functions were practically those of the diaconate; their appointment, at any rate, shows that the apostles recognized the need of some such office in the Church. It is not quite clear what is meant by the expression, to "serve tables." The reference is either to tables for food, or else to the money tables of a banker. If the former interpretation be correct, then the deacons were to attend especially to the management of the common meals. Even then, however, the expression probably refers indirectly to the general administration of charity, a prominent part of the service being mentioned simply as typical of the whole.

3. THE SYNAGOGUES

The Greek word translated "Libertines" in Acts 6 : 9 comes from the Latin word for "freedmen." The freedmen here mentioned were probably descendants of Jews taken by Pompey as slaves to Rome. The Jewish opponents of Stephen therefore included Romans, men of eastern and middle north Africa, and men of eastern and western Asia Minor. These foreign Jews, when they settled in Jerusalem, had their own synagogues. It is doubtful how many synagogues are mentioned in our passage. Luke may mean that each of the five groups had a separate synagogue, or he may be grouping the men of Cilicia and Asia in one synagogue. The wording of the Greek perhaps rather favors the view that only two synagogues are mentioned—one consisting of Libertines and men of Cyrene and Alexandria, and the other consisting of Cilicians and Asians.

4. THE SPEECH OF STEPHEN

In defending himself, Stephen gave a summary of Hebrew history. At first sight, that summary might seem to have little bearing upon the specific charges that had been made. But the history which Stephen recited was a history of Israel. "You are destroying the divine privileges of Israel"—that was the charge. "No," said Stephen, "history shows that the true privileges of Israel are the promises of divine deliverance. To them law and temple are subordinate. From Abraham on there was a promise of deliverance from Egypt. After that deliverance another deliverance was promised. It is the one which was wrought by Jesus. Moses, God's instrument in the first deliverance, was rejected by his contemporaries. Jesus, the greater Deliverer, was rejected by you. We disciples of Jesus are the true Israelites, for we, unlike you, honor the promises of God."

Other interpretations of the speech have been proposed. For example, some find the main thought of the speech to be this: "The wanderings of the patriarchs and the long period of time which elapsed before the building of the temple show that true and acceptable worship of God is not limited to any particular place." At any rate, the speech requires study—and repays it.

What was said in the last lesson about the speeches of The Acts in general applies fully to the speech of Stephen. The very difficulties of the speech, as well as its other peculiarities, help to show that it represents a genuine tradition of what, in a unique situation, was actually said.

5. MARTYRDOM

The word "martyr" is simply the Greek word for "witness." That is the word which is translated "witness" in Acts 1 : 8. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." There, of course, there is no special reference to dying for the sake of Christ. It is primarily the ordinary verbal testimony which is meant. The special meaning "martyr" is not often attached to the Greek word in the New Testament. Probably even in Acts 22 : 20, where the word is applied to Stephen, it is to be translated "witness" rather than "martyr."

Martyrdom, then, is only one kind of witnessing. But it is a very important kind. Men will not die for what they do not believe. When Stephen sank beneath the stones of his enemies

he was preaching a powerful sermon. The very fact of his death was a witness to Christ. The manner of it was still more significant. Stephen, crying in the hour of death, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," Stephen dying with words of forgiveness on his lips, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," was a witness indeed.

The Church can never do without that kind of witnessing. True, it may not now often appear as actual martyrdom. But bravery is needed as much as ever—bravery in business, men who will not say, "Business is business," but will do what is right even in the face of failure; bravery in politics, men to whom righteousness is more than a pose; bravery in social life, men and women who will sacrifice convention every time to principle, who, for example, will maintain the Christian Sabbath in the face of ridicule. Modern life affords plenty of opportunities for cowardice, plenty of opportunities for denying the faith through fear of men. It also affords opportunities for bravery. You can still show whether you are of the stuff that Stephen was made of—above all, you can show whether you are possessed by the same Spirit and are a servant of the same Lord.

6. THE RESULT OF THE PERSECUTION

The persecution resulted only in the spread of the gospel. Gamaliel was right. It was useless to fight against God. The disciples were in possession of an invincible power, and they knew it from the very beginning. When Peter and John returned from their first arrest, the disciples responded in a noble prayer. Acts 4: 24-30. Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against Jesus, had accomplished only what God's hand and God's counsel foreordained to come to pass. So it would be also with the enemies of the Church. When the disciples had prayed, "the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness." The answer to that prayer was prophetic of the whole history of the Church.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 40-42, 47-55. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Gamaliel," "Theudas," "Judas" (6), "Deacon"; Purves, article on "Stephen." Ramsay, "Pictures of the Apostolic Church," pp. 44-65. Rackham, pp. 69-111. Lumby, pp. 61-97. Plumptre, pp. 28-47. Cook, pp. 386-406.

LESSON XI

THE FIRST GENTILE CONVERTS

This lesson treats of a number of steps in the extension of the gospel. The beginning is the purely Jewish Church that is described in the first chapters of The Acts; the goal is the Gentile Christianity of Paul. Gentile Christianity was not produced all at once. The extension of the gospel to Gentiles was a gradual process. The present lesson is concerned only with the early stages. The teacher should present the lesson in such a way as to emphasize the main feature of the narrative. The main feature is the central place assigned to the Holy Spirit. Though the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles was a process, that process was due not to mere natural development, but to the gracious leading of God.

As was observed in Lesson X, Stephen perhaps introduced into the Church a more independent attitude toward the existing Judaism. There is no reason, indeed, to suppose that he thought either of preaching to Gentiles or of forsaking the ceremonial law. But possibly he did venture to exhibit the temporary and provisional character of the temple worship as compared with the promises of God. Indirectly, therefore, though certainly not directly, Stephen opened the way for the Gentile mission.

The persecution was another step in the process. It scattered the Jews abroad into regions where Gentiles were more numerous than in Jerusalem, and served perhaps also to reveal to the Church itself its incompatibility with Pharisaic Judaism.

The evangelization of Samaria was another important step. Though the Samaritans were only half Gentiles, they were particularly detested by the Jews. In preaching to them, the disciples were overcoming Jewish scruples, and thus were moving in the direction of a real Gentile mission. The baptizing of the Ethiopian may have been another step in the process.

The most important event, however, was the conversion of Cornelius and his household. Here the issue was clearly raised. Cornelius did not, like the Ethiopian, depart at once after baptism to a

distant home. His reception into the Church was a matter of public knowledge.

Luke was well aware of the importance of the story about Cornelius. That appears from the minuteness with which the story is narrated. After it has been completed once, it is repeated, at very considerable length, as a part of Peter's defense at Jerusalem. The effect is as though this incident were heavily underscored.

The importance of the Cornelius incident appears also in the fact that it gave rise to criticism. Apparently this was the first serious criticism which the gradually widening mission had encountered within the Church. There is no suggestion of such criticism in the case of the preaching in Samaria. But now a much more radical step had been taken. Peter had eaten with uncircumcised men. Acts 11 : 3. A more serious violation of Jewish particularism could hardly have been imagined.

In defense, Peter appealed simply to the manifest authorization which he had received from God. That authorization had appeared first of all in the visions which Peter and Cornelius had received, with other direct manifestations of the divine will, and also more particularly in the bestowal of the Spirit. If the Spirit was given to uncircumcised Gentiles, then circumcision was no longer necessary to membership in the Church. In the narrative about Cornelius, there is a remarkable heaping up of supernatural guidance. Vision is added to vision, revelation to revelation. The reason is plain. A decisive step was being taken. If taken by human initiative, it was open to criticism. The separateness of Israel from other nations was a divine ordinance. Since it had been instituted by God, it could be abrogated only by him. True, Jesus had said, "Make disciples of all the nations." Matt. 28 : 19. But the how and the when had been left undecided. Were the Gentiles to become Jews in order to become Christians, and was the Gentile mission to begin at once? Those were grave questions. They could not be decided without divine guidance. That guidance was given in the case of Cornelius.

Peter's defense was readily accepted. "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." The active opposition to the Gentile mission did not arise until later. But how could that opposition arise at all? Since God had spoken so clearly, who could deny to the Gentiles a free

entrance into the Church? After the case of Cornelius, how could any possible question arise?

As a matter of fact—though it may seem strange—the acceptance of Cornelius did not at first determine the policy of the Church. That incident remained, indeed, stored up in memory. It was appealed to years afterwards by Peter himself, in order to support the Gentile Christianity of Paul. Acts 15 : 7-9, 14. But so far as the practice of the Jewish Church was concerned, the Cornelius incident seems to have remained for a time without effect. The bestowal of the Spirit upon Cornelius and his friends was regarded, apparently, as a special dispensation which fixed no precedent. Before engaging in further preaching to Gentiles, the Church was waiting, perhaps, for manifestations of the divine will as palpable as those which had been given to Peter and to Cornelius.

This attitude is rather suprising. It must be remembered, however, that for the present the Church was fully engrossed in work for Jews. Undoubtedly, a Gentile work was to come, and the Cornelius incident, as well as what Jesus had said, was regarded as prophetic of it, Acts 11 : 18; but the time and the manner of its institution were still undetermined. Were the Gentile converts generally—whatever might be the special dispensation for Cornelius—to be required to submit to circumcision and become members of the chosen people? This and other questions had not yet even been faced. Engrossed for the present in the Jewish mission, the Church could leave these questions to the future guidance of God.

In what follows, a number of special points will be briefly discussed.

1. PHILIP

After the baptism of the Ethiopian, "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea." The meaning of these words is not perfectly plain. Are we to understand that Philip was carried away to Azotus by a miracle, or is nothing more intended than a sudden departure under the impulsion of the Spirit? The latter interpretation is not at all impossible. What has been emphasised in the whole narrative is the strangeness, the unaccountableness of Philip's

movements. This appears particularly in the sudden separation from the eunuch. The eunuch expected further conference with Philip but suddenly Philip rushed off, as though snatched away by a higher power. All through this incident, there is something strangely sudden and unexpected about Philip's movements. Human deliberation evidently had no part in his actions. He was under the immediate impulsion of the Spirit.

The narrative leaves Philip at Cæsarea, and there he appears years afterwards, at the time of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem. Acts 21 : 8, 9. Luke was at that time one of the company, and may have received directly from Philip the materials for the narrative in the eighth chapter of The Acts. Philip appears in Christian tradition, but there is some confusion between Philip the evangelist and Philip the apostle.

2. SIMON MAGUS

Simon the sorcerer, or "Simon Magus," is an interesting figure. He has laid hold of the fancy of Christendom. From his name—with reference to Acts 8 : 18, 19—the word "simony" has been coined to designate the sin of buying or selling any sort of spiritual advantage. Simon is very prominent in Christian tradition, where he is regarded as the fountainhead of all heresy.

3. CORNELIUS

Cornelius was a "centurion," or captain of a company in the Roman army consisting of about one hundred men. The "Italian band" to which he belonged was apparently a "cohort," composed of soldiers from Italy. Cornelius was stationed at Cæsarea, the residence of the procurators of Judea. With the favorable description of his attitude to the Jews and to the Jewish religion, Acts 10 : 2, should be compared what Luke, in his Gospel, records about another centurion. Luke 7 : 4, 5. These are sympathetic pictures of the "God-fearing" adherents of Judaism, who formed so important a class at the time of the first Christian preaching.

IN THE LIBRARY.--Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 59-67, 91-98. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Samaritan," "Samaritan," "Philip" (7), "Simon" (9), "Cæsarea," "Cornelius." Ramsay, "Pictures of the Apostolic Church," pp. 66-104. Rackham, pp. 111-124, 141-163. Lumby, pp. 97-108, 122-142. Plumptre, pp. 47-55, 63-73. Cook, pp. 407-413, 419-430.

LESSON XII

THE CONVERSION OF PAUL

Christianity a supernatural thing and a gift of God's grace—that is the real theme of the lesson. The theme is brought home by means of an example, the example of the apostle Paul.

The religious experience of Paul is the most striking phenomenon in the history of the human spirit. It really requires no defense. Give it sympathetic attention, and it is irresistible. How was it produced? The answer of Paul himself, at least, is plain. According to Paul, his whole religious life was due, not to any natural development, but to an act of the risen Christ. That is the argument of the first chapter of Galatians. He was advancing in Judaism, he says, beyond his contemporaries. He was laying waste the Church. And then suddenly, when it was least to be expected, without the influence of men, simply by God's good pleasure, Christ was revealed to him, and all was changed. The suddenness, the miraculousness of the change is the very point of the passage. Upon that marvelous act of God Paul bases the whole of his life work.

Shall Paul's explanation of his life be accepted? It can be accepted only by the recognition of Jesus Christ, who was crucified, as a living person. In an age of doubt, that recognition is not always easy. But if it be refused, then the whole of Pauline Christianity is based upon an illusion. That alternative may well seem to be monstrous. The eighth chapter of Romans has a self-evidencing power. It has transformed the world. It has entered into the very fiber of the human spirit. But it crumbles to pieces if the appearance on the road to Damascus was nothing but a delusive vision. Let us not deceive ourselves. The religious experience of Paul and the whole of our evangelical piety are based upon the historical fact of the resurrection. But if so, then the resurrection stands firm. For the full glory of Pauline Christianity becomes a witness to it. The writer of the epistle to the Romans must be believed. But it is that writer who says, "Last of all . . . he appeared to me also."

The wonder of the conversion can be felt only through an exercise

of the historical imagination. Imagine the surroundings of Paul's early life in Tarsus, live over again with him the years in Jerusalem, enter with him into his prospects of a conventional Jewish career and into his schemes for the destruction of the Church—and then only can you appreciate with him the catastrophic wonder of Christ's grace. There was no reason for the conversion of Paul. Everything pointed the other way. But Christ chose to make of the persecutor an apostle, and the life of Paul was the result. It was a divine, inexplicable act of grace—grace to Paul and grace to us who are Paul's debtors. God's mercies are often thus. They are not of human devising. They enter into human life when they are least expected, with a sudden blaze of heavenly glory.

In the review of Paul's early life various questions emerge. They must at least be faced, if not answered, if the lesson is to be vividly presented.

1. PAUL AT TARSUS

In the first place, what was the extent of the Greek influence which was exerted upon Paul at Tarsus? The question cannot be answered with certainty, and widely differing views are held. It is altogether unlikely, however, that the boy attended anything like an ordinary Gentile school. The Jewish strictness of the family precludes that supposition, and it is not required by the character of Paul's preaching and writing. It is true that he occasionally quotes a Greek poet. I Cor. 15 : 33; Titus 1 : 12; Acts 17 : 28. It is true again that some passages in Paul's letters are rhetorical—for example, I Cor. 1 : 18-25; ch. 13—and that rhetoric formed an important part of Greek training in the first century. But Paul's rhetoric is the rhetoric of nature rather than of art. Exalted by his theme he falls unconsciously into a splendid rhythm of utterance. Such rhetoric could not be learned in school. Finally, it is true that Paul's vocabulary is thought to exhibit some striking similarities to that of Stoic writers. But even if that similarity indicates acquaintance on the part of Paul with the Stoic teaching, such acquaintance need not have been attained through a study of books.

However, the importance of Paul's Greek environment, if it must not be exaggerated, must on the other hand not be ignored. In the first place, Paul is a consummate master of the Greek language. He must have acquired it in childhood, and indeed in Tarsus could hardly have failed to do so. In the second place,

he was acquainted with the religious beliefs and practices of the Greco-Roman world. The speech at Athens, Acts 17 : 22-31, shows how he made use of such knowledge for his preaching. In all probability the first impressions were made upon him at Tarsus. Finally, from his home in Tarsus Paul derived that intimate knowledge of the political and social relationships of the men of his day which, coupled with a native delicacy of perception and fineness of feeling, resulted in the exquisite tact which he exhibited in his missionary and pastoral labors. The Tarsian Jew of the dispersion was a gentleman of the Roman Empire.

That Aramaic, as well as Greek, was spoken by the family of Paul is made probable by Phil. 3 : 5 and II Cor. 11 : 22. The word "Hebrew" in these passages probably refers especially to the use of the Aramaic ("Hebrew") language, as in Acts 6 : 1, where the "Hebrews" in the Jerusalem church are contrasted with the "Grecian Jews." "A Hebrew of Hebrews," therefore, probably means "an Aramaic-speaking Jew and descended from Aramaic-speaking Jews." In Acts 21 : 40; 22 : 2 it is expressly recorded that Paul made a speech in Aramaic ("Hebrew"), and in Acts 26 : 14 it is said that Christ spoke to him in the same language. Conceivably, of course, he might have learned that language during his student days in Jerusalem. But the passages just referred to make it probable that it was rather the language of his earliest home. From childhood Paul knew both Aramaic and Greek.

2. THE INNER LIFE OF PAUL THE RABBI

The most interesting question about Paul's life at Jerusalem concerns the condition of his inner life before the conversion. Paul the Pharisee is an interesting study. What were this man's thoughts and feelings and desires before the grace of Christ made him the greatest of Christian missionaries?

The best way to answer this question would be to ask Paul himself. One passage in the Pauline epistles has been regarded as an answer to the question. That passage is Rom. 7 : 14-25. There Paul describes the struggle of the man who knows the law of God and desires to accomplish it, but finds the flesh too strong for him. If Paul is there referring to his pre-Christian life, then the passage gives a vivid picture of his fruitless struggle as a Pharisee to fulfill the law. Many interpreters, however, refer the passage not to the pre-Christian life but to the Christian life.

Even in the Christian life the struggle goes on against sin. And even if Paul is referring to the pre-Christian life, he is perhaps depicting it rather as it really was than as he then thought it was. The passage probably does not mean that before he became a Christian Paul was fully conscious of the fruitlessness of his endeavor to attain righteousness by the law. Afterwards he saw that his endeavor was fruitless, but it is doubtful how clearly he saw it at the time.

It would, indeed, be a mistake to suppose that Paul as a Pharisee was perfectly happy. No man is happy who is trying to earn salvation by his works. In his heart of hearts Paul must have known that his fulfillment of the law was woefully defective. But such discontentment would naturally lead him only farther on in the same old path. If his obedience was defective, let it be mended by increasing zeal! The more earnest Paul was about his law righteousness, the more discontented he became with his attainments, so much the more zealous did he become as a persecutor.

Some have supposed that Paul was gradually getting nearer to Christianity before Christ appeared to him—that the Damascus experience only completed a process that had already begun. There were various things, it is said, which might lead the earnest Pharisee to consider Christianity favorably. In the first place, there was the manifest impossibility of law righteousness. Paul had tried to keep the law and had failed. What if the Christians were right about salvation by faith? In the second place, there were the Old Testament prophecies about a suffering servant of Jehovah. Isa., ch. 53. If they referred to the Messiah, then the cross might be explained, as the Christians explained it, as a sacrifice for others. The stumblingblock of a crucified Messiah would thus be removed. In the third place, there was the noble life and death of the Christian martyrs.

These arguments are not so weighty as they seem. Paul's dissatisfaction with his fulfillment of the law, as has already been observed, might lead to a more zealous effort to fulfill the law as well as to a relinquishment of the law. There seems to be no clear evidence that the pre-Christian Jews ever contemplated a death of the Messiah like the death of Jesus. On the contrary the current expectation of the Messiah was diametrically opposed to any such thing. And admiration of the Christian martyrs is perhaps too modern and too Christian to be attributed to the

Pharisee. The fundamental trouble with this whole argument is that it proves merely that the Pharisee Paul ought to have been favorably impressed with Christianity. So he ought, but as a matter of fact he was not so impressed, and we have the strongest kind of evidence to prove that he was not. The book of The Acts says so, and Paul says so just as clearly in his letters. The very fact that when he was converted he was on a persecuting expedition, more ambitious than any that had been attempted before, shows that he was certainly not thinking favorably of Christianity. Was he considering the possibility that Christianity might be true? Was he trying to stifle his own inward uncertainty by the very madness of his zeal? Then, in persecuting the Church, he was going against his conscience. But in I Tim. 1:13 he distinctly says that his persecuting was done ignorantly in unbelief, and his attitude is the same in his other epistles. If in persecuting the Church he was acting contrary to better conviction, then that fact would have constituted the chief element in his guilt; yet in the passages where he speaks with the deepest contrition of his persecution, that particularly heinous sin is never mentioned. Evidently, whatever was his guilt, at least he did not have to reproach himself with the black sin of persecuting Christ's followers in the face of even a half conviction.

Accordingly, the words of Christ to Paul at the time of the conversion, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad," Acts 26:14, do not mean that Paul had been resisting an inward voice of conscience in not accepting Christ before, but rather that Christ's will for Paul was really resistless even though Paul had not known it at all. Christ's loving plan would be carried out in the end. Paul was destined to be the apostle to the Gentiles. For him to try to be anything else was as useless and as painful as it is for the ox to kick against the goad. Christ will have his way.

Thus before his conversion Paul was moving away from Christianity rather than toward it. Of course, in emphasizing the suddenness of the conversion, exaggerations must be avoided. It is absurd, for example, to suppose that Paul knew nothing at all about Jesus before the Damascus event. Of course he knew about him. Even if he had been indifferent, he could hardly have failed to hear the story of the Galilean prophet; and as a matter of fact he was not indifferent but intensely interested, though by way of opposition. These things were not done in a corner. Paul.

was in Jerusalem before and after the crucifixion, if not at the very time itself. The main facts in the life of Jesus were known to friend and foe alike. Thus when in the first chapter of Galatians Paul declares that he received his gospel not through any human agency but directly from Christ, he cannot mean that the risen Christ imparted to him the facts in the earthly life of Jesus. It never occurred to Paul to regard the bare facts as a "gospel." He had the facts by ordinary word of mouth from the eyewitnesses. What he received from the risen Christ was a new interpretation of the facts. He had known the facts before. But they had filled him with hatred. He had known about Jesus. But the more he had known about him, the more he had hated him. And then Christ himself appeared to him! It might naturally have been an appearance in wrath, a thunderstroke of the just vengeance of the Messiah. Probably that was Paul's first thought when he heard the words, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." But such was not the Lord's will. The purpose of the Damascus wonder was not destruction but divine fellowship and world-wide service.

3. PAUL'S EXPERIENCE AND OURS

In one sense, the experience of Paul is the experience of every Christian. Not, of course, in form. It is a great mistake to demand of every man that he shall be able, like Paul, to give day and hour of his conversion. Many men, it is true, still have such a definite experience. It is not pathological. It may result in glorious Christian lives. But it is not universal, and it should not be induced by tactless methods. The children of Christian homes often seem to grow up into the love of Christ. When they decide to unite themselves definitely with the Church, the decision need not necessarily come with anguish of soul. It may be simply the culmination of a God-encircled childhood, a recognition of what God has already done rather than the acquisition of something new. But after all, these differences are merely in the manner of God's working. In essence, true Christian experience is always the same, and in essence it is always like the experience of Paul. It is no mere means of making better citizens, but an end in itself. It is no product of man's effort, but a divine gift. Whatever be the manner of its coming, it is a heavenly vision. Christ still lives in the midst of glory. And still he appears to sinful men—though not now to the bodily eye—drawing them out of sin and

misery and bondage to a transitory world into communion with the holy and eternal God.

The result of Paul's vision was service. How far his destination as apostle to the Gentiles was made known to him at once is perhaps uncertain. It depends partly upon the interpretation of Acts 26 : 14-18. Are those words intended to be part of what was spoken at the very time of the conversion? There is no insuperable objection to that view. At any rate, no matter how much or how little was revealed at once, the real purpose of Christ in calling him was clearly that he should be the leader of the Gentile mission. Gal. 1 : 16. He was saved in order that he might save others. It is so normally with every Christian. Every one of us is given not only salvation, but also labor. In that labor we can use every bit of preparation that is ours, even if it was acquired before we became Christians. Paul, the apostle, used his Greek training as well as his knowledge of the Old Testament. We can use whatever talents we possess. The Christian life is not a life of idleness. It is like the life of the world in being full of labor. But it differs from that life in that its labor is always worth while. Connection with heaven does not mean idle contemplation, but a vantage ground of power. You cannot move the world without a place to stand.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 68-85. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": article on "Damascus." Ramsay, "Pictures of the Apostolic Church," pp. 113-120; "St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," pp. 29-39; "The Cities of St. Paul," pp. 85-244 (on Tarsus). Conybeare and Howson, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," chs. ii and iii. Lewin, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," chs. i and iv. Stalker, "The Life of St. Paul," pp. 1-42. Rackham, pp. 124-135, 421-424, 462-470. Lumby, pp. 108-116, 302-307, 344-349. Plumptre, pp. 55-61, 150-152, 165-167. Cook, pp. 413-417, 498-500, 516-519.

LESSON XIII

THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

Christianity originated in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire, in the midst of a very peculiar people. At first, it was entirely out of relation to the larger life of the time. The atmosphere of the Gospels is as un-Greek as could be imagined; the very conception of Messiahship is distinctively Jewish.

Yet this Jewish sect soon entered upon the conquest of the empire, and the Jewish Messiah became the Saviour of the world. Starting from Jerusalem, the new sect spread within a few decades almost to the remotest corners of the civilized world. This remarkable extension was not the work of any one man or group of men. It seemed rather to be due to some mysterious power of growth, operating in many directions and in many ways. In this manifold extension of the gospel, however, the central event of to-day's lesson stands out with special clearness. Christianity began as a Jewish movement, quite incongruous with the larger life of the empire. What would be the result of its first real contact with the culture of the time? This question was answered at Antioch.

At Antioch, the principles of the Gentile mission had to be established once for all—those principles which have governed the entire subsequent history of the Church. The extension of the gospel to the Gentiles was not a mere overcoming of racial prejudice, for the separateness of Israel had been of divine appointment; it involved rather the recognition that a new dispensation had begun. Primitive Christianity was not governed merely by considerations of practical expediency; it sought justification for every new step in the guidance of the Spirit and in the fundamental principles of the gospel. The development of those fundamental principles was necessary in order to show that Christianity was really more than a Jewish sect. Then as always, religion without theology would have been a weak and flabby thing. Christianity is not merely an instrument for the improving of social conditions, but rather an answer to the fundamental questions of the soul. It can never do without thinking, and Christian thinking is theology.

Fortunately the church at Antioch did not long remain without

a theologian. Its theologian was Paul. Paul was not the founder of the church at Antioch; but the theology of Paul was what gave to that church its really fundamental importance in the history of the world.

The lesson for to-day is of extraordinary richness and variety. Much can be learned, for example, from the characters of the story. Barnabas, with his generous recognition of the great man who was soon to overshadow him; those obscure men of Cyprus and Cyrene, not even mentioned by name, whose work at Antioch was one of the great turning points of history; Agabus, the prophet, and the charitable brethren of Antioch; Rhoda, the serving girl, and the prayerful assembly in the house of the mother of Mark—every one of these teaches some special lesson. One lesson, moreover, may be learned from them all—God is the real leader of the Church, and true disciples, though different in character and in attainments, are all sharers in a mighty work.

In what follows, an attempt will be made to throw light upon a few of the historical questions which are suggested by the narrative in *The Acts*, and to picture as vividly as possible the scene of these stirring events.

1. THE ACTS AND THE PAULINE EPISTLES

The differences between the narrative in *The Acts* and the account which Paul gives of the same events have caused considerable difficulty. This very difficulty, however, is by no means an unmixed evil; for it shows at least that Luke was entirely independent of the Epistles. If he had employed the Epistles in the composition of his book he would surely have avoided even the appearance of contradicting them. The divergences between *The Acts* and the Pauline Epistles, therefore, can only mean that Luke did not use the Epistles when he wrote; and since the Epistles came to be generally used at a very early time, *The Acts* cannot have been written at so late a date as is often supposed. But if the book was written at an early time, then there is every probability that the information which it contains is derived from trustworthy sources.

Thus the very divergences between *The Acts* and the Pauline Epistles, unless indeed they should amount to positive contradictions, strengthen the argument for the early date and high historical value of the Lucan work. The independence of *The Acts* is supported also by the complete absence of striking verbal similarity

between the narrative in The Acts and the corresponding passages in the Epistles. Even where the details of the two accounts are similar, the words are different. The few unimportant coincidences in language are altogether insufficient to overthrow this general impression of independence.

The most natural supposition, therefore, is that in The Acts and in the Epistles we have two independent and trustworthy accounts of the same events. This supposition is really borne out by the details of the two narratives. There are differences, but the differences are only what is to be expected in two narratives which were written from entirely different points of view and in complete independence of one another. Contradictions have been detected only by pressing unduly the language of one source or the other. Thus, in reading The Acts alone, one might suppose that Paul spent the whole time between his conversion and his first visit to Jerusalem in Damascus, and that this period was less than three years; but these suppositions are only inferences. Apparently Luke was not aware of the journey to Arabia; but an incomplete narrative is not necessarily inaccurate. Again, in the account of that first visit to Jerusalem, the reader of The Acts might naturally suppose that more than one of the Twelve was present, that the main purpose of the journey was rather to engage in preaching than to make the acquaintance of Peter, and that the visit lasted longer than fifteen days; and on the other hand, the reader of Galatians might perhaps suppose that instead of preaching in Jerusalem Paul remained, while there, in strict retirement. Again, however, these suppositions would be inferences; and the falsity of them simply shows how cautious the historian should be in reading between the lines of a narrative. Finally, the differences between Paul and Luke are overbalanced by the striking and undesigned agreements.

In Galatians, Paul does not mention the visit which he and Barnabas made in Jerusalem at the time of the famine. This conclusion has been avoided by those scholars who with Ramsay identify the "famine visit" with the visit mentioned in Gal. 2 : 1-10. The more usual view, however, is that Gal. 2 : 1-10 is to be regarded as parallel, not with Acts 11 : 30; 12 : 25, but with Acts 15 : 1-30. The second visit mentioned by Paul is thus identified with the third visit mentioned by Luke. Paul did not mention the famine visit because, as was probably admitted even by his opponents in Galatia, the apostles at the time of that visit were all out

of the city, so that there was no chance of a meeting with them. The subject under discussion in Galatians was not Paul's life in general, but the relation between Paul and the original apostles.

2. THE PREACHING TO "GREEKS"

In Acts 11 : 20, the best manuscripts read "spake unto the Hellenists" instead of "spake unto the Greeks." The word "Hellenist" usually means "Grecian Jew." Here, however, if this word is to be read, it must refer not to Jews, but to Gentiles; for the contrast with the preaching to Jews that is mentioned just before, is the very point of the verse. Perhaps at this point the manuscripts which read "Greeks" (that is, "Gentiles") are correct. In either case, the meaning is fixed by the context. These Jews of Cyprus and Cyrene, when they arrived at Antioch certainly began to preach regularly to Gentiles.

3. PETER'S ESCAPE FROM PRISON

In Acts 12 : 1-24, Luke brings the account of affairs in Jerusalem up to the time which has already been reached in the narrative about Antioch. The journey of Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem, Acts 11 : 30; 12 : 25, supplied the connecting link. While the church at Antioch was progressing in the manner described in Acts 11 : 19-30, a persecution had been carried on in Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa I. The escape of Peter is narrated in an extraordinarily lifelike way. Evidently Luke was in possession of first-hand information. The vividness of the narrative is very significant. It shows that the unmistakable trustworthiness of The Acts extends even to those happenings which were most clearly miraculous. The supernatural cannot be eliminated from apostolic history.

4. ANTIOCH

Antioch on the Orontes was founded by Seleucus Nicator, the first monarch of the Seleucid dynasty, and under his successors it remained the capital of the Syrian kingdom. When that kingdom was conquered by the Romans, the political importance of Antioch did not suffer. Antioch became under the Romans not only the capital of the province Syria but also the residence of the emperors and high officials when they were in the east. It may be regarded as a sort of eastern capital of the empire.

The political importance of Antioch was no greater than its

commercial importance. Situated near the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea, where the Mediterranean coast is nearer to the Euphrates than at any other point, where the Orontes valley provided easy communication with the east and the Syrian gates with the west, with a magnificent artificial harbor at Seleucia, about twenty miles distant, Antioch naturally became the great meeting point for the trade of east and west. It is not surprising that Antioch was the third city of the empire—after Rome and Alexandria.

The city was built on a plain between the Orontes on the north and the precipitous slopes of Mount Silpius on the south. A great wall extended over the rugged heights of the mountain and around the city. A magnificent street led through the city from east to west. The buildings were of extraordinary magnificence. Perhaps as magnificent as the city itself was the famous Daphne, a neighboring shrine and pleasure resort, well-known for its gilded vice.

The dominant language of Antioch, from the beginning, had been Greek. The Seleucids prided themselves on the Greek culture of their court, and Roman rule introduced no essential change. Of course, along with the Greek language and Greek culture went a large admixture of eastern blood and eastern custom. Like the other great cities of the empire, Antioch was a meeting place of various peoples, a typical cosmopolitan center of a world-wide empire. The Jewish population, of course, was numerous.

Such was the seat of the apostolic missionary church. Almost lost at first in the seething life of the great city, that church was destined to outlive all the magnificence that surrounded it. A new seed had been implanted in the ancient world, and God would give the increase.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 85-90, 98-110. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Agabus," "Antioch," "Arabia," "Aretas," "Barnabas," "Herod" (3). Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," pp. 40-69; "Pictures of the Apostolic Church," pp. 121-128. Lewin, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," chs. v, vi and vii. Conybeare and Howson, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," ch. iv. Stalker, "The Life of St. Paul," pp. 44-63. Lumby, pp. 116-122, 142-155, 307-309. Cook, pp. 416-418, 430-433, 500, 501. Plumptre, pp. 60-62, 73-79, 152. Rackham, pp. 136-141, 163-184.

PART II :

**Christianity Established Among
the Gentiles**

**The Principles and Practice
of the Gospel**

LESSON XIV

THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES

It was a dramatic moment when Paul and Barnabas, with their helper, set sail from Seleucia, on the waters of the Mediterranean. Behind them lay Syria and Palestine and the history of the chosen people; in front of them was the west. The religion of Israel had emerged from its age-long seclusion; it had entered at last upon the conquest of the world.

The message that crossed the strait to Cyprus was destined to be carried over broader seas. A mighty enterprise was begun. It was an audacious thought! The missionaries might well have been overpowered by what lay before them—by the power of a world empire, by the prestige of a brilliant civilization. How insignificant were their own weapons! Would they ever even gain a hearing? But though the enterprise was begun in weakness it was begun in faith. At their departure from Antioch the missionaries were “committed to the grace of God.”

The account of this first missionary journey is one of the most fascinating passages in The Acts. The interest never flags; incident follows incident in wonderful variety. In reading this narrative, we are transplanted into the midst of the ancient world, we come to breathe the very atmosphere of that cosmopolitan age. In the lesson of to-day the teacher has an unusual opportunity. If he uses it well, he may cause the Bible story to live again. Absolutely essential to that end is the judicious use of a map—preferably something larger than the small sketch map of the Text Book. A travel narrative without a map is a hopeless jumble. The map is an aid both to memory and to imagination. Tracing the route of the missionaries on the map, the teacher should endeavor to call up the scenes through which they passed. The student should be made to see the waters of the Mediterranean, with the hills of Cyprus beyond, the interminable stretches of the Roman roads, the lofty mountains of the Taurus, the perils of rivers and the perils of robbers, the teeming population of the countless cities—and through it all the simple missionaries of the cross, almost unnoticed amid the turmoil of the busy world, but rich in the

possession of a world-conquering gospel and resistless through the power of the living God.

1. THE PROPHETS AND TEACHERS

Both prophecy and teaching were gifts of the Spirit. I Cor. 12 : 28-31. Prophecy was immediate revelation of the divine plan or of the divine will; teaching, apparently, was logical development of the truth already given. Which of the men who are mentioned in Acts 13 : 1 were prophets and which were teachers is not clear. If any division is intended it is probably between the first three and the last two. For this grouping there is perhaps some slight indication in the connectives that are used in the Greek, but the matter is not certain. Perhaps all five of the men were possessed of both gifts.

Lucius was perhaps one of the founders of the church, for he came from Cyrene. Compare Acts 11 : 20. Manaen is an interesting figure. He is called "foster-brother" of Herod the tetrarch. The word translated "foster-brother" is apparently sometimes used in a derived sense, to designate simply an intimate associate of a prince. If that be the meaning here, then at least one member of the church at Antioch was a man of some social standing. In Antioch, as in Corinth, probably "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" were called, I Cor. 1 : 26; but in Antioch as in Corinth there were exceptions. The Herod who is here meant is Herod Antipas, the "Herod" of the Gospels.

2. ELYMAS

When the Jewish sorcerer is first mentioned he is called Bar-Jesus—that is, "son of Jesus," Jesus being a common Jewish name. Then, a little below, the same man is called "Elymas the sorcerer," and the explanation is added, "for so is his name by interpretation." Apparently the new name Elymas is introduced without explanation, and then the Greek word for "sorcerer" is introduced as a translation of that. The word Elymas is variously derived from an Arabic word meaning "wise," or an Aramaic word meaning "strong." In either case the Greek word, "magos," for which our English Bible has "sorcerer," is a fair equivalent. That Greek word is the word that appears also in Matt. 2 : 1, 7, 16, where the English Bible has "Wise-men"; and words derived from the same root are used to describe Simon of Samaria in Acts 8 : 9, 11. The word could designate men of different character. Some "magi" might be

regarded as students of natural science; in others, superstition and charlatanism were dominant.

3. SAUL AND PAUL

At Acts 13 : 9 Luke introduces the name "Paul"—"Saul, who is also called Paul." Previously the narrative always uses the Jewish name "Saul"; after this "Paul" appears with equal regularity, except in the accounts of the conversion, where in three verses a special, entirely un-Greek form of "Saul" is used. Acts 22 : 7, 13; 26 : 14. Since in our passage in the original the name of the proconsul, Paulus, is exactly like the name of the apostle, some have supposed that Paul assumed a new name in honor of his distinguished convert. That is altogether unlikely. More probable is the suggestion that although Paul had both names from the beginning, Luke is led to introduce the name Paul at just this point because of the coincidence with the name of the proconsul. Even this supposition, however, is extremely doubtful. Probably the Roman name, which Paul uses invariably in his letters, is introduced at this point simply because here for the first time Paul comes prominently forward in a distinctly Roman environment.

4. PAUL AND BARNABAS

Connected with this variation in name is the reversal in the relation between Paul and Barnabas. Previously Barnabas has been given the priority; but immediately after the incident at Paphos the missionaries are designated as "Paul and his company," Acts 13 : 13, and thereafter when the two are mentioned together, Paul, except at Acts 14 : 12, 14; 15 : 12, 25, appears first. In the presence of the Roman proconsul, Paul's Roman citizenship perhaps caused him to take the lead; and then inherent superiority made his leadership permanent.

5. THE RETURN OF JOHN MARK

The reasons for John Mark's return from Perga to Jerusalem can only be surmised. Perhaps he was simply unwilling, for some reason sufficient to him but insufficient to Paul, to undertake the hardships of the journey into the interior. Certainly it was an adventurous journey. Paul was not always an easy man to follow.

The severity of Paul's judgment of Mark was not necessarily so great as has sometimes been supposed. One purpose of the second journey was to revisit the churches of the first journey. Acts

15 : 36. Whether for good or for bad reasons, Mark, as a matter of fact, had not been with the missionaries on a large part of that first journey, and was, therefore, unknown to many of the churches. For this reason, perhaps as much as on account of moral objections, Paul considered Mark an unsuitable helper. In his later epistles Paul speaks of Mark in the most cordial way. Col. 4 : 10; Philem. 24; II Tim. 4 : 11. In the last passage, he even says that Mark was useful to him for ministering—exactly what he had not been at the beginning of the second missionary journey.

6. HARDSHIPS AND PERSECUTIONS

It is evident from II Cor. 11 : 23-27 that Luke has recorded only a small fraction of the hardships which Paul endured as a missionary of the cross. The tendency to lay exaggerated stress upon martyrdom and suffering, which runs riot in the later legends of the saints, is in The Acts conspicuous by its absence. Of the trials which are vouched for by the unimpeachable testimony of Paul himself, only a few may be identified in the Lucan narrative. It is natural, however, to suppose that some of the "perils of rivers" and "perils of robbers" were encountered on the journey through the defiles of the Taurus mountains from Perga to Pisidian Antioch, and the one stoning which Paul mentions is clearly to be identified with the adventure at Lystra. In II Tim. 3 : 11 Paul mentions the persecutions at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra.

7. GEOGRAPHY OF THE FIRST JOURNEY

The first missionary journey led the missionaries into three Roman provinces: Cyprus, Pamphylia and Galatia. The name "Galatia" had originally designated a district in the north central part of Asia Minor, which had been colonized by certain Celtic tribes several centuries before Christ. By the Romans, however, other districts were added to this original Galatia, and in 25 B. C. the whole complex was organized into an imperial province under the name Galatia. In the first century after Christ, therefore, the name Galatia could be used in two distinct senses. In the first place, in the earlier, popular sense, it could designate Galatia proper. In the second place, in the later, official sense, it could designate the whole Roman province, which included not only Galatia proper, but also parts of a number of other districts, including Phrygia and Lycaonia. Of the cities visited on the first missionary journey, Pisidian Antioch—which was called "Pisidian"

because it was near Pisidia—and Iconium were in Phrygia, and Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia; but all four were included in the province of Galatia. Many scholars suppose that the churches in these cities were the churches which Paul addresses in the Epistle to the Galatians. That view is called the "South Galatian theory." Others—adherents of the "North Galatian theory"—suppose that the epistle is addressed to churches in Galatia proper, in the northern part of the Roman province, which were founded on the second missionary journey. This question will be noticed again in connection with the epistle.

8. TIME OF THE FIRST JOURNEY

Luke gives very little indication of the amount of time which was consumed on this first journey. The hasty reader probably estimates the time too low, since only a few incidents are narrated. The rapidity of the narrative should not be misinterpreted as indicating cursoriness of the labor. The passage through Cyprus, Acts 13 : 6, was probably accompanied by evangelizing; the extension of the gospel through the whole region of Antioch, v. 49, must have occupied more than a few days; the stay at Iconium is designated as "long time," Acts 14 : 3; the change of attitude on the part of the Lystran populace, v. 19, was probably not absolutely sudden; not only Lystra and Derbe but also the surrounding country were evangelized, v. 6; and finally the missionaries could hardly have returned to the cities from which they had been driven out, v. 21, unless the heat of persecution had been allowed to cool. Perhaps a full year would not be too high an estimate of the time that was occupied by the journey, and still higher estimates are by no means excluded.

9. THE SCENE AT LYSTRA

The account of the incident at Lystra is one of those inimitable bits of narrative which imprint upon The Acts the indisputable stamp of historicity. Lystra, though a Roman colony, lay somewhat off the beaten track of culture and of trade; hence the extreme superstition of the populace is what might be expected. It may seem rather strange that Paul and Barnabas should have been identified with great gods of Olympus rather than with lesser divinities or spirits, but who can place a limit upon the superstition of an uncultured people of the ancient world? The identification may have been rendered easier by the legend of Philemon and

Baucis, which has been preserved for us by Ovid, the Latin poet. According to that legend, Zeus and Hermes appeared, once upon a time, in human form in Phrygia, the same general region in which Lystra was situated. Zeus and Hermes are the gods with whom Barnabas and Paul were identified; the English Bible simply substitutes for these Greek names the names of the corresponding Roman deities. The temple of Zeus-before-the-city and the preparations for sacrifices are described in a most lifelike way, in full accord with what is known of ancient religion. We find ourselves here in a somewhat different atmosphere from that which prevails in most of the scenes described in The Acts. It is a pagan atmosphere, and an atmosphere of ruder superstition than that which prevailed in the great cities. The "speech of Lycaonia," v. 11, is an especially characteristic touch. Apparently the all-pervading Greek was understood at Lystra even by the populace; but in the excitement of their superstition they fell very naturally into their native language.

As in the case of Peter's release from prison, so in this incident, wonderful lifelikeness of description is coupled with a miracle. The scene at Lystra is unintelligible without the miraculous healing of the lame man, with which it begins. It is impossible, in The Acts as well as in the Gospels, to separate the miraculous from the rest of the narrative. The evident truthfulness of the story applies to the supernatural elements as well as to the rest. The early Christian mission is evidently real; but it is just as evidently supernatural. It moved through the varied scenes of the real world, but it was not limited by the world. It was animated by a mysterious, superhuman power.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 111-122. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Cyprus," "Antioch" (2), "Iconium," "Lystra," "Derbe," "Galatia." Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Muir, article on "Cyprus"; Massie, article on "Bar-Jesus"; Headlam, article on "Paulus, Sergius"; Ramsay, articles on "Antioch in Pisidia," "Iconium," "Lystra," "Derbe," "Galatia." Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," pp. 64-129; "The Cities of St. Paul," pp. 247-419; "Pictures of the Apostolic Church," pp. 129-153. Lewin, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," chapter viii. Conybeare and Howson, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," chapters v and vi. Stalker, "The Life of St. Paul," pp. 65-71. Lumby, pp. 155-183. Cook, pp. 437-451. Plumptre, pp. 79-93. Rackham, pp. 194-238.

LESSON XV

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

The lesson for to-day deals with one of the most important events in apostolic history. At the Jerusalem council the principles of the Gentile mission and of the entire life of the Church were brought to clear expression. If the original apostles had agreed with the Judaizers against Paul, the whole history of the Church would have been different. There would even have been room to doubt whether Paul was really a disciple of Jesus; for if he was, how could he come to differ so radically from those whom Jesus had taught? As a matter of fact, however, these dire consequences were avoided. When the issue was made between Paul and the Judaizers, the original apostles decided whole-heartedly for Paul. The unity of the Church was preserved. God was guiding the deliberations of the council.

1. THE ACTS AND GALATIANS

The treatment of to-day's lesson in the Student's Text Book is based upon the assumption that Gal. 2 : 1-10 is an account of the same visit of Paul to Jerusalem as the visit which is described in Acts 15 : 1-29. That assumption is not universally accepted. Some scholars identify the event of Gal. 2 : 1-10, not with the Apostolic Council of Acts 15 : 1-29, but with the "famine visit" of Acts 11 : 30; 12 : 25. Indeed, some maintain that the Epistle to the Galatians not only contains no account of the Apostolic Council, but was actually written before the council was held—say at Antioch, soon after the first missionary journey. Of course this early dating of Galatians can be adopted only in connection with the "South Galatian theory"; for according to the "North Galatian theory" the churches addressed in the epistle were not founded until after the council, namely at the time of Acts 16 : 6.

Undoubtedly the identification of Gal. 2 : 1-10 with Acts 11 : 30; 12 : 25, avoids some difficulties. If Gal. 2 : 1-10 be identified with Acts 15 : 1-29, then Paul in Galatians has passed over the famine visit without mention. Furthermore there are considerable differences between Gal. 2 : 1-10 and Acts 15 : 1-29. For example,

if Paul is referring to the Apostolic Council, why has he not mentioned the apostolic decree of Acts 15 : 23-29? These difficulties, however, are not insuperable, and there are counter difficulties against the identification of Gal. 2 : 1-10 with the famine visit.

One such difficulty is connected with chronology. Paul says that his first visit to Jerusalem took place three years after his conversion, Gal. 1 : 18, and—according to the most natural interpretation of Gal. 2 : 1—that the visit of Gal. 2 : 1-10 took place fourteen years after the first visit. The conversion then occurred seventeen years before the time of Gal. 2 : 1-10. But if Gal. 2 : 1-10 describes the famine visit, then the time of Gal. 2 : 1-10 could not have been after about A. D. 46. Counting back seventeen years from A. D. 46 we should get A. D. 29 as the date of the conversion, which is, of course, too early.

This reasoning, it must be admitted, is not quite conclusive. The ancients had an inclusive method of reckoning time. According to this method three years after 1914 would be 1916. Hence, fourteen plus three might be only what we should call about fifteen years, instead of seventeen. Furthermore, Paul may mean in Gal. 2 : 1 that his conference with the apostles took place fourteen years after the conversion rather than fourteen years after the first visit.

The identification of Gal. 2 : 1-10 with the famine visit is not impossible. But on the whole the usual view, which identifies the event of Gal. 2 : 1-10 with the meeting at the time of the Apostolic Council of Acts 15 : 1-29, must be regarded as more probable. The Apostolic Council probably took place roughly at about A. D. 49. The conversion of Paul then should probably be put at about A. D. 32-34.

2. THE JUDAIZERS

Conceivably the question about the freedom of the Gentiles from the law might have arisen at an earlier time; for Gentiles had already been received into the Church before the first missionary journey. As a matter of fact, indeed, some objection had been raised to the reception of Cornelius. But that objection had easily been silenced by an appeal to the immediate guidance of God. Perhaps the case of Cornelius could be regarded as exceptional; and a similar reflection might possibly have been applied to the Gentile Christians at Antioch. There seemed to be no danger, at any rate, that the predominantly Jewish character of the Church would be lost. Now, however, after a regular Gentile mission had

been carried on with signal success, the situation was materially altered. Evidently the influx of Gentile converts, if allowed to go on unhindered, would change the whole character of the Church. Christianity would appear altogether as a new dispensation: the prerogatives of Israel would be gone. The question of Gentile Christianity had existed before, but after the first missionary journey it became acute.

Perhaps, however, there was also another reason why the battle had not been fought out at an earlier time. It looks very much as though this bitter opposition to the Gentile mission had arisen only through the appearance of a new element in the Jerusalem church. Were these extreme legalists, who objected to the work of Paul and Barnabas—were these men present in the Church from the beginning? The question is more than doubtful. It is more probable that these legalists came into the Church during the period of prosperity which followed upon the persecution of Stephen and was only briefly interrupted by the persecution under Herod Agrippa I.

These Jewish Christian opponents of the Gentile mission—these “Judaizers”—must be examined with some care. They are described not only by Luke in The Acts but by Paul himself in Galatians. According to The Acts, some of them at least had belonged to the sect of the Pharisees before they had become Christians. Acts 15 : 5.

The activity of the Judaizers is described by Luke in complete independence of the account given by Paul. As usual, Luke contents himself with a record of external fact, while Paul uncovers the deeper motives of the Judaizers' actions. Yet the facts as reported by Luke fully justify the harsh words which Paul employs. According to Paul, these Judaizers were “false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.” Gal. 2 : 4. By calling them “false brethren” Paul means simply that they had not really grasped the fundamental principle of the gospel—the principle of justification by faith. They were still trying to earn their salvation by their works instead of receiving it as a gift of God. At heart they were still Jews rather than Christians. They came in privily into places where they did not belong—perhaps Paul means especially into the church at Antioch—in order to spy out Christian liberty. Gal. 2 : 4. Compare Acts 15 : 1.

The rise of this Judaizing party is easy to understand. In some respects the Judaizers were simply following the line of least resistance. By upholding the Mosaic law they would escape persecution and even obtain honor. We have seen that it was the Jews who instigated the early persecutions of the Church. Such persecutions would be avoided by the Judaizers, for they could say to their non-Christian countrymen: "We are engaged simply in one form of the world-wide Jewish mission. We are requiring our converts to keep the Mosaic law and unite themselves definitely with the people of Israel. Every convert that we gain is a convert to Judaism. The cross of Christ that we proclaim is supplementary to the law, not subversive of it. We deserve therefore from the Jews not persecution but honor." Compare what Paul says about the Judaizers in Galatia. Gal. 6 : 12, 13.

3. THE APOSTOLIC DECREE

At first sight it seems rather strange that Paul in Galatians does not mention the apostolic decree. Some have supposed that his words even exclude any decree of that sort. In Gal. 2 : 6 Paul says that the pillars of the Jerusalem church "imparted nothing" to him. Yet according to The Acts they imparted to him this decree. The decree, moreover, seems to have a direct bearing upon the question that Paul was discussing in Galatians; for it involved the imposition of a part of the ceremonial law upon Gentile Christians. How then, if the decree really was passed as Luke says it was, could it have been left unmentioned by Paul?

There are various ways of overcoming the difficulty. In the first place it is not perfectly certain that any of the prohibitions contained in the decree are ceremonial in character. Three of them are probably ceremonial if the text of most manuscripts of The Acts is correct. Most manuscripts read, at Acts 15 : 29: "That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you." Here "things offered to idols" apparently describes not idolatrous worship, but food which had been dedicated to idols; and "blood" describes meat used for food without previous removal of the blood. This meaning of "blood" is apparently fixed by the addition of "things strangled." Since "things strangled" evidently refers to food, probably the two preceding expressions refer to food also. According to the great mass of our witnesses to the text, therefore, the apostolic decree

contains a food law. A few witnesses, however, omit all reference to things strangled, not only at Acts 15 : 29 but also at v. 20 and at ch. 21 : 25. If this text be original, then it is possible to interpret the prohibitions as simply moral and not at all ceremonial in character. "Things offered to idols" may be interpreted simply of idolatry, and "blood" of murder. But if the prohibitions are prohibitions of immorality, then they cannot be said to have "imparted" anything to Paul; for of course he was as much opposed to immorality as anyone.

However, the more familiar form of the text is probably correct. The witnesses that omit the word "strangled" are those that attest the so-called "Western Text" of The Acts. This Western Text differs rather strikingly from the more familiar text in many places. The question as to how far the Western Text of The Acts is correct is a hotly debated question. On the whole, however, the Western readings are usually at any rate to be discredited.

In the second place, the difficulty about the decree may be overcome by regarding Gal. 2 : 1-10 as parallel not with Acts 15 : 1-29 but with Acts 11 : 30; 12 : 25. This solution has already been discussed.

In the third place, the difficulty may be overcome by that interpretation of the decree which is proposed in the Student's Text Book. The decree was not an addition to Paul's gospel. It was not imposed upon the Gentile Christians as though a part of the law were necessary to salvation. On the contrary it was simply an attempt to solve the practical problems of certain mixed churches—not the Pauline churches in general, but churches which stood in an especially close relation to Jerusalem. This interpretation of the decree is favored by the difficult verse, Acts 15 : 21. What James there means is probably that the Gentile Christians should avoid those things which would give the most serious offense to hearers of the law.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 125-166. Lightfoot, "Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians," pp. 123-128 ("The later visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem"), 292-374 ("St. Paul and the Three"). Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," pp. 48-60, 152-175. Lewin, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," ch. ix. Conybeare and Howson, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," ch. vii. Stalker, "The Life of St. Paul," pp. 108-118. Lumby, pp. 185-200. Cook, pp. 451-458. Plumptre, pp. 93-101. Rackham, pp. 238-259, 263-270.

LESSON XVI

THE GOSPEL CARRIED INTO EUROPE

From the rich store of to-day's lesson only a few points can be selected for special comment.

1. TITUS AND TIMOTHY

At Lystra, Paul had Timothy circumcised. Acts 16 : 3. This action has been considered strange in view of the attitude which Paul had previously assumed. At Jerusalem, only a short time before, he had absolutely refused to permit the circumcision of Titus. Evidently, too, he had regarded the matter as of fundamental importance. Had Titus been circumcised, the freedom of the Gentile Christians would have been seriously endangered.

The presence of Titus at the Apostolic Council is mentioned only by Paul in Galatians. It is not mentioned in The Acts. Indeed, Titus does not appear in The Acts at all, though in the epistles he is rather prominent. This fact, however, really requires no further explanation than that the history of Luke is not intended to be exhaustive. The restraint exercised by the author of The Acts has already been observed, for example, in a comparison of the long list of hardships in II Cor. 11 : 23-27 with what Luke actually narrates. The helpers of Paul whom Luke mentions are usually those who traveled with him. Titus was sent by Paul on at least one important mission, II Cor. 7 : 13, 14, but was apparently not his companion on the missionary journeys. Luke does not concern himself very much with the internal affairs of the churches, and it is in this field that Titus is especially prominent in the epistles. With regard to the presence of Titus in Jerusalem, the different purposes of the narratives in Galatians and in The Acts must be borne in mind. The non-circumcision of Titus, so strongly emphasized by Paul, was merely preliminary to the public action of the church in which Luke was interested. Luke has thought it sufficient to include Titus under the "certain other" of the Antioch Christians who went up with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem.

The different policy which Paul adopted in the case of Timothy,

as compared with his policy about Titus, is amply explained by the wide differences in the situation.

In the first place, when Titus was at Jerusalem, the matter of Gentile freedom was in dispute, whereas when Timothy was circumcised the question had already been settled by a formal pronouncement of the Jerusalem church. After Paul had won the victory of principle, he could afford to make concessions where no principle was involved. Timothy was recognized as a full member of the Church even before his circumcision. Circumcision was merely intended to make him a more efficient helper in work among the Jews.

In the second place—and this is even more important—Timothy was a half-Jew. It is perhaps doubtful whether Paul under any circumstances would have authorized the circumcision of a pure Gentile like Titus. But Timothy's mother was Jewish. It must always be borne in mind that Paul did not demand the relinquishment of the law on the part of Jews; and Timothy's parentage gave him at least the right of regarding himself as a Jew. If he had chosen to follow his Gentile father, the Jews could have regarded him as a renegade. His usefulness in the synagogues would have been lost. Obviously the circumcision of such a man involved nothing more than the maintenance of ancestral custom on the part of Jews. Where no principle was involved, Paul was the most concessive of men. See especially I Cor. 9 : 19-23. The final relinquishment of the law on the part of Jews was rightly left to the future guidance of God.

2. THE ROUTE THROUGH ASIA MINOR

The difficulty of tracing the route of the missionaries beyond Lystra is due largely to the difficulty of Acts 16 : 6. A literal translation of the decisive words in that verse would be either "the Phrygian and Galatian country" or "Phrygia and the Galatian country." According to the advocates of the "South Galatian theory," "the Galatian country" here refers not to Galatia proper but to the southern part of the Roman province Galatia. "The Phrygian and Galatian country" then perhaps means "The Phrygo-Galatic country," or "that part of Phrygia which is in the Roman province Galatia." The reference then is to Iconium, Pisidian Antioch and the surrounding country—after the missionaries had passed through the Lycaonian part of the province Galatia (Derbe and Lystra) they traversed the Phrygian part of the province. The

chief objection to all such interpretations is found in the latter part of the verse: "having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia." It looks as though the reason why they passed through "the Phrygian and Galatian country" was that they were forbidden to preach in Asia. But South Galatia was directly on the way to Asia. The impossibility of preaching in Asia could therefore hardly have been the reason for passing through south Galatia.

Apparently, therefore, the disputed phrase refers rather to some region which is not on the way to Asia. This requirement is satisfied if Galatia proper is meant—the country in the northern part of the Roman province Galatia. When they got to Pisidian Antioch, it would have been natural for them to proceed into the western part of Asia Minor, into "Asia." That they were forbidden to do. Hence they turned north, and went through Phrygia into Galatia proper. When they got to the border country between Mysia and Galatia proper, they tried to continue their journey north into Bithynia, but were prevented by the Spirit. Then they turned west, and passing through Mysia without preaching arrived at last at the coast, at Troas.

Nothing is said here about preaching in Galatia proper. But in Acts 18 : 23, in connection with the third missionary journey, it is said that when Paul passed through "the Galatian country and Phrygia" he established the disciples. There could not have been disciples in the "Galatian country," unless there had been preaching there on the previous journey. On the "North Galatian" theory, therefore, the founding of the Galatian churches to which the epistle is directed is to be placed at Acts 16 : 6, and the second visit to them, which seems to be presupposed by the epistle, is to be put at Acts 18 : 23. If it seems strange that Luke does not mention the founding of these churches, the hurried character of this section of the narrative must be borne in mind. Furthermore, the epistle seems to imply that the founding of the churches was rather incidental than an original purpose of the journey; for in Gal. 4 : 13 Paul says that it was because of an infirmity of the flesh that he preached the gospel in Galatia the former time. Apparently he had been hurrying through the country without stopping, but being detained by illness used his enforced leisure to preach to the inhabitants. It is not impossible to understand how Luke came to omit mention of such incidental preaching. On the second missionary journey attention is concentrated on Macedonia and Greece.

3. THE MOVEMENTS OF SILAS AND TIMOTHY

When Paul went to Athens, Silas and Timothy remained behind in Macedonia. Acts 17 : 14. They were directed to join Paul again as soon as possible. V. 15. In Acts 18 : 1, 5 they are said to have joined him at Corinth. The narrative in The Acts must here be supplemented by the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. What Luke says is perfectly true, but his narrative is not complete. According to the most natural interpretation of I Thess. 3 : 1-5, Timothy was with Paul in Athens, and from there was sent to Thessalonica. The entire course of events was perhaps as follows: Silas and Timothy both joined Paul quickly at Athens according to directions. They were then sent away again—Timothy to Thessalonica, and Silas to some other place in Macedonia. Then, after the execution of their commissions, they finally joined Paul again at Corinth. Acts 18 : 5; I Thess. 3 : 6. Soon afterwards, all three missionaries were associated in the address of First Thessalonians.

4. PAUL AT ATHENS

In Athens Paul preached as usual in the synagogue to Jews and "God-fearers"; but he also adopted another and more unusual method—he simply took his stand without introduction in the market place, and spoke to those who chanced by. This method was characteristically Greek; it reminds us of the days of Socrates.

In the market place, Paul encountered certain of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Both of these schools of philosophy had originated almost three hundred years before Christ, and both were prominent in the New Testament period. In their tenets they were very different. The Stoics were pantheists. They conceived of the world as a sort of great living being of which God is the soul. The world does not exist apart from God and God does not exist apart from the world. Such pantheism is far removed from the Christian belief in the living God, Maker of heaven and earth; but as against polytheism, pantheism and theism have something in common. Paul in his speech was able to start from this common ground. In ethics, the Stoics were perhaps nearer to Christianity than in metaphysics. The highest good they conceived to be a life that is led in accordance with reason—that reason which is the determining principle of the world. The passions must be conquered, pleasure is worthless, the wise man is independent of external conditions. Such an ethic worked itself out in practice in many admirable virtues—in some conception of the universal

brotherhood of mankind, in charity, in heroic self-denial. But it lacked the warmth and glow of Christian love, and it lacked the living God.

The Epicureans were materialists. The world, for them, was a vast mechanism. They believed in the gods, but conceived of them as altogether without influence upon human affairs. Indeed, the deliverance of man from the fear of the gods was one of the purposes of the Epicurean philosophy. The Epicureans were interested chiefly in ethics. Pleasure, according to them, is the highest good. It need not be the pleasure of the senses; indeed Epicurus, at least, the founder of the school, insisted upon a calm life undisturbed by violent passions. Nevertheless it will readily be seen how little such a philosophy had in common with Christianity.

The conditions under which Paul made his speech cannot be determined with certainty. The difficulty arises from the ambiguity of "Areopagus." "Areopagus" means "Mars' hill." But the term was also applied to the court which held at least some of its meetings on the hill. Which meaning is intended here? Did Paul speak before the court, or did he speak on Mars' hill merely to those who were interested? On the whole, it is improbable at any rate that he was subjected to a formal trial.

The speech of Paul at Athens is one of the three important speeches of Paul, exclusive of his speeches in defense of himself at Jerusalem and at Cæsarea, which have been recorded in The Acts. These speeches are well chosen. One of them is a speech to Jews, Acts 13 : 16-41; one a speech to Gentiles, Acts 17 : 22-31; and the third a speech to Christians, Acts 20 : 18-35. Together they afford a very good idea of Paul's method as a missionary and as a pastor. As is to be expected, they differ strikingly from one another. Paul was large enough to comprehend the wonderful richness of Christian truth. His gospel was always the same, but he was able to adapt the presentation of it to the character of his hearers.

At Athens, an altar inscribed TO AN UNKNOWN GOD provided a starting point. The existence of such an altar is not at all surprising, although only altars to "unknown gods" (plural instead of singular) are attested elsewhere. Perhaps the inscription on this altar indicated simply that the builder of the altar did not know to which of the numberless gods he should offer thanks for a benefit that he had received, or to which he should address a

prayer to ward off calamity. Under a polytheistic religion, where every department of life had its own god, it was sometimes difficult to pick out the right god to pray to for any particular purpose. Such an altar was at any rate an expression of ignorance, and that ignorance served as a starting point for Paul. "You are afraid that you have neglected the proper god in this case," says Paul in effect. "Yes, indeed, you have. You have neglected a very important god indeed, you have neglected the one true God, who made the world and all things therein."

In what follows, Paul appeals to the truth contained in Stoic pantheism. His words are of peculiar interest at the present day, when pantheism is rampant even within the Church. There is a great truth in pantheism. It emphasizes the immanence of God. But the truth of pantheism is contained also in theism. The theist, as well as the pantheist, believes that God is not far from every one of us, and that in him we live and move and have our being. The theist, as well as the pantheist, can say, "Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." The theist accepts all the truth of pantheism, but avoids the error. God is present in the world—not one sparrow "shall fall on the ground without your Father"—but he is not limited to the world. He is not just another name for the totality of things, but an awful, mysterious, holy, free and sovereign Person. He is present in the world, but also Master of the world.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 177-197. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Troas," "Philippi," "Thessalonica," "Athens," "Areopagus," "Stoics," "Epicureans," "Corinth," "Gallio," "Silas." Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," pp. 175-261; "Pictures of the Apostolic Church," pp. 197-239. Lewin, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," chs. x, xi, and xii. Conybeare and Howson, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," chs. viii, ix, x, xi, and xii. Stalker, "The Life of St. Paul," pp. 71-81. Lumby, pp. 200-239. Cook, pp. 458-476. Plumptre, pp. 101-124. Rackham, pp. 260-263, 271-331. For information about the recently discovered Gallio inscription, see "The Princeton Theological Review," vol. ix, 1911, pp. 290-298: Armstrong, "Epigraphical Note."

LESSON XVII

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR RECENT CONVERTS

The Pauline Epistles fall naturally into four groups: (1) the epistles of the second missionary journey (First and Second Thessalonians); (2) the epistles of the third missionary journey (Galatians, First and Second Corinthians and Romans); (3) the epistles of the first imprisonment (Colossians and Philemon, Ephesians and Philippians); (4) the epistles written after the period covered by The Acts (First Timothy, Titus and Second Timothy).

Each of these groups has its own characteristics. The first group is characterized by simplicity of subject matter, and by a special interest in the second coming of Christ. The second group is concerned especially with the doctrines of sin and grace. The third group displays a special interest in the person of Christ and in the Church. The fourth group deals with organization, and with the maintenance of sound instruction.

1. SIMPLICITY OF THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLES

The reason for the peculiarities of First and Second Thessalonians has often been sought in the early date of these epistles. On the second missionary journey, it is said, Paul had not yet developed the great doctrines which appear at later periods of his life. This explanation may perhaps contain an element of truth. Undoubtedly there was some progress in Paul's thinking. Not everything was revealed to him at once. The chief cause, however, for the simplicity of the Thessalonian epistles is not the early date but the peculiar occasion of these epistles. Paul is here imparting his first written instruction to an infant church. Naturally he must feed these recent converts with milk. The simplicity of the letters is due not to immaturity in Paul but to immaturity in the Thessalonian church. After all, at the time when the Thessalonian epistles were written, the major part of Paul's Christian life—including the decisive conflict with the Judaizers at Antioch and Jerusalem—lay already in the past.

At any rate the simplicity of the Thessalonian epistles must not be exaggerated. In these letters the great Pauline doctrines,

though not discussed at length, are everywhere presupposed. There is the same lofty conception of Christ as in the other epistles, the same emphasis upon his resurrection, the same doctrine of salvation through his death. I Thess. 1 : 10; 5 : 9, 10.

2. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Undoubtedly the second advent, with the events which are immediately to precede it, occupies a central position in the Thessalonian epistles. A few words of explanation, therefore, may here be in order.

Evidently the expectation of Christ's coming was a fundamental part of Paul's belief, and had a fundamental place in his preaching. "Ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven"—these words show clearly how the hope of Christ's appearing was instilled in the converts from the very beginning. I Thess. 1 : 9, 10. To serve the living God and to wait for his Son—that is the sum and substance of the Christian life. All through the epistles the thought of the Parousia—the "presence" or "coming"—of Christ appears as a master motive. I Thess. 2 : 19; 3 : 13; 4 : 13 to 5 : 11, 23, 24; II Thess. 1 : 5 to 2 : 12.

This emphasis upon the second coming of Christ is explained if Paul expected Christ to come in the near future. The imminence of the Parousia for Paul appears to be indicated by I Thess. 4 : 15: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep." This verse is often thought to indicate that Paul confidently expected before his death to witness the coming of the Lord. Apparently he classes himself with those who "are left unto the coming of the Lord" as over against those who will suffer death. In the later epistles, it is further said, Paul held a very different view. From Second Corinthians on, he faced ever more definitely the thought of death. II Cor. 5 : 1, 8; Phil. 1 : 20-26. A comparison of I Cor. 15 : 51 with II Cor. 5 : 1, 8 is thought to indicate that the deadly peril which Paul incurred between the writing of the two Corinthian epistles, II Cor. 1 : 8, 9, had weakened his expectation of living until Christ should come. After he had once despaired of life, he could hardly expect with such perfect confidence to escape the experience of death. The possibility of death was too strong to be left completely out of sight.

Plausible as such a view is, it can be held only with certain reservations.

In the first place, we must not exaggerate the nearness of the Parousia according to Paul, even in the earliest period; for in II Thess. 2 : 1-12 the Thessalonians are reminded of certain events that must occur before Christ would come. The expression of the former epistle, I Thess. 5 : 2, that the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night, was to be taken as a warning to unbelievers to repent while there was yet time, not as a ground for neglecting ordinary provision for the future. In Second Thessalonians Paul finds it necessary to calm the overstrained expectations of the Thessalonian Christians.

Furthermore, it is not only in the earlier epistles that expressions occur which seem to suggest that the Parousia is near. Rom. 13 : 11; Phil. 4 : 5. And then it is evident from II Cor. 11 : 23-29 and from I Cor. 15 : 30-32 that Paul had undergone dangers before the one mentioned in II Cor. 1 : 8, 9, so that there is no reason to suppose that that one event caused any sudden change in his expectations.

Lastly, in I Cor. 6 : 14 Paul says that "God both raised the Lord, and will raise up us through his power." If that refers to the literal resurrection, then here Paul classes himself among those who are to die; for if he lived to the Parousia, then there would be no need for him to be raised up.

It is therefore very doubtful whether we can put any very definite change in the apostle's expectations as to his living or dying between First Corinthians and Second Corinthians. A gradual development in his feeling about the matter there no doubt was. During the early part of his life his mind dwelt less upon the prospect of death than it did after perils of all kinds had made that prospect more and more imminent. But at no time did the apostle regard the privilege of living until the Parousia as a certainty to be put at all in the same category with the Christian hope itself. Especially the passage in First Thessalonians can be rightly interpreted only in the light of the historical occasion for it. Until certain members of the church had died, the Thessalonian Christians had never faced the possibility of dying before the second coming of Christ. Hence they were troubled. Would the brethren who had fallen asleep miss the benefits of Christ's kingdom? Paul writes to reassure them. He does not contradict their hope of living till the coming of Christ, for God had not revealed to him that

that hope would not be realized. But he tells them that, supposing that hope to be justified, even then they will have no advantage over their dead brethren. He classes himself with those who were still alive and might therefore live till Christ should come, as over against those who were already dead and could not therefore live till Christ should come.

Certain passages in the epistles of Paul, which are not confined to any one period of his life, seem to show that at any rate he did not exclude the very real possibility that Christ might come in the near future. At any rate, however, such an expectation of the early coming of Christ was just as far removed as possible from the expectations of fanatical chiliasts. It did not lead Paul to forget that the times and the seasons are entirely in the hand of God. It had no appreciable effect upon his ethics, except to make it more intense, more fully governed by the thought of the judgment seat of Christ. It did not prevent him from laying far-reaching plans, it did not prevent his developing a great philosophy of future history in Rom., chs. 9 to 11. How far he was from falling into the error he combated in Second Thessalonians! Despite his view of the temporary character of the things that are seen, how sane and healthy was his way of dealing with practical problems! He did his duty, and left the details of the future to God. Hence it is hard to discover what Paul thought as to how soon Christ would come—naturally so, for Paul did not try to discover it himself.

3. THE PERSONS ASSOCIATED IN THE ADDRESS

Almost always other persons are associated with Paul in the addresses of the epistles. With regard to the meaning of this custom, extreme views should be avoided. On the one hand, these persons—usually, at any rate—had no share in the actual composition of the epistles. The epistles bear the imprint of one striking personality. On the other hand, association in the address means something more than that the persons so named sent greetings; for mere greetings are placed at the end. The truth lies between the two extremes. Probably the persons associated with Paul in the address were made acquainted at least in general with the contents of the epistles, and desired to express their agreement with what was said. In the Thessalonian epistles Silas and Timothy, who had had a part in the founding of the Thessalonian church, appear very appropriately in the address.

A question related to that of the persons associated in the

addresses is the question of the so-called "epistolary plural." The epistolary plural was analogous to our "editorial we" it was a usage by which the writer of a letter could substitute "we" for "I" in referring to himself alone. In many passages in the letters of Paul it is exceedingly difficult to tell whether a plural is merely epistolary, or whether it has some special significance. For example, whom, if anyone, is Paul including with himself in the "we" of I Thess. 3:1? In particular, the question often is whether, when Paul says "we," he is thinking of the persons who were associated with him in the address of the epistle. On the whole it seems impossible to deny that Paul sometimes uses the epistolary plural, though his use of it is probably not so extensive as has often been supposed.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 197-203. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves (supplemented), article on "Thessalonians, Epistles to the." Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Lock, articles on "Thessalonians, First Epistle to the" and "Thessalonians, Second Epistle to the." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 47-57. Ramsay, "Pictures of the Apostolic Church," pp. 240-246. Stalker, "The Life of St. Paul," pp. 85-107. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. iii, pp. 125-170: Mason, "The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians." "The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges": Findlay, "The Epistles to the Thessalonians." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. i, pp. 152-164, 203-255. Milligan, "St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians." The two last-named works are intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XVIII

THE CONFLICT WITH THE JUDAIZERS

1. APOLLOS

Before the arrival of Paul at Ephesus an important event had taken place in that city—the meeting of Aquila and Priscilla with Apollos. Apollos was a Jew of Alexandrian descent. He had already received instruction about Jesus—perhaps in his native city. Of all the great cities of the Roman Empire Alexandria alone was approximately as near to Jerusalem as was Syrian Antioch. The founding of the church at Alexandria is obscure, but undoubtedly it took place at a very early time. At a later period Alexandria was of the utmost importance as the center of Christian learning, as it had been already the center of the learning of the pagan world. Until instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos had known only the baptism of John the Baptist. Apparently one important thing that he had lacked was an acquaintance with the peculiar Christian manifestation of the Holy Spirit. He seems to have been trained in Greek rhetoric, whether the word translated “eloquent” in Acts 18 : 24 means “eloquent” or “learned.” Apollos did not remain long in Ephesus, but went to Corinth, where, as can be learned from First Corinthians as well as from The Acts, his work was of great importance.

2. GALATIANS A POLEMIC

After studying first the Thessalonian epistles and then Galatians in succession the student should be able to form some conception of the variety among the epistles of Paul. Certainly there could be no sharper contrast. First and Second Thessalonians are simple, affectionate letters written to a youthful church; Galatians is one of the most passionate bits of polemic in the whole Bible. We ought to honor Paul for his anger. A lesser man might have taken a calmer view of the situation. After all, it might have been said, the observance of Jewish fasts and feasts was not a serious matter; even circumcision, though useless, could do no great harm. But Paul penetrated below the surface. He detected the great principles that were at stake. The Judaizers were disannulling the grace of God.

3. THE ADDRESS. GAL. 1 : 1-5

The addresses of the Pauline epistles are never merely formal. Paul does not wait for the beginning of the letter proper in order to say what he has in mind. Even the epistolary forms are suffused with the deepest religious feeling.

The opening of the present letter is anticipatory of what is to follow. Dividing the opening into three parts—the nominative (name and title of the writer), the dative (name of those to whom the letter is addressed), and the greeting—it will be observed that every one of these parts has its peculiarity as compared with the other Pauline epistles.

The peculiarity of the nominative is the remarkable addition beginning with "not from men," which is a summary of the first great division of the epistle, Paul's defense against the personal attack of his opponents. Since the Epistle to the Galatians is polemic from beginning to end, it is not surprising that the very first word after the bare name and title of the author is "not." Paul cannot mention his title "apostle"—in the addresses of First and Second Thessalonians he had not thought it necessary to mention it at all—without thinking of the way in which in Galatia it was misrepresented. "My apostleship," he says, "came not only from Christ, but directly from Christ."

The peculiarity of the dative is its brevity—not "beloved of God, called to be saints," or the like, but just the bare and formal "to the churches of Galatia." The situation was not one which called for pleasant words!

The greeting is the least varied part in the addresses of the Pauline epistles. The long addition to the greeting in Galatians is absolutely unique. It is a summary of the second and central main division of the epistle, Paul's defense of his gospel. "Christ has died to free you. The Judaizers in bringing you into bondage are making of none effect the grace of Christ, manifested on the cross." That is the very core of the letter. In all of the Pauline epistles there is scarcely a passage more characteristic of the man than the first five verses of Galatians. An ordinary writer would have been merely formal in the address. Not so Paul!

The exultant supernaturalism of the address should be noticed. This supernaturalism appears, in the first place, in the sphere of external history—"God the Father, who raised him from the dead." Pauline Christianity is based upon the miracle of the resurrection. Supernaturalism appears also, however, in the sphere of Christian

experience—"who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world." Christianity is no mere easy development of the old life, no mere improvement of the life, but a new life in a new world. In both spheres, supernaturalism is being denied in the modern Church. Pauline Christianity is very different from much that is called Christianity to-day.

Finally, this passage will serve to exhibit Paul's lofty view of the person of Christ. "Neither through man," says Paul, "but through Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is here distinguished sharply from men and placed clearly on the side of God. What is more, even the Judaizers evidently accepted fundamentally the same view. Paul said, "Not by man, but by Jesus Christ"; the Judaizers said, "Not by Jesus Christ, but by man." But if so, then the Judaizers, no less than Paul, distinguished Jesus sharply from ordinary humanity. About other things there was debate, but about the person of Christ Paul appears in harmony even with his opponents. Evidently the original apostles had given the Judaizers on this point no slightest excuse for differing from Paul. The heavenly Christ of Paul was also the Christ of those who had walked and talked with Jesus of Nazareth. They had seen Jesus subject to all the petty limitations of human life. Yet they thought him divine! Could they have been deceived?

4. THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE. GAL. 1 : 6-10

The thanksgiving for the Christian state of the readers, which appears in practically every other of the Pauline epistles, is here conspicuous by its absence. Here it would have been a mockery. The Galatians were on the point of giving up the gospel. There was just a chance of saving them. The letter was written in a desperate crisis. Pray God it might not be too late! No time here for words of thanks!

In vs. 6-10, Paul simply states the purpose of the letter in a few uncompromising words: "You are falling away from the gospel and I am writing to stop you."

5. PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY. GAL. 1 : 11 to 2 : 21

After stating, Gal. 1 : 11, 12, the thesis that is to be proved in this section, Paul defends his independent apostolic authority by three main arguments.

In the first place, vs. 13-24, he was already launched upon his

work as apostle to the Gentiles before he had even come into any effective contact with the original apostles. Before his conversion, he had been an active persecutor. His conversion was wrought, not, like an ordinary conversion, through human agency, but by an immediate act of Christ. After his conversion it was three years before he saw any of the apostles. Then he saw only Peter (and James) and that not long enough to become, as his opponents said, a disciple of these leaders.

In the second place, Gal. 2 : 1-10, when he finally did hold a conference with the original apostles, they themselves, the very authorities to whom the Judaizers appealed, recognized that his authority was quite independent of theirs, and, like theirs, of directly divine origin.

In the third place, Gal. 2 : 11-21, so independent was his authority that on one occasion he could even rebuke the chief of the original apostles himself. What Paul said at that time to Peter happened to be exactly what he wanted to say, in the epistle, to the Galatians. This section, therefore, forms a transition to the second main division of the epistle. It has sometimes been thought surprising that Paul does not say how Peter took his rebuke. The conclusion has even been drawn that if Peter had acknowledged his error Paul would have been sure to say so. Such reasoning ignores the character of this section. In reporting the substance of what he said to Peter, Paul has laid bare the very depths of his own life. To return, after such a passage, to the incident at Antioch would have been pedantic and unnecessary. Long before the end of the second chapter Paul has forgotten all about Peter, all about Antioch, and all about the whole of his past history. He is thinking only of the grace of Christ, and how some men are trampling it under foot. O foolish Galatians, to desert so great a salvation!

6. PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS GOSPEL. GAL. 3 : 1 to 5 : 12

Salvation cannot be earned by human effort, but must be received simply as a free gift: Christ has died to save us from the curse of the law: to submit again to the yoke of bondage is disloyalty to him—that is the great thesis that Paul sets out to prove.

He proves it first by an argument from experience. Gal. 3 : 1-5. You received the Holy Spirit, in palpable manifestation, before you ever saw the Judaizers, before you ever thought of keeping the

Mosaic law. You received the Spirit by faith alone. How then can you now think that the law is necessary? Surely there can be nothing higher than the Spirit.

In the second place, there is an argument from Scripture. Not those who depend upon the works of the law, but those who believe, have the benefit of the covenant made with Abraham. Vs. 6-22.

In the third place, by the use of various figures, Paul contrasts the former bondage with the present freedom. Gal. 3 : 23 to 4 : 7. The life under the law was a period of restraint like that of childhood, preliminary to faith in Christ. The law was intended to produce the consciousness of sin, in order that the resultant hopelessness might lead men to accept the Saviour. Vs. 23-25. But now all Christians alike, both Jews and Gentiles, are sons of God in Christ, and therefore heirs of the promise made to Abraham. Vs. 26-29. Being sons of God, with all the glorious freedom of sonship, with the Spirit crying, "Abba, Father," in the heart, how can we think of returning to the miserable bondage of an external and legalistic religion? Gal. 4 : 1-11.

In the fourth place, Paul turns away from argument to make a personal appeal. Vs. 12-20. What has become of your devotion to me? Surely I have not become your enemy just because I tell you the truth. The Judaizers are estranging you from me. Listen to me, my spiritual children, even though I can speak to you only through the cold medium of a letter!

In the fifth place, Paul, in his perplexity, bethinks himself of one more argument. It is an argument that would appeal especially to those who were impressed by the Judaizers' method of using the Old Testament, but it also has permanent validity. The fundamental principle, says Paul, for which I am arguing, the principle of grace, can be illustrated from the story of Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael had every prospect of being the heir of Abraham. It seemed impossible for the aged Abraham to have another son. Nature was on Ishmael's side. But nature was overruled. So it is to-day. As far as nature is concerned, the Jews are the heirs of Abraham—they have all the outward marks of sonship. But God has willed otherwise. He has chosen to give the inheritance to the heirs according to promise. The principle of the divine choice, operative on a small scale in the acceptance of Isaac, is operative now on a large scale in the acceptance of the Gentile church.

Finally, Paul concludes the central section of the epistle by emphasizing the gravity of the crisis. Gal. 5 : 1-12. Do not be

deceived. Circumcision as the Judaizers advocate it is no innocent thing; it means the acceptance of a law religion. You must choose either the law or grace; you cannot have both.

7. THE RESULTS OF PAUL'S GOSPEL. GAL. 5 : 13 to 6 : 10

In this third main division of the epistle Paul exhibits the practical working of faith. Paul's gospel is more powerful than the teaching of the Judaizers. Try to keep the law in your own strength and you will fail, for the flesh is too strong. But the Spirit is stronger than the flesh, and the Spirit is received by faith.

8. CONCLUSION. GAL. 6 : 11-18

This concluding section, if not the whole epistle, was written with Paul's own hand. V. 11. In his other letters Paul dictated everything but a brief closing salutation.

In the closing section, Paul lays the alternative once more before his readers. The Judaizers have worldly aims, they boast of worldly advantages; but the true Christian boasts of nothing but the cross. Christianity, as here portrayed, is not the gentle, easy-going doctrine that is being mistaken for it to-day. It is no light thing to say, "The world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world." But the result is a new creature!

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 203-213. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": article on "Ephesus"; Purves, articles on "Galatia" and "Galatians, Epistle to the" (supplemented). Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Ramsay, article on "Ephesus"; Dods, article on "Galatians, Epistle to the." Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," pp. 262-282; "Pictures of the Apostolic Church," pp. 247-269, 293-300. Lewin, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, chs. xii, xiii. Conybeare and Howson, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, chs. xii, xiii, xiv, xv and xvi. Stalker, "The Life of St. Paul," pp. 82-84, 108-118. Lumby, pp. 239-266. Cook, pp. 476-485. Plumptre, pp. 124-136. Rackham, pp. 331-370. M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 70-76. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. ii, pp. 419-468: Sanday, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians." "The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges": Perowne, "The Epistle to the Galatians." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. i, pp. 164-202. Lightfoot, "Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians." The two last-named works are intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XIX

PROBLEMS OF A GENTILE CHURCH

Christianity, according to Paul, is an escape from the world. Gal. 1 : 4. All human distinctions are comparatively unimportant. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female." Gal. 3 : 28. Such a doctrine might seem logically to lead to fanaticism. If the Christian is already a citizen of heaven, may he not be indifferent to the conditions of life upon this earth? Such a conclusion was altogether avoided by Paul. In First Corinthians Paul is revealed as the most practical of men. All human distinctions are subordinate and secondary—and yet these distinctions are carefully observed. Paul was a man of heroic faith, but he was also possessed of admirable tact.

It is not that the one side of Paul's nature limited the other; it is not that common sense acted as a check to transcendental religion. On the contrary, the two things seemed to be in perfect harmony. Just because Paul was inwardly so entirely free from the world, he was also so wise in dealing with worldly affairs. The secret of this harmony was consecration. Human relationships, when consecrated to God, are not destroyed, but ennobled. They cease, indeed, to be an end in themselves, but they become a means to Christian service. The Christian man has no right to be indifferent to the world. If he is, he is no true son of the God who made the world, and sent the Lord to save it. The Christian, like the man of the world, is profoundly interested in the conditions of life on this earth. Only, unlike the man of the world, he is not helpless and perplexed in the presence of those conditions; but from his vantage ground of heavenly power, he shapes them to the divine will. He is interested in the world, but he is interested in it, not as its servant, but as its master.

So in First Corinthians Paul lays hold of certain perplexing practical problems with the sure grasp of one who is called to rule and not to serve. Everything that he touches he lifts to a higher plane. In his hands even the simplest things of life receive a heavenly significance.

The problems that are discussed in First Corinthians stood in a special relation to the environment of the Corinthian church. Most of them were due to the threatened intrusions of Greek paganism. They are closely analogous, however, to the problems which we have to solve to-day. Paganism and worldliness are not dead. The Church still stands in the midst of a hostile environment. We can still use the teaching of Paul. That teaching will now be examined in a few of its important details.

1. THE PARTIES

Paul mentions four parties that had been formed in the Corinthian church—a Paul-party, an Apollos-party, a Cephas-party and a Christ-party. These parties do not seem to have been separated from one another by any serious doctrinal differences, and it is impossible to determine their characteristics in detail. In the section where the party spirit is discussed, Paul blames the Corinthians for intellectual pride. This fault has often been connected with the Apollos-party. Apollos was an Alexandrian, and probably had an Alexandrian Greek training. He might therefore have unconsciously evoked among some members of the Corinthian church an excessive admiration for his more pretentious style of preaching, which might have caused them to despise the simpler manner of Paul. Even this much, however, is little more than surmise. At any rate, Apollos should not be blamed for the faults of those who misused his name. He is praised unstintedly by Paul, who was even desirous that he should return at once to Corinth. I Cor. 16 : 12. Paul blames the Paul-party just as much as any of the other three.

The Peter-party was composed of admirers of Peter, who had either come to Corinth from the scene of Peter's labors elsewhere, or simply had known of Peter by hearsay. It is unlikely that Peter himself had been in Corinth, for if he had Paul would probably have let the fact appear in First or Second Corinthians. The Christ-party is rather puzzling. A comparison with the false teachers who are combated in Second Corinthians has led some scholars to suppose that it was a Judaizing party, which emphasized a personal acquaintance with the earthly Jesus as a necessary qualification of apostleship. In that case, however, Paul would probably have singled out the Christ-party for special attack. More probably these were simply men who, in proud opposition to the adherents of Paul, of Apollos and of Cephas, emphasized their own independ-

ence of any leader other than Christ. Of course, the watchword, "I am of Christ," if used in a better spirit, would have been altogether praiseworthy, and indeed Paul desires all the parties to unite in it. I Cor. 3 : 21-23.

Perhaps it is a mistake to attribute to these parties anything like stability. On the whole, the passage gives the impression that it is not the individual parties that Paul is condemning, but the party spirit. That party spirit was manifested by watchwords like those which are enumerated in I Cor. 1 : 12, but that that enumeration was meant to be complete, does not appear. The whole effort to determine the characteristics of the individual parties—an effort which has absorbed the attention of many scholars—should perhaps be abandoned.

Paul's treatment of the party spirit exhibits his greatness not only as an administrator, but also as a writer. The subject was certainly not inspiring; yet under Paul's touch it becomes luminous with heavenly glory. The contrast of human wisdom with the message of the cross, I Cor. 1 : 18-31, where a splendid rhythm of language matches the sublimity of the thought, the wonderful description of the freedom and power of the man who possesses the Spirit of God, the grand climax of the third chapter, "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's"—these are among the passages that can never be forgotten.

2. THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

The question of meats offered to idols, which Paul discusses in I Cor. 8 : 1 to 11 : 1, was exceedingly intricate. To it Paul applies several great principles. In the first place, there is the principle of Christian freedom. The Christian has been delivered from enslaving superstitions. Idols have no power; they cannot impart any harmful character to the good things which God has provided for the sustenance of man. In the second place, however, there is the principle of loyalty. The fact that idols are nothing does not render idol-worship morally indifferent. On the contrary, idolatry is always sinful. If the eating of certain kinds of food under certain conditions involves participation in idolatry then it is disloyalty to the one true God. The joint operation of the two principles of freedom and of loyalty seems to lead in Paul's mind to the following practical conclusion:—The Christian may eat the meat that has

been offered to idols if it is simply put on sale in the market place or set before him at an ordinary meal; but he must not take part with the heathen in specifically religious feasts. The whole question, however, is further viewed in the light of a third principle—the principle of Christian love. Even things that are in themselves innocent must be given up if a brother by them is led into conduct which for him is sin. Christ has died for that weaker brother; surely the Christian, then, may not destroy him. Thus love, even more than loyalty, limits freedom—but it is a blessed limitation. The principles here applied by Paul to the question of the Corinthian Christians will solve many a problem of the modern Church.

3. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The principle of Christian love, with the related principle of toleration, is applied also to another set of problems, the problems with regard to the exercise of spiritual gifts. The passage in which Paul discusses these problems, aside from its spiritual and moral teaching, is of singular historical interest. It affords a unique picture of the devotional meetings of an apostolic church. The characteristic of these meetings was the enthusiasm which prevailed in them. Paul is not at all desirous of dampening that enthusiasm. On the contrary the gifts in question were in his judgment really bestowed by the Holy Spirit. Even the gift of tongues, which Paul limits in its operation, is in his judgment of genuine value. Indeed, he himself had exercised it even more than the other Christians. I Cor. 14 : 18. This last fact should correct any unworthy impression which we might have formed with regard to the gift. If speaking with tongues was practiced by Paul, then it was no mere unhealthy emotionalism. We are to-day unable to understand it fully, but in the apostolic Church it was a real expression of Christian experience.

Paul desires, not to dampen the enthusiasm of the Corinthian church, but merely to eliminate certain harmful by-products of that which was in itself altogether excellent. The first principle which he applies is the principle of toleration. There is room in the Church for many different kinds of workers. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." The principle is often neglected in the modern Church. Toleration, indeed, is on everyone's lips; but it is not the kind of toleration that Paul means. It is often nothing more than indifference to the great verities of the faith. Such toleration would have met with nothing but an anathema from

Paul. The toleration that Paul is commending is a toleration, not with regard to matters of doctrine, but with regard to methods of work. Such toleration is often sadly lacking. Some advocates of missions think that almost every Christian who stays at home is a coward; some good, conservative elders, on the other hand, have little interest in what passes the bounds of their own congregation. Some Christians of reserved habits are shocked at the popular methods of the evangelists; some evangelists are loud in their ignorant denunciation of the Christian scholar. In other words, many very devout Christians of the present day act as though they had never read the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians.

The principle of toleration, however, culminates in the principle of love. If there must be a choice between the exercise of different gifts, then the choice should be in favor of those gifts which are most profitable to other men. Finally, even the highest spiritual gifts are not independent of reason. I Cor. 14 : 32, 33. That is a far-reaching principle. Some modern Christians seem to think that an appeal to the inward voice of the Spirit excuses them from listening to reasonable counsel. Such is not the teaching of Paul.

4. THE RESURRECTION

The error which is combated in the fifteenth chapter of the epistle could hardly have been a denial, in general, of continued existence after death, but was rather a denial of the resurrection of the body as over against the Greek doctrine of the immortality of the soul. In reply, Paul appeals to the resurrection of Jesus. The appeal would seem to be futile unless Paul means that the resurrection of Jesus was a bodily resurrection. If the appearances of Jesus were no more than incorporeal manifestations of his spirit, then obviously the believer in a mere immortality of the soul remained unrefuted. In this chapter there is an advance over the simple teaching of First Thessalonians. Here the character of the resurrection body comes into view. The resurrection body will have a real connection with the old body—otherwise there would be no resurrection—but the weakness of the old body will be done away. There is continuity, but also transformation.

5. INCIDENTAL INFORMATION ABOUT JESUS

Certain passages in First Corinthians, which are introduced only in an incidental way, as illustrations of the principles which are

being applied, are of inestimable historical value. These passages include not only the great autobiographical passage in the ninth chapter, where Paul illustrates from his own life the limitation of the principle of freedom by the principle of love, but also two all-important passages which refer to the life of Christ.

It is generally admitted that First Corinthians was written at about A. D. 55. The eleventh chapter of the epistle gives an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, in which Jesus teaches the sacrificial significance of his death; and the fifteenth chapter gives a list of the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection. The information contained in these passages was not invented by Paul; indeed he distinctly says that it was "received." In A. D. 55, then, not only Paul, but also the Church generally believed that Jesus' death, according to his own teaching, was sacrificial, and appealed in support of his resurrection to a wealth of competent testimony. But from whom had Paul "received" these things? Hardly from anyone except those who had been Christians before him—in other words, from the Palestinian church. We have here an irremovable confirmation of the Gospel view of Jesus. First Corinthians is a historical document of absolutely priceless value.

The incidental character of these historical passages is especially noteworthy. It shows that Paul knew far more about Jesus than he found occasion in the epistles to tell. If he had told more, no doubt the Gospel picture of Jesus would have received confirmation throughout.

IN THE LIBRARY—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 213-221. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": article on "Apollos"; Purves and Davis, article on "Corinthians, Epistles to the." Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Robertson, article on "Corinthians, First Epistle to the." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 58-64. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. ii, pp. 281-356: Shore, "The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians." "The Cambridge Bible for Schools": Lias, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. i, pp. 256-306. "The International Critical Commentary": Robertson and Plummer, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians." The two last-named works presuppose a knowledge of Greek.

LESSON XX

THE APOSTLE AND HIS MINISTRY

1. ADDRESS AND THANKSGIVING. II Cor. 1 : 1-11

In First Corinthians the obscure Sosthenes is found to be associated with Paul in the address of the epistle; in Second Corinthians it is Timothy, one of the best-known of the helpers of Paul. Even if that mission of Timothy to Corinth which is mentioned in First Corinthians had resulted in failure, Timothy's usefulness in the church was not permanently affected.

After the address, comes, as is usual in the Pauline Epistles, an expression of thanksgiving to God. This time, however, it is not thanksgiving for the Christian state of the readers, but thanksgiving for Paul's own escape from danger. The absence of thanksgiving for the readers does not mean here, as in the case of Galatians, that there was nothing to be thankful for in the church that is being addressed, for the whole first section of the letter is suffused with a spirit of thankfulness for the Corinthians' return to their true allegiance; it means rather simply that the thought of the deadly personal danger, and of the remarkable escape, were for the moment in the forefront of Paul's thought. Even that personal matter, however, was used by Paul to fortify his readers against similar trials, and especially to strengthen still further the bonds of sympathy which had at last been restored between him and them.

What this danger was from which Paul had just escaped cannot be determined. It is as much a puzzle as the fighting with beasts at Ephesus, which Paul mentions in I Cor. 15 : 32. Neither one nor the other can very well be identified with the trouble caused by Demetrius the silversmith, Acts 19 : 23-41, for there Paul does not seem to have been in deadly danger. Some suppose that the fighting with beasts is literally meant; that Paul was actually exposed to the wild beasts in the arena and escaped only in some remarkable way. It should be observed that Paul does not say, with regard to the danger mentioned in Second Corinthians, that it occurred in Ephesus, but only that it occurred in Asia. The expression, "weighed down," in II Cor. 1 : 8 perhaps points to some form of illness rather than to persecution.

2. THE APOSTLE AND THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.**II Cor. 1 : 12 to 7 : 16**

Immediately after the thanksgiving for his escape from death, Paul begins the defense of his ministry. After the suspense of the previous days, he feels the need of reviewing the methods and motives of his labor among the Corinthians, in order that the last vestige of suspicion may be removed. This he does in an unrestrained, cordial sort of way, which reveals the deepest secrets of his heart, and culminates here and there in grand expositions of the very essence of the gospel.

First, in just a passing word, ch. 1:13, 14, he defends his letters against that charge of obscurity or concealment which is hinted at elsewhere in the epistle. Compare ch. 4 : 1-4; 11 : 6.

Next, he defends himself against the charge of fickleness in his journey plans. At some time, probably during or after the unsuccessful visit alluded to in ch. 2 : 1, Paul had formed the plan of returning to Corinth by the direct route. This plan he had not carried out, and his abandonment of it apparently confirmed the impression of weakness which had been left by the unsuccessful visit. "He is very bold in letters," said his opponents, "but when he is here he is weak, and now he is afraid to return." It was a petty criticism, and a lesser man might have answered it in a petty way. But Paul was able to lift the whole discussion to a loftier plane. His answer to the criticism was very simple—the reason why he had not returned to Corinth at once was that he did not want to return again in grief and in severity; for the sake of the Corinthians themselves he wanted to give them time to repent, before the final and fatal issue should be raised. Characteristically, however, Paul does not content himself with this simple answer; indeed he does not even begin with it. A specific explanation of the change in his plans would have refuted the criticism immediately under consideration, but Paul felt the need of doing far more than that. What he desired to do was to make not only this criticism, but all similar criticisms, impossible. This he does by the fine reference to the positive character of his gospel. "You say that I am uncertain in my plans, that I say yes and no in one breath. Well, the gospel that I preached, at any rate, was no such uncertain thing as that. My gospel was a great 'Yes' to all the promises of God." Such a method of refutation lifts the reader far above all petty criticisms to the great things of Paul's gospel.

Yet this reference to great principles is no mere excuse to avoid

the simple question at issue. On the contrary, Paul is perfectly frank about the reason why he had not gone to Corinth as he had intended. It was out of love to the Corinthian church, and this had also prompted the writing of a severe letter. Here, ch. 2 : 5-11, Paul refers to the offender whose case had been made a test at the time of the recent painful visit. This offender was probably different from the incestuous person who is so sternly dealt with in I Cor. 5 : 1-5. His offense is thought by many to have been some personal insult to Paul, II Cor. 2 : 5, but this is not quite certain. At any rate, whatever his original offence, Paul's demand for his punishment had become a test of the loyalty of the church. At first the demand had been refused, but now the majority of the congregation has agreed and the man himself is deeply repentant, so that Paul is only afraid lest severity may go too far. It is hardly worth while saying that the character of Paul was entirely free from vindictiveness. When the discipline of the Church would permit it, Paul was the first to propose counsels of mercy.

The reference to the epistles of commendation which had been used by Paul's opponents in Corinth, ch. 3 : 1, has been made the basis of far-reaching conclusions about the whole history of the apostolic age. From whom could the opponents have received their letters of introduction? Only, it is said, from Palestine, and probably from the original apostles. This conclusion is hasty, to say the least. It should be noticed that not only letters to the Corinthian church but also letters from the church are apparently in mind. V. 1. If, then, the Corinthian church had been asked to supply these false teachers with letters of commendation, perhaps the other churches that had supplied them with letters were no nearer to Jerusalem than Corinth was.

The mention of these letters of commendation introduces one of the grandest passages in the New Testament. "I," says Paul, by way of transition, "do not need any letters of commendation. My work is sufficient commendation. What I have accomplished in the hearts of men is an epistle written by the Spirit of God." Then follows the magnificent exposition of the ministry of the new covenant. That ministry is first contrasted with the old dispensation, perhaps with reference to an excessive valuation, by the opponents, of a continued Judaism in the Church. The old covenant was glorious, but how much more glorious is the new! The old was a ministry of condemnation, but the new is a ministry of justification. The old was a ministry of an external law, the new

is a ministry of the life-giving power of the Spirit of God. There is no reason any longer for concealment. The Spirit brings freedom and openness and light.

This treasure is held indeed in earthen vessels. The recent danger that Paul has passed through, as well as the overpowering hardships of his life, make him painfully conscious of human weakness. But that weakness is blessed which in all the fuller glory reveals the all-conquering power of God. The Christian need never despair, for by the eye of faith he can detect those unseen things which are eternal. The present body may be dissolved, but the resurrection body will be ready. Indeed, even if the Christian by death is separated for a time altogether from the body, he need not fear. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

The climax of the whole glorious passage is the brief exposition of the ministry of reconciliation which begins with ch. 5 : 11. Here we are introduced to the secret of the remarkable life which is revealed in Second Corinthians and in the other epistles of Paul. Reconciliation with God through the death of Christ in our behalf and in our stead, consequent freedom from sin and from the world, a new and glorious life under the favor of God—these are the things that Paul experienced in his own life, these are the things that he preached to others, regardless of all hardship and criticism, and these are the things, now and always, which contain the real springs of the Church's power.

After an uncompromising warning against impurity and worldliness, delivered from the lofty vantage ground that has just been reached, the apostle gives expression once more to the joy that he has received from the good news which Titus brought him; and then proceeds to an entirely different matter.

3. THE COLLECTION. II Cor., chs. 8, 9

Two whole chapters of the epistle are devoted to the collection for the Jerusalem church. The history of this matter, so far as it can be traced, is briefly as follows: At the time of the Jerusalem council, the pillars of the Jerusalem church had requested Paul to remember the Jerusalem poor. At the time when First Corinthians was written, Paul had already started a collection for this purpose in the churches of Galatia, and in First Corinthians he asks the Corinthians to take part. I Cor. 16 : 1-4. In Second Corinthians he announces that the churches of Macedonia have contributed

bountifully, II Cor. 8 : 1-5, and urges the continuance of the collection in Corinth. Finally, in the Epistle to the Romans, which was written from Corinth only a short time after Second Corinthians, he mentions the collection in Macedonia and Achaia, announces his intention of journeying to Jerusalem with the gifts, and asks the Roman Christians to pray that the ministration may be acceptable to the Jerusalem church. Rom. 15 : 25-27, 31, 32.

With his customary foresight, Paul made careful provision for the administration of the gifts, in order to avoid all possible misunderstanding or suspicion. For example, the churches are to choose delegates to carry their bounty to Jerusalem. I Cor. 16 : 3. Possibly the delegates are to be identified with the persons who are named in Acts 20 : 4. Luke does not mention the collection, but it is alluded to in Acts 24 : 17.

Paul's treatment of the collection in II Cor., chs. 8, 9, was not only adapted to accomplish its immediate purpose, but also has been of high value to the Christian Church. These chapters have assured to the right use of wealth a place of real dignity among the forms of Christian service.

4. THE OPPONENTS. II Cor., chs. 10 to 13

The striking change of tone at ch. 10 : 1 is amply explained by the change of subject. In the first part of the epistle, Paul has been thinking of the return of the majority of the congregation to their allegiance; now he turns to deal with the false teachers who have been causing all the trouble. It is still necessary to meet their attacks and remove every vestige of influence which they may still have retained over the church. Their attack upon Paul was of a peculiarly mean and unworthy character; the indignation which Paul displays in these chapters was fully justified.

The opponents were certainly Jews, and prided themselves on the fact. Ch. 11 : 22. But it does not appear with certainty that they were Judaizers. If they were intending to come forward with any demand of circumcision or of observance of the Mosaic law, such demand was still kept in the background. Indeed, there is no indication that the doctrine that they preached was different in important respects from that of Paul. In particular, there is no indication that they advocated a different view about Jesus. One verse, ch. 11 : 4, has, indeed, been regarded as such an indication, but only by an exceedingly doubtful interpretation. Probably the other Jesus whom the opponents preached existed only in their own

claim. They said merely, "Paul has kept something back," v. 6, margin; ch. 4 : 3; "we alone can give you adequate information; we alone can proclaim the true Jesus, the true Spirit and the true gospel." In reality, however, they had nothing new to offer. Paul had made the whole gospel known.

It is further not even quite clear that the opponents laid stress upon a personal acquaintance with the earthly Jesus, and so played the original apostles off against Paul. The expression "chiefest apostles," ch. 11 : 5, is clearly nothing more than an ironical designation of the false teachers themselves. It is true, the false teachers claimed to belong in a special sense to Christ, ch 10 : 7, and to be in a special sense "ministers of Christ." Ch. 11 : 23. But it is not at all clear—despite ch. 5 : 16—that the connection which they claimed to have with Christ was that of personal acquaintance, either directly or through their authorities, with the earthly Jesus. Finally, these false teachers cannot with any certainty be connected with the Christ-party of First Corinthians.

The chief value of the last four chapters of the epistle is the wealth of autobiographical material which they contain. Against the insidious personal attacks of the opponents, Paul was obliged to speak of certain personal matters about which he might otherwise have been silent. Had he been silent, the Church would have been the loser. To know the inner life of the apostle Paul is to know Christ; for Paul was in Christ and Christ was in Paul. What could compensate us for the loss of II Cor. 12 : 7-10? Through these words the bodily weakness of Paul has forever been made profitable for the strength of the Church.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 221-225. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves and Davis, article on "Corinthians, Epistles to the." Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Robertson, article on "Corinthians, Second Epistle to the." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 65-69. Beet, "A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians," seventh edition, pp. 1-20, 317-542. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. ii, pp. 357-417: Plumptre, "The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians." "The Cambridge Bible for Schools": Lias, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. i, pp. 307-351. The last-named work presupposes a knowledge of Greek.

LESSON XXI

THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION

The Epistle to the Romans, though it is not merely a systematic treatise, is more systematic than any other of the Pauline Epistles. Unlike the epistles that preceded it, it was written in a period of comparative quiet between two great stages in the apostle's work. Not unnaturally, therefore, it contains something like a summary of Paul's teaching. The summary, however, does not embrace the whole of the Pauline theology, but only one important department of it. The nature of God, for example, and the person of Christ, are not discussed in the Epistle to the Romans. Of course Paul held very definite views upon these subjects, and these views are presupposed on every page of the epistle—especially the loftiest possible conception of the person of Christ lies at the background of this entire account of Christ's work—but such presuppositions do not in this epistle receive an elaborate exposition. The real subject of the first eight chapters of Romans is not theology in general, but simply the way of salvation. How can man be saved—that is the question which Paul answers in this epistle.

Obviously the question is of the utmost practical importance. The Epistle to the Romans is absolutely fundamental for the establishment of Christian faith. This estimate, which was formerly a matter of course, has in recent years unfortunately fallen into disrepute. The Epistle to the Romans, after all, it is said, is concerned with theology, whereas what we need is simple faith. We must return from Romans to the Gospels, from Paul to Christ. The words of Jesus, recorded in the Gospels, are thus emphasized to the prejudice of the teaching of the apostle.

This tendency should be resisted with the utmost firmness. It is striking at the very vitals of the Church's life. After all, Jesus came, as has been well said, not to say something, but to do something. His words are very precious, we could never do without them; but after all they are subsidiary to his deeds. His life and death and resurrection—these are the things that wrought salvation for men. And these great saving acts could not be fully explained till after they had been done. For an explanation of them, therefore,

we must turn not only to the Gospels but also to the epistles, not only to Jesus but also to Paul. Paul was in a special sense our apostle; like us, he had never known the earthly Jesus. Just for that reason, through the divine revelation that was granted him, he could guide all subsequent generations to the risen Christ. The Epistle to the Romans, more fully perhaps than any other book, points out the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ. It does not, indeed, solve all mysteries; but it reveals enough to enable us to believe.

1. THE EDICT OF CLAUDIUS

The edict of Claudius which expelled the Jews from Rome was certainly not permanently effective; indeed there are some indications that it was modified almost as soon as it was issued. But although it did not keep the Jews out of Rome, it may at least have hastened the separation between Judaism and Christianity. If the conflict between the two, as a conflict within Judaism, had given rise to the hostile edict, then, as has plausibly been suggested, the separation might be in the interests of both parties. If the church were kept separate from the synagogue, the Jews would be protected from dangerous disorders and from the opposition which would be encountered by a new and illegal religion, and the Christians, on the other hand, would be protected from the Claudian edict against the Jews.

2. ADDRESS, THANKSGIVING AND SUBJECT. Rom. 1 : 1-17

The address of the Epistle to the Romans is remarkable for the long addition which is made to the name of the author. Paul was writing to a church which he had never seen. His excuse for writing was to be found only in the gospel with which he had been intrusted. At the very start, therefore, he places his gospel in the foreground. Here, however, it is rather the great presupposition of the gospel which is in mind—Jesus Christ in his double nature. One who has been commissioned to preach to the Gentiles the gospel of such a Christ may certainly address a letter to Rome.

In connection with the customary thanksgiving, Paul mentions his long-cherished desire of visiting the Roman Christians. He desires to impart unto them some spiritual gift—no, he says, rather he desires to receive from them as well as to give. The correction is characteristic of Paul. Some men would have felt no need of making it. As a matter of fact, Paul was fully in a position to

impart spiritual gifts. But he was afraid his readers might feel hurt—as though the apostle thought they could make no return for the benefit which the visit would bring them. It is an exquisite bit of fine discernment and delicate courtesy. But like all true courtesy, it was based on fact. Paul was really not a man to decline help and comfort from even the humblest of the brethren.

In vs. 16, 17, the theme of the epistle is announced—the gospel the power of God unto salvation, the gospel which reveals a righteousness of God that is received by faith. The meaning of “a righteousness of God” has been much disputed. Some think that it refers to the righteousness which is an attribute of God. More probably, however, it is to be interpreted in the light of ch. 10 : 3; Phil. 3:9. It then refers to that right relation of man to God which God himself produces. There are two ways of receiving a sentence of acquittal from God the Judge. One is by keeping the law of God perfectly. The other is by receiving through faith the righteousness of Christ. The former is impossible because of sin. The latter has been made possible by the gift of Christ. As sinners, we are subject to the punishment of death. But that punishment has been paid for us by Christ. We therefore go free; we can start fresh, with the consciousness of God’s favor. We are “justified”—that is, “pronounced righteous”—not because we are free from sin, but because by his grace God looks not upon us but upon Christ. We have been pronounced righteous, but not on account of our own works. We possess not our own righteousness but “a righteousness of God.”

This righteousness of God is received by faith. Faith is not a work, it is simply the willingness to receive. Christ has promised by his death to bring us to God. We may not understand it all, but is Christ to be believed? Study the Gospel picture of him, and you will be convinced that he is.

Justification by faith, then, means being pronounced righteous by God, although we are sinners. It might seem to be a very dangerous doctrine. If we are pronounced righteous whether we are really righteous or not, then may we not go on with impunity in sin? Such reasoning ignores the results of justification. Faith brings more than forgiveness. It brings a new life. In the new life sin has no place. The Christian has broken forever with his old slavery. Though perfection has not yet been attained in practice, it has been attained in principle, and by the power of the Spirit all sin will finally be removed. The Christian cannot compromise with sin. Salvation is not only from the guilt of sin, but also from the

power of it. The sixth chapter of Romans leaves no room for moral laxness.

3. ROMANS AND GALATIANS

It is interesting to compare Romans with Galatians. The subject of the two epistles is the same. Both are concerned with salvation by faith alone, apart from the works of the law. In many passages the two are parallel. The fuller exposition in Romans is often the best commentary upon the briefer statements of Galatians. For example, the words: "What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions"—very obscure as they stand in Galatians—are explained by Rom. 5 : 20; ch. 7. In tone, however, the two epistles are widely different. Galatians is written in view of one definite attack upon the gospel; Romans is a general exposition summing up the results of the conflict. When Paul wrote Galatians he was in the thick of the battle; at the time of Romans he had fought his way through to the heights.

The Epistle to the Romans, however, is no cold, purely logical treatise. Theology here is interwoven with experience. No exposition can do justice to this wonderful letter. To read about it is sometimes dull; but to read it is life.

4. THE PAULINE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY. Rom., chs. 9 to 11

Chapters 9 to 11 of this epistle are interesting in a great many ways. They are interesting, for example, in their tremendous conception of the mystery of the divine will. The ninth chapter of Romans is a good corrective for any carelessness in our attitude toward God. After all, God is a mystery. How little we know of his eternal plan! We must ever tremble before him. Yet it is such a God who has invited us, through Christ, to hold communion with himself. There is the true wonder of the gospel—that it brings us into fellowship, not with a God of our own devising, not with one who is a Father and nothing else, but with the awful, holy, mysterious Maker and Ruler of all things. The joy of the believer is the deepest of all joys. It is a joy that is akin to holy fear.

These chapters are also interesting because they attest the attachment of Paul to the Jewish people. Where is there a nobler expression of patriotism than Rom. 9 : 1-5? Exclusive attention to the polemic passages where Paul is defending the Gentile mission and denying the efficacy of the Mosaic law, have produced in the minds of some scholars a one-sided view of Paul's attitude toward Israel. Paul did not advocate the destruction of the identity of his

people. He believed that even the natural Israel had a part to play on the stage of history. These chapters of Romans, together with some other passages in the epistles, such as I Cor. 9 : 20, confirm what the Book of The Acts tells us about Paul's willingness, when no principle was involved, to conform to Jewish custom.

5. INTEGRITY OF THE EPISTLE

The genuineness of the Epistle to the Romans is undoubted, but its "integrity" has been questioned. The epistle was certainly written by Paul, but was it all, as we now have it, originally part of one letter? By many scholars the greater part of the sixteenth chapter is supposed to have originally formed part of an epistle of Paul written not to Rome but to Ephesus. The chief argument for this hypothesis is derived from the long list of names in ch. 16: 3-15. Could Paul have had so many personal acquaintances in a church which he had never visited? The argument is not conclusive. Just because Paul could not appeal in his letter to any personal acquaintance with the Roman church as a whole, it would be natural for him to mention at least all the individuals in the church with whom he stood in any sort of special relation. Furthermore, the frequency of travel in the Roman Empire must be borne in mind. Many persons whom Paul had met on his travels would naturally find their way to the capital. Finally, Aquila and Priscilla, though they had recently lived in Ephesus, I Cor. 16 : 19, may easily have resumed their former residence in Rome. Acts 18 : 2; Rom. 16 : 3-5.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 226-231. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves, (supplemented) article on "Romans, Epistle to the." Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Robertson, article on "Romans, Epistle to the." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 77-82. Gifford, "The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans." Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. ii, pp. 193-280: Sanday, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans." "The Cambridge Bible for Schools": Moule, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans." "The International Critical Commentary": Sanday and Headlam, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. i, pp. 352-438. The two last-named works presuppose a knowledge of Greek.

LESSON XXII

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME

The material of this lesson is so extensive that only the barest summary can be attempted in the class. The great features of the narrative should be made to stand out clear—the bitter opposition of the Jews, the favorable attitude of the Roman authorities, the journey to Rome. Before the lesson is over the student should have a deeper impression of the character of Paul—his perfect ease and tactfulness in the various relations of life, his unswerving boldness where the gospel was concerned, his inexplicable power. Finally, the peculiar quality of the narrative should be appreciated. These chapters contain the two longer “we-sections” of The Acts.

1. THE JOURNEY TO TROAS

At first Paul had intended to sail direct from Corinth to Syria, but a plot of the Jews caused him to change his plan. Acts 20 : 3. It has been suggested that the ship upon which he was intending to sail may have carried non-Christian Jews, going to the approaching feast in Jerusalem, v. 16, who could have done him harm upon the voyage. By choosing the route through Macedonia he averted the immediate danger.

The use of the first person plural begins again at Acts 20 : 5. It was broken off at ch. 16: 17. Luke had parted from Paul at Philippi on the second missionary journey; and it is at Philippi that he now appears again. The following journeys, in which Luke himself took part, are narrated with the utmost vividness and minuteness. The narrative amounts practically to a diary—in some sections every day is accounted for.

The departure from Philippi took place “after the days of unleavened bread,” that is, after the passover week. Acts 20 : 6. From the account of the subsequent journey it is not quite possible to tell whether Paul actually succeeded in carrying out his plan of being in Jerusalem at Pentecost. Pentecost, it will be remembered, came fifty days after the beginning of the passover week.

2. TROAS

The description of the last evening at Troas, when Paul prolonged his discourse in the lighted room, is one of the inimitably vivid scenes of The Acts. Probably we are to understand that Eutychus, who fell down from a window in the third story, was really killed and not merely stunned. Verse 10 might seem to indicate that he was only stunned, but the last words of v. 9 point rather to actual, and not merely apparent, death. The miracle is paralleled by the raising of Dorcas by Peter. Acts 9 : 36-42.

3. THE ELDERS OF EPHESUS

When Paul told the elders that they would see his face "no more," or perhaps rather "no longer," Acts 20 : 25, 38, he did not necessarily mean that he would certainly never return to Ephesus. For a period of years, at any rate, he was intending to transfer his labors to the west; his return to Ephesus, therefore, was at all events uncertain. His long activity at Ephesus, which had occupied the better part of the past three years, was for the present at an end. From the Pastoral Epistles it appears that as a matter of fact Paul did visit Ephesus again after his release from the first Roman imprisonment.

4. ARRIVAL IN PALESTINE

At Tyre and at Cæsarea, Paul received warnings against visiting Jerusalem. These warnings came through the Spirit, Acts 21 : 4, 11, but not in the sense that the Holy Spirit commanded Paul not to go. The meaning is that the Spirit warned him of the dangers that were to befall him. In meeting these dangers bravely he was acting in full accordance with the divine will.

At Acts 21 : 18 the use of the first person plural ceases, because Luke had no immediate part in the events that followed. It is natural to suppose, however, that he remained in Palestine, for he joined Paul again in Cæsarea, at the beginning of the journey to Rome. For the events of Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem and in Cæsarea he had first-hand information.

The vow in which Paul took part at the request of James was at least similar to the Nazirite vow described in Num. 6 : 1-21. Not all the details of such vows are perfectly clear. Paul himself, on his own account, had assumed a similar vow on his second missionary journey, Acts 18 : 18—unless indeed, as is grammatically possible, the words in that passage refer to Aquila rather than to Paul.

It was not true, as the Christians of Judea had been led to think,

that Paul taught the Jewish Christians of the dispersion to forsake the law of Moses, though he was insistent that the Gentile Christians must not adopt that law. It was not even true that he himself had altogether given up keeping the law, though the exigencies of his Gentile work required him to give it up very often, and though he regarded himself as inwardly free from the law. His willingness to take part in a Jewish vow in Jerusalem is therefore not surprising. His action on this occasion was fully justified by the principles of his conduct as described in I Cor. 9 : 20, 21. The keeping of the law was not for Paul a means of obtaining salvation. Salvation was a free gift of God, through the death of Christ. But for the present the general relinquishment of the law and abandonment of the distinctive customs of Judaism on the part of Jewish Christians was not required. Paul was willing to leave that question to the future guidance of God.

It is somewhat surprising that the Book of The Acts mentions the great collection for the Jerusalem church only incidentally, in the report of a speech of Paul. Acts 24 : 17. The interest of Luke in this part of the narrative is absorbed in the relations between Paul and the non-Christian Jews and the Roman authorities. The internal affairs of the Church are left for the most part out of account. The Acts and the Pauline Epistles, here as so often, must be allowed to supplement each other. Luke gives a vivid picture of the external events, and a clear view of the relations of Christianity to the outside world; while Paul affords us a deeper insight, in some respects at least, into the inward development of the Church's life.

5. PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

The famous reply of Agrippa to Paul, Acts 26 : 28, is exceedingly difficult to translate and to interpret. The translation in the Revised Version is by no means certainly correct. The words may mean, "A little more of this persuasion will make me a Christian!" or else, "You seem to think that the little persuasion you have used is sufficient to make me a Christian." In any case, the sentence displays a certain perplexity on the part of the king. He certainly does not mean that he is on the point of accepting Christianity—his words have a half-ironical tone—but on the other hand his interest is aroused. The same thing is probably to be said for Festus. He said, "Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad," but he said it with a loud voice as though he were agitated. There was something uncanny about this prisoner!

6. THE ACCESSION OF FESTUS

The dates of many events in the apostolic age have usually been fixed by counting from the accession of Festus. Unfortunately, however, that event itself cannot be dated with certainty. Some put it as late as A. D. 61, others as early as A. D. 55. If the date A. D. 60 be provisionally adopted, then Paul's arrest in Jerusalem occurred in A. D. 58, and his arrival in Rome in A. D. 61. The conclusion of the narrative in The Acts would then fall in the year A. D. 63. It will be remembered that the proconsulship of Gallio now affords an additional starting point for a chronology of the apostolic age.

7. LATER HISTORY OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

After the meeting between Paul and James, which is narrated in Acts 21 : 17-26, the Jerusalem church, at least so far as any direct narrative is concerned, disappears from the pages of the New Testament. It will be observed that in the account of Paul's last visit, only James, the brother of the Lord, and "the elders" are mentioned as representatives of the church. Possibly some of the twelve apostles may be included under the term "elders," but it is also perfectly possible that the apostles were all out of the city.

James, the brother of the Lord, continued to be the head of the Jerusalem church until he was martyred—in A. D. 62, or, as others suppose, in A. D. 66. Before the war which culminated in the capture of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, the Christians of the city fled to Pella beyond the Jordan. From that time on, though the Christians returned after the war, Jewish Christianity was quite uninfluential. The supremacy of the Jerusalem church was gone. But that church had already rendered a priceless service. It had laid the foundations of Christendom. It had sent forth the first missionaries. And it had preserved the record of Jesus' life. The Synoptic Gospels, in substance at least, are a product of the Jerusalem church.

IN THE LIBRARY—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 160-166, 231-239. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on the many persons and places mentioned in the narrative, especially "Felix," "Festus," and "Herod" (4). Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," pp. 283-362; "Pictures of the Apostolic Church," pp. 270-285, 310-364. Lewin, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," vol. ii, chs. ii, iii, iv, v, and vi. Conybeare and Howson, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," chs. xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii, xxiv and xxv. Stalker, "The Life of St. Paul," pp. 121-133. Lumby, pp. 266-380. Cook, pp. 485-534. Plumptre, pp. 136-184. Rackham, pp. 370-513.

LESSON XXIII

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

1. THE EPISTLES OF THE THIRD GROUP

With the lesson for to-day, we are introduced to the third group among the epistles of Paul. The epistles of the second group, which were written during the third missionary journey, are concerned with the problem of sin and salvation; the epistles of the third group are interesting especially for their teaching about the person of Christ and about the Church. A period of about three or four years separates the last epistle of the second group from the first epistle of the third. Most of this interval had been spent by Paul in captivity. Undoubtedly, during this period of enforced leisure, there had been development in Paul's thinking, but it is very difficult to determine exactly wherein that development consisted. The differences of the third group of epistles from the second are due to the difference in the readers at least as much as to a difference in Paul himself. It is hard to say just how much of Colossians and Ephesians Paul would have been incapable of writing during the third missionary journey.

At any rate, the epistles of the captivity differ from those of the former group in being for the most part quieter in tone. During the third journey Paul had had to continue the great battles of his career against various forms of Judaizing error. Christianity at one time seemed to be in danger of being reduced to a mere form of Judaism; the free grace of God was being deserted for a law religion; faith was being deserted for works. In Galatia, the question of principle had been uppermost; in Corinth, the personal attack upon Paul. Everywhere, moreover, the gospel of salvation by faith was exposed to misconception. Pagan license was threatening to creep into the Church. Unless it could be kept out, the legalists would have some apparent show of reason on their side. Taking it all in all, it had been a hard battle. But it had been gloriously fought, and it had been won. Now Paul was able to turn his attention to new fields of labor and to new problems.

2. THE CHRISTOLOGY OF COLOSSIANS

The Epistle to the Colossians is peculiarly "Christological." More fully and more expressly than in any other of his letters Paul

here develops his view about the person of Christ. Even here, however, this teaching is incidental; it was simply Paul's way of refuting certain errors that had crept into the Colossian church. Except for those errors Paul would perhaps never have written at length, as he does in Col. 1 : 14-23, about the relation of Christ to God and to the world. Yet in that case his own views would have been the same, and they would have been just as fundamental to his whole religious life. In the epistles, which are written to Christians, Paul takes many things for granted. Some of the things which are most fundamental appear only incidentally. Just because they were fundamental, just because they were accepted by everyone, they did not need to be discussed at length.

So it is especially with the person of Christ. From the first epistle to the last, Paul presupposes essentially the same view of that great subject. Practically everything that he says in Colossians could have been inferred from scattered hints in the earlier epistles. From the beginning Paul regarded Jesus Christ as a man, who had a real human life and died a real death on the cross. From the beginning, on the other hand, he separated Christ sharply from men and placed him clearly on the side of God. From the beginning, in other words, he attributed to him a double nature—Jesus Christ was always in Paul's thinking both God and man. Finally, the preëxistence of Christ, which is so strongly emphasized in Colossians, is clearly implied in such passages as Gal. 4 : 4; and his activity in creation appears, according to the best-attested text, in I Cor. 8 : 6.

Nevertheless, the more systematic exposition in Colossians is of the utmost value. It serves to summarize and explain the scattered implications of the earlier epistles. Christ according to Paul is, in the first place, "the image of the invisible God." Col. 1 : 15. He is the supreme Revealer of God, a Revealer, however, not merely by words but by his own nature. If you want to know what God is, look upon Christ! In the second place, he is "the firstborn of all creation." Of itself that phrase might be misconstrued. It might be thought to mean that Christ was the first being that God created. Any such interpretation, however, is clearly excluded by the three following verses. There Paul has himself provided an explanation of his puzzling phrase. "The firstborn of all creation" means that Christ, himself uncreated, existed before all created things; he was prior to all things, and, as befits an only son, he possesses all things. Indeed he himself was active in the creation of all things, not only the world, and men, but also those angelic powers—"thrones or

dominions or principalities or powers"—upon whom the errorists in Colossæ were inclined to lay too much emphasis. He was the instrument of God the Father in creation. And he was also the end of creation. The world exists not for its own sake, but for the sake of Christ. Especially is he the Head of the Church. His headship is declared by his being the first to rise from the dead into that glorious life into which he will finally bring all his disciples. In a word, the entire "fulness" of the divine nature dwells in Christ. That word "fulness" was much misused in the "Gnostic" speculations of the second century. It is barely possible that the word had already been employed in the incipient Gnosticism of the Colossian errorists. If so, Paul by his repeated use of the word in Colossians and Ephesians, is bringing his readers back to a healthier and simpler and grander conception.

3. THE PERSON OF CHRIST AND THE WORK OF CHRIST

In Col. 1 : 20-23, Paul bases upon the preceding exposition of the nature of Christ a noble description of Christ's work. The work which has been intrusted to Christ is nothing less than that of reconciling the creation unto God. Through sin, an enmity had been set up between God and the work of his hands. That enmity applies primarily of course to the sinful persons themselves. They are under God's wrath and curse. Sin is not a trifle. It cannot simply be treated as though it had never been. If God be righteous, then there is such a thing as a moral order. The wrath of God rests upon the sinner. But by the sacrifice of Christ, that enmity has been wiped out. Christ has paid the awful penalty of sin. Christ has brought the sinner again near to God. The enmity and the following reconciliation concern primarily the men who have sinned. But they also apply to the whole world. The ground has been cursed for man's sake. The end of the reconciliation will be a new heaven and a new earth. The groaning and travailing of the creation will one day have an end. Compare Rom. 8 : 18-25.

This brief description of the work of Christ in Col. 1 : 20-22; 2 : 10-15, can be richly paralleled in the earlier epistles. What now needs to be emphasized is that the Pauline view of Christ's work depends absolutely upon the Pauline view of Christ's person. All through the epistles of Paul the life and death and resurrection are represented as events of a cosmic significance. But they can have such significance only if Christ is the kind of being that is described in the Epistle to the Colossians. The glorious account of

salvation, which runs all through the epistles and forms the especial subject of the second group, is unintelligible if Christ were merely an inspired prophet or merely the greatest of created things. It becomes intelligible only if Christ is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." The mysterious Christology of Colossians lies at the very heart of Christian faith.

4. THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

The Epistle to the Colossians, though addressed to a church that Paul had never visited, is full of warm-hearted affection. Paul could hardly have been cold and formal if he had tried. He was a man of great breadth of sympathy. Hence he was able to enter with the deepest interest into the problems of the Colossian Christians—to rejoice at their faith and love, to lament their faults, and to labor with whole-souled devotion for their spiritual profit.

The simple, unconstrained affection of Paul's nature, however, had freer scope in the delightful little letter to Philemon. Philemon apparently was a convert of Paul himself. Philem. 19. He was not a man with whom Paul had to be on his guard. Paul is perfectly confident that Philemon will fully understand the motives of his action and of his letter.

The letter is addressed to Philemon primarily, but also to Apphia and to Archippus and to the church in Philemon's house. We are here introduced into a Christian household of the apostolic age. Apphia was probably Philemon's wife and Archippus perhaps his son. Evidently Archippus held some sort of office in the Colossian church. "Say to Archippus," says Paul in a strangely emphatic way, at the very end of the Epistle to the Colossians, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it." We should like to know what the ministry was which Archippus had received. At any rate, we hope that he fulfilled it. It was a solemn warning which he received—a warning which might well have made him tremble. We also may well take the warning to heart. Our task of imparting Bible truth is no light responsibility. To us also the warning comes, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it."

The letter is addressed not only to Philemon and his family, but also to the "church" which met in his house. This "church" was a part of the Colossian congregation. In the early days, when it was difficult to secure meeting places, well-to-do Christians frequently offered the hospitality of their own homes. A certain Nympha or

Nymphas—the name varies in the manuscripts—performed this service in Laodicea, Col. 4 : 15, Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, I Cor. 16 : 19, and also Gaius in the same city. Rom. 16 : 23.

The Epistle to Philemon exhibits that perfection of courtesy and delicacy of feeling which has been observed again and again in Paul. A man of coarser feeling might have kept Onesimus with him until receiving the response of Philemon. In that case no doubt Philemon would have replied not only that Onesimus was forgiven, but that Paul might retain the benefit of his services. But Paul saw clearly that that would have made Philemon's goodness seem to be of necessity and not of free will. Philem. 14. There was only one really fine, honorable, high-toned way of dealing with the situation, and that was the way which Paul adopted.

The letter is informal and affectionate. There is even apparently a little delicate play on the name Onesimus, which means "helpful." Once Onesimus belied his name, but now he has become helpful again. Philem. 11. In v. 20, also, where Paul says, "Let me have joy of thee," he uses a word which comes from the same root as that which appears in the name of the slave. Nevertheless, despite all informality, Paul has succeeded, here as always, in lifting the matter to a lofty plane. Paul was a man who ennobled everything that he touched.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 241-246. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible," articles on "Colossæ," "Hierapolis" and "Laodicea": Purves, articles on "Colossians, Epistle to the" and "Philemon" (supplemented). Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Ramsay, articles on "Colossæ," "Hierapolis," and "Laodicea"; Murray, article on "Colossians, Epistle to the"; Bernard, articles on "Philemon," and "Philemon, Epistle to." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 91-98. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. iii: Barry, "The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians," pp. 1-8, 96-124; "The Epistle of Paul to Philemon," pp. 265-274. "The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges": Moule, "The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. i, pp. 439-479. Lightfoot, "Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon." The two last-named works are intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXIV

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The special effort in the lessons of the second quarter has been to produce some lively impression of the wonderful variety among the letters of Paul. That variety is due largely to the variety in the occasions of the letters. Just because Paul entered with such sympathy into the varying circumstances of his many churches, the letters of Paul reflect the wonderful manifoldness of life.

Nevertheless, it is also an advantage that at least one letter is largely independent of any special circumstances whatever. This is the case with the epistle which is to be studied to-day. The Epistle to the Ephesians is addressed to a definite group of churches, but that group is addressed not with regard to its own special problems, but simply as representative of Gentile Christianity in general. For once Paul allows his thoughts to flow unchecked by the particular needs of his readers.

1. STYLE OF EPHESIANS

The purpose of Ephesians, therefore, is quite different from the purpose of any other of the Pauline Epistles. To the difference in purpose corresponds a difference in style. The style of Ephesians is characterized especially by long sentences, heaped full of an almost bewildering wealth of thought. This characteristic had appeared to some extent even in the earliest epistles—compare II Thess. 1 : 3-10—but in Ephesians it becomes more pronounced. Ephesians 1 : 3-14, for example, is only one sentence, but it is a world in itself. Apparently in this epistle Paul has allowed his mind and heart to roam unchecked over the whole realm of the divine economy. This freedom might conceivably be thought to involve a sacrifice of logical symmetry and of euphonic grace, but at any rate it possesses a certain beauty and value of its own. Ephesians may lack the splendid rhythm of the first chapter of First Corinthians or the eighth chapter of Romans, but on the other hand these tremendous periods, with their heaping-up of majestic phrases, serve admirably to express the bewilderment of the soul in the presence of divine wonders. Human language is inadequate to do full justice to the grace of God. In Ephesians, we see an inspired apostle striving to

give utterance in human language to things which in their full reality are unspeakable.

2. COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS

The Epistle to the Ephesians is strikingly similar to the Epistle to the Colossians, not only in thought, but also in many details of language. Another case of striking similarity between two epistles of Paul was encountered in First and Second Thessalonians. There the two similar letters were written both to the same church, though at no very great interval of time. The similarity was due to the desire which Paul felt of reiterating, with some additions and explanations, the teaching of his former letter. In the case of Ephesians and Colossians the similarity is even more easily explained. These two epistles were written to different churches at the same time. What more natural than that the same thoughts and to some extent the same words should appear in both? Only, the teaching which in Colossians is directed against a definite form of error is in Ephesians reproduced in freer, more general form. The relation between the two epistles is somewhat like that which exists between Galatians and Romans. In Galatians, the doctrine of salvation by faith appears in conflict with the opposing error; in Romans, the same doctrine finds expression, but this time in quieter, more systematic development, after the conflict is over. The similarity between Galatians and Romans is, however, not so close as that between Colossians and Ephesians—partly because the contrast of spirit is not so striking in the latter case, Colossians being far less bitterly polemic than Galatians; and more particularly because a considerable interval separates Romans from Galatians, whereas Colossians and Ephesians were dispatched by the same messenger.

3. THE ADDRESS OF EPHESIANS. EPH. 1: 1, 2

In the Student's Text Book, it has been shown that the words "at Ephesus" in the first verse may perhaps be no part of what Paul wrote, but a later addition. It cannot be claimed, however, that the problem of the address has been completely solved. Without the words "at Ephesus," the address becomes very difficult. "To the saints that are and the faithful in Christ Jesus" hardly seems to make sense. The Greek words might be construed perfectly well to mean, "To the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus," but that is a rather unusual expression. The suggestion has been made that in the first copies of the epistle a blank space was left after "the

saints that are," to be filled in with the names of the particular churches of the group which is addressed. Every church among the group would thus receive a copy with its own name inserted. The hypothesis is not altogether satisfactory. Probably we shall simply have to admit that there is an unsolved problem here.

4. THANKSGIVING FOR THE PLAN OF SALVATION. EPH. 1 : 3-14

Before the customary thanksgiving for the Christian state of the readers, Paul inserts here, in accordance with the nature of this epistle, a general thanksgiving for the whole Church, which is applied especially to the readers only at the very end. The passage contains a wonderful summary of the whole of salvation, but it begins with the plan of God and it closes with the glory of God. God is the beginning and end of all things. His mysterious decree is the cause of our being chosen for salvation, and his own glory is the ultimate object in view. Men are often rebellious against such a God-centered view of things. Predestination is an unpopular doctrine. But it was at any rate the doctrine of Paul, and it lay at the roots of his experience. It is sometimes hard for us to write God so large in our thoughts. Because we think of him merely as a somewhat greater man, we are inclined to reject the doctrine which attributes all things to the workings of his will and to the furtherance of his glory. If, however, we could think of him, not only as a person, but also as an infinite, eternal and holy person, then we should murmur no longer, but should, with Paul, burst forth in praise of the inscrutable wonder of his grace. The glory of a merciful God has involved for its full unfolding the salvation of guilty sinners. God's glory finds its full expression only when he is revealed as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER FOR THE READERS. EPH. 1 : 15 to 2 : 10

Beginning with thanksgiving for the present faith and love of the readers, Paul passes at once to a prayer that they may be given understanding to appreciate the wonderful salvation which has been celebrated in the preceding section, especially the mighty Saviour who has been bestowed upon the Church. Then the greatness of the present salvation, not only of Gentiles, but also of Jews, is celebrated by a contrast with the previous condition of sin and misery. The blessed change has been due, not to anything in man, but simply and solely to the grace of God, received by faith.

6. RECEPTION OF THE GENTILES. EPH. 2 : 11-22

Here the contrast between past and present is applied especially to the Gentiles. Formerly they were excluded from the people of God. But now by the death of Christ the "middle wall of partition" has been broken down. Gentiles and Jews have now a common access to the Father.

7. THE MINISTRY OF PAUL. EPH., ch. 3

This reception of the Gentiles is the work that has been intrusted especially to Paul. It is a glorious ministry, far too great for human strength. It can be fulfilled only through the grace of God. The full mystery of God's grace, concealed for many generations, has at last been revealed. The first half of the epistle is fittingly closed by a doxology.

8. LIFE IN THE CHURCH. EPH., chs. 4 to 6

This section may be called the practical part of the epistle. It exhibits the results in holy living which proceed from the glorious gospel which has just been proclaimed. Even in the "practical" part, however, the great doctrines of God's grace are so constantly finding renewed expression that it is difficult to separate one part from the other. Paul never separated moral precepts from the great truths which give them force. Let the readers live like citizens of the commonwealth of God, and members of the body of Christ!

Naturally, in this part of the epistle the unity of the Church—which is perhaps the central theme of the whole—is especially emphasized. The first half of the fourth chapter, for example, is a magnificent hymn to Christian unity. Even in the midst of the directions for the various relationships of life the great theme of Christ and the Church, under the figure of husband and wife, is brought again into view.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 246-249. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves and Davis, article on "Ephesians, Epistle to the." Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Lock, article on "Ephesians, Epistle to." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 99-103. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. iii: Barry, "The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians," pp. 9-60. "The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges": Moule, "The Epistle to the Ephesians." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament, vol. i, pp. 479-522. Robinson, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians." The two last-named works are intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXV

CHRIST AND HIS FOLLOWERS

The Epistle to the Philippians is the only one of the letters of Paul which is addressed to an approved church with whom he stood on terms of untroubled intimacy and affection. In Galatians and both the Corinthian epistles, serious errors in the churches addressed, as well as unscrupulous personal criticism, lend a tone of bitterness to the apostle's words; Romans, Colossians and perhaps "Ephesians" are addressed to churches which he had never seen. In some ways the little letter to Philemon is very similar to Philippians. Both Philippians and Philemon display the same perfect confidence in the readers, the same perfection of courtesy, the same tone of untroubled cordiality. But Philemon is addressed primarily to an individual, and Philippians to a church; Philemon confines itself almost exclusively to one little personal matter, while Philippians discusses a variety of topics. Among the letters addressed to churches, perhaps the First Epistle to the Thessalonians is more similar to Philippians, at least in tone, than is any of the others. Like Philippians it is animated by a deep satisfaction with the readers, and a certain pleasing simplicity of manner. But here again of course there are wide differences. First Thessalonians is addressed to an infant church, which has just passed through its first trial, and needs the most elementary instruction; in Philippians Paul is writing to old friends, to a church which for ten years has endured bravely the hardships incident to the Christian profession, and has shared in fullest sympathy the joys and sorrows of the apostle's life.

During the ten years, moreover, which have elapsed between First Thessalonians and Philippians, there has been a change in the apostle himself, as well as in his readers. Those years of conflict and labor and meditation and suffering have borne fruit in the apostle's own thinking. His gospel was the same from the beginning, but the expression of it has become richer and maturer and nobler with the advancing years. Philippians is a wonderful letter. Simplicity and profundity are here combined. This simple letter of thanks, with its delicate courtesy and tactful admonition, has

engaged the profoundest study of the theologians, and touched the grandest chords of the Christian heart.

1. THE ADDRESS. Phil. 1 : 1, 2

The address of Philippians is remarkable because of the mention of bishops and deacons, which occurs in this way in no other of the Pauline Epistles. Possibly, as has been suggested, these officers are here mentioned because they had had a special part in sending the gifts of the church. It is important to observe that there was a plurality of bishops in the Philippian church. At a later time, when the "bishops" were exalted above the other presbyters, there was only one bishop in every church. In The Acts and in the Pauline Epistles, "bishop" and "presbyter" appear plainly as nothing more than two names for exactly the same office.

It should be noticed that the title "apostle," which appears at the beginning of all the other Pauline Epistles addressed to churches, except First and Second Thessalonians, the two earliest, is lacking in the address of Philippians. Perhaps in writing to such a devoted church Paul considered it unnecessary to mention his apostleship as he had regularly done in his epistles since the denial of it in Galatia. On account of the peculiar nature of the Philippian church, the Epistle to the Philippians partakes somewhat of the informality and intimacy of such a letter as that to Philemon, where the title is also lacking in the address.

Very naturally Timothy is associated with Paul in the address of the epistle, for he had been one of Paul's companions in founding the Philippian church. At what time Timothy had come to Rome we do not know. His name appears also in the address of Colossians and of Philemon. Luke, although he had journeyed with Paul to Rome, and was in Rome at the time when Colossians and Philemon were written, Col. 4 : 14; Philem. 24, was apparently absent at the time of Philippians; for since he, like Timothy, had assisted in founding the Philippian church, and perhaps had even remained in Philippi for years after the departure of the others, he would probably have been associated in the address, or at least would have sent greetings, if he had been at hand.

2. THE THANKSGIVING. Phil. 1 : 3-11

As might have been expected, the thanksgiving for the Christian state of the readers is in this epistle of unusual cordiality. In the mention of their "fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the

first day until now," there is perhaps a delicate allusion to the material assistance which they had sent him from time to time and especially a little while before the writing of the letter; but such material assistance was for Paul of course not the only, or even the principal, manifestation of their fellowship. Here as often, the thanksgiving runs over into a prayer—and this time it is a prayer of singular beauty and depth.

3. PROGRESS OF AFFAIRS IN ROME. Phil. 1 : 12-30

In this section, Paul hastens to relieve the minds of his readers about the course of events in Rome. Even his bonds, and the jealousy of certain preachers, have resulted only in the furtherance of the gospel. With regard to the outcome of his trial, there is every reason to be hopeful. For his part he would prefer to depart and to be with Christ, but there is still work for him to do. And whether he is present or absent, let the Philippians give him joy by living in a manner worthy of the gospel, and by being steadfast in the persecutions which are bound to come to them as well as to him. It is a high privilege not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for him.

4. EXHORTATION TO UNITY. Phil. 2 : 1-18

With the utmost earnestness, Paul here appeals to his readers to keep their Christian life free from selfishness and quarreling. The stupendous "Christological" passage of the epistle, vs. 5-11, which has given rise to endless discussion, is introduced merely in an incidental way, in order to strengthen the apostle's exhortation. So it is frequently in the letters of Paul. The apostle was always able to make the profoundest verities of the faith immediately effective in conduct. Theology in Paul was never divorced from practice. The converse of the proposition, however, is also true. If Paul's theology did not exist apart from practice, neither did his practice exist apart from theology. It is the latter proposition which needs to be emphasized to-day. Modern liberalism has sometimes endeavored to reproduce Paul's religion apart from his theology; but the effort has resulted in failure.

The example of Christ which Paul holds up before his readers is briefly as follows: Originally Christ not only existed in the form of God—that is, was in full possession of the divine attributes—but also lived in glory, in a way befitting deity. Instead, however, of keeping hold of this heavenly glory, he humbled himself by

becoming man. He laid aside, not indeed his divine attributes, but the enjoyment of his divine glory. He who was Lord of all took the form of a servant like other men. And even more. His obedience extended even to death, and to the shameful death of the cross. But after humiliation came exaltation. God gave to him a name that is above every name. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in earth and in heaven, to the glory of God the Father.

5. THE MISSION OF TIMOTHY AND OF EPAPHRODITUS.

Phil. 2 : 19-30

The personal appeal with which the preceding section closed leads Paul to speak of the plans which he has for the comfort and help of the readers. Timothy will be sent as soon as the issue of Paul's trial is definitely in view; Epaphroditus will return to Philippi at once.

6. WARNING AGAINST OPPONENTS. Phil., ch. 3

The men who are rebuked in very vigorous language in the former part of this section evidently placed an excessive emphasis upon circumcision and connection with the people of Israel. Perhaps also they were advocates of a law righteousness. V. 9. The most obvious suggestion is that they were Judaizers like those in Galatia, or at least like the opponents of Paul in Corinth. Paul's account in vs. 4-6 of the Jewish advantages, fully equal to those of his opponents, which he counts as nothing in view of the superior advantages of faith in Christ, is strikingly similar to II Cor. 11 : 21, 22. If, however, Paul is here referring to Judaizers, it looks as though they were at least as cautious as the opponents in Corinth about presenting the claims of the law. At any rate, the danger of a legalistic propaganda either in Philippi or in Rome does not seem to be very seriously in view. Apparently the acute stage of the Judaistic controversy is over. It is possible that Paul is referring to Jews rather than Jewish Christians. We must remember that Judaism in the first century was still an active missionary religion. A Jewish propaganda, with stress upon circumcision and law righteousness, might conceivably become, even in Philippi, where the Jews seem not to have been numerous, a serious danger, if not to the stability, at least to the rapid extension, of the Christian Church.

Finally, it is uncertain whether "the enemies of the cross of Christ," Phil. 3 : 18, are the same as those who are combated in the former part of the section.

Fortunately these various uncertainties do not affect the lofty teaching of this part of the epistle. Whoever the opponents were, what Paul says in opposition to them is the thing of real value. In the wonderfully terse, complete, vigorous description of the Christian salvation and of the Christian life which Paul gives in ch. 3 : 7-14, 20, 21, the long years of the Judaistic controversy have borne glorious fruit. The final, eternal truth of God, in classic statement, has at last emerged triumphant from the conflict.

7. EXHORTATION, ACKNOWLEDGMENT, GREETINGS AND BENEDICTION. Phil., ch. 4

The principal contents of this section have been discussed in the Student's Text Book. First Paul applies the general exhortation to unity, Phil. 2 : 1-11, to the case of Euodia and Syntyche, and adds certain other brief exhortations. The "true yokefellow" of ch. 4:3 probably refers to Epaphroditus, the bearer of the epistle. Then, in a characteristically delicate and worthy manner, he acknowledges the gift of the Philippians. Next, in just a word, he transmits, along with his own, the greetings of his immediate companions, and of the Roman church in general, especially of those members who were connected, as slaves or officials, with the immediate service of the emperor. Finally, with a brief benediction, the epistle closes.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 249-251. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves (edited) article on "Philippians." Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Gibb, article on "Philippians, Epistle to the." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 83-90. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers", vol. iii : Barry, "The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians," pp. 61-90. "The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges": Moule, "The Epistle to the Philippians." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. i, pp. 522-564. Lightfoot, "Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians." The two last-named works are intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXVI

TRAINING NEW LEADERS

The emphasis which the Pastoral Epistles lay upon sound instruction and upon orderly government is sometimes looked upon with distaste. Orthodoxy and organization are thought to be destructive of religious fervor. In the New Testament, however, the two aspects of the Church's life appear side by side. In the New Testament, enthusiasm and sanity are united. And the New Testament is right. Religion is a concern of every individual soul—the final decision must be made by every man in the immediate presence of his God—but normally no man can do without association with his fellows. The Church is a great permanent community. It is not merely an aggregation, but an institution. To break away from its restraints may be attractive, it may produce a certain temporary impression of zeal and new life; but in the long run the old way is usually best.

The Pastoral Epistles, however, are sometimes thought to indicate an unfortunate change in Paul himself as well as in the Church. Some students would prefer to know only the Paul of Galatians and Corinthians and Romans. This judgment is one-sided. The Pastorals do not contradict, but supplement, the earlier letters. The earlier period, no doubt, is the more inspiring; there is nothing in the Pastoral Epistles like the first few chapters of First Corinthians, or the fifth chapter of Second Corinthians, or the eighth chapter of Romans. These passages are overpowering in the intensity of their eloquence; the later letters are soberer, graver, more matter-of-fact. These latter qualities, however, are much needed in the Church. The Church needs enthusiasm; but she also needs gravity and sanity. Her function is not merely evangelistic; it is also conservative and educational. In both functions Paul was a leader. The quiet gravity of the Pastoral Epistles supplements the glories of Galatians and Romans. Only when these last epistles are added to the others can the many-sided greatness of Paul be fully appreciated. Exaggerations, moreover, should be avoided. The soberness of the Pastorals is not commonplace. Back of the details of organization, back of the concern for sound instruction, there can

be detected throughout the glow of the Pauline gospel. The Pastoral Epistles, like the other letters of Paul, are a perennial fountain of Christian life.

The Second Epistle to Timothy was clearly the last of the extant epistles of Paul; but the order of First Timothy and Titus cannot be certainly determined. The difficulty of reconstructing the history implied by the Pastoral Epistles reveals anew the supreme value of The Acts. After the conclusion of the Lucan narrative the historian is almost helpless. From about A. D. 63 on into the second century, the history of the Church is shrouded in profound darkness, with gleams of light only here and there.

1. THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

At the time when First Timothy was written, Paul had recently made a journey to Macedonia. 1 Tim. 1 : 3. Perhaps he had gone thither from Ephesus, though the words do not make that perfectly clear. At any rate, he had directed Timothy to remain in Ephesus, where he hoped to join him before long. In case of delay, however, he writes the epistle. Chs. 3 : 14, 15; 4 : 13.

On a previous occasion, perhaps by word of mouth when he had been in Ephesus, he had warned Timothy to put a stop to certain false teaching in the Church, and the warning is now reiterated in the epistle. The exact nature of this teaching is somewhat difficult to determine. Apparently it had been concerned with the Jewish law. Ch. 1 : 7-11. Compare Titus 1 : 10, 14. Like the false teaching at Colossæ, it seems not to have been directly subversive of the truth of the gospel. At least, however, it diverted attention from the great things of the faith to useless questionings. 1 Tim. 6 : 4. The myths and endless genealogies, ch. 1 : 4, compare 4 : 7, were perhaps elaborations of the Old Testament history. Whether the ascetic tendency which is combated in ch. 4 : 3, 8, is connected with this same teaching, is not certain, but is on the whole perhaps probable.

The first reference to the false teaching, ch. 1 : 3-10, leads Paul to speak of the norm by which it could be combated. Vs. 11-20. That norm was the gospel with which he had been intrusted. The bestowal of the gospel had changed him from a blasphemer and persecutor into an apostle. The gospel had been bestowed purely by the free grace of Christ, and its content was the salvation which Christ offers. A doxology to God, v. 17, is natural whenever that gospel is mentioned. That gospel will overcome all error, and if

attended to diligently will prevent disasters like that which has befallen Hymenæus and Alexander.

In the second chapter, Paul insists upon gravity and order in the public worship of the Church. In the prayers which are to be offered, the civil authority is not to be forgotten, even though it be non-Christian. The sympathies of the Christian must be broad. God desires all men to come to a knowledge of the truth.

The highest regular officers of the Church are in the third chapter called "bishops." It is abundantly evident, however—especially from Titus 1 : 5, 7—that "bishop" is only another name for "presbyter" or "elder." At a later time the term "bishop" was applied to an officer who had the supreme oversight over a church and to whom the elders were subject. These conditions did not prevail at the time of the Pastoral Epistles. At first sight, indeed, it might seem as though Timothy and Titus themselves were "bishops" in the later sense of the word. But this also is false. Timothy and Titus do not appear at all as officers of individual congregations. They had oversight over a plurality of churches, and evidently their authority was special and temporary. They did not fill an office which was intended to become permanent in the Church, but were simply special representatives of the apostle. As the apostles had no successors, so no man after the apostolic age had a right to assume the functions of Timothy and Titus.

The fourth chapter calls attention to the revelation of the Holy Spirit, probably through the lips of Christian prophets, that in the future there would appear apostates from the faith. The errorists who are combated in vs. 7-10 are apparently to be regarded as forerunners, still within the Church, of the more open apostasy which is one day to follow.

The institution of the "widows," which is discussed in the fifth chapter, is to us somewhat obscure. Evidently those who were accounted "widows," being helpless, were entitled to support by the church. The necessity of sound teaching, with emphasis upon the really fundamental things of the faith, is again insisted upon; and certain false teachers are accused of practicing or inculcating piety as a means of worldly gain. Ch. 6 : 3-10. The last warning of the epistle characteristically concerns vain babblings and oppositions of a so-called knowledge. Probably these errors are connected in some way with those which are combated in the first section of the epistle. In the final words, "Grace be with you," the "you" in the Greek, according to the best attestation, is plural; and in the cor-

responding passages at the end of Titus and of Second Timothy, it is certainly plural. This may furnish an indication—to be added to more general considerations—that the Pastoral Epistles were intended not merely for those to whom they are formally addressed, but also to the churches under their care.

2. THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

The address of the Epistle to Titus is noteworthy for the long addition to the title of the author, which is to be compared with the similar addition in Romans.

At the time when the epistle was written, Paul had recently been with Titus in Crete. Paul had not labored on that island before the first Roman imprisonment. His journeys in the east between the two imprisonments therefore involved something more than the revisitation of former fields. The reason why Titus was left behind in Crete was somewhat similar to the reason why Timothy, according to First Timothy, was told to remain in Ephesus. Titus was to give attention to organization, and to the maintenance of sound instruction.

Like Timothy, Titus is given the power of establishing presbyters, and of establishing them not merely in one church but in various churches. The function of the presbyter was that of "bishop" or "overseer." Titus 1:5-7. In vs. 9-16, the close connection of organization with sound doctrine becomes particularly apparent. One important function of the presbyters was to counteract the errors which were springing up. The account of the errorists in Crete is perhaps in some respects clearer than that which is given of the related phenomenon in Ephesus. The false teachers were animated by a love of gain. V. 11. Some of them were Jews or proselytes. V. 10. They had a fondness for Jewish fables. Apparently, also, they tried to atone for a lack of real inward purity by an outward asceticism. Vs. 15, 16. They were concerned with vain questionings and genealogies and legal disputes. These last are perhaps to be regarded as casuistic discussions like those which play such a large part in Jewish tradition.

The Epistle to Titus is somewhat richer than First Timothy in personal details. After Titus has been relieved in Crete by Artemas or Tychicus, who may soon be sent, he is to join Paul in Nicopolis. Tychicus, it will be remembered, had served as Paul's messenger during the first imprisonment. He was the bearer of Colossians and Ephesians. The Nicopolis where Paul is intending to pass the

approaching winter, is probably the chief of the many cities of that name, the Nicopolis in Epirus. Zenas, a lawyer otherwise unknown, and the well-known Apollos, who appears so prominently in The Acts and in First Corinthians, are to be furnished in Crete with everything that they need for their further journey.

3. THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

The First Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus are in many respects strikingly similar. A certain strong family resemblance extends also to Second Timothy. Evidently all three of the Pastoral Epistles belong to the same general period of Paul's life, and were intended to subserve similar purposes. Second Timothy, however, as compared with the other two, exhibits some marked peculiarities.

The personal element, in particular, is in this letter much more prominent. Second Timothy contains a wealth of interesting biographical details about Timothy, about Paul, and about a very considerable number of other persons. Some of these last are known only from this epistle; others have been brought to our attention again and again.

In Second Timothy Paul appears as a prisoner, no doubt at Rome. This time there seems to be little hope of his release. Apparently his imprisonment is not of long standing. Only recently he has been at Corinth and at Miletus. II Tim. 4 : 20. He speaks in one place of his first defense. V. 16. Some suppose that this is a reminiscence of the trial which had taken place years before, during the first imprisonment. More probably it refers to some preliminary hearing which had only recently been held. Paul is oppressed with a sense of loneliness, even more than during the first imprisonment. There was no one to stand by him at his first hearing. For one reason or another, his intimate associates have been scattered—some of them, no doubt, for good and sufficient reasons, but Demas, at any rate, out of an unworthy love of the world. Luke, fortunately, is still with him; and Timothy, with Mark, is urged to come before the winter. Vs. 11, 21. Mark seems to have changed since he turned back from the work at Perga. At the beginning he was rebuked for desertion; but now at the end he is one of the few faithful ones.

It is not quite clear where Timothy was when the letter was addressed to him. The greeting to Priscilla and Aquila might seem to point to Ephesus. They had lived there before; perhaps

they returned thither after a residence in Rome. Rom. 16 : 3. If Timothy was in Ephesus, then Tychicus, who was sent thither, II Tim. 4 : 12, was probably expected to linger by the way; otherwise his sending would be no news to the reader of the letter. Something is to be said, perhaps, for the view that Timothy was not at Ephesus, but perhaps at Lystra, his original home.

The Second Epistle to Timothy contains warnings against false teaching similar to those which appear in First Timothy and Titus. But the characteristic feature of the letter is to be found in the references to the apostle's own life. Even the warnings and admonitions are brought into relation to these. Paul does not hesitate to point to himself as an example for his beloved followers. He does so, without a touch of vain glory, in the simple consciousness of a divine commission. Second Timothy is a letter of farewell, in which reminiscence and exhortation are characteristically blended. It is a farewell from the apostle, primarily for Timothy, though he is expecting to see Timothy again, but also for all of the Pauline churches. The letter has taken deep hold of every generation in the history of the Church. The fitting end of a life of true service, the calm facing of death, the certainty of heavenly communion with the Lord—these are the things above all others that have been learned from the last of the epistles of Paul.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 252-261. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves, articles on "Timothy" and "Titus." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and its Writers," pp. 104-115. Lewin, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," vol. ii, chs. vii, viii, ix, x and xi. Conybeare and Howson, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," ch. xxvii. Stalker, "The Life of St. Paul," pp. 133-136. Warfield, "Acts, Timothy, Titus and Philemon," in "The Temple Bible," pp. xxvii-xliii. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers, vol. iii, pp. 171-264 : Spence, "The Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul." "The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges": Humphreys, "The Epistles to Timothy and Titus." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii, pp. 1-133. The last named work is intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

PART III :

**The Presentation and Defense of
Christianity**

LESSON XXVII

A PRESENTATION OF JESUS TO JEWISH CHRISTIANS

The Gospel According to Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew is probably, as has been said, the most important book that was ever written. Its importance is due to the information which it contains about Jesus Christ. More fully perhaps than any other one book, the Gospel of Matthew has preserved the knowledge of Jesus.

Whatever be the future of the Church, the life of Jesus will now always remain the central fact of history. Even the secondary influence of Jesus is incalculable; even if none were left to own him as Lord and Master, still he would remain incomparably the most influential man that has ever lived. As a matter of fact, however, such a condition has never existed and never will exist. From the very beginning the life of Jesus made itself felt through those who accepted him, to the exclusion of all others, as the supreme Lord of their lives. If Jesus had been regarded merely as a quiet teacher of ethics, the Gospel of Matthew never would have been written, and probably the very name of Jesus would have perished. The wonderful influence of Jesus, which has transformed the world from darkness to light, which alone gives promise of a final reign of righteousness, has been exerted through the instrumentality, not of admirers, but of disciples. Jesus has been a Teacher only because he has been a Master.

To make Jesus Master in the lives of men was the purpose of the Gospel of Matthew, and it is the purpose of our study of the book. The Gospel was not written with merely scientific interest; it was not written merely to preserve certain gems from the lips of an inspired teacher. The ultimate purpose of the book was to make men fall at Jesus' feet with the words, "My Lord and my God." Such a purpose is not inconsistent with the most scrupulous truthfulness. Adoration of Jesus can be induced best of all, not by fanciful elaboration, but by sober fact. In the case of Jesus, truth was more glorious by far than the boldest fiction.

To make Jesus Lord and Saviour is the purpose of our work

as teachers. That purpose cannot be attained by exhortation or by threatening, but only by impartation of knowledge. To know Jesus is to trust him and adore him. Many readers of the Gospels never attain to the true knowledge. Their failure is due to various causes—to moral laxness, to preconceived opinions, to spiritual dullness. One obstacle, however, is of a simpler kind. One thing that stands in the way of a real understanding of the Gospels is the habit of piecemeal reading. We read the Gospels bit by bit instead of allowing the whole to make its impression. We do not see the wood for the trees. Jesus is concealed from us by his individual acts. The Gospels should be read as well as studied—read rapidly, like an ordinary book, preferably in some rational form of printing where verse numbers and all editorial matters are relegated to the margin and the lines stretch across the page. These things may seem to be trivialities, and certainly they are not essential. What is essential—not in place of detailed study, but in addition to it—is a rapid reading of the Gospels, by which, through the exclusion of all non-essentials, the mysterious, holy person of Jesus is brought simply and freshly before the wondering soul. Not to know about Jesus, but to know him, is the prime object of our study. To know about him is a valuable part of education; but to know him is life eternal.

1. MEANING OF "GOSPEL"

The Greek word for "gospel" means "good news." Nowhere in the New Testament, however, is that word applied to a book. There is no reference in the New Testament to a "Gospel" of Matthew or of Mark or of Luke or of John. In the New Testament the word "gospel" has a more general reference. It designates the "good news" which lies at the basis of Christian preaching, however that news may be known. Christianity is based upon "a piece of information." The subject of that information is the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without Christ we should have been hopeless, but Christ has saved us. Information about what he has done for us, however that information be conveyed, is the gospel.

This broad use of the word "gospel" appears even in the titles "Gospel according to Matthew," "Gospel according to Mark," "Gospel according to Luke," and "Gospel according to John," which are not due to the original authors of the books. "Gospel according to Matthew" did not originally mean the same thing as

"Gospel of Matthew." It did not mean the Gospel which Matthew produced, but the one Gospel of Jesus Christ as Matthew narrated it. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John produced simply four accounts of the same thing. That common subject of the four accounts is the gospel, the good news, of what Jesus Christ has done for his followers.

At a very early time, however, books which had the gospel as their subject came themselves to be designated as "Gospels." The usage is convenient, and will be freely adopted in these textbooks. We may speak indiscriminately of the "Gospel according to Matthew" and of the "Gospel of Matthew."

2. AUTHORSHIP OF THE FIRST GOSPEL

(1) **Not Indicated in the Gospel Itself.**—The Gospel of Matthew should be sharply distinguished from those books which themselves make definite claims as to their authorship. The Epistle to the Romans, for example, claims to have been written by the apostle Paul. If it was not written by Paul, it is a forgery. The book of The Acts, also, though it does not mention the name of the author, claims at least—through the use of the first person plural—to have been written by some companion of the apostle Paul. Even the Gospel of John, as we shall see, really affords clear indications about its own authorship. The Gospel of Matthew, on the other hand, lays no claim to any particular authorship. We might believe that it was written by some other person than Matthew and yet be perfectly loyal to the book itself. The self-witness of the book is confined merely to a claim of truthfulness. If we believe that the record which the book contains is true, then we might, in perfect loyalty to the Gospel, believe that it was written by some one like Luke or Mark, outside of the company of the apostles. Such a view, however, would display an unreasonable distrust of Christian tradition.

(2) **Papias on the First Gospel.**—The earliest extant information about the authorship of the First Gospel is to be found in a fragment which Eusebius, the church historian of the fourth century, has preserved from a lost work of Papias. Papias was bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor in the former half of the second century.

The fragment from Papias, which is found in Eusebius, Church History, iii, 39, 16, may be translated as follows:

"Matthew accordingly wrote [or compiled] the oracles in the Hebrew dialect, and everyone translated them as he was able."

It seems pretty evident that Papias is here referring to the First Gospel. Some, indeed, have supposed that he means by "the oracles" a writing composed almost exclusively of sayings of Jesus, which formed merely one of the sources of our First Gospel. This view is probably incorrect. Papias could designate the Gospel of Matthew as "the oracles" either because of the large place which sayings of Jesus have in this Gospel, as compared, for example, with the Gospel of Mark, or else because the whole Gospel, both speeches and narrative, was of divine, oracular authority. The view that "according to Matthew" in the ancient title and in Christian tradition means not that Matthew wrote the book, but that it is based in some way ultimately on his authority, is opposed by the analogy of Mark. As we shall see, the Gospel of Mark, in early tradition, was referred ultimately to the authority of Peter; if, therefore, "according to" was used in the sense indicated above, the Second Gospel would have been called the Gospel "according to Peter" instead of the Gospel "according to Mark."

The testimony of Papias involves two principal assertions: in the first place, that Matthew wrote the First Gospel; and in the second place, that he wrote it in the "Hebrew" language.

The former assertion, which is supported by a striking consensus of early writers, has already been considered. The latter is much more puzzling.

3. WAS THE FIRST GOSPEL ORIGINALLY ARAMAIC?

(1) **Meaning of "Hebrew."**—By "the Hebrew dialect," Papias no doubt means Aramaic rather than what we call Hebrew. The term "Hebrew" was applied to both of the two closely related languages. Compare Acts 21 : 40. It is exceedingly unlikely that a Gospel would have been written in Hebrew; for before the time of Christ that had ceased to be the living language of Palestine. What Papias asserts, then, is that Matthew wrote in Aramaic.

(2) **"Everyone Translated Them as He Was Able."**—Papias asserts further that everyone translated the oracles as he was able. These words may be interpreted in various ways. Perhaps they mean that every man who used the original of Matthew had to translate it for himself; or perhaps that the Gospel was translated orally in the churches, as the Jews translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Aramaic in the synagogues; or perhaps that a number of written translations of the Gospel were made. At any rate Papias seems to imply that the condition which he here describes had come

to an end when he wrote. Some one Greek form of the Gospel had gained general acceptance; the time when everyone translated as he was able was at an end.

(3) **Value of the Tradition.**—The tradition of an Aramaic original of Matthew is not preserved merely by Papias, but appears in a considerable number of early writers. How far the other writers are independent of Papias is a disputed question. The tradition may be variously estimated. Some have supposed that it is entirely correct—that our Greek Gospel of Matthew is a translation, by Matthew himself or by some one else, of an Aramaic work; others have supposed that the tradition is altogether false—for example, that an Aramaic translation of the Greek Gospel was mistaken for an original from which the Greek Gospel had been translated: others hold intermediate views—for example, that one of the sources of our Greek Gospel was written in Aramaic. An important objection to the view that there was an Aramaic original of Matthew is that the Greek Gospel looks more like an original Greek work than like a translation. The tradition of the Aramaic Matthew places before us one of the unsolved problems of New Testament criticism.

One thing is certain—the language of the Gospel of Matthew, like that of the other Gospels, has a strong Aramaic coloring. This, however, does not require the hypothesis that our Matthew was translated from an Aramaic original. Undoubtedly, however our Greek Matthew was written, there was a time in the early days of the Church when the tradition of the life of Christ was carried on chiefly or wholly in the Aramaic language. The words of Jesus, at any rate, as they appear in our Gospels, have at some time or other undergone translation; for Jesus taught in Aramaic. The Aramaic coloring of the Gospels is one of the evidences of their trustworthiness. Though written in Greek, they are evidently rooted deep in the original Palestinian soil.

4. DATE

The date of the Gospel cannot be determined with accuracy. Some indication, however, is afforded by the assertion of Irenæus, of the latter part of the second century, that Matthew published his Gospel while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome. Even if this assertion should prove not to be absolutely correct, it would exhibit an early tradition for the years between about A. D. 60 and 70 as the date of the Gospel. This tradition is confirmed by the widespread view among early writers that Matthew was written before Mark; for Mark is now generally admitted to have been written

before the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. There is really no serious objection to the traditional dating of Matthew. It was probably written in the sixties of the first century, and probably, as tradition says, in Palestine.

There are traces of the use of the Gospel in writers of the early half of the second century. On the other hand, there is no clear indication that it was used by any New Testament writer. The absence of citations from our Gospels in the epistles of Paul would tend to indicate that in the very earliest period the gospel tradition was carried on by word of mouth rather than by books.

5. THE APOSTLE MATTHEW

In the four lists of the apostles, Matt. 10 : 2-4; Mark 3 : 16-19; Luke 6 : 13-16; Acts 1 : 13, Matthew is designated by the bare name, except in his own Gospel, where he appears as "Matthew the publican." In Matt. 9 : 9, his call is narrated. In the parallel passages in Mark and Luke, Mark 2 : 14; Luke 5 : 27, 28, the name of the publican who was called is given only as "Levi." Without the Gospel of Matthew we should not have been able to identify Levi and Matthew. Evidently the apostle had two names, as was the case with so many others of the persons mentioned in the New Testament. After his call, Matthew made a great feast for Jesus. Luke 5 : 29; compare Mark 2 : 15. Matthew himself, alone among the Synoptists, does not even make it perfectly clear that it was he in whose house Jesus sat at meat. The peculiarities of the First Gospel in what is said about Matthew become significant when the authorship is known. Of course of themselves they would be quite insufficient to indicate who the author was. The assertion by early writers that Matthew wrote the Gospel, was based not upon indications in the Gospel itself, but upon independent tradition.

6. "THE BOOK OF THE GENERATION OF JESUS CHRIST"

The first verse of the Gospel is evidently based upon the formula, occurring for the first time at Gen. 5 : 1, which marks off the divisions of the book of Genesis. It is most naturally regarded as a heading for the genealogy that follows in Matt. 1 : 2-17. There is only one objection to that view. In Genesis "the book of the generations of Adam," or "the generations of Shem" or the like, introduces an account, not of ancestors of the persons in question, but of their descendants. In Matt. 1 : 2-17, on the contrary, we have an account not of descendants of Jesus, but of ancestors. This objection has led

some scholars to regard Matt. 1 : 1 as the title not of the genealogy but of the whole Gospel. The title would then represent Jesus as the beginning of a new race, or of a new period in the history of humanity.

This interpretation is unnecessarily subtle. It should rather be admitted that there is a difference between the phrase in Genesis and that in Matthew. The difference is very natural. In the case of Abraham the descendants were in view; in the case of the Messiah, the ancestors. Adam and Noah and Abraham were bearers of a promise; Christ was the culmination. Genesis looks forward; Matthew looks back. The difference in the use of the phrase is natural and significant.

The title, with the whole genealogy, is significant of what is to follow. At the very start, the ruling thought of Matthew's Gospel finds expression. Jesus is son of David, and son of Abraham; he is the culmination of the divine promise.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 270-272, 290-293. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves (supplemented), articles on "Gospel" and "Matthew." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 1-20. Stevens and Burton, "A Harmony of the Gospels." Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. i: Plumptre, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke," pp. xli-xliii, 1-186. Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii, pp. 367-427, 506-601. The last-named work is intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXVIII

A GRAPHIC SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

The Gospel According to Mark

The Gospel of Mark contains scarcely any material which is not also contained in one or both of the other two Synoptic Gospels. The loss of Mark would not diminish appreciably the number of facts that we know about Jesus. Nevertheless, the Second Gospel is of the utmost importance; for although it narrates for the most part only the same facts as are also narrated elsewhere, it narrates them in a different way. Indeed the very brevity of the Gospel adds to its special value. A picture is sometimes the more impressive by being limited in extent. Read the Gospel of Mark, not piecemeal but as a whole, and you obtain an impression of Jesus which can be obtained from no other book.

1. THE TRADITION

(1) **Papias on Mark.**—As in the case of Matthew, so in that of Mark it is Papias of Hierapolis who provides the earliest information about the production of the Gospel. Again also the words of Papias are quoted by Eusebius (*Church History*, iii, 39, 15). The passage from Papias is as follows:

“This also the presbyter said: ‘Mark, on the one hand, being an interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately as many things as he remembered, yet not in order, the things which were either said or done by the Lord.’ For neither did he hear the Lord nor did he follow him, but afterwards, as I said, he followed Peter, who carried on his teaching as need required but not as though he were making an ordered account of the oracles of the Lord; so that Mark committed no fault when he wrote some things as he had remembered them. For he had one care—that he should not leave out anything of the things that he had heard, or represent anything among them falsely.”

(2) **Antiquity of the Papian Tradition.**—It will be observed that Papias is here represented as quoting from “the presbyter.” Probably, however, it is only the first sentence that is quoted; the rest seems to be an explanation by Papias himself. By “presbyter,”

or "elder," Papias means not an officer in the Church, but a man of an older generation. The tradition is therefore very ancient. Papias himself lived in the former half of the second century; a man of a still older generation would probably have acquired his information about Mark well before A. D. 100. Such information is not to be lightly rejected.

(3) **Mark an Interpreter of Peter.**—According to the presbyter, Mark was an "interpreter" of Peter. If the word be taken strictly it means that Mark translated the words of Peter from one language into another—probably from Aramaic into Greek. On the whole, however, it is not probable, in view of linguistic conditions in Palestine and in the Church, that Peter would be unable to speak Greek. Perhaps, then, the sentence means that Mark was merely the mediator, in a general sense, of Peter's preaching. He presented the teaching of Peter to those who had not had the opportunity of hearing it themselves. Perhaps the meaning is that he had done so formerly by word of mouth. Perhaps, however, it is rather the Gospel itself that is referred to. By writing the Gospel Mark became an interpreter or mediator of the preaching of Peter.

At any rate, whatever meaning be given to the word "interpreter," the general sense of the sentence—especially when taken in connection with the following explanation by Papias is fairly clear. Mark derived the information for his Gospel not from personal acquaintance with the earthly Jesus, but from association with Peter.

(4) **Mark Not Written "In Order."**—The presbyter said further that although Mark wrote accurately what he heard from Peter, he did not succeed in giving "in order" an account of the things that Jesus did and said. Evidently the historical incompleteness, the lack of uninterrupted sequence, of the Gospel of Mark is here in view.

But by what standard is the Gospel judged? It can hardly be by the standard of Matthew, for Matthew pays even less attention to temporal sequence than Mark does. The order in Luke also is by no means in all respects more strictly chronological than that in Mark. Only one standard satisfies the requirements of the presbyter's words—the standard provided by the teaching of John. John was the great leader of the Church of Asia Minor. His teaching naturally formed the standard of authority in that region. Perhaps at the time when the presbyter expressed his judgment on Mark the Gospel of John had already been written, so that one Gospel could be compared with the other; perhaps, however, it was merely the

oral teaching of John, afterwards embodied in the Gospel, which afforded the basis of comparison. The Gospel of John alone provides something like a chronological framework of the public ministry of Jesus: John alone mentions the early Judean ministry; John alone narrates the successive visits of Jesus to the feasts in Jerusalem. If, as is possible, "the presbyter" of Papias was none other than John himself, then of course the whole matter becomes especially plain. John knew that there were important omissions in the Gospel of Mark; he probably observed, for example, that that Gospel if taken alone might readily create the impression that the ministry of Jesus lasted only one year instead of three or four. No doubt he corrected this impression in his oral teaching; certainly he corrects it in his Gospel. In commending the Gospel of Mark, John would naturally call attention to its chronological incompleteness.

2. THE HEADING

Like the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark opens not with a sentence, but with a heading. As in the former case, however, the exact reference of the heading is uncertain. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ" may, in the first place, mean merely, "Here begins the gospel of Jesus Christ." "The gospel of Jesus Christ" would then be simply the story about Christ that is narrated in the book that follows.

In the second place, the phrase may be taken as a description of the contents of the book. The whole of Jesus' life would then be described as the beginning of that proclamation of the gospel which was afterwards continued by the apostles and by the Church.

In the third place, the phrase may be merely a heading for the section that immediately follows, for Mark 1 : 2-8, or for vs. 2-13. In this case the preaching of John the Baptist, with or without the baptism of Jesus, the descent of the Spirit, and the temptation, would be described as the beginning of, as preliminary to, the proclamation of the gospel, which is mentioned in vs. 14, 15.

Perhaps the first interpretation is to be preferred as being the simplest, though it must be admitted that the phrase is a little puzzling.

3. MARK THE MISSIONARY GOSPEL

It is significant that the Gospel of Mark begins not with the birth and infancy of Jesus, but with the ministry of John the Baptist and the subsequent preaching of Jesus in Galilee. Mark

seems to be following with great exactness the scheme of early apostolic preaching as it is laid down in Acts 10 : 37-43. Apparently Mark is preëminently the missionary Gospel; it contains only those things which had a place in the first preaching to unbelievers. That does not mean that the things which Mark omits are necessarily less important than the things which it contains. Mark gives a summary, not exactly of the most important things about Jesus, but rather of the things which unbelievers or recent converts could most easily understand. Hence the omission of the mystery of the birth, of the profound teaching of the early Judean ministry, of the intimate instructions to the disciples. These things are of fundamental importance. But they can best be understood only after one has first acquired a thorough grasp of the public ministry, and of the death and resurrection.

The Second Gospel, judged by purely formal standards, cannot be called exactly a beautiful book. It lacks the rhythm of Old Testament poetry, and the grace of the Gospel of Luke. But its rough, vigorous naturalness conveys a message of compelling power.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves (edited) article on "Mark." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 21-26. Stevens and Burton, "A Harmony of the Gospels." Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. i: Plumptre, "The Gospel according to St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke," pp. 187-234. "The Cambridge Bible for Schools": Maclear, "The Gospel according to St. Mark." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii, pp. 427-506, 601-617. The last-named work is intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXIX

A GREEK HISTORIAN'S ACCOUNT OF JESUS

The Gospel According to Luke

The purpose of the Gospel of Luke was, the author says in his prologue, that Theophilus might know the certainty concerning the things wherein he had been instructed. These words involve recognition of a fundamental need of the Church, which is to-day often ignored. After interest in Christianity has been aroused, after faith has been awakened, the Christian feels the need of a deeper intellectual grounding of the faith that is in him. This feeling is perfectly legitimate; it should not be stifled; the expression of it should not be treated necessarily as sinful doubt.

The treatment of these natural questionings is one of the most important problems that faces the teachers of the present course. We are dealing with young men and women of maturing minds, many of whom can no longer be satisfied with the unthinking faith of childhood. If Christianity is to remain permanently a force in their lives it must be related to their entire intellectual equipment; it must be exhibited as a reasonable thing, which is consistent with a sane and healthy view of the world. In other words, we are dealing with the problem of religious doubt, which is almost an inevitable stage in the development of intelligent Christians of the present day.

Undoubtedly the problem is often very unwisely handled. By hearing every natural expression of their doubt unmercifully decried as rebellion against the Word of God, many intelligent young people are being driven into hopeless estrangement from the Church. It is useless to try to bully people into faith. Instead, we ought to learn the method of the Third Gospel.

Very possibly Luke was facing the very same problem that is before us teachers to-day—very possibly Theophilus, to whom the Gospel and The Acts were dedicated, was a young man who had grown up in the Church and could now no longer be satisfied with the vague and unsystematic instruction that had been given him in childhood. At any rate, whether he was a young man grown up

in the Church, or a recent convert, or merely a Gentile interested in Christianity, he was a person of intellectual interests, and those interests are treated by the evangelist not with contempt but with the utmost sympathy. The Gospel was written in order that Theophilus might "know the certainty" of those things wherein he had been instructed.

That might be regarded as the motto for the entire course of study which we have undertaken this year. It should be our aim to lay before young people of the Church the certainty of the things wherein they have been instructed—to enable them to substitute for the unreasoning faith of childhood the profound convictions of full-grown men and women. Moreover, exactly like the author of the Third Gospel, we are endeavoring to accomplish this aim, not by argument, but by an orderly presentation of "those matters which have been fulfilled among us." A simple historical presentation of the facts upon which Christianity is founded is the surest safeguard of Christian faith.

1. THE PROLOGUE

Alone among the Synoptists Luke gives his readers some direct information about the methods of his work. Luke 1 : 1-4; Acts 1 : 1, 2. This information, which was barely touched upon in the Student's Text Book, must here be considered somewhat more in detail.

(1) **Luke Not an Eyewitness from the Beginning.**—From the prologue to the Gospel, Luke 1 : 1-4, it appears, in the first place, that Luke was not an eyewitness of the events that he narrates—at least he was not an eyewitness "from the beginning."

(2) **His Predecessors.**—In the second place, it appears that he had had predecessors in his task of writing an account of early Christian history. Apparently, however, none of these previous works were produced by an apostle or by an eyewitness of the earthly ministry of Jesus. The previous writers, like Luke himself, were dependent upon the testimony of the eyewitnesses. The Gospel of Matthew, therefore, since it was written by an apostle, was not one of the works to which reference is made. This conclusion is amply confirmed by a comparison of Matthew with Luke. Evidently, at least, the two are entirely independent. If Luke refers to the First Gospel in the prologue, at any rate he made no use of it.

(3) **Was Mark One of the Predecessors?**—The Gospel of Mark, on the contrary, answers to the description of the previous works. It was written not by an eyewitness, but by one who listened to eye-

witnesses. Perhaps, therefore, it was one of the many works to which Luke refers. If so, it may well have been used by Luke in the preparation of his own Gospel. This supposition is by no means excluded by a comparison of the two books. As a matter of fact, the great majority of modern scholars suppose that the writer of the Third Gospel made use of the Gospel of Mark. All that can here be asserted is that this view, though not required by what Luke says in his prologue, is perfectly consistent with it.

(4) **Luke's Attitude Toward the Predecessors.**—It should be observed that Luke attaches no blame whatever to the efforts of his fore-runners. When he says that they had "taken in hand" or "attempted" to write accounts of certain things, he does not imply in the slightest that their attempts had been unsuccessful. He means simply to justify his own procedure by a reference to what had already been done. "My effort at writing an account of the origin of Christianity," he says in effect, "is no strange, unheard-of thing. I have had many predecessors." Such a reference to the work of predecessors was in antiquity a common literary form. At the very beginning of his work, Luke displays the effects of his Greek literary training.

Of course, however, although Luke attaches no blame to his predecessors, he would not have undertaken a new work if he had thought that the old satisfied all needs. Evidently he hoped to accomplish by his own book something that his predecessors had not accomplished or had accomplished only in part.

(5) **The Subject of the Gospel.**—Finally, therefore, Luke informs his readers what his own peculiar methods and purposes were. The main subject of the Gospel is not described with any definiteness in Luke 1 : 1-4, but it appears in the retrospect at the beginning of the second work. There the subject of the Gospel is designated as "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen." Acts 1 : 1, 2. The subject of the Gospel, in other words, was the earthly life of Jesus.

(6) **Completeness of the Narrative.**—In treating this subject, Luke had striven, he says, Luke 1 : 3, first of all for completeness. In his investigations he had followed all things from the beginning. This feature appears plainly in the Gospel. Instead of beginning as Mark does, with the public ministry of Jesus, Luke first gives an account of the birth and infancy, and not content with that, he

goes back even to events preceding the birth not only of Jesus, but also of his forerunner.

(7) **Accuracy.**—In the second place, Luke says that he had striven after accuracy. Here again the Gospel justifies the claim of its author. The effort after precision may be seen perhaps especially in such a passage as Luke 3 : 1, 2, where there is an elaborate dating of the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry.

(8) **Orderly Arrangement.**—The effort at orderly arrangement, which forms a third part of the claim which the author makes, was, especially in the Gospel, limited by the material that was at hand. Evidently in Palestine in the early period, the memory of the earthly ministry of Jesus was preserved not in a connected narrative, but in isolated anecdotes. It was impossible, therefore, even for a historian like Luke to maintain a chronological arrangement throughout; where chronological arrangement was impossible he was obliged to be satisfied with an arrangement according to logical affinities. This logical method of arrangement, however, is not resorted to by Luke so much as by Matthew; and for considerable sections of his narrative he was able to gratify his historian's desire for recounting events in the order in which they happened.

(9) **Luke a Historian.**—Detailed examination of the prologue should not be allowed to obscure the outstanding fact that the sum of what Luke here attests is a genuine historical aim and method in the composition of his work. Of course, history in Luke's mind did not exist for its own sake. The Gospel of Luke is not a mere scientific dissertation. On the contrary, the history which is narrated was to the author a thing of supreme value. But it was valuable only because it was true. There is not the slightest evidence that Luke was a bad historian because he was a good Christian. On the contrary, he was a Christian just because he was a historian. In the case of Jesus, knowledge of the real facts is the surest way to adoration.

(10) **Is Luke 1 : 1-4 a Prologue to both the Gospel and The Acts?**—The first four verses of the Gospel of Luke may be taken as a prologue either to the Gospel alone or else to the entire work, including both the Gospel and The Acts. The latter view, since the subject is described in v. 1 only in very broad terms, is not to be rashly rejected. No doubt, however, in the prologue Luke was thinking especially of the former part of the work—the part for which he was dependent altogether upon the testimony of others. The first verses of The Acts link the two parts close together.

Their connection has been obscured by the traditional arrangement of our New Testament books. But that arrangement is altogether advisable. The former part of the Lucan work certainly belongs among the Gospels; and of the Gospels the Gospel of John must certainly be placed last, as being supplementary to the others.

2. TYPICAL PASSAGES

The characteristics of the Gospel of Luke may perhaps be presented more vividly than by the general description in the Student's Text Book, by an examination of a few typical passages. The two such passages which we shall choose somewhat at random, are the narrative of the birth and infancy in Luke 1 : 5 to 2 : 52, and the parable of the Prodigal Son. Ch. 15 : 11-32. Both of these are without any parallel in the other Gospels. Matthew provides an infancy narrative, but it is concerned for the most part with events different from those that appear in Luke.

(1) **The Narrative of the Birth and Infancy.**—It has often been observed that the characteristic Greek sentence of the prologue, Luke 1 : 1-4, is immediately followed by the most strongly Hebraistic passage in the New Testament. The Semitic style of Luke 1 : 5 to 2 : 52 becomes explicable only if Luke was here making use of Palestinian sources, either oral or written. This conclusion is confirmed by the whole spirit and substance of the narrative. In this narrative as clearly as anywhere else in the New Testament we find ourselves transplanted to Palestinian soil.

The early date of the narrative is as evident as its Jewish Christian and Palestinian character. There is here no reference to concrete events in the later history of the Church. Messianic prophecy appears in its Old Testament form uncolored by the details of the fulfillment. Evidently this narrative is no product of the Church's fancy, but genuine history told in the very forms of speech which were natural to those who participated in it.

The first two chapters of Luke are in spirit really a bit of the Old Testament continued to the very threshold of the New. These chapters contain the poetry of the New Testament, which has taken deep hold of the heart and fancy of the Church.

In this section of his Gospel, Luke shows himself to be a genuine historian. A biographer is not satisfied with narrating the public life of his hero, but prefaces to his work some account of the family, and of the birth and childhood. So our understanding of the ministry of Jesus becomes far deeper when we know that he grew

up among the simple, devout folk who are described in the first two chapters of Luke. The picture of Mary in these chapters, painted with an exquisite delicacy of touch, throws a flood of light upon the earthly life of the Son of Man.

Beauty of detail, however, must not be allowed to obscure the central fact. The culmination of the narrative, undoubtedly, is to be found in the stupendous mystery of Luke 1 : 34, 35. Far from being an excrescence in the narrative, as it has sometimes been represented in an age of rampant naturalism, the supernatural conception of Jesus is the very keystone of the arch. In this central fact, Matthew and Luke, totally independent as they are, are perfectly agreed. By this fact Jesus is represented, more clearly perhaps than by anything else, as not a product of the world but a Saviour come from without.

(2) **The Prodigal Son.**—The parable of the Prodigal Son, simple though it is, has often been sadly misinterpreted. It has been thought to mean, for example, that God pardons sin on the basis simply of human repentance without the necessity of the divine sacrifice. All such interpretations are wide of the mark. The parable is not meant to teach how God pardons sin, but only the fact that he does pardon it with joy, and that we ought to share in his joy.

Misinterpretation of the parable has come from the ignoring of its occasion. The key to the interpretation is given in Luke 15 : 1, 2.—Jesus was receiving publicans and sinners. Instead of rejoicing at the salvation of these poor, degraded sons of Abraham, the Pharisees murmured. In rebuke, Jesus spoke three parables. One of them, the parable of the Lost Sheep, is reported also by Matthew, ch. 18 : 12-14; but the last two, the parables of the Lost Coin and of the Prodigal Son, appear only in Luke.

The teaching of all three of these parables is exactly the same. The imagery varies, but the application is constant. That application may be expressed very simply: "God rejoices at the salvation of a sinner; if, therefore, you are really sons of God, you will rejoice too." In the parable of the Prodigal Son, however, the application is forced home more poignantly than in either of the other two. In that parable alone among the three, the Pharisees could see—in the elder brother—a direct representation of themselves.

The incident of the elder brother, sometimes regarded as a mere detail, really introduces the main point of the parable. Everything

else leads up to that. The wonderful description of the joy of the father at the prodigal's home-coming is all intended as a contrast to the churlish jealousy of the brother. The elder brother was as far as possible from sharing in the father's joy. That showed that he was no true son. Though he lived under the father's roof, he had no real inward share in the father's life. So it was with the Pharisees. They lived in the Father's house; they were, as we should say, members of the Church. But when salvation, in the person of Jesus, had at last come to the poor, sinful outcasts of the people, the Pharisees drew aside. God rejoiced when the publicans crowded in to Jesus; but the Pharisees held back. That showed that after all they were not, as they thought, true sons of God. If they had been, they would have shared God's feeling.

It should be noticed that the parable ends with an invitation. The elder brother is not harshly rebuked by the father, but tenderly urged to come in still. Will the invitation be accepted? The question is not answered; and there lies the crowning beauty of the parable. The Pharisees are still given a chance. Will they still share the joy of God at the return of his lost children? They must answer the question for themselves.

And we, too, have the same question to answer. If we are really children of God, then we shall not despise the outcasts and the sinners, but shall rejoice with him at their salvation. The parable is characteristic of the Gospel of Luke. Of course, Luke did not compose it. Nothing in the Gospels bears more indisputably the marks of Jesus' teaching. But from the rich store of Palestinian tradition Luke sought out those things which displayed sympathy for the downtrodden and the sick and the sinful. It was an inestimable service to the Church. Shall we heed the message? God rejoices at the salvation of a sinner. Shall we be sharers in his holy joy?

IN THE LIBRARY.—Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves (edited), article on "Luke." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 27-32. Stevens and Burton, "A Harmony of the Gospels." Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. i: Plumptre, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke," pp. 235-365. Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. iii, pp. 1-173. The last-named work is intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXX

THE TESTIMONY OF THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

The Gospel According to John

1. THE EVANGELIST A WITNESS

The author of the Fourth Gospel was a great man. He was great, however, not as a philosopher or as a religious genius, but as an apostle; not as the originator of great ideas, but as one who received the teaching of another. He was great, not as one who created a profound theology, but as one who could understand the Lord Jesus Christ. The "Johannine theology" is the theology not of John but of Jesus. So at least John himself represents it. He claims to be not a theologian, but a witness. The value of his book depends upon the truth of his witnessing. If the Johannine picture of Christ is the creation of the author's genius, it commands admiration; but only if it is a true picture of the historic Jesus can it offer eternal life.

Is the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel fiction or fact, a splendid product of religious genius or a living Saviour?

Few questions have caused profounder agitation in the modern Church. The question cannot be separated from the question of authorship. Clearly if the book was written by an intimate friend of Jesus, its witness must be true. Who wrote the Fourth Gospel? This question is of vital importance.

2. THE TRADITION

At the close of the second century—the earliest period from which any really abundant Christian literature outside of the New Testament has been preserved—the tradition about the authorship of the Gospel was practically unanimous. Even the one small and unimportant sect that disagreed practically supports the common view, for its denial was evidently based upon objections to the contents of the Gospel and not at all upon any independent information.

(1) **Irenæus and Polycarp.**—Of the three important writers of the close of the second century, all of whom attest the Johannine authorship of the Gospel, Irenæus deserves special mention. Irenæus spent his early life in Asia Minor, but afterwards became

the leader of the Church in Gaul. Before he left Asia Minor he had some very interesting associations. One of them was with Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who was martyred in A. D. 155. Polycarp would be an important figure merely on account of the early period in which he lived; but what makes his testimony supremely valuable is his personal association with John. Irenæus himself in his early youth, before he had left Asia Minor, had heard Polycarp discoursing about the things he had heard John say. Polycarp, then, was a personal disciple of John, and Irenæus was a personal disciple of Polycarp. Only one link, therefore, separated Irenæus from John. Moreover, since Irenæus in his youth had lived in Asia Minor, the very place of John's residence, it is natural to believe that what he heard Polycarp say about John could be supplemented in other ways.

Now beyond any reasonable doubt whatever, Irenæus supposed that the John of whom he had heard Polycarp speak was none other than John the apostle, the son of Zebedee. If that supposition was correct, then the connection between Irenæus and the apostle John was exceedingly close; and when Irenæus exhibits an absolutely unwavering belief that the Fourth Gospel was written by the apostle, it is very unlikely that he was mistaken. He had known one of the personal disciples of John; he himself had lived in Asia Minor where John had been the well-known leader of the Church, and where the Fourth Gospel, no matter who wrote it, was almost certainly produced. When, therefore, he asserts, not as something new, but as a thing which he had known from the beginning, that the Fourth Gospel was written by the apostle John, surely he must be believed.

This conclusion has been avoided by the hypothesis that the John about whom Polycarp spoke was not really, as Irenæus supposed, John the son of Zebedee, but another John, a certain John the presbyter, who was not one of the twelve apostles at all. The unnaturalness of such an hypothesis appears on the surface. Could a native of Asia Minor who had repeatedly heard Polycarp speak about the John in question, and who had many other opportunities for acquainting himself with the traditions of the church in Asia Minor—could such a man, together with all his contemporaries, have come to labor under so egregious a misapprehension?

(2) Other Attestation.—The testimony of Irenæus to the Fourth Gospel is of particular importance, on account of Irenæus' connection with Polycarp. But it is only one detail in a remarkable consensus. When the most widely separated portions of the Church before the close of the second century all agreed that the

Fourth Gospel was written by John the son of Zebedee, their common belief could not have been of recent origin. Earlier writers, moreover, by their use of the Gospel attest at least its early date.

3. THE TESTIMONY OF THE GOSPEL ITSELF

The tradition which attributes the Fourth Gospel to John the son of Zebedee is confirmed by the testimony of the Gospel itself. Although the book does not mention the name of its author it clearly implies who he was.

(1) **Indirectness of the Testimony.**—This testimony of the Gospel itself is all the more valuable because it is indirect. If the name John had been mentioned at the beginning, then it might conceivably be supposed that an unknown author had desired to gain a hearing for his work by putting it falsely under the name of a great apostle. As it is, the inference that the author claims to be John the son of Zebedee, though certain, does not force itself upon the careless reader. A forger would not thus, by the indirectness of his claim, have deprived himself of the benefits of his forgery.

The testimony of the Gospel to its author must now be considered.

(2) **The Author an Eyewitness.**—In the first place, almost at the very beginning, we observe that the author claims to be an eyewitness of the life of Jesus. "We beheld his glory," he says in John 1 : 14. By beholding the glory of Christ he evidently does not mean merely that experience of Christ's power which is possessed by every Christian. On the contrary, the glory of Christ, as it is intended by the evangelist, is fully explained by such passages as ch. 2 : 11. The miracles of Jesus—palpable, visible events in the external world—are clearly included in what is meant. It will be observed that in ch. 1 : 14 it is very specifically the incarnate Christ that is spoken of. The evangelist is describing the condition of things after "the Word became flesh." Evidently, therefore, it was the earthly life of Jesus which the evangelist claims to have "beheld."

This conclusion is confirmed by I John 1 : 1-4. Scarcely anyone doubts that the First Epistle of John was written by the man who wrote the Gospel. When, therefore, the author of the epistle speaks of "that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life," evidently these words have significance for the Gospel also. The author fairly heaps up expressions to show, beyond all possibility of misunderstanding, that he had come into actual physical contact with the earthly Jesus.

(3) **The Unnamed Disciple of John 1 : 35-42.**—The author of the Fourth Gospel, then, clearly claims to be an eyewitness of the earthly life of Christ. Further indications identify him with a particular one among the eyewitnesses. In John 1 : 35-42, an unnamed disciple of Jesus is mentioned. "One of the two," it is said in v. 40, "that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." Who was the other? There is some reason for thinking that he was one of the two sons of Zebedee. But the matter will become clearer as we proceed.

Another question is why this disciple is not mentioned by name. The Fourth Gospel is not chary of names. Why, then, is the disciple who appears so prominently along with Andrew and Simon not mentioned by name? Only one plausible explanation suggests itself—the explanation that the unnamed disciple was the author of the Gospel, who, through a feeling common in the literature of antiquity, as well as of our own time, did not like to mention his own name in the course of his narrative. We have already observed that the author claims to be an eyewitness of the life of Christ. John 1 : 14. When, therefore, near the beginning of the narrative a disciple of Jesus is introduced, rather mysteriously, without a name, when, furthermore, events in which this disciple was immediately concerned are narrated with unusual vividness and wealth of detail, vs. 35-42, the conclusion becomes very natural that this unnamed disciple is none other than the author himself.

(4) **The Beloved Disciple.**—This conclusion, it must be admitted, so far as this first passage is concerned, is nothing more than a likely guess. But by other passages it is rendered almost certain.

In John 13 : 21-25, a disciple is mentioned as leaning on Jesus' breast and as being one whom Jesus loved. This disciple is not named. But who was he? Evidently he was one of the twelve apostles, for only the apostles were present at the Supper which is described in chs. 13 to 17. The disciple "whom Jesus loved," however, was not only among the Twelve; he was evidently among the innermost circle of the Twelve. Such an innermost circle appears clearly in the Synoptic Gospels. It was composed of Peter and James and John. The beloved disciple was probably one of these three; and since he is clearly distinguished from Peter, ch. 13 : 24, he was either James or John.

The introduction of an unnamed disciple, which seemed significant even in John 1 : 35-42, becomes yet far more significant in the present passage. In the account of the Last Supper, a considerable

number of the disciples are named—Peter, Judas Iscariot, Thomas, Philip, Judas not Iscariot—yet the disciple who is introduced with especial emphasis, whose very position at table is described with a wealth of detail far greater than is displayed in the case of any of the others, is designated merely as “one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.” The strange omission of this disciple’s name can be explained only if he was the author of the book. Clearly the painter has here introduced a modest portrait of himself in the midst of his great picture.

Passing by John 18 : 15, 16, where “the other disciple” is probably the author, and ch. 19 : 26, 27, where the repetition of the strange designation, “the disciple . . . whom he [Jesus] loved,” confirms the impressions derived from ch. 13:21-25, we discover another important indication in ch. 19:35. “And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.” “He that hath seen” can scarcely refer to anyone other than the beloved disciple who was mentioned just before as standing by the cross. In the present verse, this beloved disciple is represented as the one who is now speaking. The identification of the beloved disciple with the author of the Gospel, which was implied before, here becomes explicit.

In John 20 : 1-10, “the other disciple whom Jesus loved” is of course the same as the one who appears in ch. 13:21-25; 19:26, 27, 35.

(5) **Testimony of the Appendix.**—In John 21 : 7, 20-23, the beloved disciple appears again, and in v. 24 he is identified, in so many words, with the writer of the Gospel. In this verse the first person plural is used; other persons seem to be associated with the author in commending the Gospel to the attention of the Church. This phenomenon is explained if the twenty-first chapter be regarded as a sort of appendix, perhaps added at the request of a circle of friends. It will be observed that ch. 20 : 30, 31 forms a fit ending to the book; what follows therefore appears the more like an appendix, though it was certainly written by the author’s own hand and published before his death along with the rest of the book.

(6) **Why Are John and James Not Mentioned by Name?**—The conclusion of our investigation is that the author of the Fourth Gospel indicates clearly that he was either one or the other of the two sons of Zebedee. This conclusion is confirmed by the curious circumstance that neither one of these men is mentioned in the Gospel by name. How did they come to be omitted? They were in the very innermost circle of Jesus’ disciples; many apostles far less prominent

than they are named frequently on the pages of the Gospel. There can be only one solution of the problem: one at least of these men is, as a matter of fact, introduced in the Gospel as the beloved disciple, and the reason why he is introduced in such a curiously anonymous way and why his brother also is not named, is that the author felt a natural delicacy about introducing his own and his brother's name into a narrative of the Lord's life.

One statement that has just been made requires qualification: it is not quite true that the sons of Zebedee are not designated by name in the Gospel. They are not indeed called by their individual names, but in ch. 21 : 2, they are designated by the name of their father. Possibly this slight difference of usage between chapter 21 and the rest of the Gospel has something to do with the fact that chapter 21 seems to be an appendix.

(7) The Author Was Not James, but John.—The author of the Fourth Gospel, then, identifies himself with one or the other of the sons of Zebedee. As to which one of the two is meant there cannot be the slightest doubt. James the son of Zebedee was martyred in A. D. 44. Acts 12 : 2. There is abundant evidence that the Fourth Gospel was not written so early as that; and John 21 : 20-23 apparently implies that the author lived to a considerable age. Evidently, therefore, it is John and not James with whom the author identifies himself.

(8) Is the Gospel's Own Testimony True?—Thus the singularly strong tradition which attributes the Fourth Gospel to John the son of Zebedee is supported by the independent testimony of the book itself. Conceivably, of course, that testimony might be false. But it is very hard to believe that it is. It is very hard to believe that the author of this wonderful book, who despite all the profundity of his ideas exalts in a very special manner the importance of simple testimony based upon the senses, John 19 : 35; I John 1 : 1-4, has in a manner far subtler and more heinous than if he had simply put a false name at the beginning palmed himself off as an eyewitness of the Saviour's life. Many learned men have found it possible to accept such a view; but the simple reader of the Gospel will always be inclined to dissent. The author of this book has narrated many things hard to be believed. But there are still found those who accept his solemn testimony; there are still found those in whom the purpose of the book is achieved, who through this Gospel believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing have life in his name. John 20 : 31.

4. TRADITIONAL TIME AND PLACE AND PLAN

The tradition about the Fourth Gospel is not confined to the bare fact of Johannine authorship; it has preserved certain other very interesting information.

(1) **The Ephesian Residence.**—For example, tradition represents the Fourth Gospel as written after the other three Gospels and at Ephesus. The evidence for the Ephesian residence of the apostle John is singularly abundant and weighty; and the contrary evidence which has been thought to attest an early death of John is exceedingly weak. At first, John, like the others of the original apostles, remained in Palestine. He appears in Jerusalem a little before A. D. 50 at the Apostolic Council. Gal. 2 : 9. At some subsequent time, perhaps at the outbreak of the Jewish war in A. D. 66, he journeyed to Asia Minor and there for many years was the revered head of the Church. He lived indeed until the reign of Trajan, which began in A. D. 98.

(2) **The Gospel of John Supplementary to the Synoptic Gospels.**—According to tradition, the Gospel of John was not only written after the Synoptic Gospels, but was intended to be supplementary to them. This information is amply confirmed by the Gospel itself. Evidently John presupposes on the part of his readers a knowledge of the Synoptic account. This explains his peculiar choice of material—for example, his omission of most of the Galilean ministry, and of such events as the baptism and the institution of the Lord's Supper. It explains also, for example, a verse like John 3 : 24: "For John was not yet cast into prison." The Synoptic Gospels begin their account of the ministry of Jesus with what happened after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. Mark 1 : 14. Readers of Mark might even receive the impression that Jesus had not begun his teaching till after that time. John corrects any such impression in ch. 3 : 24.

If, then, the Gospel of John is intended not to compete with the Synoptic Gospels, but to supplement them, in what direction does the supplementing move? What is it that John adds to what had already been told? Here, again, tradition affords us useful hints.

Eusebius, in the early part of the fourth century, writes as follows (Church History, iii, 24, 7-13, translated by McGiffert, in "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers," second series, vol. i, p. 153):

"And when Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the Gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason. The three Gospels already mentioned [Matthew, Mark and Luke]

having come into the hands of all and into his own too, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there was lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry. And this indeed is true. For it is evident that the three evangelists recorded only the deeds done by the Saviour for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and indicated this in the beginning of their account. For Matthew, after the forty days' fast and the temptation which followed it, indicates the chronology of his work when he says: 'Now when he heard that John was delivered up he withdrew from Judea into Galilee.' Mark likewise says: 'Now after that John was delivered up Jesus came into Galilee.' And Luke, before commencing his account of the deeds of Jesus, similarly marks the time, when he says that Herod, 'adding to all the evil deeds which he had done, shut up John in prison.' They say, therefore, that the apostle John, being asked to do it for this reason, gave in his Gospel an account of the period which had been omitted by the earlier evangelists, and of the deeds done by the Saviour during that period; that is, of those which were done before the imprisonment of the Baptist. And this is indicated by him, they say, in the following words: 'This beginning of miracles did Jesus'; and again when he refers to the Baptist, in the midst of the deeds of Jesus, as still baptizing in Ænon near Salim; where he states the matter clearly in the words: 'For John was not yet cast into prison.' John accordingly, in his Gospel, records the deeds of Christ which were performed before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three evangelists mention the events which happened after that time. One who understands this can no longer think that the Gospels are at variance with one another, inasmuch as the Gospel according to John contains the first acts of Christ, while the others give an account of the latter part of his life. And the genealogy of our Saviour according to the flesh John quite naturally omitted, because it had been already given by Matthew and Luke, and began with the doctrine of his divinity, which had, as it were, been reserved for him, as their superior, by the divine Spirit."

According to Eusebius, then, John intended to treat the time before the imprisonment of the Baptist as the Synoptists treated the time after that event. We have already noted the element of truth in this observation. Of course it is not the only observation that needs to be made. Much of what John narrates occurred after the imprisonment of the Baptist.

According to Clement of Alexandria, of the close of the second century, who here reports what had been said by his predecessors in Alexandria, John, seeing that "bodily" matters had been treated by the Synoptists, supplemented their work by writing a "spiritual" Gospel. In this testimony also there is no doubt an element of truth. It is true that the Fourth Gospel reproduces certain profound elements in the teaching of Jesus which in the earlier Gospels appear only incidentally.

The oral tradition which forms the chief basis of the Synoptic Gospels was rooted deep in the earliest missionary activity of the Church. Especially, perhaps, in the Gospel of Mark, but also in Matthew and Luke, we have for the most part those facts about Jesus and those elements of his teaching which could appeal at once to simple-minded believers or to outsiders. The Gospel of John, on the other hand, drawing, like the others, from the rich store of Jesus' teaching and Jesus' person, has revealed yet deeper mysteries. In this profound book, we have the recollections of a beloved disciple, at first understood only imperfectly by the apostle himself, but rendered ever clearer by advancing experience, and firmly fixed by being often repeated in the author's oral instruction of the Church.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible," article on "John" (7): Purves, article on "John, Gospel according to St." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 33-40. Stevens and Burton, "A Harmony of the Gospels." Westcott, "The Gospel according to St. John: The Authorized Version with Introduction and Notes." "The Cambridge Bible for Schools": Plummer, "The Gospel According to St. John." Browning, "A Death in the Desert" (vol. iv, pp. 191-206 of the Riverside Edition). Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. iii, pp. 174-355. The last-named work is intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXXI

THE JESUS OF THE GOSPELS

It is possible to speak of "the Jesus of the Gospels" only if the Gospels are in essential agreement. If the features of the four portraits are so different that they never could have been united really in the same person, then there is no such thing as a Jesus of the Gospels, but only a Jesus of Matthew and a Jesus of Mark and a Jesus of Luke and a Jesus of John.

1. AGREEMENT AMONG THE SYNOPTISTS

Among the Synoptic Gospels, at any rate, no such difference exists. Though every one of these Gospels possesses its own characteristics, the peculiarities are almost negligible in comparison with the underlying unity. There is certainly such a thing as "the Synoptic Jesus." His words and deeds are narrated in each of the Gospels in a different selection and in a different style, but the characteristic features are everywhere the same.

2. THE SYNOPTISTS AND JOHN

With regard to the Fourth Gospel, the matter is not quite so plain. The contrast between the Synoptists and John has already been noticed. It forces itself upon even the most casual reader. Difference, however, is not necessarily contradiction. It may be due to a difference in the point of view. Both the Synoptists and John give a true picture of Jesus; the same features appear very different when viewed from different angles.

3. DIVINITY AND HUMANITY

At any rate, if there is a contradiction between the first three Gospels and the Gospel of John, the contradiction is by no means easy to formulate. It cannot be said, for example, simply that the Synoptists present a human Jesus and John a divine Jesus. Whatever the differences among the four Gospels, all four agree at least in two essential features. All four present Jesus, in the first place as a man, and in the second place as something more than a man.

(1) **Humanity in the Synoptists.**—The former feature is perhaps especially clear in the Synoptists. According to the first three Gospels, Jesus led a genuine human life from birth to death. As a child he grew not only in stature, but also in wisdom. He was subject to human parents and to the requirements of the Jewish law. Even after the inauguration of his ministry the human conditions of his life were not superseded. He was even tempted like other men. He grew weary and slept. He suffered hunger and thirst. He could rejoice and he could suffer sorrow. He prayed, like other men, and worshiped God. He needed strengthening both for body and for mind. No mere semblance of a human life is here presented, but a genuine man of flesh and blood.

(2) **Humanity in John.**—But if the Jesus of the Synoptists is a true man, how is it with the Jesus of John? Does the Fourth Gospel present merely a heavenly being who walked through the world untouched and unruffled by the sin and misery and weakness that surrounded him? Only a very superficial reading can produce such an impression. The Fourth Gospel indeed lays a supreme emphasis upon the majesty of Jesus, upon his "glory" as it was manifested in works of power and attested by God himself. But side by side with these features of the narrative, as though to prevent a possible misunderstanding, the author presents the humanity of Jesus with drastic touches that can scarcely be paralleled in the Synoptists themselves. It is John who speaks of the weariness of Jesus at the well of Samaria, ch. 4 : 6; of the human affection which he felt for Lazarus and Martha and Mary, ch. 11 : 3, 5, 36, and for an individual among the disciples, ch. 13 : 23; of his weeping, ch. 11 : 35; and indignant groaning, v. 38; and of his deadly thirst. Ch. 19 : 28. As clearly as the other evangelists John presents Jesus as a man.

(3) **Divinity in John.**—In the second place, all four Gospels, if they present Jesus as a man, also present him as something far more than a man. With regard to the Gospel of John, of course the matter is unmistakable. The very first verse reads: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Jesus according to John was plainly no product of the world, but God come in the flesh. John 1 : 14. The teaching of Jesus himself, as it is reported in the Fourth Gospel, is concerned with the relation of perfect unity that exists between the Father and the Son.

(4) **Divinity in the Synoptists.**—In the Synoptists the supernatural character of Jesus is somewhat less on the surface. His teaching, as the Synoptists report it, is largely concerned not directly with his

own person, but with the kingdom that he came to found. Even his Messiahship is often kept in the background; the demons are often commanded not to reveal it.

A closer examination, however, reveals the essential unity between the Synoptists and John. If the supernatural character of Jesus appears in the Synoptists less plainly on the surface, it is really no less pervasive at the center. It does not so often form the subject of direct exposition, but it is everywhere presupposed. The doing by Jesus of what only God can do, Mark 2 : 5, 7; the sovereign way in which he legislates for the kingdom of God, Matt. 5 : 17-48; his unearthly holiness and complete lack of any consciousness of sin; the boundlessness of his demand for obedience, Luke 9 : 57-62; his expected freedom from limitations of time and place, Matt. 28 : 20; the absolutely central place which he claims for himself as ruler and judge; the substantiation of all his lofty claims by wonderful power over the forces of nature—these are only indications chosen almost at random of what is really plain upon every page of the Synoptic Gospels, that the Jesus who is there described is no mere human figure but a divine Saviour of the world. The invitation of Matt. 11 : 28-30, which is typical of the Synoptic teaching, would have been absurd on the lips of anyone but the Son of God.

Moreover, the divine nature of Jesus is not merely implied in the Synoptic Gospels; there are times when it even becomes explicit. The relation of perfect mutual knowledge that exists between Jesus and the Father, Matt. 11 : 27, reveals a perfect unity of nature. The Jesus of the Synoptists, as well as the Jesus of John, might say, "I and the Father are one."

4. THE MANNER OF JESUS' TEACHING

The Synoptic Gospels, therefore, imply everywhere exactly the same Jesus who is more expressly presented in the Gospel of John. If, then, there is a contradiction between the Synoptists and John, it can be concerned only with the manner of Jesus' teaching. The Synoptists as well as John present Jesus as a supernatural person, it is said, but unlike John they represent him as keeping his own person in the background.

Even here, however, maturer consideration shows that the difference does not amount to anything like contradiction. May not the same person have spoken the discourses of the Fourth Gospel and also those of the Synoptists? It must be remembered that the ministry of Jesus was varied, and that the first three evangelists

confine themselves almost exclusively to one phase of it. In the public Galilean ministry, which the Synoptists describe, it was necessary for Jesus to keep even his Messiahship for a time in the background. Publication of it, owing to the false political conception which the Jews had of the Messiah's work, would have been fatal to Jesus' plan. Here, as so often, the Fourth Gospel explains the other three. After the feeding of the five thousand, John tells us, the crowd wanted to take Jesus by force and make him a king. John 6 : 15. Popularity was dangerous. Jesus could not proclaim himself publicly as the Messiah, until by explaining the spiritual nature of the kingdom he had prepared the people for the kind of Messiah which it was his mission to be.

Of course, it is difficult for us to understand at every point just why Jesus acted as he did. All that we are now maintaining is that the considerations just adduced, and others like them, show that it is perfectly conceivable that Jesus, before his intimate disciples and in Jerusalem and at a special crisis, John, ch. 6, adopted a method of teaching which in the greater part of the Galilean ministry he considered out of place. There is room in a true narrative of Jesus' life both for the Synoptists and for John.

5. THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF JESUS

Jesus was many-sided. He was Lawgiver, he was Teacher, he was Healer, he was Ruler, he was Saviour. He was man and he was God. The Gospels have presented him in the richness of his mysterious person. Modern historians are less comprehensive. They have been offended at the manifoldness of the Gospel picture. They have endeavored to reduce Jesus to the level of what they can comprehend. But their effort has been a failure. After the supposed contradictions have been removed, greater contradictions remain; and the resulting figure is at any rate too small to account for the origin of Christianity. The partial Jesus of modern criticism, despite his comparative littleness, is a monstrosity; the comprehensive Jesus of the Gospels, though mysterious, is a self-evidencing and life-giving fact.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves, article on "Jesus Christ." Warfield, "The Lord of Glory," pp. 125-173. Robertson, "Epochs in the Life of Jesus." Stalker, "The Life of Jesus Christ." Denney, "Jesus and the Gospel." Andrews, "The Life of Our Lord."

LESSON XXXII

A DOCUMENT OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

The Epistle of James

1. THE CHRISTIANITY OF JAMES

The Epistle of James has been called the least Christian book in the New Testament. Superficially this judgment is true. The name of Jesus occurs only twice in the epistle, James 1 : 1; 2 : 1, and there is no specific reference to his life and death and resurrection. A close examination, however, reverses the first impression.

(1) **James and the Synoptic Discourses.**—In the first place, the ethical teaching of James is permeated by the spirit of Jesus. Even the form of the epistle displays a marked affinity for the discourses of the Synoptic Gospels, and the affinity in content is even more apparent. Many striking parallels could be cited; but what is more convincing than such details is the indefinable spirit of the whole. The way in which James treats the covetousness, the pride, the heartlessness, the formalism, the pettiness and the meanness of his readers, is strikingly similar to the way in which his Master dealt with the Pharisees. James does not indeed actually cite the words of Jesus; but the absence of citations makes the underlying similarity all the more significant. The writer of this epistle did not live at a time when the knowledge of the words of Jesus was derived from books; rather he had himself listened to the Master—even though he was not at first a disciple—and was living in a community where the impression of Jesus' teaching and Jesus' person was still fresh in the memory of those who had known him on earth.

(2) **James and Christian Doctrine.**—In the second place, moreover, the Christianity of James is religious as well as ethical. Of course it could not be like the teaching of Jesus if it were merely ethical; for everything that Jesus taught even about the simplest matters of human conduct was determined by the thought of the heavenly Father and by the significance of his own person. But by the religious character of the Epistle of James even more than this is meant. Like all the writers of the New Testament James was well aware of the saving significance of Jesus' death and resurrection. For him as well as for the others, Jesus was Lord, ch. 1 : 1, and a Lord who was possessed of a heavenly glory. Ch. 2 : 1. James, as

well as the others, was waiting for the second coming of Christ. Ch. 5 : 8. He does not directly refer to the saving events that form the substance of Christian faith; but he takes them everywhere for granted. The word of truth through which the disciples have been formed by God, ch. 1 : 18, the implanted word, v. 21, that needs ever to be received anew, can hardly be anything else than the apostolic gospel as it was proclaimed in the earliest speeches of Peter which are recorded in The Acts, and as it found its rich unfolding in the teaching of Paul. Just because that gospel in our epistle is presupposed, it does not need to be expounded in detail. The men to whom James was writing were not lacking in orthodoxy. If they had been, he would have set them right, and we should have had another exposition of the gospel. As a matter of fact their fault was in practice, not in theory; and it is in the sphere of practice that they are met by James. The epistle would be insufficient if it stood alone. It does not lay the foundation of Christian faith. But it shows how, upon that foundation, may be built not the wood, hay and stubble of a wordy orthodoxy, but the gold and silver and precious stones of an honest Christian life.

This epistle, then, might be misleading if taken by itself; but it becomes salutary if it is understood in its historical connections. Far from disparaging Christian doctrine—as the modern Church is tempted to suppose—it builds upon doctrine. In that it agrees with the whole of the Bible. Christianity, as has been finely said, is a life only because it is a doctrine. Only the great saving events of the gospel have rendered possible a life like that which is described in the Epistle of James. And where the gospel is really accepted with heart as well as mind, that life of love will always follow.

2. DATE AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE

The view which will be held about the date of the Epistle of James will depend very largely upon the interpretation of the passage about faith and works. James 2 : 14-26. In that passage, some of the same terms appear as are prominent in connection with the great Judaistic controversy in which Paul was engaged from the time of the Apostolic Council to the time of the third missionary journey. Three views have been held with regard to the date of the Epistle of James. The epistle may be regarded as written (1) before the Judaistic controversy arose, (2) during that controversy or while it was still fresh in men's minds, or (3) long after the controversy had been settled.

(1) The Intermediate Date.—The second of these three views may be eliminated first. This intermediate view has the advantage of placing the epistle within the lifetime of James. It can treat the epistle as authentic. It has furthermore the advantage of explaining the coincidences between James 2 : 14-26 and Rom., ch. 4. For if the epistle was written at the very close of the lifetime of James—say about A. D. 62, or, following Hegesippus, A. D. 66—the author may have become acquainted with the Epistle to the Romans.

But the difficulties of this view far overbalance the advantages. If James was writing with Galatians and Romans before him, then apparently in ch. 2 : 24 he intends to contradict those epistles. As a matter of fact, however, as is shown in the Student's Text Book, he does not really contradict them, but is in perfect harmony with them. He has therefore gone out of his way in order to introduce a formal contradiction of the great apostle to the Gentiles although there is no real contradiction of meaning at all! What could he possibly gain by such useless trouble-making? If James really wanted to combat Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, he would have done so very differently; and if he did not want to combat it, he would certainly not have uselessly created the appearance of doing so.

Perhaps, however, James 2 : 14-26 is a refutation not of Paul but of a misunderstanding of Paul. This also is very improbable. If the passage was a refutation not of Paul but of a misunderstanding of Paul, why did James not say so? Why did he not distinguish Paul clearly from his misinterpreters? Instead he has indulged uselessly in a formal contradiction of Paul, and has in refutation of a misunderstanding of Paul not even used the abundant materials which Paul himself could offer! And where was such a misunderstanding of Paul possible in Jewish Christian circles of A. D. 62?

What makes every form of this intermediate dating impossible is the total absence from the epistle of any reference to the question of the conditions upon which Gentiles were to be received into the Church. In A. D. 62 this question had recently been the subject of bitter controversy. At that time no one could have touched upon the closely related topic of faith and works as James does and yet have ignored so completely the controversial question.

Evidently, therefore, the epistle was written either before the Judaistic controversy arose or else long after it was over.

(2) The Late Date.—The latter view makes the epistle a pseudonymous work—it assumes that an unknown author has here tried to

enhance the influence of his work by putting it under the name of the first head of the Jerusalem church. This is of itself sufficient to refute the late dating. For the procedure of the supposed falsifier is quite incomprehensible. He has chosen James as the alleged author only because of the lofty position which James held, and yet he has designated him in the first verse merely as a simple Christian! The procedure of real forgers is very different.

There are also, however, other objections to the late dating. Would any writer in the second century, when the authority of Paul was well established, have ventured to introduce such an apparent contradiction of Paul as appears in James 2 : 24? In a writer of A. D. 150 we should have had formal agreement with Paul and material disagreement; in the Epistle of James we have formal disagreement and material harmony. Apparent contradiction of expression combined with perfect unity of thought is a sure sign of independence. The Epistle of James has made no use of the epistles of Paul.

Against this conclusion may be urged only the coincidence that James and Paul both use the example of Abraham, and cite the same verse, Gen. 15 : 6, with regard to him. But it must be remembered that to every Jew Abraham offered the most obvious example in all the Scriptures. It is possible, too, that the faith and works of Abraham had in pre-Christian Jewish circles already been the subject of controversy. Furthermore, James does not confine himself to Abraham, but introduces Rahab also, who is not mentioned by Paul. The coincidence between Paul and James is quite insufficient to overbalance the clear evidence of independence.

(3) **The Early Date.**—Only one hypothesis, then, suits the facts. The Epistle of James was clearly written before the Judaistic controversy became acute at the time of the Apostolic Council. In the second chapter of the epistle, James has used the same terms that became prominent in that controversy, but he has used them in refuting a practical, not a theoretical, error—an error that is related only indirectly to the great subject of Galatians and Romans.

3. UNDERLYING UNITY OF THE EPISTLE

At first sight the Epistle of James seems to possess very little unity. Topic follows topic often with little apparent connection. But the connection between the individual sections is closer than appears at first; and the epistle as a whole possesses at least a perfect unity of spirit.

(1) **Reality in Religion.**—The ruling tone of the epistle, which may be detected beneath all the varying exhortations, is a certain manly honesty, a certain fierce hatred of all sham and cant and humbug and meanness. James is a stern advocate of a practical religion.

(2) **Supremacy of Religion.**—It must be noticed, however, that the religion of this writer is none the less religious because it is practical. James is no advocate of a "gospel of street-cleaning." On the contrary he insists with characteristic vehemence upon personal piety. The same writer who has been regarded as emphasizing works at the expense of faith, who might be hailed as a leader of those who would make religion terminate upon man rather than God, who might be thought to disparage everything but "social service"—this same writer is one of the most earnest advocates of prayer. James 1 : 5-8; 4 : 2, 3; 5 : 14-18. This apostle of works, this supposed disparager of faith, is almost bitter in his denunciation of unbelief! Ch. 1 : 6-8. God, not man, according to James, is the author of every perfect gift. V. 17. Prayer is the remedy both for bodily and for spiritual ills. Ch. 5 : 14-18. James lends no countenance to the modern disparagement of religious devotion. The same uncompromising severity with which he lashes an inactive religion is also applied just as mercilessly to an irreligious activity. Ch. 4 : 13-15. James does not attack religion in the interests of reality; he attacks unreality in the interests of religion.

4. CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE

The opening of the epistle, like that of the letters contained in Acts 15 : 23-29; 23 : 26-30, is constructed according to the regular Greek form.

After the opening, James speaks first of trials or temptations. Rightly used they will lead to perfection. If, however, there is still imperfection, it can be removed by prayer to God. The imperfection which is here especially in view is an imperfection in wisdom. Apparently the readers, like the Pharisees, had laid an excessive stress upon knowledge. The true wisdom, says James, can be obtained not by human pride, as the readers seem to think, but only by prayer. Prayer, however, must be in faith—there must be no wavering in it. Pride, indeed, is altogether blameworthy. If there is to be boasting, it should certainly be not in earthly wealth but in those spiritual blessings which often reverse earthly distinctions. Returning to the subject of temptations, James insists that in their evil they do not come from God, but from the depths of

man's own desires. From God comes no evil thing, but every perfect gift; and in the gospel God has bestowed upon us his richest blessing.

That gospel must be received with all diligence. It will exclude wrath and insincerity. True religion consists not merely in hearing but in doing; good examples of the exercise of it are the visitation of the fatherless and widows and the preservation of one's own personal purity of life.

Faith in Christ, James continues in similar vein, excludes all undue respect of persons. Indeed God in his choice of those who should be saved has especially favored the poor. The rich as a class are rather the oppressors of the Christians. Surely then the Christians should not favor rich men for selfish reasons. The law of love will exclude all such unworthy conduct.

That law of love requires an active life. Faith, if it be true faith, leads to works. Away with a miserable faith that is expressed only in words!

Words, indeed, are dangerous. The tongue is a prolific source of harm. Evil speech reveals the deep-seated corruption of the heart. The readers must be careful, therefore, about seeking the work of a teacher. The true wisdom, which fits a man to teach, is not of man's acquiring, but comes from God.

Quarreling—which was produced especially by the inordinate ambition among the readers to pose as teachers—must be counteracted by submission to God.

The constant thought of God excludes all pride in human planning. Especially the rich must reflect upon the transitoriness of earthly possessions and above all must be sure that their wealth is honestly gained.

Finally, patient waiting for the Lord, the example of the Old Testament saints, and the earnest practice of prayer will make effective all the exhortations of the epistle.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 123-138. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Warfield, articles on "James" and "James, Epistle of." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 123-129. Knowling, "The Epistle of St. James." "The Cambridge Bible for Schools": Plumptre, "The General Epistle of St. James." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. i, pp. 73-151. The last-named work is intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXXIII

JESUS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Epistle to the Hebrews

1. PAUL NOT THE AUTHOR

(1) **The Tradition.**—At Alexandria in the latter part of the second century Paul was thought to be the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; but in North Africa a little later Tertullian attributed the epistle to Barnabas, and in other portions of the Church the Pauline authorship was certainly not accepted. In the west, the Pauline authorship was long denied and the inclusion of the epistle in the New Testament resisted. At last the Alexandrian view won universal acceptance. The Epistle to the Hebrews became an accepted part of the New Testament, and was attributed to Paul.

Clement of Alexandria, who had apparently received the tradition of Pauline authorship from Pantænus, his predecessor, himself declares that Hebrews was written by Paul in the "Hebrew" (Aramaic) language, and was translated by Luke into Greek. The notion of a translation by Luke was based upon no genuine historical tradition—Hebrews is certainly an original Greek work—but was simply an hypothesis constructed to explain the peculiarities of the epistle on the supposition that it was a work of Paul.

(2) **The Value of the Tradition.**—The tradition of Pauline authorship is clearly very weak. If Paul had been the author, it is hard to see why the memory of the fact should have been lost so generally in the Church. No one in the early period had any objection to the epistle; on the contrary it was very highly regarded. If, then, it had really been written by Paul, the Pauline authorship would have been accepted everywhere with avidity. The negative testimony of the Roman church is particularly significant. The epistle was quoted by Clement of Rome at about A. D. 95; yet at Rome as elsewhere in the West the epistle seems never in the early period to have been regarded as Pauline. In other words, just where acquaintance with the epistle can be traced farthest back, the denial of Pauline authorship seems to have been most insistent. If Clement of Rome had regarded Paul as the author, the history of Roman opinion about the epistle would have been very different.

On the other hand, on the supposition that there was originally no tradition of Pauline authorship, the subsequent prevalence of such a tradition is easily explained. It was due simply to the evident apostolic authority of the epistle itself. From the start, *Hebrews* was felt to be an authoritative work. Being authoritative, it would be collected along with other authoritative works. Since it was an epistle, and exhibited a certain Pauline quality of spirit and subject, it would naturally be associated with the other works of the greatest letter writer of the apostolic age. Being thus included in a collection of the Pauline Epistles, and being regarded as of apostolic authority, what was more natural than to attribute it to the apostle Paul? Such, very possibly, was the origin of the Alexandrian tradition.

This tradition did not win immediate acceptance, because the rest of the Church was still aware that the epistle was not written by Paul. What led to the final conquest of the Pauline tradition was simply the character of the book itself. The question of Pauline authorship, in the case of this book, became connected with the question of apostolic authority. The Church had to choose between rejecting the book altogether, and accepting it as Pauline. When she finally adopted the latter alternative, undoubtedly she chose the lesser error. It was an error to regard the epistle as the work of Paul; but it would have been a far greater error to exclude it from the New Testament. As a matter of fact, though the book was not written by Paul, it was written, if not by one of the other apostles, at least by an "apostolic man" like Mark or Luke. Scarcely any book of the New Testament bears clearer marks of true apostolicity.

(3) **Internal Evidence.**—The argument against Pauline authorship which is derived from tradition is strongly supported by the contents of the epistle itself. In the first place, it is exceedingly doubtful whether Paul could have spoken of himself as having had the Christian salvation confirmed to him by those who had heard the Lord. Heb. 2 : 3. Knowledge of the earthly life of Jesus was indeed conveyed to Paul by ordinary word of mouth from the eye-witnesses; but the gospel itself, as he insists with vehemence in *Galatians*, was revealed to him directly by Christ. In the second place, the style of the epistle is very different from that of Paul, being, as we shall see, far more carefully wrought. In the third place, the thoughts developed in *Hebrews*, though undoubtedly they are in perfect harmony with the Pauline Epistles, are by no means characteristically Pauline. It is a little hard to understand, for

example, how Paul could have written at such length about the law without speaking of justification by faith or the reception of Gentiles into the Church. This last argument, however, must not be exaggerated. Undoubtedly Paul would have agreed heartily to everything that Hebrews contains. Paul and the author of this epistle have developed merely somewhat different sides of the same great truth.

2. WHO WAS THE AUTHOR?

If Paul did not write the Epistle to the Hebrews, who did write it? Prodigious labor has been expended upon this question, but with very little result. In ancient times, Barnabas, Luke and Clement of Rome, were each regarded as the author. Of these three views the first is most probable; the second is exceedingly unlikely; and the last is clearly impossible. Whoever wrote the epistle, Clement certainly did not. The letter which we possess from his pen is immeasurably inferior to the apostolic writings to which Hebrews certainly belongs. Clement was a humble reader of Hebrews, not the author of it. Luther was inclined to regard Apollos as the possible author of Hebrews; and of all the many suggestions that have been made, this is perhaps the best. Undoubtedly the circumstances and training of Apollos were in a number of respects like those which might naturally be attributed to the author of the epistle. Apollos was closely associated with Paul, and perhaps at a later time with others of the apostles, just as might be expected of the author of an apostolic work such as Hebrews. On the other hand, like the author of the epistle, he was not an eyewitness of the life of Jesus. Compare Heb. 2 : 4. Like the author of the epistle he was no doubt acquainted with Timothy. Compare ch. 13 : 23. He was an "eloquent" or "learned" man, Acts 18 : 24, who might well have produced the splendid rhetoric of the epistle. He was a Jew and mighty in the Scriptures, as was also the author of Hebrews. He was a native of Alexandria, the university city of the period, and the seat of a large Jewish community, where just that combination of Greek rhetorical training with Scriptural knowledge which is exhibited in the epistle is most naturally to be sought.

These indications, however, can merely show that Apollos might conceivably have written the epistle; they do not show that he did write it. The authorship of this powerful work will always remain uncertain. How little we know, after all, of the abounding life of the apostolic Church!

3. WHERE WERE THE READERS?

In the Student's Text Book, it has been shown that the readers of the epistle were probably members of some rather narrowly circumscribed community. Where this community was is by no means clear. The one indication of place which the epistle contains is ambiguous. In ch. 13 : 24 it is said, "They of Italy salute you." These words may mean that the author is in Italy and sends greetings from the Christians of that country, or they may mean that the author is outside of Italy and sends greetings from Italian Christians who happened to be with him. In the latter case, probably the readers were in Italy; for otherwise they would have no special interest in the Italian Christians. All that we can say is then that the epistle was probably written either from Italy or to Italy. If it was written from Italy, then since the readers were Jews, it is natural to seek them in Palestine. The Palestinian Christians were "Hebrews" in the narrower, linguistic sense of the word, as well as in the broader, national sense. The ancient heading of the epistle thus comes to its full rights. On the other hand the Palestinian hypothesis faces some rather grave difficulties. If the readers are to be sought in Italy, then perhaps they formed a Jewish Christian community in Rome or in some other Italian city. The question cannot be settled with any certainty. The destination of the epistle is an even greater riddle than the authorship.

4. WHEN WAS THE EPISTLE WRITTEN?

The Epistle to the Hebrews was certainly written before A. D. 95, for at about that time it was quoted by Clement of Rome. The mention of Timothy in ch. 13 : 23 perhaps does not carry us much farther, for Timothy, who was a grown man at about A. D. 50, Acts 16 : 1-3, may have lived till the end of the first century. The epistle, however, does not bear any of the marks of late origin. The question of date is closely connected with the question whether in the epistle the temple at Jerusalem is regarded as still standing. This question cannot be settled with certainty. But on the whole the continuance of the Levitical ceremonies seems to be assumed in the epistle, and at any rate there is no clear reference to their cessation. Probably therefore the Epistle to the Hebrews was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70.

5. HEBREWS A LITERARY WORK

The Epistle to the Hebrews is a product of conscious literary art.

The rhetoric of Paul is unconscious; even such passages as the first few chapters of First Corinthians or the eighth chapter of Romans may have been composed with the utmost rapidity. The author of Hebrews probably went differently to work. Such sentences as Heb. 1 : 1-4, even in an inspired writer, can only be the result of diligent labor. By long practice the writer of Hebrews had acquired that feeling for rhythm and balance of phrase, that facility in the construction of smooth-flowing periods, which give to his epistle its distinctive quality among the New Testament books. Greek rhetoric of the Hellenistic age, freed from its hollow artificiality, is here laid under contribution for the Saviour's praise.

The presence of such a book in the New Testament is highly salutary. Devout Christians in their enthusiasm for the simplicity of the gospel are sometimes in danger of becoming one-sided. They are sometimes inclined to confuse simplicity with ugliness, and then to prize ugliness for its own sake. It is perfectly true that the value of the gospel is quite independent of æsthetic niceties, and that the language of the New Testament is for the most part very simple. But it is not true that the simplicity of the New Testament has anything in common with the bad taste of some modern phraseology, or that eloquence is of itself evil. The Epistle to the Hebrews shows by a noble example that there is such a thing as Christian art. The majestic sentences of this ancient masterpiece, with their exquisite clearness and liturgic rhythm and uplifting power, have contributed inestimably to the Christian conception of the Saviour. The art of Hebrews is not art for art's sake, but art for the sake of Christ. Literary perfection is here combined with profound genuineness and apostolic fervor; art is here ennobled by consecration.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 164, 165, 265-267, 286-289. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves, article on "Hebrews, Epistle to the." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 116-122. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. iii, pp. 275-348: Moulton, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." Westcott, "The Epistle to the Hebrews." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii, pp. 293-366. The two last-named works are intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXXIV

CHRISTIAN FORTITUDE

The First Epistle of Peter

1. SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

The First Epistle of Peter is the epistle of separateness. The modern Church is in grave danger of forgetting the distinctiveness of her gospel and the glorious isolation of her position. She is too often content to be merely one factor in civilization, a means of improving the world instead of the instrument in creating a new world.

The first readers of the epistle were subject to a similar danger, though it arose from a somewhat different cause. To-day we are no longer subject to persecution; but the danger is fundamentally the same. The world's friendship may be even more disastrous than the world's hatred. The readers of First Peter were tempted to relinquish what was distinctive in their faith in order to avoid the hostility of their heathen neighbors; we are tempted to do the same thing because the superficial respectability of modern life has put a gloss of polite convention over the profound differences that divide the inner lives of men. We, as well as the first readers of the epistle, need to be told that this world is lost in sin, that the blood of Christ has ransomed an elect race from the city of destruction, that the high privileges of the Christian calling demand spotless purity and unswerving courage.

(1) **The Character of the Persecution.**—The character of the persecution to which the readers of the epistle were subjected cannot be determined with perfect clearness. It is not even certain that the Christian profession in itself was regarded officially as a crime. Apparently charges of positive misconduct were needed to give countenance to the persecutors. I Peter 2 : 12. The Christians needed to be warned that there is no heroism in suffering if the suffering is the just punishment of misdeeds. Chs. 2 : 20; 4 : 15. What particular charges were brought against the Christians it is of course difficult to determine. Perhaps they were sometimes charged with gross crimes such as murder or theft. But a more frequent accusation was probably "hatred of the human race," or the like. The Christians were thought to be busybodies. In

setting the world to rights they seemed to meddle in other people's affairs. In claiming to be citizens of a heavenly kingdom, they seemed indifferent or hostile to earthly relationships. As subjects of the emperor and of his representatives, the Christians were thought to be disloyal; as slaves, they seemed disobedient.

(2) Duties of Earthly Life.—In view of these accusations, Peter urges his readers to avoid all improper employment of their Christian freedom. Christian freedom does not mean license; Christian independence does not mean indifference. There is no reason why a good Christian should be a bad citizen, even of a heathen state, ch. 2 : 13-17, or an unprofitable servant, even of a harsh master, vs. 18-25, or a quarrelsome wife, even of an unconverted husband. Ch. 3 : 1-6. On the contrary, Christians must approve themselves not only in the spiritual realm, but also in the ordinary relationships of this life.

(3) Application to Modern Conditions.—Here again the lesson is important for the present day. Now as always fervent realization of the transcendent glory of Christianity tends sometimes to result in depreciation of ordinary duties. Men of exceptional piety sometimes seem to feel that civilization is unworthy of their attention, even if it is not actually a work of Satan. Of all such vagaries the First Epistle of Peter is the best corrective. Truth is here admirably guarded against the error that lurks at its root. The very epistle that emphasizes the separateness of the Church from the world, that teaches Christian people to look down upon earthly affairs from the vantage ground of heaven, is just the epistle that inculcates sober and diligent conduct in the various relationships of earthly life. In the effort at a higher morality, the simple, humble virtues that even the world appreciates should not be neglected; piety should involve no loss of common sense. Now as always the Christian should be ready to give a reason for the faith that is in him; now as always he should be able to refute the slanders of the world; now as always he should commend his Christianity by his good citizenship. Only so will the example of Christ be fully followed. Jesus was in possession of a transcendent message; but he lived the life of a normal man. The Christian, too, is a man with a divine mission; but like his Master he must exercise his mission in the turmoil of life. He must not be a spoilsport at feasts; his is no desert rôle like John the Baptist's. Christianity has a mission from without; but its mission is fulfilled in loving contact with the world of men.

(4) **The Christian's Defense.**—The Christians who suffered persecution should first of all, according to Peter, defend themselves to the very best of their ability. They should do their best to remove dishonor from the name of Christ. They should show the baselessness of the accusations which are brought against them. Then, if they still suffer, it will be clearly suffering for Christ's sake. Such suffering is glorious. It is a test from which faith emerges strong and sure, ch. 1 : 7; it is true conformity to the example of Christ. Chs. 2 : 21-24; 3 : 18; 4 : 1, 13.

2. THE DATE OF THE PERSECUTIONS

From the persecutions presupposed in First Peter no very certain conclusion can be drawn with regard to the date of the epistle. A late date has sometimes been inferred from such passages as I Peter 4 : 16. Christians were not punished as Christians, it is said, until the beginning of the second century, and especially no such persecution was carried out in the early period throughout the whole empire. Ch. 5 : 9.

This argument breaks down at a number of points. In the first place, as has already been observed, it is by no means clear that First Peter presupposes a persecution of the Christians simply as Christians. Apparently special charges of immorality were still in the foreground, though these charges were often mere pretexts in order to secure the punishment of members of the hated sect.

In the second place, it is not clear exactly when Christians first began to be punished as "Christians" by the Roman authorities. Undoubtedly the legal basis for such persecution was present as soon as Christianity began to be regarded as separate from Judaism. Judaism had a legal status; Christianity, strictly speaking, had none.

3. DEPENDENCE AND ORIGINALITY

First Peter is clearly dependent upon a number of the Pauline Epistles, and apparently also upon the Epistle of James. The dependence, however, is by no means slavish; the epistle possesses marked characteristics of its own. As compared with Paul, for example, First Peter is somewhat simpler both in thought and in expression. No mere imitator, but a genuine personality, speaks to us from the noble simplicity of these pages.

4. COMPARISON WITH THE SPEECHES OF PETER

It is interesting to compare this epistle with the early speeches of Peter that are recorded in The Acts. Part of the difference—

similarities also have been pointed out—no doubt, was due to the difference in the persons addressed. In those early speeches, Peter was preaching to unconverted Jews, and had to content himself with a few outstanding facts. In the epistle, he was addressing Christians, before whom he could lay bare the deep things of the faith. Nevertheless, the passing years had brought a change in Peter himself. Upon him as upon everyone else the mighty influence of Paul made itself felt; and even the revelation which came directly to him was progressive. The essence of the gospel was present from the beginning; but the rich unfolding of it which appears in First Peter was the product of long years spent in an ever-widening service.

5. THE STYLE OF THE EPISTLE

The style of First Peter, though not at all rhetorical, like that of Hebrews, is smooth and graceful. It has often been considered strange that a fisherman of Galilee should have been so proficient in Greek. But probably we have an exaggerated notion of the poverty and roughness of the first disciples of Jesus. Undoubtedly they had not enjoyed a rabbinical education; in the technical Jewish sense they were "unlearned and ignorant men." Acts 4 : 13. Nevertheless, they clearly did not belong at all to the lowest of the population; Peter in particular seems to have been possessed of considerable property. Furthermore, it must be remembered that Greek culture in the first century was making itself felt very extensively in Galilee. No doubt Peter could use Greek even before he left Galilee, and in the course of his later life his linguistic attainments must have been very greatly improved. It is by no means impossible that he wrote First Peter entirely without assistance.

6. SILVANUS

In order, however, to account for the linguistic excellence of this epistle, and in particular for the striking difference between it and Second Peter, a rather attractive hypothesis has been proposed. In I Peter 5 : 12, Peter says: "By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him, I have written unto you briefly." Undoubtedly these words may designate Silvanus merely as the messenger who carried the letter to its destination. Compare Acts 15 : 23. It is also possible, however, that Peter meant to say that Silvanus had written the letter under his direction. In that case the thought would be due altogether to Peter; but the form, to some extent

at least, would be the work of Silvanus. The hypothesis, of course, is only plausible, not necessary. There are other ways of accounting for the peculiarities of the epistle.

In all probability, the Silvanus of First Peter is the same as the Silvanus of the Pauline Epistles and the Silas of The Acts. If so, his association with Peter is altogether natural; he was originally a member of the Jerusalem church. If, in accordance with the hypothesis which has just been mentioned, Silvanus was really concerned in the composition of the epistle, the choice of such a man for the task was, as has been pointed out by the chief advocate of the hypothesis, exceedingly wise. Silvanus, who had been a companion of Paul and his associate in founding many of the churches of Asia Minor, would be just the man who could find the right tone in writing to the churches to which the epistle is addressed.

7. MARK

The appearance of Mark in I Peter 5 : 13 confirms the strong tradition which makes Mark a disciple of Peter and associates him with Peter in the production of the Second Gospel. The only two individuals whom Peter mentions in his First Epistle were both natives of Jerusalem, and both, during part of their lives, companions of Paul. The unity of the apostolic Church was preserved not only by a unity of spirit, but also by the changing associations of Christian workers.

8. FORTITUDE IN THE MODERN CHURCH

The First Epistle of Peter has a varied message to the Church of to-day. Even in its exhortations to bravery and steadfastness it is very much needed. We are not subject to persecution by the state, but still there are a thousand circumstances of life in which we need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, casting all our anxiety upon him, because he careth for us. Ch. 5 : 6, 7.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 267, 275-282. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Warfield (supplemented), article on "Peter." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 130-136. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. iii, pp. 385-436: Mason, "The First Epistle of St. Peter." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii, pp. 134-194. The last-named work is intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXXV

THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ERROR AND IMMORALITY

The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude

1. AUTHENTICITY

The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude are among the least known and most seriously questioned parts of the New Testament. Even in ancient times their authenticity was disputed; in the third and fourth centuries there were some at least who desired to exclude them from the New Testament. These ancient doubts have been continued in the modern Church. By very many scholars of the present day, Second Peter and Jude are assigned to second-century writers who falsely assumed the names of an apostle and of a brother of the Lord.

Against such views as these, a number of arguments might be employed. But the strongest argument of all is provided by the self-witness of the epistles themselves. Second Peter, in particular, not only lays claim to apostolic authorship in the address, but is written throughout in the name of an apostle. Either it was really written by an apostle or else it was a deliberate fraud. The latter alternative is excluded by the epistle itself. Second Peter does not look at all like a pseudonymous work, but is a weighty bit of writing, full of the sincerest moral earnestness. Both Second Peter and Jude ring true, with the genuine apostolic note.

2. SECOND PETER AND FIRST PETER

Resemblances have often been pointed out among all three divisions of the New Testament material attributed to Peter. Second Peter has been shown to resemble not only First Peter, but also the speeches of Peter as they are reported in The Acts. Such similarities of course point to a common authorship. It cannot be denied, however, that differences stand side by side with the similarities. In the comparison of the epistles with the speeches, such differences are of course not surprising. The total difference

of subject and the wide interval of time provide an amply sufficient explanation. But how is it with the difference between Second Peter and First Peter?

(1) **Difference of Purpose and Subject.**—In the first place, the difference may be partly explained by the difference of purpose and subject. First Peter is a presentation of the glories of the faith in order to encourage Christians under trial and make them feel their separateness from the world; Second Peter is a solemn warning against dangerous perverters of the life of the Church.

(2) **Difference of Time.**—In the second place, a considerable interval of time may separate the two epistles. Here we find ourselves on uncertain ground. On the whole it is perhaps better to put the epistles near together at the close of Peter's life.

(3) **Work of Silvanus.**—In the third place, recourse may be had to the hypothesis, mentioned in the last lesson, which attributes a considerable share in the composition of First Peter to Silvanus.

(4) **Conclusion.**—Finally, there may be still further possibilities of explanation which cannot now be detected. The differences of style and of thought between the two epistles of Peter are far from sufficient to show diversity of authorship, and it must be remembered that similarities are to be balanced against the differences.

3. VALUE OF SECOND PETER AND JUDE

Although Second Peter and Jude are not so familiar as most of the New Testament, yet even these two brief epistles have entered deep into the mind and heart of the Church.

(1) **Expressive Phrases.**—Even the inimitably expressive phrases and sentences that have been derived from the epistles have produced no small enrichment of Christian life. The "exceeding great and precious promises," and the "partakers of the divine nature" of II Peter 1 : 4, the chain of virtues in vs. 5-7, the "make your calling and election sure" of v. 10, the "sure word of prophecy" of v. 19, the description of inspired prophecy in vs. 20, 21—"no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—the "vexed his righteous soul" of ch. 2 : 8, the "railing accusation" of v. 11; Jude 9, the "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance" of II Peter 3 : 1, the "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" of v. 9, the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints" of Jude 3, the magnificent dox-

ology of vs. 24, 25—a review of these passages as they appear in the King James Version will bring some realization of the profound influence which even the most obscure books of the New Testament have exerted both upon the English language and upon the character of Christian men.

The influence of Second Peter and Jude, however, is not merely the influence of isolated phrases. The epistles as a whole have a distinctive message for the Church. That message is twofold. It embraces in the first place an emphasis upon authority, and in the second place an insistence upon holiness.

(2) The Emphasis Upon Authority.—The adversaries who are combated in Second Peter and Jude were impatient of restraint. Apparently they distinguished themselves, as possessing the Spirit, from the ordinary Christians, as being merely “natural.” Jude 5, 19; II Peter 2 : 12. They appealed to their own deeper insight, instead of listening to what apostles and prophets had to say. In reply, Peter and Jude insisted upon the authority of the Old Testament prophets, and upon the authority of the apostles, which was ultimately the authority of Christ. See especially II Peter 3 : 2.

A similar insistence upon authority is greatly needed to-day. Again men are inclined to appeal to an inward light as justifying freedom from ancient restraints; the Christian consciousness is being exalted above the Bible. At such a time, renewed attention to Second Peter and Jude would be salutary. False notions are rife to-day with regard to apostolic authority. They can be corrected by our epistles. Peter as well as Paul exerts his authority not in an official or coldly ecclesiastical way, but with an inimitable brotherliness. The authority of the apostles is the authority of good news. Subjection to such authority is perfect freedom.

The authority which Peter and Jude urge upon their readers is a double authority—in the first place the authority of the Old Testament, and in the second place the authority of Christ exerted through the apostles. For us, however, the two become one. The apostles, like the Old Testament prophets, speak to us only through the Bible. We need to learn the lesson. A return to the Bible is the deepest need of the modern Church. It would mean a return to God.

(3) Insistence Upon Holiness.—The second characteristic of Second Peter and Jude is the insistence upon holiness. Religion is by no means always connected with goodness. In the Greco-Roman world, the two were often entirely separate. Many pagan

cults contained no ethical element whatever. The danger was therefore very great that Christianity might be treated in the same way. The early Christians needed to be admonished ever and again that their God was a God of righteousness, that no unclean thing could stand in his presence.

Insistence upon holiness is in itself no peculiarity of Second Peter and Jude. It runs all through the New Testament. But in these epistles it is directed more definitely perhaps than anywhere else against the opposite error. The opponents of Peter and Jude did not merely drift into immorality; they defended it on theoretical grounds. They were making a deliberate effort to reduce Christianity to the level of a non-ethical religion. Such theoretical defense of immorality appears, indeed, in a number of places in the apostolic Church. A certain party in Corinth, for example, made a wrong use of Christian freedom. But what is more or less incidental in First Corinthians forms the main subject of Second Peter and Jude. Christianity is here insisting upon its thoroughly ethical character.

At first sight the message might seem obsolete to-day. We always associate religion with morality; we can hardly understand how the two ever could have been separated. It is to be feared, however, that the danger is not altogether past. In our thoughts we preserve the ethical character of Christianity. But how is it with our lives? How is it with our religious observances? Are we not constantly in danger of making religion a mere cult, a mere emotional excitement, a mere means of gaining earthly or heavenly advantages, a mere effort to bribe God by our worship? The danger is always with us. We need always to remind ourselves that Christian faith must work itself out in holy living.

Peter in his second epistle has provided us with one important means to that end. It is the thought of Christ's coming. There can be no laxness in moral effort if we remember the judgment seat of Christ.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 267-270, 282-285. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Warfield (supplemented), article on "Jude." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 137-143. Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. iii, pp. 437-463, 505-519; Plummer, "The Second Epistle of St. Peter" and "The Epistle of St. Jude." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii, pp. 194-293. The last-named work is intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXXVI

THE LIFE OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD

The Epistles of John

1. AUTHORSHIP OF THE FIRST EPISTLE

The First Epistle of John does not contain the name of its author. According to tradition, however, it was written by the apostle John, and tradition is here supported by the characteristics of the epistle itself. The author of the epistle was evidently the same as the author of the Fourth Gospel. The marked similarity in style can be explained in no other way. Even the careless reader observes that the style of the Fourth Gospel is very peculiar. Short sentences are joined to one another with the utmost simplicity; the vocabulary is limited, but contains expressions of extraordinary richness; the total effect is singularly powerful. These same characteristics, though they are so peculiar, appear also in the epistle. There is the same simplicity of sentence structure, the same use of such terms as "life" and "light" and "love," the same indescribable spirit and tone. Yet the epistle is no slavish imitation of the Gospel—differences stand side by side with the similarities. These two works are evidently related, not as model and copy, but as living productions of the same remarkable personality.

2. TESTIMONY OF AN EYEWITNESS

As in the Gospel, so also in the epistle the author presents himself clearly as an eyewitness of the life of Jesus, I John 1 : 1-3; 4 : 14; as in the Gospel he lays stress upon simple testimony. Even those things which have just been noticed as characteristic of his style are connected ultimately with the teaching of Jesus. In both Gospel and epistle, the beloved disciple has reproduced what he heard in Galilee and in Judea, though in both he has made the memory a living, spiritual fact.

3. DESTINATION AND DATE

The First Epistle of John is perhaps scarcely to be called an epistle at all. Practically all the characteristics of a letter are missing.

There is no address; there is no greeting at the close; there are no personal details. The readers are indeed referred to in the second person; but preachers as well as letter-writers say, "you." First John is a sort of general address written probably to some extended group of churches.

These churches are probably to be sought in Asia Minor. Throughout the epistle the readers are addressed in a fatherly tone. See, for example, ch. 2 : 1. Evidently the writer was well known as a sort of patriarch throughout an extended region. Such conditions prevailed in Asia Minor after the apostle John had begun to reside at Ephesus. Trustworthy tradition as well as the New Testament informs us of a period in the apostle's life when he had outlived all or most of the other apostles and was revered as the head of the Asian church. At some time within this period—probably nearer the end than the beginning—the First Epistle of John was written.

4. THE FALSE TEACHERS

The form of error against which the epistle is directed becomes clearest, perhaps in ch. 4 : 2, 3. The false teachers had denied that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh. This may be interpreted in several different ways.

(1) **Docetism.**—In the first place, John may mean that the opponents simply denied the reality of the earthly life of Jesus. Such a form of error is by no means unknown in the history of the Church. It is called "Docetism." According to Docetism the Son of God did not really live a human life—with human sufferings and a human death—but only appeared to do so.

(2) **Cerinthus.**—In the second place, the meaning of the passage may be that the opponents denied the unity of the person of Jesus Christ. Compare ch. 2 : 22. Some persons in the early Church supposed that there were two separate persons in the figure that is described in the Gospels. A heavenly being, the Christ, it was thought, united himself with the man Jesus at the time when the dove descended after the baptism. Matt. 3 : 16, 17. Such was the view of Cerinthus, who is declared by tradition to have been an opponent of the apostle John at Ephesus. It has been suggested, therefore, that it was actually Cerinthus, with his disciples, who is combated in the First Epistle of John.

(3) **Denial of the Incarnation.**—Both Cerinthus and the Docetists denied the reality of the incarnation—both denied that the Son of

God actually assumed a human nature and lived a complete human life. According to Cerinthus and others like him, the Christ stood only in somewhat loose relation to the man Jesus. He was united with him only late in life, he left him before the crucifixion. On this view, it was not the Christ who lay in the manger at Bethlehem, it was not the Christ who suffered on the cross. Cerinthus, like the Docetists, kept the Son of God out of any close relation to the world and to us.

(4) **John's Reply.**—Against some such view as one of these, John was concerned to establish the reality of the incarnation—the truth that “the Word became flesh.” In the Gospel, that truth underlies the whole of the narrative; in the First Epistle it is directly defended against the opposing error. It is defended first of all by an appeal to what the writer had seen and heard. “We knew Jesus in Palestine,” says John in effect, “and we can testify that Jesus himself was none other than the Christ, the Son of God.” I John, 1 : 1-4.

(5) **John, the Opponents, and Cerinthus.**—The false teachers who are combated in the epistle had apparently withdrawn from the Church and formed a separate sect. I John 2 : 19. Their separateness of mind and heart and life had found expression in open schism. Whether they are to be identified with disciples of Cerinthus is at least doubtful. False speculation about the person of Christ no doubt assumed many forms in the closing years of the first century.

5. CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THE THIRD EPISTLE

In III John 9, the apostle tells Gaius that he had written “somewhat unto the church.” This letter to the church may have been written at some previous time. It is also possible, however, that it was written together with the letter to Gaius. The Greek word for “I wrote” admits of that interpretation. If that interpretation be correct, then John perhaps means to say that although he has written a letter to the church he could not in that letter urge the hospitable reception of the missionaries. For the present, the influence of Diotrephes was too strong. The letter to the church had to be concerned with other matters.

If this view of the letter mentioned in III John 9 be adopted, then the Second Epistle of John corresponds to the description. The Second Epistle is addressed to a church, and it is written with some reserve. If “certain” of the children of “the elect lady” were

walking in truth, II John 4, the inference is that others were conducting themselves very differently. Evidently there was danger of false teaching among the readers. Hospitality to men like Demetrius and his companions could hardly be expected of such a church. If hospitality should be practiced, it was only too likely to be hospitality to men of a very different stamp. Vs. 10, 11.

Possibly, therefore, the Second Epistle of John is actually the letter that is referred to in III John 9, a letter to the church of which Gaius was a member. This hypothesis is supported by the striking formal similarity of the two letters. They are of almost exactly the same length; the openings and especially the conclusions, II John 12, 13; III John 13, 14, are couched in almost exactly the same terms. They look very much like twin epistles, written on two sheets of papyrus of the same size.

Of course the hypothesis is by no means certain. Perhaps the letter referred to in III John 9 was a previous letter bespeaking hospitality, which had failed of its effect. When the apostle saw, from the answer or lack of answer to the previous letter, that the church was ill disposed, he had recourse to an individual member of it. Even in this case, however, it remains probable that our two epistles were written at about the same time.

6. VALUE OF THE SHORTER EPISTLES

These last two epistles of John do not deserve the neglect which they have sometimes suffered. Despite their brevity—they are the shortest books of the New Testament—they are instructive in a number of ways.

(1) **Historical.**—It is exceedingly interesting, for example, to compare them with the private letters of the same period which have recently been discovered in Egypt—see Lesson III, Teacher's Manual, in this course. In form, the opening of the Third Epistle is very much in the manner of the papyrus letters. Compare, for example, with III John 1-4 the following opening of a letter of the second century after Christ: "Apion to Epimachus his father and lord heartiest greetings. First of all I pray that you are in health and continually prosper and fare well with my sister and daughter and my brother. I thank the lord Serapis. . . ." (The translation is that of Professor Milligan. See p. 20 of Teacher's Manual, Part I, of this course.) The differences, however, are even more instructive than the resemblances. What was said in Lesson I about the epistles of Paul applies in full measure to the epistles

of John. Even the epistolary forms are here modified so as to be the vehicle of a new message and a new spirit.

Furthermore, the two epistles, especially Third John, cast a flood of light upon the internal development of the Church. In one respect indeed the historical significance of the Third Epistle has sometimes been exaggerated. It is not true that we have here the emergence of the monarchical episcopate—that is, the preëminence of one presbyter, called a “bishop,” over his brother presbyters. Diotrophes does not appear clearly as a bishop. At about A. D. 110 in the epistles of Ignatius the episcopate is very prominent; but Third John belongs to an earlier period.

Nevertheless, this concrete picture of the internal affairs of a late first-century church is absolutely unique. The period is very obscure; these few brief lines illumine it more than pages of narrative. The traveling preachers of Third John are particularly interesting. Similar missionaries appear also in the “Didache,” a sort of church manual which may probably be dated in the early part of the second century. In that later period, however, care had to be taken lest the hospitality of the churches should be abused. “But let every apostle,” says the writer—the word “apostle” is used in a very broad sense to designate wandering preachers—“who comes to you be received as the Lord. He shall remain, however, no more than one day, or if necessary two. If he remains three days he is a false prophet.” Such precautions, we may be sure, were not needed in the case of Demetrius and his companions.

(2) **Practical.**—Despite its individual address and private character, the Third Epistle of John is not an ordinary private letter. Like all the books of the New Testament, it has a message for the entire Church. The devout reader rises from the perusal of it with a more steadfast devotion to the truth and a warmer glow of Christian love.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, “Christianity in the Apostolic Age,” pp. 272-274, 294-308.” Davis, “Dictionary of the Bible”: Purves (supplemented), article on “John, Epistles of.” M'Clymont, “The New Testament and Its Writers,” pp. 144-149. Ellicott, “A New Testament Commentary for English Readers,” vol. iii, pp. 467-502: Sinclair, “The Epistles of St. John.” Westcott, “The Epistles of St. John.” Zahn, “Introduction to the New Testament,” vol. iii, pp. 355-384. The two last-named works are intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXXVII

THE MESSAGES OF THE LIVING CHRIST

The Book of Revelation (First Lesson)

1. THE APOCALYPSE AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

In the Student's Text Book it was maintained that the Apocalypse was written by John the son of Zebedee. The strongest objection to this view is to be found in the striking difference of language and style which exists between the Apocalypse on the one side and the Gospel and Epistles of John on the other. The style of the Apocalypse is extraordinarily rough; in it the most elementary laws of Greek grammar are sometimes disregarded. Such peculiarities appear scarcely at all in the Gospel; the language of the Gospel, though simple, is perfectly grammatical.

This observation has led many scholars to decide that the Gospel and the Apocalypse never could have been written by the same person; the argument, indeed, was advanced as early as the third century by Dionysius of Alexandria. Those who thus deny the unity of authorship do not all reject either one book or the other as authoritative; some suppose that the John whose name appears in the Apocalypse, though not the same as John the son of Zebedee, was a genuine prophet.

The evidence, however, for attributing all the Johannine books to the son of Zebedee is exceedingly strong. If the Apocalypse is to be attributed to some one else, tradition is very seriously at fault, and it is also very difficult to see how another John could have introduced himself to the churches of Asia Minor in the way that the author does at the beginning and end of the book without distinguishing himself from the greater man of the same name who was residing at Ephesus at the very same time. The Apocalypse must therefore be assigned to the son of Zebedee unless there is absolutely unimpeachable evidence to the contrary.

Such evidence is not really forthcoming. The difference of style between the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel is capable of explanation.

(1) **Possible Difference of Date.**—In the first place, it might be

explained by a wide difference of date. If the Apocalypse was written at about A. D. 68, then an interval of some twenty-five years or more separates it from the Gospel. Such an interval would allow plenty of time for the style of the author to change. When the Galilean fisherman first left his home in Palestine, his command of the Greek language might conceivably be slight; whereas after a long residence in Asia Minor, as leader of a group of Greek-speaking churches, the roughness of his style would be removed. Hence the un-Greek, strongly Hebraistic usages of the Apocalypse would in the Gospel naturally give place to a correct, though simple style.

This hypothesis, however, is beset with serious difficulties. It is difficult to suppose that the Apocalypse was written before the closing decade of the first century. Some passages, it is true, have been strongly urged in favor of the early date. Particularly the reference to the seven kings in Rev. 17 : 10 has been thought by many excellent scholars to be decisive. The reference to the seven hills in the preceding verse seems to show that the "beast" represents Rome; the seven kings therefore naturally represent Roman emperors. The fifth emperor, beginning with Augustus, was Nero. If at the time when the book was written five were fallen, one was and the other was not yet come, v. 10, the book must apparently have been written under Nero's successor. His successor, Galba, reigned only a few months: the book was therefore written in A. D. 68 or 69. Or if the very brief reigns of Galba, Otho and Vitellius be not counted, then the book was written between A. D. 69 and 79, during the reign of Vespasian.

The passage remains, however, so obscure that it is very doubtful whether any one interpretation of it should be allowed to overbalance the evidence for the later date. Such evidence is abundant. Most weighty of all, perhaps, is the strong tradition which places the Apocalypse in the closing years of Domitian. It is hard to believe that that tradition is seriously at fault. The condition of the Church, moreover, as it is presupposed in the book, is more naturally to be sought at A. D. 95 than twenty-five years earlier. The persecution, for example, which the writer describes, seems far more like the persecution under Domitian than it is like the outbreak which was occasioned by the cruelty of Nero.

(2) **The Difference of Subject.**—If the later date be accepted, then the Gospel and the Apocalypse were written in the same period of the apostle's life, and the difference of style cannot be

explained by a difference of date. Another explanation, however, is sufficient. The difference between the two books may be explained by the total difference of subject. The Gospel is a narrative of Jesus' life, written with abundant opportunity for reflection; the Apocalypse is a record of wonderful visions, where stylistic nicety would have marred the immediateness of the revelation. The very roughness of the Apocalypse is valuable as expressing the character of the book. In the Gospel, John brought to bear all his power of reflection and of expression; in the Apocalypse, he wrote in haste under the overpowering influence of a transcendent experience.

The grammatical irregularities of the Apocalypse, moreover, often create the impression that they are intentional. They belonged, apparently, to an apocalyptic style which to a certain extent had already been formed; they were felt to be suited to the peculiar character of the work.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that side by side with the differences of style there are some remarkable similarities. The underlying unity of thought and expression points to unity of authorship.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE APOCALYPSE

(1) **A Record of Visions.**—In what has just been said, the dominant peculiarity of the Apocalypse has already been indicated. The Apocalypse is no careful literary composition, pieced together from previous works of a similar character. On the contrary, it is a record of genuine revelations. Before writing, the seer was "in the Spirit."

(2) **Influence of the Old Testament.**—Nevertheless, although the Apocalypse is a record of visions, and was written consciously under the impulsion of the Spirit, it is by no means uninfluenced by previous works. To a degree that is perhaps not paralleled by any other New Testament book, the Apocalypse is suffused with the language and with the imagery of the Old Testament. Though there is not a single formal quotation, the Old Testament Scriptures have influenced almost every sentence of the book. Particularly the books of Ezekiel and Daniel, which, like the Apocalypse, are composed largely of the records of visions, have supplied much of the imagery of the New Testament work.

This wide-spread influence of the Old Testament upon the Apocalypse is by no means surprising. The Apocalypse is based

upon direct revelation, but direct revelation is not necessarily out of relation to everything else. On the contrary, it uses the language which its recipients can understand; and part of the language of the apostle John was the phraseology and imagery of the Old Testament.

It has already been hinted that works very similar in form to the Apocalypse are to be found in the Old Testament. This apocalyptic form was continued in a number of Jewish works written after the conclusion of the Old Testament canon. Superficially these works bear considerable resemblance to the New Testament Apocalypse; but closer examination reveals profound differences. The Jewish apocalypses appeared under assumed names—the most important of them under the name of Enoch—while John is so firmly convinced of having received genuine revelation that he requires no such spurious authority for his work. The similarity between our Apocalypse and its extra-canonical Jewish predecessors and contemporaries is a similarity at most of form; in spirit and content the difference is incalculable. Unlike these other works, the Apocalypse is a genuine prophecy.

3. THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The so-called letters to the seven churches were never intended to be circulated separately. From the beginning the letters formed part of the Apocalypse, which was addressed to all seven of the churches. From the beginning, therefore, each of the letters was intended to be read not only by the church whose name it bears, but also by all the others. The seven churches, moreover, are representative of the Church at large.

Nevertheless, despite the universal purpose of the letters, they are very concrete in the information that they provide about the churches in Asia Minor. Like the Second and Third Epistles of John they illumine an exceedingly obscure period in the history of Christianity.

(1) **The "Angels" of the Churches.**—Some details in the letters, it is true, are to us obscure. What, for example, is meant by the "angels" of the churches to which the several letters are addressed? The Greek word translated "angel" may also mean simply "messenger." Conceivably, it might designate merely a congregational officer. Many have supposed that it designates a bishop. In the epistles of Ignatius, which were written not very many years after the Apocalypse, the term "bishop" is applied to an officer who had

supreme authority over a congregation including the presbyters. The appearance of these "angels" or "messengers" in the Apocalypse has been urged as proof that John as well as Ignatius recognized the institution of the episcopacy.

Surely, however, the matter is more than doubtful. The Greek word used, whether it be translated "angel" or "messenger," is a very strange designation of a bishop. Moreover, in the rest of the Johannine literature there is no recognition of the episcopacy. In the Third Epistle of John, for example, even if Diotrophes had set himself up as a bishop—which is itself exceedingly doubtful—his claim is certainly not accepted by the apostle.

On the whole, it seems better to regard the "angels" to which the seven letters of the Apocalypse are addressed merely as ideal representatives of the churches—representatives conceived of perhaps as guardian angels. Compare Matt. 18 : 10.

(2) **The Nicolaitans.**—Another puzzling question concerns the "Nicolaitans" who appear in several of the letters. The name itself is obscure. By tradition it is connected with that Nicolaüs of Antioch who was one of the seven men appointed in the early days of the Jerusalem church to attend to the administration of charity. Acts 6 : 5. The tradition may possibly be correct. If it is correct, then Nicolaüs, in his later life, had not justified the confidence originally reposed in him.

At the first mention of the Nicolaitans, in the letter to Ephesus, Rev. 2 : 6, nothing whatever is said about their tenets. Their error, however, was not merely theoretical, but practical, for it was their "works" that the Lord is represented as hating. In the letter to Pergamum, the Nicolaitans are probably meant in v. 14. Like Balaam, they enticed the people of God to idolatry and impurity. The form which their idolatry took was the eating of meats offered to idols. The question of meats offered to idols was no simple matter. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul had permitted the eating of such meats under certain circumstances, but had sternly forbidden it wherever it involved real or supposed participation in idolatrous worship. The form in which it was favored by the Nicolaitans evidently fell under the latter category. In a time of persecution, the temptation to guilty compromise with heathenism must have been insidious; and also the low morality of the Asian cities threatened ever and again to drag Christian people back into the impure life of the world.

In the letter to Thyatira, also, "the woman Jezebel" is apparently

to be connected with the same sect, for the practical faults in Thyatira and in Pergamum were identical. Jezebel, the Phœnician wife of Ahab, was, like Balaam, a striking Old Testament example of one who led Israel into sin. It is significant that the woman Jezebel in Thyatira called herself a prophetess. Rev. 2 : 20. This circumstance seems to indicate that the Nicolaitans had excused their moral laxness by an appeal to special revelations. The impression is confirmed by v. 24. Apparently the Nicolaitans had boasted of their knowledge of the "deep things," and had despised the simple Christians who contented themselves with a holy life. At any rate, whatever particular justification the Nicolaitans advanced for their immoral life, they could not deceive the all-searching eye of Christ. Their "deep things" were deep things, not of God, but of Satan!

Who is meant by "the woman Jezebel"? Some interpreters, who suppose that the "angel" of the church was the bishop, regard Jezebel as a designation of the bishop's wife. This whole interpretation is, however, beset with serious difficulty. Perhaps "the woman Jezebel" does not refer to an individual at all, but is simply a figurative designation of the Nicolaitan sect. The description of the coming retribution in vs. 21-23 seems to be highly figurative.

It will be observed that the sin of the churches at Pergamum and Thyatira was not limited to those who actually accepted the Nicolaitan teaching. Even to endure the presence of the guilty sect was the object of the Lord's rebuke. Toward the works of the Nicolaitans only hatred was in place. Rev. 2 : 6. That is a solemn lesson for modern indifferentism. Tolerance is good; but there are times when it is a deadly sin.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Purves, "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," pp. 274, 308-312. Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": Purves (supplemented), article on "Revelation." M'Clymont, "The New Testament and Its Writers," pp. 150-155. Milligan, "Lectures on the Apocalypse" and "Discussions on the Apocalypse." Ellicott, "A New Testament Commentary for English Readers," vol. iii, pp. 523-641: Carpenter, "The Revelation of St. John." Ramsay, "The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia." Plumptre, "A Popular Exposition of the Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia." Swete, "The Apocalypse of St. John." Zahn, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. iii, pp. 384-449. The two last-named works are intended primarily for those who have some knowledge of Greek, but can also be used by others.

LESSON XXXVIII

A VISION OF THE FINAL TRIUMPH

The Book of Revelation (Second Lesson)

1. THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE APOCALYPSE

The interpretations of the Apocalypse may be divided into four classes.

(1) **Unfulfilled Prophecies.**—According to one method of interpretation, the prophecies of the book are all unfulfilled. In the last days there will be a mighty revival of evil like that which is symbolized by the dragon and the beast and the false prophet, there will be plagues and woes like those which are described in connection with the seals and the trumpets and the bowls, and there will be a triumph of God's people and an eternal blessedness of the new Jerusalem. This interpretation would place the Apocalypse out of analogy with the other prophecies of the Bible. Prophecy is seldom out of all connection with the immediate present. Even where the prophetic vision reaches to the very end of time, the fulfillment or the preparation for the fulfillment is usually represented as beginning at once. In the Apocalypse, as in other prophecy, there is evident reference to the circumstances of the original readers.

(2) **Contemporary Events.**—A second method of interpretation goes to an opposite extreme. By this method the prophecies of the book are thought to be concerned merely with events of the writer's own age. "The beast" is the Roman Empire; "Babylon" is the city of Rome; the author expected the destruction of both to take place within a few years' time. In its thoroughgoing form this interpretation also is to be rejected. It degrades the Apocalypse to the level of a mistaken prediction, and reduces the self-evidencing glories of the book to trivialities. Evidently the outlook of the seer was far broader and far more spiritual than it is represented by the advocates of this interpretation.

(3) **The Whole History of the Church.**—By a third method of interpretation, the first two methods are combined. The book is written distinctly in view of conditions of the first century, its predictions concern partly the immediate future; but there is also

an outlook upon remoter ages. By this interpretation the prophecies are held to provide an epitome of the whole of history from the first coming of Christ to his second coming.

(4) Mixture of Discordant Traditions.—A fourth method of interpretation, which has become influential in very recent years, abandons all hope of discovering a unitary message in the book, and proceeds to divide it into its component parts. The analysis was carried on first by literary criticism. An older work of the time of Nero was supposed to have been revised at a later period; or non-Christian Jewish works were supposed to have been incorporated in the present work by a Christian compiler. This sort of literary criticism has in the last few years given place sometimes to a subtler method. Investigation is now directed to the materials of which the book is composed, whether those materials were embodied in previous literary works or only in previous traditions. The ultimate source of much of the material is found in Babylonia or other eastern countries; this material is thought to be not always in accord with the context into which in our Apocalypse it has been introduced.

This method must emphatically be rejected. It contains, indeed, an element of truth. Undoubtedly the Apocalypse makes use of already-existing materials. But these materials are, for the most part at least, of genuinely Hebrew origin; and they have been thoroughly assimilated for the purposes of the present prophecy. The Apocalypse is not a compilation full of contradictions, but a unitary work, with one great message for the Church.

(5) Wrong Use of the Third Method.—Of these four methods of interpretation the third has been adopted in the Student's Text Book. The prophecies of the Apocalypse concern the entire history of the Church. Undoubtedly this interpretation is subject to abuse. It has been employed in the interests of special controversy, as when the Protestants saw in the scarlet woman a representation of papal Rome.

(6) Principles, Not Individual Facts.—All such abuses may be avoided, however, if the interpreter will remember that the book deals with great principles, rather than with individual facts. The beast is neither the Roman Catholic Church, nor the religion of Mohammed, nor the Turkish Empire. Undoubtedly it expressed itself in some phases of each of those institutions. But no one of them can be identified with it outright. The beast of the Apocalypse is nothing less than the blatant, godless power of worldly empire, however that power may be manifested. At the time of John it

was manifested especially in the empire of Rome. Even Rome, however, cannot be identified with the beast entirely without qualification. Even Rome had its beneficent side. John as well as Paul, even in the fire of persecution, might have expressed the thought of Rom. 13 : 1-7. Peter also wrote in the midst of persecution; yet Peter could say, "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well." I Peter 2 : 13, 14.

The other side of Rome's power, it is true, was prominent at the close of the first century. More systematically than before, Rome had begun to persecute the Church of God. By the demand of emperor-worship she had tried to put her stamp upon the followers of Jesus. Through her priesthood she had endeavored to lead men astray. In these things she was a manifestation of the beast. As such she was execrated and resisted to the death by every loyal Christian. There could be no hope of compromise. Hope lay rather in the power of God. God would give the just reward; God would give the final victory. Such was the message of the Apocalypse.

The message is of perennial value. The beast is not yet dead. His methods are different, but still he oppresses the Church. Wherever his power is felt—whether in ruthless oppression or impious warfare or degrading superstition—there the prophecy of John is a comfort and an inspiration to the people of God.

Undoubtedly this method of interpretation, which detects in the book principles rather than individual facts, involves a reduction in the amount of direct information which the Apocalypse may be thought to give. A detailed account, whether of the progress of the Church, or of the final catastrophe, is by this interpretation no longer found in the book.

2. THE THOUSAND YEARS

At one point at least, this conclusion has been regarded by many devout Christians as involving a serious loss. That point is concerned with the thousand years of Rev. 20 : 1-8. According to the interpretation that has just been advocated, the thousand years are merely a symbol for the time of the present Christian dispensation, and the rule which the saints are represented as bearing with Christ probably refers to the condition of the blessed dead up to the final resurrection. To many devout readers of the Bible this interpreta-

tion seems to be an impoverishment of the prophet's words. In reality, they maintain, the passage predicts a return of Jesus to earth before the final judgment, and a long period of his blessed sway.

Undoubtedly this more literal interpretation of the millennium seems at first sight to be required by certain phrases of the passage. But the highly figurative character of apocalyptic language must always be borne in mind. Numbers, in the Apocalypse, are usually symbolic; so it may be with the thousand years. During the present dispensation Satan is in one sense bound, and in another sense he is free. In principle he has been conquered; but in the sphere of worldly power he continues to work his wrathful will.

3. THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

One thing at least is clear. No interpretation of the Apocalypse is correct if it fails to do justice to the hope of Christ's return. If the figurative interpretation weakens our expectation of that dread meeting with the Lord, then it is untrue to the mind of the Spirit. There are difficulties connected with the idea of a literal millennium; but such difficulties are inconsiderable in comparison with those that result from any rationalizing, any explaining away, of the universal Christian hope. The Apocalypse, according to any right interpretation, is a vision of final triumph.

That triumph is a triumph of Christ. Back of all the lurid imagery of the book, back of the battles and the woes, and back of the glories of God's people, stands the figure of the Saviour. With him the book began, and with him, too, it ends. He is the same who lived the life of mercy and of glory on earth, the same who died for our sins on the cross. To the Lamb all power is given—all power in heaven and on earth. By him all enemies are conquered; by him the whole earth will be judged. To those who bear the mark of the beast he is an Avenger; to his Church he is an ever-living Saviour.

IN THE LIBRARY.—The reading suggested under Lesson XXXVII is intended for both of the lessons on the Apocalypse.

LESSON XXXIX

REVIEW

This review lesson is fully as important as any other lesson of the first three quarters. Without reviewing, the study of history is unproductive; only a review can make of the facts a permanent possession. The story of the apostolic age, as it is narrated in the work of Luke, is really very simple; it becomes confusing only when it is imperfectly mastered. A little time spent in turning over the pages of the Lucan narrative, or even of the Student's Text Book, will accomplish wonders.

1. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

The New Testament account of the apostolic age is indeed only fragmentary. Many questions must be left unanswered. Of the original twelve apostles only Peter and the sons of Zebedee and Judas Iscariot receive in The Acts anything more than a bare mention; and even the most prominent of these disappears after the fifteenth chapter. What did Paul do in Arabia and in Tarsus? What was the origin of the great church at Alexandria? Who founded the church at Rome? These questions, and many like them, must forever remain unanswered.

If, moreover, even the period covered by The Acts is obscure, far deeper is the darkness after the guiding hand of Luke has been withdrawn. For the death of the apostle Paul, there is only a meager tradition; the latter years of Peter are even more obscure. For the important period between the release of Paul after his first Roman imprisonment and the death of the apostle John at about the end of the first century, anything like a connected narrative is quite impossible.

2. THE NERONIAN PERSECUTION

A few facts, however, may still be established. The Roman historian Tacitus tells of a persecution of the Christians at Rome at the time of the burning of the city in A. D. 64. The emperor Nero, suspected of starting the fire, sought to remove suspicion from himself by accusing the Christians. The latter had already become

unpopular because of their peculiar ways, and were thought to be guilty of abominable crimes; but the cruelty of Nero almost exceeded the wishes of the populace. The Christians were put to death under horrible tortures. Many were burned, and their burning bodies served as torches to illumine the emperor's gardens.

The beheading of Paul has often been brought into connection with this persecution, but more probably it occurred a few years later. Paul had been released from his first imprisonment, and his second imprisonment, at the time of the Neronian outbreak, had not yet begun.

The extent of the Neronian persecution cannot be determined with certainty. Probably, however, although there was no systematic persecution throughout the empire, the provinces would not be altogether unaffected by what was happening at Rome. The causes of popular and official disfavor were always present; it required only a slight occasion to bring them actively into play.

3. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Even more important than the Roman persecution of A. D. 64 was the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. At the outbreak of the war which culminated in that catastrophe, the Jerusalem Christians took refuge in Pella, east of the Jordan; Jerusalem ceased to be the center of the Christian Church. After the war, the Jerusalem church never regained its old position of leadership; and specifically Jewish Christianity, suffering by the destruction of the national Jewish life, ceased to be influential in Christian history.

4. THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL

From the years between the destruction of Jerusalem and the closing years of the century, scarcely any definite incidents can be enumerated. Undoubtedly the missionary activity of the Church was continuing; the gospel was making rapid progress in its conquest of the empire. In this missionary activity probably many of the twelve apostles were engaged; but details of their work are narrated for the most part only in late tradition.

5. JOHN AT EPHESUS

At some time—whether before or after A. D. 70 is uncertain—the apostle John went to Ephesus, and there became the leader of the Asian church. Detailed information about his position and the churches under his care is provided not only in trustworthy tradi-

tion—especially that which comes through Irenæus from Polycarp, the hearer of John—but also in the writings of John himself. The two shorter epistles of John, though each embraces only a small page, are extraordinarily rich in information about congregational matters, and even more instructive are the seven messages of the Apocalypse. By means of the latter the moral condition of the church in Asia Minor is characterized with a vividness that is scarcely to be paralleled for any other period of the apostolic age.

6. THE PERSECUTION UNDER DOMITIAN

During the latter part of the residence of John in Asia Minor there was an important event in the history of the Church. This was the outbreak of the persecution under Domitian—a persecution which apparently exceeded in extent, if not in severity, every persecution that had preceded it. Under Domitian the Roman authorities became definitely hostile; apostasy from Christ was apparently demanded systematically of the Christians—apostasy from Christ and adhesion to the imperial cult. The latter, in the Apocalypse, is represented as an example of the mark of “the beast”; the Roman Empire, as would have been unnatural in the days of Paul, appears in that book as an incorporation of Satanic power. The long conflict between the Church and the empire had at last begun. Which side would be victorious? In the Apocalypse the answer is plain. The Lord himself was fighting for his Church!

7. THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPEL

Our knowledge of the apostolic age, though fragmentary, is sufficient—sufficient not indeed for a complete history, but for the requirements of Christian faith. The information provided in the New Testament makes up in quality for what it lacks in quantity. Its extraordinary vividness and concreteness possesses a self-evidencing value. The life of the apostle Paul—revealed with unmistakable fidelity—is itself a sufficient bulwark against historical skepticism; it involves inevitably the supernatural Christ. The gospel is no aspiration in the hearts of dreamers; it is a real entrance of divine power into the troubled battle field of human history. God was working in the apostolic Church, God is speaking in the New Testament—there is the summation of our study.

PART IV :

**The Apostolic Church and the
Church of To-Day**

LESSON XL

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

The apostolic Church, as was observed in the Student's Text Book, found itself from the beginning in the midst of an environment more or less actively hostile. If we had been in Jerusalem at about the year 30, we should have observed a small group of disciples of Jesus, outwardly conforming to Jewish customs, but inwardly quite different from their countrymen. In Corinth and in other pagan cities of the Greco-Roman world, the contrast between the Church and its environment was even more striking; these cities were sunk in superstition and vice; the Church was leading, in the eyes of the world, a very peculiar life.

The presence of a common enemy led in the apostolic age to a closer union among the Christians themselves, and so it will always be. When Christian people realize the power of the enemy against whom they are all fighting, then they will have no time to fight among themselves. The Christian life is a warfare against sin—sin in a thousand deadly forms. In such a warfare, if we are to be good soldiers, we must all stand shoulder to shoulder.

The apostolic Church was waging an audacious warfare against the intrenched forces of heathenism and sin. Fortunately it had a Leader; and by that Leader alone it won the victory. The Leader was Christ. The primary relation of the soldier is the relation to the commander; the relation of the individual soldiers to one another is dependent upon that. So we shall study to-day the lordship of Christ; by that study, the work of the whole quarter will be introduced.

1. TERMS DESCRIPTIVE OF DISCIPLESHIP

The lordship of Christ may profitably be studied by an examination of some of the various names which in the New Testament are applied to the Church and its individual members. The individual titles should be studied first. After all, the Church exists for the individual believer rather than the individual believer for the Church. The primary relation is the relation between Christ and the individual soul. Brotherhood comes only through the union of individuals with a common Lord.

(1) **"Christians."**—Probably the first title that occurs to us to-day to designate the individual members of the Church is the title "Christian"; yet as a matter of fact that title appears only three times in the New Testament, and then only as it was taken from the lips of unbelievers. In accordance with the explicit testimony of Acts 11 : 26, the name was given for the first time at Antioch; it had no place, therefore, in the early Jerusalem church. A moment's thought will reveal the reason. The name "Christians" would have meant to a Jew adherents of the "Christ," or the "Messiah." Obviously no Jew would have applied such a name specifically to the disciples of Jesus; for all the Jews, in one sense or another, were adherents of the Messiah. The Jews were adherents of him by way of anticipation; the disciples thought he had already appeared; but all earnest Jews alike would have rejoiced to be called by his name.

Evidently the name was applied in Antioch by the pagan population. The Church had become so clearly separate from Judaism that a separate name for it was required. The name "Christian" suggested itself very naturally. "Jesus Christ" was forever on the lips of these strange enthusiasts! "The Christ" was indeed also spoken of by the Jews, but only careful observers would necessarily be aware of the fact. The Messianic hope was an internal concern of the synagogues, with which outsiders would usually have little to do. The new sect, on the other hand, brought the title "Christ" out from its seclusion; "Christ" to these enthusiasts was something more than a title, it was becoming almost a proper name; like "Jesus," it was a designation of the Founder of the sect, and accordingly the adjective derived from it could be used to designate the sect itself.

In Acts 26 : 28, the name appears as used by Agrippa; in I Peter 4 : 16, also, it is evidently taken from the lips of the opponents of the faith. The Christians, however, Peter implies, need not be ashamed of the name which has been fastened upon them. Rather let them strive to be worthy of it! It is the highest honor to be called by the name of Christ; and if they are true "Christians," their confession will redound to the glory of God.

In modern times, the name is often misapplied; the use of it is broadened and weakened. Nations are declared to be Christian although only a very small percentage of their citizens really deserve the name; teaching is called Christian though it is only similar in some respects to the teaching of Christ. Such a use of terms

should be avoided wherever possible; the original poignancy of the designation should be restored. Properly speaking, "Christian" means not "like Christ" but "subject to Christ." A Christian is not one who admires Christ or is impressed with Christ's teaching or tries to imitate Christ, but one to whom Christ is Saviour and Lord.

Are we willing to be known as "Christians" in that sense? At the time of First Peter, it would have been a serious question; an affirmative answer would have meant persecution and perhaps death. But it is also a serious question to-day. Confession of Christ involves solemn responsibilities; dishonor to the "Christian" means dishonor to Christ; the unworthy servant is a dishonor to his Master. But let us not fear; Christ is Helper as well as Lord.

(2) "**Disciples.**"—The earliest designation of the followers of Jesus was "disciples" or "learners"; during the earthly ministry perhaps scarcely any other designation was commonly used. Jesus appeared at first as a teacher; the form of his work was somewhat like that of other teachers of the Jews. Nevertheless, although he was a teacher from the beginning, he was also from the beginning something more. He had not only authority, but also power; he was not only Teacher, but also Saviour. His followers were not merely instructed, but were received into fellowship; and that fellowship made of them new men. "Disciples" in the Gospels is more than "learners" or "students"; it is a fine, warm, rich word; the Teacher was also Friend and Lord.

The same term was continued in the early Palestinian Church, and the resurrection had brought an incalculable enrichment of its meaning. The "disciples" were not merely those who remembered the words of Jesus, but those who had been redeemed by his blood and were living now in the power of his Holy Spirit. If we use the term, let it be in the same lofty sense. Let us be learners, indeed; let us hear the words of Jesus, as they are recorded in the Gospels; but let us hear them not from a dead teacher, but ever anew from the living Lord.

(3) "**Saints.**"—A third designation is "saints." This term is used as a title of the Christians in Acts 9 : 13, 32, 41; 26 : 10, and frequently in the epistles of Paul and in the Apocalypse. Its use in the New Testament is very different from some uses of it that appeared at a later time. The Roman Catholics, for example, employ the term as a title of honor for a number of persons carefully limited by the Church; Protestants often designate by it persons

of exceptional purity or goodness. In the New Testament, on the contrary, the title "saints" is clearly applied to all Christians.

In the original Greek the word is exactly the same as a word meaning "holy"; it is simply the adjective "holy" used as a noun. "Saints," therefore, really means "holy persons." Unfortunately, however, the word "holy," as well as the word "saint" has undergone modifications of usage. "Holy," in the Bible, is not simply another word for "good" or "righteous," but expresses a somewhat different idea. It has the idea of "sacred" or "separate"—separate from the world. God is holy not merely because he is good, but because he is separate. Undoubtedly his goodness is one attribute—perhaps the chief attribute—that constitutes the separateness; but other attributes also have their place. His omnipotence and his infinitude, as well as his goodness, make him "holy."

The word "holy" or "saint" as applied to Christians has fundamentally the same meaning. Believers are "holy" because they are in communion with the holy God and therefore separate from the world. Undoubtedly the most obvious element in their separateness is their goodness; the moral implications of the term "holy" are sometimes so prominent that the specific meaning of the word seems obscured. But that specific meaning is probably never altogether lost. Christians are called "saints" because they are citizens, not of the present evil world, but of a heavenly kingdom.

The familiar word, thus interpreted, has a startling lesson for the modern Church. Can modern Christians be called "saints," in the New Testament sense? Are we really separate from the world? Are we really "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (A. V.)? Do we really feel ourselves to be strangers and pilgrims in the earth? Or are we rather salt that has lost its savor? Have we become merged in the life of the world?

(4) "**Brethren.**"—A fourth designation is concerned, not with the relation of the believer to Christ or to the world, but with the relation of believers among themselves. That designation is "brethren." It is a very simple word; it requires little explanation; the rich meaning of it will be unfolded in the whole of this quarter's study.

(5) "**Church.**"—After studying the New Testament terms that denote the disciples of Jesus individually, it will now be well to turn for a moment to the chief designation of the body of disciples con-

sidered as a unit. That designation is "church," or in the Greek form, "ecclesia."

The word "ecclesia" is in itself a very simple term indeed. It is derived from the verb "call" and the preposition "out." An "ecclesia" is a body of persons called out from their houses to a common meeting place, in short it is simply an "assembly," and an assembly of any kind. This simple use of the word is found in Acts 19 : 32, 39, 41; the Greek word which is there translated "assembly" is exactly the same word as that which is elsewhere translated "church."

Even before New Testament times, however, the word had begun to be used in a special, religious sense. Here, as so often, the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament prepared the way for New Testament usage. In the Septuagint the word "ecclesia" was used to denote the solemn assembly of the people of Israel. That assembly was of course religious as well as political; for Israel was a theocratic nation. Hence it was no abrupt transition from previous usage when the New Testament writers selected the word "ecclesia" to denote the Christian congregation.

In the New Testament, the word is used in various ways. In the first place, it designates the body of Christians who lived in any particular place. So, for example, the epistles of Paul are addressed to individual "churches." In the second place, however, the word designates the whole body of Christians throughout the world. This usage is prominent in the Epistle to the Ephesians, but it also appears even in the Gospels, in the memorable words of Jesus at Cæsarea Philippi. Matt. 16 : 18. It is a wonderfully grand conception which is thus disclosed by the familiar word. "The Church" is a chosen people, ruled by the Lord himself, a mighty army, engaged, not in earthly warfare, but in a spiritual campaign of salvation and love.

(6) **"The Kingdom of God."**—One further conception requires at least a word. What is meant by "the kingdom of God"? This conception is evidently related to the conception of "the Church," but the two are not identical. The kingdom of God is simply that place or that condition where God rules. As the kingdom of Cæsar was the territory over which Cæsar held sway, so the kingdom of God is the realm where God's will is done. In one sense, of course, the kingdom of God embraces the whole universe, for nothing is beyond the reach of God's power. But in the New Testament the term is used in a far deeper sense; it is used to denote the realm

where God's will is done, not of necessity, but by willing submission. Wherever human hearts and wills are in true accord with the will of God, there the "kingdom" has come.

In one sense the kingdom of God belongs to the future age. It is never realized fully upon earth; there is here always some lurking trace of sinful resistance. Nevertheless, in the New Testament the kingdom is by no means always represented as future. Though it has not yet been fully realized, it is already present in principle; it is present especially in the Church. The Church gives clear, though imperfect, expression to the idea of the kingdom; the Church is a people whose ruler is God.

Entrance into the Church is not to be obtained by human effort; it is the free gift of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. No other gift is so glorious. If we are members of that chosen people, we need fear nothing in heaven or on earth.

2. PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

Two lessons should be conveyed by our study of to-day: in the first place the lesson of separateness, and in the second place the lesson of unity. Neither can be truly learned without the other. There can be no true Christian unity if individual members of the Christian body make common cause with the unbelieving world. A knowledge of the common enemy will draw us all into closer fellowship. That fellowship need not necessarily be expressed in a common organization; but it will be expressed at least in a common service. Separateness from the world will not mean leaving the world to its fate; the Christian salvation will be offered freely to all. But the gravity of the choice should never, by any false urbanity, be disguised. It is no light difference whether a man is within the people of God or without; there is a definite line of demarcation, and the passing of it means the transition from death into life.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Church," "Disciple," "Christian." Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Gayford, article on "Church." Hort, "The Christian Ecclesia." Charteris, "The Church of Christ." Westcott, "The Two Empires: The Church and the World," in "The Epistles of St. John," pp. 250-282. "The Epistle to Diognetus," introduction and translation in Lightfoot, "The Apostolic Fathers," pp. 487-489, 501-511. Erdman, "Coming to the Communion."

LESSON XLI

THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

1. A PHILOSOPHY, OR A TESTIMONY?

In the Student's Text Book the Christian message has been represented as primarily a piece of good news, a story of something that happened. That representation does not pass unchallenged to-day. Many suppose that the message of the apostles was concerned simply with reflection upon eternal truths. For centuries, it is said in effect, men had been reflecting upon the problems of God and the world and sin; what the apostles did in Jerusalem and elsewhere was simply to provide better instruction on these great themes; Jesus had taught men that God is a Father, the apostles simply continued his teaching.

Such a view, of course, can be held only by rejecting or distorting the testimony of the New Testament. If the book of The Acts is correct, if Paul is correct, then the preaching that founded the apostolic Church was not better instruction about old facts, but information about a new fact. Before Jesus came, the world was lost under sin; but Jesus lived and died and rose again, and gave salvation to all who would receive. According to the New Testament, Jesus did not come to tell men that they were God's children; he came to make them God's children. John 1 : 12; Gal. 4 : 3-5. Without him they were under God's wrath and curse; but by faith in him, by acceptance of his sacrifice of himself for them, by receiving from his Spirit the power to believe, they could call God Father. On the day of Pentecost Jesus was presented as more than a Teacher; he was presented as a Saviour.

2. THE EFFECTS OF THE MESSAGE

(1) **In the Apostolic Age.**—The effects of that presentation have been considered briefly in the Student's Text Book, and what was said there might easily be supplemented. The conversion of the three thousand was only a beginning. The new spirit of the Christian community, the brotherly love and holy joy of the disciples, indeed everything that will be treated in the lessons of the

quarter, were the result of a simple piece of news. By the wise men of the world—then as now—the message was despised, but “the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” I Cor. 1 : 25.

This lesson offers a singular opportunity to the teacher. The Christian message in the apostolic Church was a message of power. The story of its progress is full of dramatic vigor; it appeals even to the non-Christian historian. The story of the apostolic age is full of surprises—the sudden transformation of bitter Jewish enemies into humble disciples; the triumphant spread of the faith when everything seemed opposed; the establishment of Christian churches in the very centers of pagan vice; the astonishingly rapid preparation for the conquest of the empire; and all this accomplished not by worldly wisdom, but by simple men who only had a bit of news—a bit of news, and God!

(2) **In the History of the Church.**—The triumphs of the gospel, however, were not confined to the age of the apostles. The apostolic age was prophetic of the Christian centuries. There were many days of darkness; but the Church always emerged again triumphant. So it will be to-day. God has not deserted his people; he will attest his truth with the power of his Spirit; there is no room for discouragement. One thing, however, should be remembered; the victories of the Church are victories, not of brilliant preachers, not of human wisdom or human goodness, but of the cross of Christ. Under that banner all true conquests move.

3. THE PRESENTATION OF THE MESSAGE

The Christian message was presented in the apostolic Church in many different ways. The gospel was everywhere essentially the same, but the presentation of it was adapted to the needs of particular hearers, and the understanding of it became ever more complete under the illumination of the Holy Spirit. It is interesting to collect the various types of missionary speeches that are found in the New Testament.

(1) **The Missionary Preaching of the Jerusalem Church.**—The early chapters of The Acts preserve a number of speeches that were addressed to Jews. As might have been expected, these speeches are intended primarily to prove the Messiahship of Jesus. If that could be proved, then—among the Jews—the rest would follow. The Messiahship was proved first by an appeal to the Scriptures, and second by the fact of the resurrection. Even the death of Jesus on

the cross, which was to the Jews a stumblingblock, was predicted by the prophets, and so served to prove that Jesus was the promised One. The resurrection was also predicted; and the resurrection was established first by the simple testimony of eyewitnesses and second by the wonderful works of the living Christ.

These early speeches contain only a little of the full truth of the gospel. In them, for example, the significance of the death of Christ as an atonement for sin is not fully explained. Such omissions were due no doubt to two causes.

(a) Limitations Due to the Hearers.—In the first place, the peculiar needs of the hearers had to be considered. The hearers were Jews; to them the death of the Messiah was an unheard-of paradox; to them the cross was a stumblingblock. Before the inner meaning of the crucifixion could be explained, obviously the objections derived from it needed to be overcome. The first task of the missionaries was to show that Jesus, although he had been crucified, was the Messiah. That was done by an appeal to prophecy and to the plain fact of the resurrection. After conviction had thus been produced, it would be time enough to show that what was at first regarded as a stumblingblock was really the supreme act of divine grace.

(b) Limitations Due to an Early Stage of Revelation.—The omissions in the early speeches were due, however, not merely to the peculiar needs of the hearers, but also to limitations in the knowledge of the apostles. Christian truth was not all revealed at once; undoubtedly the full explanation of the cross, the full exposition of the atonement, was revealed only when the disciples could bear it. Such is the divine method, even in revelation. The disciples were brought gradually, by the gracious leading of the Holy Spirit, into ever richer knowledge of the truth.

(c) The Significance of the Cross.—Nevertheless, the meagerness of the early teaching must not be exaggerated. In the very first missionary speech of Peter, Jesus was represented as "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Acts 2 : 23. What happened "by the determinate counsel . . . of God" was no meaningless chance; the crucifixion was not a victory of evil over God, it must have had some beneficent purpose. Furthermore, Jesus himself had explained what that purpose was. He had spoken of giving his life a ransom for many, Mark 10 : 45; still more plainly, on the last solemn passover evening, he had represented his death as sacrificial. These words were certainly not

forgotten in the Jerusalem church; they were called to mind in the repeated celebration of the Lord's Supper, and must have formed the subject of meditation. The Jerusalem Christians knew that Jesus' death was a death on their behalf.

(d) **The Lordship of Jesus.**—The lordship of Jesus, moreover, was fully recognized from the very beginning. The risen Christ had ascended into glory, and had poured forth his mighty Spirit. The believer was no mere learner of the words of a dead teacher; he was called into communion with a Lord and Saviour. Such communion meant nothing less than an entirely new life, in which sin could have no rightful place. It was a life of conflict, but also a life of hope. The Saviour would come again in like manner as he had gone. The spiritual victory, already won, would be perfected by a final victory in every realm.

(2) **The Missionary Preaching of Paul.**—The gospel of the early preachers was a glorious message. It was a piece of glad tidings, such as the world had never known. Yet even greater things were in store; even more wondrous mysteries were to be revealed. They were revealed especially through the instrumentality of the apostle Paul. The gospel had been preached from the beginning, but much of its deeper meaning was reserved for Paul.

(a) **Truth and Error.**—In the teaching of Paul, truth became plainer by being contrasted with error. The original apostles had really been trusting in the atonement of Christ for salvation; but now that trust became plainer and more explicit by being contrasted with works of the law. The original apostles had really grasped the inner significance of Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament; but now that significance became still plainer by the contrast with Pharisaic legality. Now at length the death and resurrection were represented sharply and clearly as great representative acts in which the believer shares through faith. The original apostles were not overwhelmed and confused by the new revelation; they recognized the grace of God. Their perfect agreement with Paul exhibited the unity of the apostolic gospel.

Scarcely anything would be more interesting than a full collection of the missionary speeches of Paul. Such a collection, however, has not been preserved. The writings that we possess from the hand of Paul are not missionary addresses, but letters written to those who were already Christians. We should not, however, complain of the providence of God. God has not thought good to give us everything, but what he has given us is enough.

(b) Information Provided by The Acts.—The book of The Acts, in the first place, affords valuable information. The author was interested, indeed, chiefly in beginnings. The examples of Paul's missionary preaching which Luke has preserved, are perhaps preliminary to evangelism, rather than evangelism itself. The speech at Pisidian Antioch shows how Paul proved the Messiahship of Jesus. In winning the Jews, that proof was the first step. The Pauline gospel indeed appears, but it appears only at the very end of the speech. The speech at Athens is still more clearly of preliminary character. Monotheism needed to be established before the gospel of Christ could be understood. Despite their necessary limitations however, these speeches are instructive. They show, in the first place, that Paul adapted his preaching to the needs of his hearers. He did not preach the same sermon mechanically to all. He sought really to win men over, he began with what his hearers could understand. They show, in the second place, that all preliminary matters were kept strictly subordinate. These matters were not made an end in themselves, as is often the case in the modern Church, but were merely a means to an end. No matter where he began, Paul always proceeded quickly to the center of the gospel. Both at Pisidian Antioch and at Athens, he hastened on to the resurrection.

(c) Information Provided by the Epistles.—The Pauline Epistles, in the second place, though they are addressed to Christians, really afford sufficient information, at least in outline, about the missionary preaching of Paul. Incidental references are sufficient to show at least that the cross and the resurrection were the center and core of it. The Thessalonians, for example, under the preaching of Paul, "turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come." This little passage is worth pages of exposition. Preaching to Gentiles is here reviewed in epitome, though of course not with studied symmetry and completeness. The knowledge of the one true God formed of course, for Gentiles, the starting point for all the rest, but from that starting point the preacher at once proceeded to tell of the work of Christ. Just as illuminating are passages like I Cor. 2:2; Gal. 3:1. In Corinth Paul knew nothing save "Jesus Christ, and him crucified"; in Galatia the story of the cross was made so plain that it was as though Jesus Christ crucified were held up before the eyes of the Galatians on a great picture

or placard. The famous passage in First Corinthians, ch. 15 : 1-8, is, however, perhaps clearest of all. At the very beginning Paul had spoken of the death of Christ and the resurrection. The death, moreover, was not presented as a mere inspiring story of a holy martyrdom, but as a death "for our sins"; and the resurrection was supported not primarily by an inward experience, but by simple testimony.

Apostolic preaching was everywhere essentially the same. The apostles never began, like many modern preachers, with exhortation; though they proceeded to exhortation, they always began with facts. What was always fundamental was the simple story of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ crucified and risen was the subject of the good news that conquered the world. When will the modern Church take up the message with new power? We do not know. The times are in God's hand. But when the blessed day comes, it will be a day of victory.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Bunyan, "The Pilgrim's Progress." Warfield, "The Saviour of the World," and "The Power of God Unto Salvation" (the latter in "The Presbyterian Pulpit"). Hodge, "The Way of Life."

LESSON XLII

THE WORD AND THE SACRAMENTS

This lesson and the two following are intended primarily to encourage in the student the diligent use of "the means of grace." The wise teacher will keep the practical purpose steadily in view. That practical purpose may now be examined a little more in detail. Why should the example of the apostolic Church be followed in the matter of Bible-reading, of the sacraments, of prayer, of Christian meetings? What was God's purpose in providing these simple exercises of the Christian life—what benefit do we receive from them? Perhaps the briefest and simplest answer is that we receive from them what is often known as "reality" in religion.

1. REALITY IN RELIGION

Many Christians are puzzled by the lack of the sense of "reality" in their Christian life. They have believed in Christ, but often he seems far from them. It is not so much that positive doubts have arisen, though certainly the lack of fervency gives doubt its opportunity. Rather is it an inexplicable dulling of the spiritual eye. The gospel still seems wonderful to the intellect, but to the heart it has somehow lost its power.

(1) **The Need of Diligence.**—This condition is due very often to a neglect of "the means of grace," which we shall study in this lesson and the two lessons following. It is a great mistake to suppose that the spiritual life is altogether beyond our control. Undoubtedly it is instituted only by an immediate exercise of the divine power, independent of the human will; undoubtedly the maintenance of it would be impossible without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, in that work of maintenance, we have a very definite part. Many Christians suppose that any performance of religious exercises merely for duty's sake, without immediate spiritual profit, is a mere form. This supposition is erroneous. Not performance of religious exercises without spiritual profit, but performance of them without the desire of spiritual profit, is formalism. The appointed means of grace must continue to be used even when

no immediate benefit can be discerned. In the reading of the Bible, in prayer, in public worship, the Christian should first of all do his duty. The result may safely be left to God.

(2) **The Danger of Neglect.**—Without such attention to duty, the Christian life becomes merely a matter of inclination. In times of great spiritual distress we call upon God for comfort and help; but in the long, level weeks of comparative prosperity we think we can do without him. Such thoughts are the height of folly. God is not our servant, he is not one who can safely be left out of our thoughts except when we think we especially need him. If we neglect God in time of prosperity, we may call in vain when adversity comes.

(3) **The Reward of Duty.**—The religious life is not merely a matter of inclination; it must be diligently fostered. Such attention to duty, however, will never be merely drudgery. It may begin with drudgery, and it may become drudgery again at times, but if persisted in, it will be an ever-widening avenue of joy and power.

2. THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE

The reading of the Bible is such a simple thing, and so obviously necessary to the Christian life, that it requires comparatively little discussion. Despite its indispensableness, however, it is being sadly neglected to-day. Our fathers learned the Bible with a thoroughness which to-day is almost unknown. The change is full of danger. A Bible-reading Church is possessed of power; without the Bible the Church loses its identity altogether and sinks back into the life of the world. The process, unfortunately, has gone to considerable lengths. How may it now be checked?

(1) **The Study Should Be Made Interesting.**—Something, no doubt, may be done by making the study of the Bible more interesting. Certainly the Bible does not yield in interest to any other branch of knowledge. The Bible does not merely present spiritual truth; it presents it in a wonderfully rich and varied way. If the study of the Bible is stupid, the fault lies not in the subject matter, but in the student or in the teacher.

(2) **The Motive of Duty.**—Nevertheless, a mere appeal to the interest of the students is entirely insufficient. After all, there is no royal road to learning—not to Biblical learning any more than to the learning of the world. Solid education can never be attained without hard work; education that is easy is pretty sure to be worthless. Especially at the beginning the chief appeal in education

must be to a sense of duty. So it is in the case of the Bible. The Bible is the word of God; obviously it may not be neglected. Let us study it, then, primarily because the study of it is an obvious duty. As a matter of fact the duty will soon become a pleasure, but let not that be the motive. Let us read the Bible regularly and persistently, in entire independence of changing impulse. That is the kind of study that is blessed of God. Superficial study, determined by mere inclination, may at first sight seem just as good. But when adversity or temptation comes, then the difference appears. It is the difference between a house built upon the sand and a house built upon the rock. The two houses look alike, but when the rains descend and the floods come, one falls and the other stands. The Christian whose knowledge of the Bible is obtained by old-fashioned, patient study, never interrupted by changing inclination, has dug deep and founded his house upon the rock.

(3) **The Example of the Apostolic Church.**—The example of the apostolic Church in the matter of the means of grace is especially significant. In the apostolic age, it might have seemed as though these simple exercises might be dispensed with. What need of regularly appointed forms when the Holy Spirit was so immediately manifested? Yet as a matter of fact all of the essential forms of Christian custom were present from the beginning. Regularity and diligence were cherished even in the first exuberance of the Jerusalem church. Enthusiasm of spiritual life did not lead to the despising of ordinary helps; the early disciples "continued stedfastly," "day by day," "with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart." Acts 2 : 46.

The use which the apostolic Church made of the Bible might seem to some modern men particularly surprising. A book religion, men say, is a stagnant religion; living faith is independent of dead documents; it is only when the early enthusiasm is lost that belief becomes crystallized in submission to venerable authority. This sort of religious philosophy shatters on the plain facts of the apostolic age. Admittedly that was an age of freshness and independence. There never has been such an outburst of religious enthusiasm as that which planted the faith in Jerusalem and carried it like wildfire throughout the civilized world. Yet another fact is equally plain—this wonderful enthusiasm was coupled with the utmost reverence for a book. Nothing could exceed the unquestioning submission which the early Christians paid to the Old Testa-

ment Scriptures. The exuberance of apostolic Christianity was intertwined with a book religion!

The explanation, of course, is simple. Submission to a human book means stagnation; but genuine submission to the Word of God means always what it meant in the apostolic age—heroism and victory and life.

3. BAPTISM

(1) **Baptism and Circumcision.**—The sacrament of baptism had its truest predecessor in circumcision, the Old Testament sign of union with the covenant people. Baptism as well as circumcision is a sign of the covenant, though the varied symbolism marks the advance of the new covenant over the old.

(2) **Christian Baptism and the Baptism of John.**—In form, moreover, and to a considerable extent also in meaning, Christian baptism in the early Church was prepared for by the baptism of John the Baptist, which had even been continued by the disciples of Jesus during Jesus' earthly ministry. John 4 : 1, 2. Both the baptism of John and Christian baptism symbolized cleansing from sin. Compare Acts 2 : 38 with Matt. 3 : 6, 11.

Christian baptism, however, differed from every rite that had preceded it by its definite reference to Christ, and by its definite connection with a new manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

(3) **Baptism "Into Christ."**—In the apostolic writings, baptism is sometimes spoken of as a baptism "into Christ." Gal. 3 : 27; Rom. 6 : 3. The meaning of this phrase has often been obscured both in translation and in interpretation. The phrase "into Christ" in this connection means something more than "with reference to Christ"; it means rather "into a position within Christ." The Christian, according to a common Pauline expression, is "in Christ"; he is in such close union with Christ that the life of Christ might almost be described as the atmosphere which he breathes. To be baptized "into Christ" means to come by baptism into this state of blessed union with the Saviour.

(4) **Baptism and Faith.**—At this point, however, a serious question arises. How can baptism be described as the means by which the Christian comes into union with Christ, when at other times salvation is declared to be by faith? One solution of the difficulty would be simply to say that baptism and faith are both necessary—a man must believe if he is to be saved, but he must also be baptized. Clearly, however, this view does not represent the meaning of the New Testament. The passages where faith alone

is represented as the condition of salvation are too strong; especially the vigorous contrast which Paul sets up between faith and works prevents any inclusion of such a work as baptism along with faith as an additional condition of acceptance with God. The true solution is that baptism is related to faith, or rather to the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit, as the sign is related to the thing signified. Baptism represents the work of the Spirit; it is a means which the Spirit uses. If it stood alone, it would be a meaningless form, but when it is representative of spiritual facts it becomes a channel of divine grace.

4. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Jerusalem church was probably connected in some way with "the breaking of bread," which is mentioned in Acts 2 : 42. Every common meal was an expression of Christian communion, but the solemn words of Christ at the Last Supper could not have been forgotten. Here, as so often, the book of The Acts affords little information about the internal affairs of the Church.

Fortunately, Paul, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, is far more explicit, and inferences can be drawn from him with regard even to Jerusalem. Paul represents the Lord's Supper, not as an innovation, but as something that had been given to the Corinthians as a matter of course, at the very beginning of their Christian lives; evidently the sacrament was celebrated universally in the churches; Paul had "received" the account of the institution of the Supper from the Lord through the first Christians.

In Corinth, as was also probably the case in the early days in Jerusalem, the Supper was celebrated in connection with the common meals of the Christian community. Certain abuses had arisen; the rich brought food and drink with them and feasted luxuriously in the presence of their poorer brethren; the spiritual significance of the Supper was profaned. Against such abuses Paul enunciates the great principle that the Supper does not work a magical benefit; if partaken of irreverently it brings condemnation rather than blessing.

In I Cor. 10 : 14-22, the Lord's Supper appears as a warning against participation in heathen feasts. The pagan fellow citizens of the Corinthian Christians, by their religious feasts, held communion with idols; the Christians cannot remain with them and at the same time commune with Christ. A man must take his choice—

either Christ or idols; he must choose either the Lord's Supper or heathen feasts. Here the Lord's Supper appears especially as a sign of communion with Christ, as in ch. 11 : 26 it appears especially as a commemoration of his death. These two aspects of the Supper, and their intimate connection with each other, should now be explained a little more in detail.

(1) **A Representation of the Death of Christ.**—The Lord's Supper, as is observed in the Student's Text Book, is representative of the death of Christ on our behalf. In many passages of the New Testament, the significance of that death is explained in words; in the Lord's Supper it is represented in visible form. The Lord's Supper is related to the story of the gospel, as the picture or the acted representation is related to ordinary discourse. In the broken bread and poured-out wine we not only apprehend with the mind, but actually see the broken body and shed blood of the Lord. Of course that does not mean, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches, that the bread and wine are actually by a miracle, at every celebration of the Supper, changed into the body and blood of Christ, but only that they represent them. The very simplicity of the sacrament should have guarded against misinterpretation. An actual image of the dying Saviour might lead to idolatry, or to an overemphasis upon the details of the scene on Calvary; the simple representation that Christ ordained is enough to be vivid, without being enough to become misleading.

(2) **A Representation of Our Union with Christ.**—The Supper represents the death of Christ not as a mere drama, remote from us, but as a death on our behalf. In the Supper we do not merely witness the breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine; we partake of the bread and wine ourselves. Plainly the symbolism means that we who are disciples of Christ do not merely admire the holy self-sacrifice of Christ, but rather receive the benefits of it. We feed upon the body and blood of Christ in the high spiritual sense that by faith we obtain from Christ's death pardon for our sins and a fresh start in the full favor of God. These benefits we obtain not by our own efforts, but by a free gift. It was Christ himself who broke the bread and poured out the wine on the last evening before the crucifixion; it is also Christ who, through his minister, at every celebration of the sacrament, is represented as offering to us his body and blood.

The Lord's Supper, therefore, is not merely a commemoration of an event in the past; it is also the symbol of a present fact. It

symbolizes the blessed communion of believers with one another and with Christ.

5. THE SACRAMENTS MORE THAN A PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

So far we have considered the sacraments merely as one means of proclaiming the gospel. The Bible proclaims the gospel in words; the sacraments proclaim it in pictures. Even if that were all, the sacraments would be of great value. By these symbolic actions the gospel message attains a new vividness and definiteness.

As a matter of fact, however, baptism and the Lord's Supper are more than peculiar ways of making a vivid presentation of the gospel. They were instituted especially by Christ, and the Holy Spirit has connected with them a special blessing. The Spirit can use what means he will, and he has chosen to use these. In the Lord's Supper, for example, the Lord is really present in the midst of his people. He is not present, indeed, in "a corporal and carnal manner"; but his spiritual presence is a blessed fact.

The sacraments, therefore, should not be neglected. In themselves, when unaccompanied by faith, they are valueless; and they are not necessary for salvation. Ordinarily, however, they are a chosen means of blessing. When God wills, other means can take their place, but under all ordinary circumstances they are used. Certainly they should not be neglected without adequate cause. They have been provided by God, and God is wiser than men.

The Lord's Supper should be received with solemnity; but sometimes young Christians have perhaps an exaggerated dread of it. The error of the Corinthian Christians should indeed be carefully avoided; wanton carelessness in the solemn act will of course bring the condemnation of God. But the Supper does not demand perfection, even in faith; on the contrary it is intended to help to remove imperfection. The Lord's Supper is not a dangerous bit of magic, where any little mistake might break the charm. Let us partake of it with a simple prayer, and leave the results to the goodness of God.

IN THE LIBRARY. — Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": article on "Lord's Supper"; Purves, article on "Baptism." W. W. Moore, "The Indispensable Book." Candlish, "The Christian Sacraments" (In "Handbooks for Bible Classes," edited by Dods and Whyte). Lilley, "The Lord's Supper."

LESSON XLIII

PRAYER

1. THE ANSWERER OF PRAYER

The prayers of the apostolic age reveal with startling clearness the apostolic conception of God; and one chief reason why our prayers fall short of the apostolic standard is that our idea of God is different.

(1) **God Is a Person.**—In the first place, true prayer always conceives of God as a Person; whereas much of modern religious thinking conceives of him as only another name for the world. Human life, it is said, is a part of the life of God; every man, to some degree, is divine. Such a philosophy makes prayer logically impossible. It is impossible for us to speak to an impersonal world-force of which we ourselves are merely an expression; the personal distinction between man and God is absolutely essential to prayer.

The transcendence of God as over against the world is grandly expressed in the prayer of the Jerusalem church, which was studied in the Student's Text Book; the Jerusalem Christians addressed God as the Lord who made "the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is." Acts 4 : 24. God, in other words, is not another name for the world, but Creator of the world. He is indeed present in the world; not a single thing that happens is independent of him; the world would not continue for a moment without God's sustaining hand. But that means, not that God is identical with the world, but that he is Master of it. God pervades all things; he is present everywhere; but he is also free.

That conception pervades all the prayers of the apostolic Church; in all of them man comes to God as one person to another. God is free; God can do what he will; through Christ he is our Father. He is not bound by his own works; he is independent of nature; he will overrule all things for the good of his children. Such is the God that can answer prayer.

(2) **God Is an Infinite and Holy Person.**—If, however, the prayers of the apostolic age conceive of God as a Person, they also conceive of him as very different from men. Here, also, they

provide a salutary example for the modern Church. Many devout Christians of to-day, in avoiding the error which has just been described, in thinking of God plainly as a person, are inclined to fall into the opposite mistake. In their clear realization of God as a person they think of him as a person exactly like ourselves. They regard the difference between God and man as a difference of degree rather than a difference of kind; they think of God as merely a greater man in the sky. The result of such thinking is disastrous for prayer. Prayer, to be sure, is here not absolutely destroyed; communion with God remains possible; but such communion is degraded. Communion loses that sense of mystery and awe which properly belongs to it. Man becomes too familiar with God; God takes merely the leading place in a circle of friends; religion descends to the plane of other relationships. Prayer to such a God is apt to become irreverent. If our prayers are to lift us fully into the presence of God they must never lie on the same plane with the communion that we enjoy with our fellow men, but must be filled with a profound sense of God's majesty and power.

The danger of permitting prayer, on account of its very privilege, to become a commonplace thing is one that threatens us all. It may be overcome, however, in the first place, by the contemplation of nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork"—and it is a terrible, mysterious God that they reveal. The stupendous vastness of the universe and the baffling mystery of the surrounding infinity oppress the thoughtful mind with a profound sense of insignificance. And God is the Maker and Ruler of it all, the One in whom all the mystery finds its explanation! Such is the employment of nature in the prayer of the Jerusalem church. Acts 4 : 24.

All the prayers of the apostolic Church illustrate the principle which is now being emphasized. There is never anything trite or vulgar about the prayers that are contained in the New Testament; they are all characterized by a wonderful dignity and reverence.

If the infinity and omnipotence of God should prevent any irreverence in our prayers, the thought of his holiness is perhaps even more overwhelming. We are full of impurity. Who can stand before the white light of God's awful judgment throne?

(3) **God Is a Gracious Person.**—Nevertheless, despite the majesty and holiness of God, he invites us into his presence. It is a stupendous wonder. No reasoning could have shown it to be probable; only ignorance can regard it as a matter of course. If

God were only a somewhat greater man, there would have been comparatively little mystery in prayer; but communion with the infinite and eternal and holy One, the unfathomed cause of all things, is the wonder of wonders. It is a wonder of God's grace. It is too wonderful to be true; yet it has become true in Christ. True prayer brings us not before some God of our own devising, before whom we could stand in our own merit without fear, but into the dread presence of Jehovah. Let us not hesitate to go; God has called us; he loves us as a Father, far more than we can ever love him. Prayer is full of joy; the joy is so great that it is akin to fear.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF JESUS' TEACHING UPON THE PRAYERS OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

In studying the prayers of the apostolic age, it must always be remembered that they stood upon the foundation of Jesus' example and precept.

(1) **The Example of Jesus.**—With all his power and holiness Jesus was not above asking for strength to perform his gracious work; after that long, wearying day in Capernaum he "departed into a desert place, and there prayed." Mark 1 : 35. In the hour of agony in Gethsemane, he prayed a truly human, though holy, prayer: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt." Ch. 14 : 36. Prayer, moreover, was not something which Jesus reserved for himself; clearly it was a privilege which he extended to all his disciples. In the prayer that he taught his disciples, he summed up all that our prayer should be. Matt. 6 : 9-15.

(2) **God as Father.**—One thing in particular was derived by the apostolic Church from Jesus—the conception of God as Father. This conception appears in the epistles of Paul as a matter of course; evidently it was firmly established among the readers; it no longer required defense or explanation. Yet it had not lost, through long repetition, one whit of its freshness; in Paul it is never a mere phrase, but always a profound spiritual fact.

Obviously this idea of the fatherhood of God was of particular importance for prayer. It taught the disciples "to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help" them. A characteristic way of addressing God even in the Gentile churches of Paul was "Abba, Father." Gal. 4 : 6; Rom. 8 : 15. The Aramaic word "Abba" is sufficient

to show that this hallowed usage was based ultimately upon the teaching and example of Jesus; the word was the very one that Jesus had used both in his own prayers, for example in Gethsemane, Mark 14 : 36, and in the "Lord's Prayer" which he taught to his disciples.

(3) **The Right of Sonship.**—What needs to be observed especially, however, is that the right of addressing God as "our Father" was not in the apostolic Church extended to all men. Certainly no justification for such an extension could have been found in the teaching of Jesus; it was not the unbelieving multitude, but his own disciples, to whom Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer. Matt. 5 : 1; 6 : 9; Luke 11 : 1, 2. Paul is even more explicit; the cry "Abba, Father" was to him a proof that a great change had taken place, that those who had been formerly under bondage to the world had now become sons of God. This change Paul represents especially under the figure of adoption, Gal. 4 : 5; men have to be adopted by God before they can call God Father; and adoption is accomplished only by the work of Christ. Vs. 4, 5.

(4) **The Intercession of the Spirit.**—The cry, "Abba, Father" can never be uttered by sinful man alone, but only by the power of Christ's Spirit. The prayers even of the redeemed are faulty. But the Holy Spirit takes up their cry. "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Rom. 8 : 26, 27.

There lies the true ground of confidence in prayer. Prayer does not derive its efficacy from any merit of its own, but only from the goodness of God. Let us not worry too much as to whether our prayers are good or bad; let them only be simple and sincere; God knows our weakness; his Spirit will make intercession for us far better than we can intercede for ourselves.

3. PUBLIC PRAYERS OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The few individual prayers that have been preserved from the apostolic age are for the most part prayers of a more or less public character. The spontaneous outpourings of the hearts of individual saints before God would usually not be put into writing; the full secrets of the prayer closet are known to God alone.

(1) **Spontaneity and Sincerity.**—Nevertheless, the public character of the prayers of the New Testament does not mean that they are cold and formal. On the contrary, at a time when set liturgies had not yet been formed, public prayer possessed all the spontaneity of more private devotions; the thought of the listening congregation or of a circle of readers did not bring any hampering restraint. There is a sterling sincerity about all the prayers or fragments of prayers in the New Testament.

(2) **Dignity.**—The spontaneity and sincerity of the prayers, however, did not involve any sacrifice of dignity. The prayer of the Jerusalem congregation, Acts 4 : 24-30, is a marvel of exalted speech; its employment of Scripture phrase is an admirable example for public prayers of all ages. That prayer received a glorious answer; indeed the true prayer of the congregation never remains unheard. Christ's promise is always fulfilled; where two or three are gathered together in his name there is he in the midst of them.

In the epistles, there is to be found here and there what may be called, if not the beginning of liturgy, at any rate material of which a magnificent liturgy can be formed. The benediction of Heb. 13 : 20, 21, for example, is characterized by a splendid rhythm as well as by true evangelical fervor. Such a prayer lifts the hearts of the congregation up into the presence of God. There is use for beauty, even in prayer; and the truest beauty is to be found in the prayers of the Bible.

4. PRIVATE PRAYERS OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The apostolic guidance in prayer extends even to those private prayers which no one hears except God. In this field, the epistles of Paul are of special value. More fully than any other one man of the apostolic age, Paul has revealed the very secrets of Christian experience; and that experience is rooted in prayer. A glance at the beginnings and endings of the epistles will be sufficient to show how fundamental prayer was in Paul's life; news of the churches was never received without issuing at once in thanksgiving or in intercession, and Paul desires, not merely the good wishes, but the prayers, of his beloved converts. Paul practiced what he preached when he urged the Thessalonian Christians to "pray without ceasing." I Thess. 5 : 17. Compare chs. 1 : 3; 2 : 13; Rom. 1 : 9; II Tim. 1 : 3. Evidently, moreover, he regarded prayer as something far more than an incidental expression of the Christian life; he believed in its real efficacy with the Ruler of the world.

5. "MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS"

One passage, particularly, will repay special study. In II Cor. 12 : 8, 9, we have information about the most intimate, the most personal of the prayers of Paul. The apostle had been afflicted with a persistent illness; it had apparently hampered him in his work, and caused him acute distress. In his trouble he called upon the Lord; and by that prayer Paul's affliction has been made to redound to the lasting instruction and encouragement of the Church.

(1) **Prayer Concerning Physical Ills.**—In the first place, the prayer concerns not spiritual matters, or the needs of the Church at large, but a simple affair of the physical life. As life is constituted here on earth, we are intimately connected with the physical world; the body is necessary to the soul. But God is Master of earth as well as of heaven; even the simplest needs of life may be laid before him in prayer. To teach us that, we have here the example of Paul, as well as the precept of the Saviour himself.

(2) **The Answer.**—In the second place, the prayer was answered, and answered in a very instructive way. The illness was not removed; but it was made an instrument of blessing. The purpose of it was revealed: "My power," said Christ, "is made perfect in weakness." Physical suffering is worth while if it leads to heroism and faith. Such is often the Lord's will. He himself trod the path of suffering before us, and in his case as in ours, the path led to glory.

(3) **The Prayer Addressed to Christ.**—In the third place, this prayer was addressed, not to God the Father, but to Christ. Compare Acts 7 : 59, 60. Without doubt "the Lord" in II Cor. 12 : 8, as practically always in the Pauline Epistles, refers to Christ. Usually, in the New Testament, prayer is addressed, through Christ, to God the Father; but there is no reason why it should not be addressed to the Son. The Son as well as the Father is a living Person; and the Son as well as the Father is God. It is well that we have apostolic examples for prayer addressed directly to the Saviour. Christ, to Paul, was no mere instrument in salvation, that had served its purpose and was then removed; he was alive and sovereign, and the relation to him was a relation of love. In a time of acute physical distress, Paul turned to the Saviour. Three times he called, and then the answer came. The answer will always come in the Lord's way, not in ours; but the Lord's way is always best.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Bernard, article on "Prayer" (III). "Thomas, "The Prayers of St. Paul."

LESSON XLIV

THE CONGREGATION

1. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS IN PALESTINE

In studying the congregational meetings of the apostolic churches it must be remembered that the Christian community in Jerusalem continued for many years its participation in the worship of temple and synagogue. Specially Christian meetings, therefore, were at first not the sole expression of the collective worship of the Jerusalem Christians. Nevertheless, such meetings were undoubtedly held, even from the beginning. From the days when the one hundred and twenty brethren were gathered together before Pentecost, the Church was not without some outward expression of its distinctive life.

(1) **As Indicated in The Acts.**—The circumstances of such early meetings of the congregation are, however, obscure. The very considerable numbers of the converts, Acts 2 : 41, 47; 4 : 4; 5 : 14, would perhaps sometimes make it difficult to gather the whole congregation together in one place; if, however, that were done, it would perhaps be usually in some part of the temple area. There seem to have been general meetings—for example, Acts 15 : 1-29—but it is perhaps not necessary to suppose that they included every individual member of the Jerusalem church.

Certainly, however, no members of that first Christian community neglected the assembling of themselves together. Evidently the sense of brotherhood was strongly developed, and evidently it expressed itself not only in the regular relief of the needy, Acts 6 : 1, but also in meetings for instruction and worship and prayer. Ch. 2 : 42; 4 : 23-31. These meetings were only outward indications of a wonderful unity of mind and heart. Ch. 4 : 32. The cause of that unity was the common possession of the Spirit of God.

As might have been expected in a book which is interested chiefly in the outward extension of the kingdom, the book of The Acts gives us little detailed information about the conduct of these earliest Christian meetings. Probably, however, the example of the Jewish synagogue made itself strongly felt. There was no violent break

with Judaism; a new spirit was infused into ancient forms. The resemblance between the synagogue service and even the fully developed Christian meetings of to-day was noted in connection with Lesson IV.

(2) **As Indicated in the Epistle of James.**—The Epistle of James perhaps helps somewhat to supply the need of detailed information. That epistle, as was observed in Lesson XXXII, was written by the head of the Jerusalem Church, and probably to Jewish Christians before A. D. 49. Apparently, therefore, we have in James 2 : 1-6 some welcome information about Christian assemblies, if not in Jerusalem, at least in other Jewish Christian churches. In v. 2, the word "synagogue" is applied to the meeting which is described, but that word in Greek means simply "gathering together"—almost the same word is used in Heb. 10 : 25. The use of the word by James shows simply that at that early time "synagogue" had not become purely a technical designation of a non-Christian Jewish assembly.

So interpreted, the passage in James indicates—what might indeed have been expected—that the early Christian meetings were not always perfect. A Pharisaical habit of respect of persons and desire for the chief seats had crept even into the Church. If similar faults appear in modern times, we should not despair, but should fight against them in the spirit of James.

2. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS IN THE PAULINE CHURCHES

With regard to the Pauline churches information about the conduct of religious services is far more abundant than it is with regard to the churches of Palestine; for we have here the inestimable assistance of the Pauline Epistles. The First Epistle to the Corinthians, especially, is a mine of information; but much can also be learned elsewhere.

(1) **The Place of Meeting.**—From The Acts it appears that Paul regularly began his work in any city by preaching in the Jewish synagogue, but that the opposition of the Jews soon made it necessary to find another meeting place. Often, a private house, belonging to one of the converts, served the purpose. Rom. 16 : 23; I Cor. 16 : 19; Col. 4 : 15; Philem. 2. Sometimes there seem to have been a number of such house-churches in the same city; yet common meetings of all the Christians of the city seem also to be presupposed. In Ephesus Paul used for his evangelistic work a building or a room belonging to a certain Tyrannus, who was

probably a rhetorician. The erection of buildings especially for Christian use belongs of course to a considerably later time.

(2) **The Time of Meeting.**—The frequency of the meetings does not appear, and may well have varied according to circumstances. There is some indication, however, that the first day of the week, the present Sunday, was especially singled out for religious services. I Cor. 16: 2; Acts 20: 7. The same day is apparently called "the Lord's day" in Rev. 1: 10.

(3) **Temporary Gifts of the Spirit.**—In the actual conduct of the meetings, some features appear which are not to be observed in the modern Church. A number of the gifts discussed in I Cor., chs. 12 to 14—for example, miracles, speaking with tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and prophecy in the strict sense—have become extinct. The cessation of them need cause no wonder; the apostolic age was a time of beginnings, when the Church was being established by the immediate exercise of the power of God; it is no wonder that at such a time the Spirit manifested himself as he did not in later generations. There is a fundamental difference between the apostolic age and all subsequent periods in the history of the Church.

Nevertheless, all the essential features of our modern church services were present from the earliest time about which we have detailed information. The example of the apostles is here very explicit.

(4) **Scripture-Reading.**—In the first place, the Pauline churches certainly practiced the reading of the Bible. That would be proved sufficiently by the evident familiarity of the Christians with the Old Testament Scriptures; for in those days such familiarity would undoubtedly be received in large measure by having the Bible read aloud. The example of the synagogue would also have its influence. It must be remembered that some even of the Gentile converts were familiar with the synagogue service before they became Christians. But there is also the explicit testimony of I Thess. 5: 27, Col. 4: 16. There the reading of Pauline Epistles is specifically enjoined. The Apocalypse also was clearly intended to be read aloud. Rev. 1: 3; 22: 18.

(5) **Preaching.**—In the second place, there was preaching. No doubt this part of the service often took a somewhat different form from that which it assumes to-day. Prophecy, for example, was a kind of preaching which has been discontinued. The exercise of the gift of "teaching" perhaps corresponded more closely to the

sermons of the present day; certainly an exposition of the Scripture passages read would have been according to the analogy of the Jewish synagogue. At any rate, in some form or other, there was certainly instruction in the Scriptures and in the gospel, and exhortation based upon that instruction.

(6) **Prayer.**—In the third place, there was prayer; directions for public prayer are given at some length in I Tim., ch. 2; and there are indications that prayer was practiced also in the meetings of the Corinthian church. See for example, I Cor. 11 : 4, 5.

(7) **Singing.**—In the fourth place, there was probably singing, though the direct information about this part of the service is slight. See, for example, I Cor. 14 : 26. Certainly no elaborate argument is necessary in order to exhibit the Scripture warrant for singing in the worship of God. Psalms were sung in Old Testament times to an instrumental accompaniment, and there is no evidence that the customs of the Church were changed in this respect under the new dispensation. Indeed, if singing is an expression of joy, it would seem to be especially in place after the fulfillment of the promises has come.

3. PAUL'S DIRECTIONS FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Two features balance each other in Paul's directions for the public worship of the Corinthian church.

(1) **The Principle of Freedom.**—In the first place he is in full sympathy with the freedom and informality that prevailed. There seem to have been no set speakers in Corinth; every man spoke as the spirit gave him utterance; the service must have been characterized by great variety. This variety, Paul says, is not disturbing, because it finds its higher unity in the Holy Spirit. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." I Cor. 12 : 4.

(2) **The Principle of Dignity.**—In the second place, however, Paul has a strong sense of dignity. The enthusiastic expression of religious feeling must not degenerate into anything like a senseless orgy; spiritual gifts, however exalted, are not independent of reason. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace." I Cor. 14 : 32, 33. "Let all things be done decently and in order." V. 40.

Dignity was to be preserved, moreover, not merely in the ordering of the service itself, but also in the dress and behavior of those who took part. So much at least is clear in the difficult passage, ch. 11 : 2-16. Apparently the full equality which was granted to

women in the Christian life led the women of the Corinthian congregation to give a kind of expression to their freedom which at least at that time was not seemly. Paul detected the danger and guarded against it. The lesson always needs to be learned. However dignity may be preserved in detail, in any particular country and at any particular time, the principle itself should always be borne in mind exactly as Paul enunciated it.

At a later period in the apostolic age, the sense of dignity seems to have found expression in a quieter sort of religious service than that which prevailed at the time of First Corinthians. The First Epistle to Timothy lays great stress upon sobriety and gravity in various departments of the life of the Church.

(3) **The Principle of Love.**—These two principles—the principle of freedom and the principle of dignity—are kept each in its own proper place only when they are submitted to the governance of a higher principle. That higher principle is love. The ultimate aim of congregational meetings, according to Paul, is not the benefit of the individual, but the edification of the whole body, and of the stranger who may come in. The man who has the principle of Christian love in his heart, as it is grandly described in I Cor., ch. 13, will never push himself forward in the congregation in such a way as to display his own spiritual gifts at the expense of others. On the other hand, he will not be inclined to check the operations of the Spirit; it is the Spirit alone who can convert the stranger, it is the Spirit alone who can build up Christian people in the life of faith and hope and love.

The principle of love is often neglected in the modern Church. People say they will not go to church because they get nothing out of it. No doubt they are mistaken; no doubt if they did go, the benefit would appear clearly in the long run in their own lives. But at any rate they have ignored the highest motive altogether. We should go to church not only to obtain benefit for ourselves, but also, and especially, to benefit our brethren by joining with them in worship, in prayer and in instruction.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible"; Gayford, article on "Church"; Adeney, article on "Worship (in N.T.)." Charteris, "The Church of Christ," pp. 44-90.

LESSON XLV

THE RELIEF OF THE NEEDY

In the Student's Text Book, special emphasis was laid upon the relief of the needy as it was practiced in the Jerusalem church. Here it may be well to supplement what was there said by a somewhat more detailed treatment of the great collection that was undertaken by Paul. The exposition will serve to illustrate the apostolic principles of Christian giving.

1. THE PAULINE COLLECTION ACCORDING TO FIRST CORINTHIANS

(1) **The Beginning in Galatia and in Corinth.**—Writing from Ephesus during his long stay in that city, Acts 19 : 1 to 20 : 1, Paul tells the Corinthians that he had already given directions about the collection to the churches of Galatia, I Cor. 16 : 1; he had probably done so either during the second visit to Galatia, Acts 18 : 23, or by letter after his arrival at Ephesus. Now, at any rate, he asks the Corinthians—very simply and briefly, and evidently presupposing previous information on the part of his readers—to prosecute the collection during his absence in order that when he should arrive at Corinth everything might be ready.

(2) **Laying in Store on the First Day of the Week.**—The manner in which the collection was to be managed is exceedingly interesting. "Upon the first day of the week," Paul says, "let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper." I Cor. 16 : 2. Apparently no permanent church treasury was used for the reception of the gifts, every man was to save his own money at home, very much as private collection barrels are used to-day. The laying up of the money, however, was to take place on the first day of the week; we have here probably an early trace of the Christian Sabbath. Perhaps we may conclude that the act of giving was regarded as a part of religious worship. Such a conclusion is at any rate in thorough harmony with all that Paul says about the collection. Some people seem to feel that the taking of an offering rather mars the dignity of a church service. In reality it has that effect only if

it is executed in the wrong spirit. Christian giving is treated by Paul as a legitimate part of the worship of God.

(3) **The Delegates of the Corinthian Church.**—When Paul should arrive at Corinth, he was to receive the collection and either send or take it to Jerusalem by the help of delegates whom the Corinthians themselves should choose. The purpose of choosing these delegates appears more plainly in Second Corinthians.

2. THE PAULINE COLLECTION ACCORDING TO SECOND CORINTHIANS

(1) **The Situation.**—After the writing of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, there had followed a period of serious estrangement between Paul and the Corinthian church. Naturally enough the collection suffered during this period, as did other Christian activities. At the time of Second Corinthians, perhaps about a year after the first letter had been written, Paul was obliged to remind his readers that although they had begun the work the year before, much remained still to be done. II Cor. 8 : 10; 9 : 2. Nevertheless, Titus, during his recent visit to Corinth, when the repentance of the church had become manifest, had apparently been able to take the matter again in hand. Such seems to be the most probable interpretation of ch. 8 : 6; 12 : 18. If Titus did take up the matter on the very visit when the rebellion against Paul had been only with difficulty quelled, that is a striking indication of the importance which Paul and his associates attributed to the collection. It was not a matter that could wait until some convenient season; it had to be taken in hand vigorously, even perhaps at the risk of misunderstanding and suspicion, the very moment when Paul's relation to the church became again tolerably good.

(2) **Courtesy of Paul.**—Like all of Paul's management of money matters, his treatment of the collection is characterized by admirable delicacy and tact. Instead of berating the Corinthians roundly for their delinquency, as so many modern organizers would have done, he seeks to win them over by worthier methods. He points, indeed, to the example of the Macedonian Christians, in order to fire the zeal of the Corinthians; the poverty of the Macedonian churches had not stood in the way of their liberality; they had given up to their power and indeed beyond their power; they had given, not of compulsion, but willingly, dedicating themselves as well as their goods to the Lord. II Cor. 8 : 1-5. But the Corinthians are allowed to draw their own conclusion; Paul does not

force it upon them. He does not press the matter home brutally; he does not put the Corinthians to shame by expressly pointing out how much more generously the poorer Macedonian Christians had contributed than they. Indeed he gives his readers full credit; he courteously calls their attention to the fact that it was they who had made the beginning, v. 10, and that he had been able to boast of them to the Macedonians, so that their zeal had stirred up their Macedonian brethren. Ch. 9 : 1, 2. He appeals especially to the pride that they ought to feel in the boasting which Paul had ventured upon in their behalf; Paul had boasted to the Macedonians that Achaia had been prepared for a year; how sad an end it would be to such boasting if Macedonians should go to Corinth with Paul and should find that the collection was not ready after all! Paul urges the Corinthians not to leave any part of the work until after his arrival; if they do, they will put both him and themselves to shame. Vs. 1-5.

With equal delicacy Paul hints that the achievements of the Corinthians in other directions ought to be supplemented by this grace of giving. The Corinthians, according to the first epistle, had been very proud of their power of "utterance" and their "knowledge"; to these Paul can now add—after the loyalty of the church has finally been established—earnestness and love, II Cor. 8 : 6-8; but all these excellences will be incomplete unless there is also liberality. The Christian life must express itself in the simpler graces, if the more conspicuous activities are to be of genuine value.

(3) **No Unfair Burdens to Be Borne.**—The delicacy of Paul's treatment of the matter is observed also in II Cor. 8 : 10-15; he is careful to explain that the Corinthians are not asked to lay unfair burdens upon themselves. There should be an equality among Christians; it is now time for the Corinthians to give rather than to receive, but if circumstances should change they might count on the aid of their brethren. Furthermore, no one should be discouraged if he can give only a little; "if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not."

(4) **Cheerful Giving.**—Paul urges his readers, indeed, to be bountiful. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." II Cor. 9 : 6. But this bountifulness was to be secured, not by pressing out the last cent, but by promoting real cheerfulness in giving. "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." The

Pauline method is wisest in the end. Men can seldom be bullied into liberality; they will give liberally only when giving becomes, not a mere duty, but a joy. Cheerfulness in giving, moreover, possesses a value of its own, quite aside from the amount of the gift; it is a true expression of Christian communion.

(5) **The Unity of the Church.**—Probably Paul desired to accomplish by the collection something even more important than the relief of the Jerusalem poor. Many Palestinian Christians—not only extreme Judaizers, but also apparently considerable numbers among the rank and file—had been suspicious of the Gentile mission. Acts 21 : 20, 21. Such suspicions would be allayed by deeds more effectively than by words; a generous offering for the poor of the Jerusalem church would show that Jews and Gentiles were really united in the bonds of Christian love. II Cor. 9 : 12-14.

(6) **The Glory of God.**—Ultimately, however, the purpose of the collection, as of all other Christian activities, is to be found, according to Paul, in God. "For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God." The unity of the Church, inspiring though it is, is desired, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the glory of God. By the simple means of the collection, Paul hopes to present a united Church—united in thanksgiving and in love—as some poor, human return to him who has granted us all the "unspeakable gift" of salvation through his Son.

(7) **Sound Business Methods.**—The arrangements which Paul made for the administration of the gifts are as instructive in their way as are the lofty principles that he applied. In order to avoid base suspicions, II Cor. 8 : 20; 12 : 16-18, he determined that delegates approved by the Corinthians themselves should carry the gifts to Jerusalem, I Cor. 16 : 3, 4, and secured for the prosecution of the work in Corinth men who had the full indorsement of the churches. II Cor. 8 : 16-24. The lesson is worth learning. It will not do to be careless about the money matters of the Church; it will not do to say that the Church is above suspicion. Like Paul, "we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." In other words, we must be not only honorable in managing the money affairs of the Church, but also demonstrably honorable. To that end sound business methods should always be used. The accounts of the Church should be audited, not with less care, but if anything with more care, than those of ordinary business enterprises.

3. THE PAULINE COLLECTION ACCORDING TO ROMANS

In the Epistle to the Romans, written from Corinth a little after the time of Second Corinthians, Paul speaks of the collection again. Rom. 15 : 22-29, 31. He is on the point of going with the gifts to Jerusalem, and asks the Roman Christians to pray that the ministration of the Gentiles may be "acceptable to the saints." There is no reason to suppose that such prayers were unanswered; Paul was cordially received by the Jerusalem Christians, Acts 21:17-26; the trouble which caused his arrest came from non-Christian Jews.

4. TO WHOM WAS RELIEF EXTENDED?

(1) **Breadth of Christian Sympathy.**—The relief of the needy in the apostolic Church, as it has been studied in the present lesson, concerned, not outsiders, but Christian brethren. This fact certainly does not mean that the early Christians were narrow in their sympathies; they had received from Jesus the command to love their enemies, and the command was reiterated by the apostles. Rom. 12 : 20. They were commanded, furthermore, to "work that which is good toward all men." Gal. 6 : 10.

(2) **Special Attention to Christian Brethren.**—There were reasons, however, why such good works should be directed "especially toward them that are of the household of the faith."

(a) **The Special Rights of Brethren.**—In the first place, there was a general reason, which applies to all ages. Though the Church has a duty to all men, it has a special duty to its own members; for Christian people to allow their brethren to starve is as unnatural as for a father to neglect a son, or a husband a wife. Community in the faith does create a special bond, which should make itself felt in all departments of life.

It should be observed that in the matter of the collection Paul takes altogether for granted the right of the poor saints to the support of the Church. He does not think it worth while to go into details about the suffering of the Jerusalem poor; he does not attempt to play upon the sympathies of his readers; he does not patronizingly represent the recipients of the bounty as paupers. Indeed, the Jerusalem Christians, he tells the Romans, though they are receiving material aid, are not really debtors, but rather creditors. "If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things." Rom. 15 : 27. This attitude toward poorer Christians is worthy of all emulation. Aid to the brethren is not "charity," in the degraded

sense which that fine word has unfortunately assumed, but a solemn and yet joyful duty. It should never be undertaken in a patronizing spirit, but in a spirit of love that multiplies the value of the gift.

(b) Avoidance of Idleness in the Church.—On the other hand, however, the apostolic Church did not encourage begging or pauperism. What the special reason was for the poverty of the Jerusalem church we do not know. Perhaps many of the Jerusalem Christians had been obliged to leave their homes in Galilee and in the Dispersion. At any rate, we may assume that the poverty of the church was not due to idleness. In the Thessalonian epistles Paul takes occasion to warn his converts against an idle life; they are to do their own business and work with their hands; "if any will not work, neither let him eat." I Thess. 4 : 10-12; II Thess. 3 : 6-15. Certainly Paul was the best example of such diligence; despite his wonderful gifts and lofty duties he had made himself independent by manual labor. In the First Epistle to Timothy, moreover, particular precautions are taken against allowing the bounty of the Church to be abused. I Tim. 5 : 3-16. The treatment of the poor in the apostolic Church exhibits everywhere an admirable combination of common sense with lofty idealism.

(c) Conditions in the Apostolic Church and Conditions To-day.—If the gifts of the apostolic Church were devoted chiefly to Christian brethren rather than to outsiders, that is no justification for such limitation to-day. In the apostolic age there were special reasons why the Church could not often deal extensively with the material needs of the world at large. The Church was exceedingly poor; many of the converts probably suffered serious losses by the very fact of their being Christians; under such conditions the first duty was obviously at home. Conditions to-day are widely different. The Church has become wealthy; she is well able to extend her ministrations far and wide. Only by unlimited breadth of service will she really be true to the example of Jesus and of his first disciples; only by universal helpfulness will she be true to her great commission.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Uhlhorn, "Christian Charity in the Ancient Church." Brace, "Gesta Christi," pp. 93-105. Charteris, "The Church of Christ," pp. 91-129.

LESSON XLVI

ORGANIZING FOR SERVICE

Whatever the organization of a body of Christians may be, the body itself is a true branch of the Church if it consists of those who believe in Christ. Nevertheless, if the Church is to be more than an aggregation of individuals, if it is not only to be something, but also to do something, it requires some sort of organization. This fundamental need was clearly recognized in the apostolic age; and it was met by certain provisions which we believe ought still to be followed. These provisions, however, do not amount to anything like an elaborate constitution; they do not hinder adaptation to changing conditions.

1. ELDERS ACCORDING TO THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

In the Pastoral Epistles, which afford more detailed information about organization than is to be found anywhere else in the New Testament, the government of the local church is seen to be intrusted to a body of "elders," with whom "deacons" are associated. No one of the elders, so far as can be detected, possessed authority at all different in kind from the authority of the others; all had the function of ruling; all were "overseers" or "bishops" of the church.

The functions of the elders are not described in detail; but evidently they had a general oversight over the affairs of the congregation. That is the meaning of the word "bishop" as it is applied to them. Some of them at least also labored "in the word and in teaching," but all seem to have been alike in their function of bearing rule.

2. ELDERS ACCORDING TO THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The similarity of such an arrangement to our own Presbyterian form of government is plain. Our churches also are governed not by an individual, but by a body of "elders" who are equal to one another in authority. Changing conditions have of course intro-

duced elaboration of the simple apostolic model. Thus the teaching function, for example, which in apostolic times was perhaps exercised more or less informally by those of the elders who possessed the gifts for it, is now naturally assigned for the most part to men who have received a special training. These "teaching elders" in our church are the ministers. Conditions have become so complex that men of special training, who devote their whole time to the work of the Church, are imperatively required. The pastors and teachers, Eph. 4 : 11, even in the apostolic Church, seem to have formed a fairly definite group. This class of gifts is exercised to-day especially by the ministers, though similar functions should also be exercised by other members of the Church.

3. HOW WERE ELDERS TO BE CHOSEN?

With regard to the government of the apostolic Church a number of interesting questions can never be definitely answered. For example, how were the elders to be chosen?

(1) **Sometimes Appointed by the Apostles.**—Such passages as Acts 14 : 23; Titus 1 : 5, do not settle the question. According to the former passage, elders were appointed in the churches of southern Galatia by Paul and Barnabas. But it must be remembered that the authority of the apostles was peculiar and temporary. Because the apostles had power to appoint elders it does not follow that any individuals at a later time would possess a similar power. The situation, at the time of the first Christian mission, was peculiar; small bodies of Christians had just been rescued from heathenism; at first they would need a kind of guidance which could afterwards safely be withdrawn. According to Titus 1 : 5, Titus was to appoint elders in the churches of Crete. But clearly Titus, like Timothy, was merely a special and temporary representative of the apostle Paul; for Titus to appoint elders, under the definite direction of Paul, was no more significant than for Paul to appoint them himself.

(2) **The Right of Congregational Election.**—On the whole, it may be confidently maintained that the Presbyterian method of choosing elders—namely the method of election by the whole congregation—is more in accordance with the spirit of apostolic precedent than any other method that has been proposed. Throughout the apostolic Church, the congregation was evidently given a very large place in all departments of the Christian life. The Jerusalem congregation, for example, had a decisive voice in choosing the very

first Church officers who are known to have been added to the apostles. Acts 6 : 2-6. In Thessalonica and in Corinth the whole congregation was active in the matter of church discipline. II Thess. 3 : 14, 15; I Cor. 5 : 3-5; II Cor. 2 : 6. The whole congregation was also invited to choose delegates for carrying the gifts of the Corinthian church to Jerusalem. I Cor. 16 : 3. These are merely examples. It must be remembered, moreover, that the authority of the congregation in the apostolic age was limited by the authority of the apostles, which was special and temporary; when the apostles should be removed, the congregational functions would be increased. Yet even the apostles were exceedingly careful not to destroy the liberties of the rank and file. Nowhere in the apostolic Church were the ordinary church members treated as though they were without rights and without responsibilities. Indeed, even when the apostles appointed elders, they may have previously ascertained the preferences of the people.

4. THE APOSTOLIC PRECEDENT AND DEPARTURES FROM IT

The presbyterial form of church government—that is, government by a body of elders—which is found in the apostolic age, differs strikingly from certain later developments. In several particulars, at least, principles have become prevalent which are at variance with the apostolic model.

(1) **The Monarchical Episcopate.**—The first particular concerns the relation of the church officers to one another. In the apostolic Church, as we have observed, there was a parity among the elders; the local congregation was governed, not by an individual, but by a body. As early, however, as the first part of the second century, a change had taken place, at least in many of the churches. The supreme authority had come to be held by an individual, called “bishop”; all other officers were clearly subordinate to him; the government of the local congregation was no longer presbyterial, but monarchical; the so-called “monarchical episcopate” had been formed.

This state of affairs appears clearly in the epistles of Ignatius, which were written a short time before A. D. 117. But all attempts to find traces of the monarchical episcopate in the apostolic age have resulted in failure. The Greek word *episcopos*, which is translated in the English Bible—rather misleadingly, perhaps—by “bishop,” is applied, not to a special officer standing above the elders, but simply to the elders themselves. “Elder” designates

the office; *episcopos* designates one function of the office. The latter word could hardly have been used in this general way if it had already acquired its technical significance.

The efforts which have been made to discover references to the office of bishop in the apostolic age are unconvincing. It is exceedingly doubtful whether the "angels" of the seven churches to which messages are sent in the Apocalypse are to be regarded as church officers; and even if they were church officers it is by no means clear that they exercised the functions of bishops. Undoubtedly Timothy and Titus appear in the Pastoral Epistles with functions similar in many respects to those of bishops, but it is also clear that they exercised those functions, not as officers of the Church who might have successors, but merely as temporary representatives of the apostle Paul.

(2) **The Priesthood of the Clergy.**—An even more important divergence from apostolic conditions concerns the functions of the church officers. According to a theory which has become widely prevalent, certain officers of the Church are to be regarded as "priests"—that is, they are mediators between God and man. Curiously enough the English word "priest," is nothing but another form of the word "presbyter," which means "elder"; "presbyter" is only "priest" "writ large." In actual usage, however, "priest" means vastly more than "presbyter"; it designates a man who represents men to God and mediates God's actions to men. So understood, the term is never applied in the New Testament to church officers as such. According to the New Testament, the only priest (in the strict sense) under the new dispensation is Christ; Christ is the only mediator between God and man, I Tim. 2 : 5; the high-priesthood of Christ is elaborated in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In another sense, indeed, all believers are priests, I Peter 2 : 5, 9; Rev. 1 : 6; 5 : 10; 20 : 6; all have the right of direct access to God; all are devoted to a holy service. The idea of a special priesthood in the Christian Church is strikingly at variance with the apostolic teaching.

(3) **Apostolic Succession.**—Another point of variance concerns the manner in which the officers of the Church should receive their authority. By a theory prevalent in the Church of England and in the Protestant Episcopal Church in America as well as in the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, the authority of the clergy has been received through an unbroken line of transmission from the apostles; the immediate successors of the apostles received the

right of handing down the commission to others, and so on through the centuries; without an ordination derived in this way no one can be a ruler in the true Church; and without submission to such regularly ordained rulers no body of persons can constitute a branch of the true Church. This theory places a tremendous power in the hands of a definite body of persons whose moral qualifications for wielding that power are often more than doubtful. Surely so stupendous a claim can be made good only by the clear pronouncement of a recognized authority.

Such a pronouncement is not to be found in the New Testament. There is not the slightest evidence to show that the apostles provided for a transmission of their authority through a succession of persons. On the contrary, their authority seems to have been special and temporary, like the miraculous powers with which they were endowed. The regular church officers who were appointed in the apostolic age evidently possessed no apostolic authority; however chosen, they were essentially representatives of the congregation. A true branch of the Church could exist, at least in theory, without any officers at all, wherever true believers were together; the Church did not depend upon the officers, but the officers upon the Church.

5. RELATIONS OF THE CONGREGATIONS TO ONE ANOTHER

So far, the organization of the apostolic Church has been considered only in so far as it concerned the individual congregation; a word must now be said about the relation of the congregations to one another.

That relation, in the apostolic age, was undoubtedly very close. The Pauline Epistles, in particular, give an impression of active intercourse among the churches. The Thessalonian Christians "became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia"; the story of their conversion became known "in every place." I Thess. 1 : 7-10. In the matter of the collection, Macedonia stirred up Achaia, and Achaia Macedonia. II Cor. 8 : 1-6; 9 : 1-4. The faith of the Roman Christians was "proclaimed throughout the whole world." Rom. 1 : 8. Judea heard of the missionary labors of Paul, Gal. 1 : 21-24; fellowship between Jews and Gentiles was maintained by the collection for the Jerusalem saints. Evidently the apostolic Church was animated by a strong sense of unity.

This feeling of unity was maintained especially by the instrumentality of the apostles, who, with their helpers, traveled from one

congregation to another, and exerted a unifying authority over all. Certainly there was nothing like a universal Church council; Christian fellowship was maintained in a thoroughly informal way. In order that such fellowship should be permanent, however, there would obviously be an increasing need for some sort of official union among the congregations. When the apostles passed away, their place would have to be taken by representative assemblies; increasing complexity of life brought increasing need of organization. The representative assemblies of our own Church, therefore, meet an obvious need; and both in their free, representative character and in their unifying purpose it may fairly be claimed that they are true to the spirit of the apostolic age.

6. PRINCIPLES

The apostolic precedent with regard to organization should always be followed in spirit as well as in form. Three principles, especially, are to be observed in the Church organization of the apostolic age. In the first place, there was considerable freedom in details. No Christian who had gifts of any kind was ordinarily prevented from exercising them. In the second place, there was respect for the constituted authority, whatever it might be. Such respect, moreover, was not blind devotion to a ruling class, but the respect which is ennobled by love. Finally, in Church organization, as in all the affairs of life, what was regarded as really essential was the presence of the Holy Spirit. When Timothy laid his hands upon a new elder, the act signified the bestowal of, or the prayer for, divine favor. This last lesson, especially, needs to be learned to-day. Without the grace of God, the best of Church organizations is mere machinery without power.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Davis, "Dictionary of the Bible": articles on "Elder," "Deacon," "Deaconess," "Laying on of Hands." Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Gayford, article on "Church"; Gwatkin, article on "Church Government in the Apostolic Age." Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry," in "Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians," pp. 181-269, and in "Dissertations on the Apostolic Age," pp. 135-238. Charteris, "The Church of Christ," pp. 1-43, 130-170, 205-239. Falconer, "From Apostle to Priest." MacPherson, "Presbyterianism" (in "Handbooks for Bible Classes").

LESSON XLVII

A MISSION FOR THE WORLD

1. JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

In teaching the lesson in class, it might be well simply to review the principal steps in the geographical extension of the apostolic Church. This geographical advance, however, was made possible only by an advance in principles which should not be ignored. The really great step in the early Christian mission was not the progress from Jerusalem to Antioch, or from Antioch to Asia Minor and to Greece, but the progress from a national to a universal religion. Judaism, despite its missionary activity, always identified the Church more or less closely with the nation; it was a distinctly national religion. Full union with it meant the abandonment of one's own racial and national relationships.

(1) **Limitations of Judaism.**—The national character of Judaism was an insurmountable hindrance to the Jewish mission. Despite the hindrance, it is true, Judaism achieved important conquests; it won many adherents throughout the Greco-Roman world. These missionary achievements undoubtedly form an eloquent testimony to the power of Israel's faith; despite those features of Jewish custom which were repulsive to the Gentile mind, the belief in the one true God and the lofty ethical ideal of the Old Testament Scriptures possessed an irresistible attraction for many earnest souls. Nevertheless, so long as Jewish monotheism and Jewish ethics were centered altogether in the life of a very peculiar people, they could never really succeed in winning the nations of the world.

(2) **Apparent Identity of Judaism and Christianity.**—At first it looked as though Christianity were to share in the limitation; it looked as though the disciples of Jesus formed merely a Jewish sect. Undoubtedly they would bring the Jewish people to a loftier faith and to a purer life; they would themselves become better and nobler Jews; but Jews they would apparently always remain.

(3) **The Great Transition.**—Before many years had passed, however, the limitation was gloriously transcended. Christianity was no longer bound to Judaism. It became a religion for the world,

within whose capacious borders there was room for every nation and every race. How was the transition accomplished?

It was not accomplished by any contemptuous repudiation of the age-long exclusiveness of Israel. Such repudiation would have involved the discrediting of the Old Testament, and to the Old Testament the Church was intensely loyal. Jewish particularism had been ordered of God; the Scriptures were full of warnings against any mingling of the chosen people with its neighbors. Jehovah had made of Israel a people alone; he had planted it in an inaccessible hill country, remote from the great currents of the world's thought and life; he had preserved its separateness even amid the changing fortunes of captivity and war. Salvation was to be found only in Israel; Israel was the chosen people.

The Church never abandoned this view of Israelitish history. Yet for herself she transcended the particularism that it involved. She did so in a very simple way—merely by recognizing that a new era had begun. In the old era, particularism had a rightful place; it was no mere prejudice, but a divine ordinance. But now, in the age of the Messiah, particularism had given place to universalism; the religion of Israel had become a religion of the world. What had formerly been right had now become wrong; God himself had ushered in a new and more glorious dispensation. Particularism, in the divine economy, had served a temporary, though beneficent, purpose; God had separated Israel from the world in order that the precious deposit of Israel's faith, pure of all heathen alloy, might finally be given freely to all.

The recognition of this wonderful new dispensation of God was accomplished in two ways.

2. THE DIVINE GUIDANCE

In the first place, it was accomplished by the direct command of the Holy Spirit. The first preaching to Gentiles was undertaken not because the missionaries understood why it should be done, but simply because God commanded.

(1) **Philip.**—For example, when Philip preached to the Ethiopian—who was not in the strictest sense a member of the Jewish people—he was acting not in accordance with any reflection of his own—a desert road was a very unlikely place for missionary service—but under the plain and palpable guidance of the Spirit. What is emphasized in the whole narrative is the strange, unaccountable character of Philip's movements; evidently his actions at such a

time were not open to criticism; what Philip did God did; if Philip preached to an outsider, such preaching was God's will. Acts 8 : 26-40.

(2) **Cornelius.**—In the case of the conversion of Cornelius and his friends, Acts 10 : 1 to 11 : 18, the divine warrant was just as plain. Both Cornelius and Peter acted altogether in accordance with God's guidance. On the housetop, Peter's scruples were unmistakably overcome. "What God hath cleansed," he was told, "make not thou common." Peter did not fully comprehend the strange command that he should eat what the law forbade, and it was not explained to him; but at least the command was a command of God, and must certainly be obeyed. The meaning of the vision became clear when Cornelius' house was entered; a Gentile had evidently been granted the offer of the gospel. God was no respecter of persons. Finally the Holy Spirit fell on all the Gentiles who heard the message; they spake with tongues as the disciples had done at the first. That was the crowning manifestation of God's will. There was no reason to wait for circumcision or union with the people of Israel. "Can any man forbid the water," said Peter, "that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" Acts 10 : 47. All opposition was broken down; only one conclusion was possible; the Jerusalem Christians "glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." Acts 11 : 18.

(3) **The Grace of God in the Gentile Mission.**—Scarcely less palpable was the divine guidance in the subsequent developments of the Gentile mission. After the momentous step of certain unnamed Jews of Cyprus and Cyrene, who founded the church at Antioch, Barnabas had no difficulty in recognizing the grace of God. Acts 11 : 23. Not suspicion, but only gladness, was in place. When Paul and Barnabas returned from the first Gentile mission, they could report to the Antioch church that God had plainly "opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles." Ch. 14 : 27. If God had opened, who could close? At the apostolic council, in the very face of bitter opposition, the same great argument was used. The missionaries simply "rehearsed all things that God had done with them," ch. 15 : 4, especially "what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them." V. 12. There was only one thing to be done; the Gentile mission must be accepted with gladness as a gift of God; he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for Paul also unto

the Gentiles, Gal. 2 : 8; James and Peter and John could recognize, both in the Gentile mission and in the inner life of the chief missionary, the plainest possible manifestation of the grace of God. V. 9.

3. REASONS FOR GENTILE FREEDOM

The Church transcended the bounds of Judaism, then, primarily because of a direct command of God. Such commands must be obeyed whether they are understood or not. As a matter of fact, however, God did not leave the matter in such an unsatisfactory state; he revealed not only his will, but also the reason for it; he showed not only that the Gentiles must be received into the Church, but also why they must be received. The essence of the gospel had demanded Gentile freedom from the beginning; the justification of that freedom at the bar of reason, therefore, brought a clearer understanding of the gospel itself.

Two contrasts, at least, enabled the Church to explain the reason why the Gentiles could be saved without becoming Jews. The first was the contrast between faith and works, between grace and the law; the second was the contrast between the type and the thing typified. The former was revealed especially to Paul; the latter to the author of Hebrews.

(1) **The Law and Grace.**—Salvation through Christ, according to Paul, is an absolutely free gift. It cannot be earned; it must simply be received. In other words, it comes not by works, but by faith. The law of God, on the other hand, of which the Mosaic law was the clearest embodiment, offers a different means of obtaining God's favor. It simply presents a series of commandments, and offers salvation on condition that they be obeyed. But the trouble is, the commandments, since the fall, cannot be obeyed; everyone has incurred deadly guilt through his disobedience; the power of the flesh is too strong. At that point, however, God intervened. He offered Christ as a sacrifice for sin that all believers might have a fresh start; and he bestowed the Spirit of the living Christ that all might have strength to lead a new life. But Christ will do everything or nothing. A man must take his choice. There are only two ways of obtaining salvation—the perfect keeping of the law, or the simple, unconditional acceptance of what Christ has done. The first is excluded because of sin; the second has become a glorious reality in the Church.

If, however, salvation is through the free gift of Christ, then the law religion has been superseded. All those features of the law

which were intended to make the law palpable, as a set of external rules, are abrogated. The Christian, indeed, performs the will of God—in the deepest sense Christianity only confirms the law—but he performs it, not by slavish obedience to a complex of external commandments, but by willing submission to the Spirit of God.

Of course, the religion of the Old Testament was not, according to Paul, purely a law religion; on the contrary Paul quotes the Old Testament in support of faith. But there was a law element in the Old Testament; and the law served merely a temporary, though beneficent, purpose. It was intended to deepen the sense of sin and hopelessness, in order that finally salvation might be sought not in man's way but in God's. The new order at length has come; in Christ we are free men, and should never return to the former bondage. The middle wall of partition has been done away; the ordinances of the law no longer separate Jew and Gentile; all alike have access through one Saviour unto God, all alike receive power through the Holy Spirit to live a life of holiness and love.

(2) **The Type and the Fulfillment.**—The contrast which was worked out in the Epistle to the Hebrews was especially a contrast between the sign and the thing signified. The ceremonial law, which had separated Jew from Gentile, was intended to point forward to Christ; and now that the fulfillment has come, what further need is there of the old types and symbols? Christ is the great High Priest; by him all alike can enter into the holy place.

(3) **The Meaning of the Gospel.**—The transition from Jewish Christianity, with all the difficulties of that transition, led finally to a deeper understanding of the gospel. It showed once for all that the salvation of the Christians is a free gift. "Just as I am, without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me"—these words are a good summary of the result of the Judaistic controversy. The transition showed, furthermore, what had really been felt from the beginning, that Christ was the one and all-sufficient Lord. When he was present, no other priest, and no other sacrifice was required. That is the truly missionary gospel—the gospel that will finally conquer the world.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Orr, "Neglected Factors in the Study of the Early Progress of Christianity" and "The Early Church." George Smith, "Short History of Christian Missions" (in "Handbooks for Bible Classes").

LESSON XLVIII

THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL OF PERSONAL MORALITY

In treating the lesson for to-day, the teacher will be embarrassed by the wealth of his material. It is important, therefore, that the chief purpose of the lesson should not be lost amid a mass of details. That chief purpose is the presentation of Christianity as something that has a very definite and immediate bearing upon daily life. Christianity is first of all a piece of good news, a record of something that has happened; but the effect of it, if it be sincerely received, is always manifest in holy living.

1. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

In the Student's Text Book, little attempt was made at detailed analysis of the apostolic ideal. The defect should be supplied by careful attention to the "Topics for Study," and also, if possible, by the treatment of the lesson in class. First of all, however, it should be observed how naturally the apostolic presentation of the ideal grows out of the teaching of Jesus. The advance which revelation made after the close of Jesus' earthly ministry concerned the fuller explanation of the means by which the moral ideal is to be attained rather than additional exposition of the ideal itself. That does not mean that the apostles did no more, in the field of ethics, than quote the words of Jesus; indeed there seem to be surprisingly few direct quotations of the words of Jesus in the apostolic writings; the ethical teaching of the apostolic Church was no mere mechanical repetition of words, but a profound application of principles. Nevertheless the teaching of Jesus was absolutely fundamental; without an examination of it, the moral life of the apostolic Church cannot be fully understood.

(1) **The Inexorableness of the Law.**—Jesus had insisted, for example, upon the inexorableness of the law of God. To the keeping of God's commandments everything else must be sacrificed. "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell." Matt. 5:29. In this respect the apostles were true disciples of their

Master. The Christian, they insisted, must be absolutely ruthless; he must be willing to sacrifice everything he has for moral purity.

This ruthlessness, however, this thoroughgoing devotion to moral purity, did not mean in the teaching of Jesus, any more than in that of the apostles, that under ordinary conditions the Christian ought to withdraw from the simple pleasures that the world offers. Jesus himself took his place freely at feasts; so far was he from leading a stern, ascetic life that his enemies could even accuse him of being a winebibber and a friend of publicans and sinners. The fidelity with which the apostles followed this part of their Master's example has been pointed out in the Student's Text Book. The enjoyable things of the earth are not evil in themselves; they are to be received with thanksgiving as gifts of the heavenly Father, and then dedicated to his service.

(2) **The Morality of the Heart.**—Furthermore, Jesus, as well as his apostles, emphasized the inwardness of the moral law. Here again the apostolic Church was faithful to Jesus' teaching. The seat of sin was placed by the apostles in the very center of a man's life; the flesh and the Spirit wage their warfare in the battle field of the heart. See, for example, Gal. 5: 16-24.

2. CONTRASTS

The sharp difference between the Christian life and the life of the world was set forth in the apostolic teaching by means of various contrasts.

(1) **Death and Life.**—In the first place, there was the contrast between death and life. The man of the world, according to the apostles, is not merely ill; he is morally and spiritually dead. Col. 2: 13; Eph. 2: 1, 5. There is no hope for him in his old existence; that existence is merely a death in life. But God is One who can raise the dead; and as he raised Jesus from the tomb on the third day, so he raises those who belong to Jesus from the deadness of their sins; he implants in them a new life in which they can bring forth fruits unto God. A moral miracle, according to the New Testament, stands at the beginning of Christian experience. That miracle was called by Jesus himself, as well as by the apostles, a new birth or "regeneration." It is no work of man; only God can raise the dead. See John 1: 13; 3: 1-21; I John 2: 29; I Peter 1: 3, 23.

(2) **Darkness and Light.**—The contrast between darkness and light, also, was common to the teaching of Jesus and that of his

apostles. It appears particularly in the Gospel of John, but there are also clear traces of it in the Synoptists, Matt. 5 : 14-16; the righteous are "the sons of the light." Luke 16 : 8. In the writings of the apostles the contrast appears in many forms. "Ye are all sons of light," said Paul, "and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober." I Thess. 5 : 5, 6. "Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Eph. 5 : 8. God has called us "out of darkness into his marvellous light." I Peter 2 : 9. The contrast serves admirably to represent the honesty and openness and cleanness of the true Christian life.

(3) **Flesh and Spirit.**—An even more important contrast is the contrast of flesh and Spirit, which is expounded especially by Paul. "Flesh" in this connection means something more than the bodily side of human nature; it means human nature as a whole, so far as it is not subjected to God. "Spirit" also means something more than might be supposed on a superficial examination. It does not mean the spiritual, as distinguished from the material, side of human nature; but the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. The warfare, therefore, between the flesh and the Spirit, which is mentioned so often in the Pauline Epistles, is a warfare between sin and God.

The flesh, according to Paul, is a mighty power, which is too strong for the human will. It is impossible for the natural man to keep the law of God. "I know," says Paul, "that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. . . I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members." Rom. 7 : 18, 21-23. In this recognition of the power of sin in human life, Paul has laid his finger upon one of the deepest facts in human experience.

The way of escape, however, has been provided; sin has been conquered in two aspects.

It has been conquered, in the first place, in its guilt. Without that conquest, everything else would be useless. The dreadful subjection to the power of sin, which becomes so abundantly plain in evil habit, was itself a punishment for sin; before the effect can be destroyed, the guilt which caused it must be removed. It has been removed by the sacrifice of Christ. Christ has died for us,

the Just for the unjust; through his death we have a fresh start, in the favor of God, with the guilty past wiped out.

Sin has been conquered, in the second place, in its power. Together with the very implanting of faith in our hearts, the Holy Spirit has given us a new life, a new power, by which we can perform the works of God. A mighty warfare, indeed, is yet before us; but it is fought with the Spirit's help, and by the Spirit it will finally be won.

(4) **The Old Man and the New.**—As the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit was concerned with the causes of the Christian's escape from sin, so the contrast now to be considered is concerned with the effects of that escape. The Christian, according to Paul, has become a new man in Christ; the old man has been destroyed. The Gentiles, he says, are darkened in their understanding, and alienated from God. Eph. 4:17-19. "But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." Vs. 20-24. Compare Col. 3:5-11. This putting on of the new man is included in what Paul elsewhere calls putting on Christ. Gal. 3:27; Rom. 13:14. The true Christian has clothed himself with Christ; the lineaments of the old sinful nature have been transformed into the blessed features of the Master; look upon the Christian, and what you see is Christ! This change has been wrought by Christ himself; "it is no longer I that live," says Paul, "but Christ liveth in me"; Christ finds expression in the life of the Christian. It is noteworthy, however, that the "putting on" of Christ, which in Gal. 3:27 is represented as an accomplished fact, is in Rom. 13:14 inculcated as a duty. It has been accomplished already in principle—in his sacrificial death, Christ has already taken our place in the sight of God—but the practical realization of it in conduct is the lifelong task which every earnest disciple, aided by the Holy Spirit, must prosecute with might and main.

3. THE NEW MAN

Details in the character of the "new man," as they are revealed in the apostolic writings, can here be treated only very briefly.

(1) **Honesty.**—Certainly the Christian, according to the apostles,

must be honest. Honesty is the foundation of the virtues; without it everything else is based upon the sand. Nothing could exceed the fine scorn which the New Testament heaps upon anything like hypocrisy or deceit. The Epistle of James, in particular, is a plea for profound reality in all departments of life. Away with all deceit! The Christian life is to be lived in the full blaze of God's sunlight.

Many hours could be occupied in the class with the applications of honesty under modern conditions. Student life, for example, is full of temptations to dishonesty. To say nothing of out-and-out cheating, there are a hundred ways in which the fine edge of honor can be blunted. In business life, also, temptations are many; and indeed no one can really escape the test. The apostolic example deserves to be borne in mind; Christian honesty ought to be more than the honesty of the world.

(2) **Purity.**—In the second place, the apostolic Church presents an ideal of purity, purity in thought as well as in word and deed. The ideal must have seemed strange to the degraded populations of Corinth and Ephesus; but it is also sadly needed to-day. Let us not deceive ourselves. He who would hold fellowship with Christ must put away impurity; Christ is the holy One. Purity, however, is to be attained not by unaided human effort, but by the help of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit, if he be admitted to the heart, will purge it of unclean thoughts.

(3) **Patience and Bravery.**—In the third place, patience and humility are prominent in the Christian ideal. These virtues are coupled, however, with the most vigorous bravery. There is nothing weak or sickly or sentimental about the Christian character. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." I Cor. 16 : 13.

(4) **Love.**—The summation of the Christian ideal is love. Love, however, is more than a benevolent desire. It includes purity and heroism as well as helpfulness. In order to love in the Christian sense, one must attain "unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4 : 13.

IN THE LIBRARY.—Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible": Strong, article on "Ethics" (II). Kilpatrick, "Christian Character." Bruce, "The Formation of Christian Character." Luthardt, "Apologetic Lectures on the Moral Truths of Christianity."

LESSON XLIX

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

1. THE PROBLEM

Two apparently contradictory features appear in the life of the apostolic Church. In the first place, there was an intense other-worldliness; the Christians were regarded as citizens of a heavenly kingdom. In the second place, there was careful attention to the various relationships of the present life; no man was excused from homely duty. The two sides of the picture appear in the sharpest colors in the life of the apostle Paul. No one emphasized more strongly than he the independence of the Christian life with reference to the world; all Christians, whether their worldly station be high or low, are alike in the sight of God; the Church operates with entirely new standards of value. Yet on the other hand, in his actual dealing with the affairs of this world Paul observed the most delicate tact; and in all history it is difficult to find a man with profounder natural affections. Where is there, for example, a more passionate expression of patriotic feeling than that which is to be found in Rom. 9 : 3? "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

On the one hand, then, the apostolic Church regarded all earthly distinctions as temporary and secondary, and yet on the other hand those same distinctions were very carefully observed. The apparent contradiction brings before us the great question of the attitude of Christianity toward human relationships. This question may be answered in one of three ways.

2. THE WORLDLY SOLUTION

In the first place, there is the worldly answer. The Christian finds himself in a world where his time and his thoughts seem to be fully occupied by what lies near at hand. The existence of God may not be denied, but practically, in the stress of more obvious duties, God is left out of account.

(1) "**Practical Christianity.**"—In its crude form, of course, where

it involves mere engrossment in selfish pleasure, this answer to our question hardly needs refutation. Obviously the Christian cannot devote himself to worldly enjoyment; a cardinal virtue of the Christian is self-denial. Worldliness in the Church, however, may be taken in a wider sense; it has often assumed very alluring forms. At the present day, for example, it often represents itself as the only true, the only "practical" kind of Christianity. It is often said that true religion is identical with social service, that the service of one's fellow men is always worship of God. This assertion involves a depreciation of "dogma" in the interests of "practical" Christianity; it makes no difference, it is said, what a man believes, provided only he engages in the improvement of living conditions and the promotion of fairer laws.

(2) **This World Is Not All.**—This tendency in the Church really makes religion a thing of this world only. Undoubtedly, much good is being accomplished by social workers who have given up belief in historic Christianity; but it is good that does not go to the root of the matter. Suppose we have improved conditions on this earth, suppose more men have healthy employment and an abundance of worldly goods. Even so the thought of death cannot be banished. Is the totality of man's happiness limited to a brief span of life; are we after all but creatures of a day? Or is there an eternal life beyond the grave, with infinite possibilities of good or evil? Jesus and his apostles and the whole of the apostolic Church adopted the latter alternative.

(3) **The Secularization of Religion.**—We lay our finger here upon one of the points where the modern Church is in danger of departing most fundamentally from the apostolic model. Religion is in serious danger of being secularized; that is, of being regarded as concerned merely with this life. The only corrective is the recovery of the old conception of God. God is not merely another name for the highest aspirations of men, he is not merely the summation of the social forces which are working for human betterment. On the contrary, he is a living Person, working in the world, but also eternally independent of it. You can work for the worldly benefit of your fellow men without coming into any saving contact with God; it does make a vast difference what you believe; it makes all the difference between death and life.

(4) **The Teaching of Jesus and of the Apostles.**—Only one-sided reading of the New Testament can find support for the opposite view. Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my

brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me," Matt. 25 : 40; but the same Jesus also said, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14 : 26. The giving of a cup of cold water, which receives the blessing of Jesus, is done for "one of these little ones . . . in the name of a disciple." Matt. 10 : 42. Evidently the good works of the Christian are not independent of the attitude of the doer toward Jesus and toward God; Jesus regards the personal relation between himself and his disciples as one which takes precedence of even the holiest of earthly ties. Far more convincing, however, than any citation of definite passages is the whole spirit of the New Testament teaching; evidently both Jesus and his early disciples had their lives determined by the thought of the living, personal God, holy and mysterious and independent of the world. Social service exists for the sake of God, not God for the sake of social service. The reversal of this relationship is one of the most distressing tendencies of the present day; a study of the apostolic Church may bring a return to sanity and humility.

3. THE ASCETIC SOLUTION

The second answer to our question is the answer of ascetics of many different kinds. According to this answer, the relationship of the Christian to God on the one hand, and his relationship to his fellow men on the other, are in competition. Consequently, in order to strengthen the former, the latter must be broken off. In its extreme form, this way of thinking leads to the hermit ideal, to the belief that the less a man has to do with his fellow men the more he has to do with God. Such conceptions are not always so un-influential as we are inclined to think, even in our Protestant churches. Monasticism is not indeed consistently carried out, but it is often present in spirit and in principle. Some excellent Christians seem to feel that whole-hearted, natural interest in earthly friends is disloyalty to Christ, that all men must be treated alike, that admission of one man into the depths of the heart more fully than another is contrary to the universality of the gospel. By such men, individuals are not treated as persons, with a value of their own, but merely as opportunities for Christian service.

(1) **This Solution Defeats Its Own End.**—It is evident, in the first place, that such an attitude defeats its own aim. Evidently the power of a Christian worker depends partly at least upon his

interest in individuals. It will not do, for example, for the teachers in this course to let their students say, "The teacher loves Christ supremely, but he has no interest in me." Evidently the power of influencing our fellow men is largely increased by an intimate personal relationship; if we are to serve Christ by bringing men to his feet, then we ought not to dissolve but rather to strengthen the bonds of simple affection which unite us to our human friends.

(2) This Solution Is Opposed to Apostolic Example.—The example of the apostolic Church points in the same direction; we have already noticed the intensity of natural affection which was displayed even by a man so thoroughly and heroically devoted to Christian service as was the apostle Paul. This example might well be supplemented, and supplemented most emphatically of all by the example which lies at the basis of all of the apostolic Church—the example of Jesus himself. If any man might have been aloof from his fellow men, it was Jesus, yet as a matter of fact, he plainly had his earthly friends.

4. THE TRUE SOLUTION

The true solution of the problem is found in consecration. Human relationships are not to be made the sole aim of life; neither are they to be destroyed; but they are to be consecrated to the service of God. Love for God under normal conditions comes into no competition with love for man, because God takes a place in the life which can never be filled by any human friend; by lopping off human friendships we are not devoting ourselves more fully to God, but merely becoming less efficient servants of him.

5. CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL SERVICE

Consecration of human relationships to God does not involve any depreciation of what is known to-day as "social service." On the contrary it gives to social service its necessary basis and motive power. Only when God is remembered is there an eternal outlook in the betterment of human lives; the improvement of social conditions, which gives the souls of men a fair chance instead of keeping them stunted and balked by poverty and disease, is seen by him who believes in a future life and a final judgment and heaven and hell to have value not only for time, but also for eternity, not only for man, but also for the infinite God.

(1) Society or the Individual?—It is sometimes regarded as a reproach that old-fashioned, evangelical Christianity makes its

first appeal to the individual. The success of certain evangelists has occasioned considerable surprise in some quarters. Everyone knows, it is said, that the "social gospel" is the really effective modern agency; yet some evangelists with only the very crudest possible social program are accomplishing important and beneficent results! The lesson may well be learned, and it should never be forgotten. Despite the importance of social reforms, the first purpose of true Christian evangelism is to bring the individual man clearly and consciously into the presence of his God. Without that, all else is of but temporary value; the human race is composed of individual souls; the best of social edifices will crumble if all the materials are faulty.

(2) Every Man Should First Correct His Own Faults.—The true attitude of the Christian toward social institutions can be learned clearly from the example of the apostolic Church. The first lesson that the early Christians learned when they faced the ordinary duties of life was to make the best of the institutions that were already existing. There was nothing directly revolutionary about the apostolic teaching. Sharp rebuke, indeed, was directed against the covetousness of the rich. But the significant fact is that such denunciations of wealthy men were addressed to the wealthy men themselves and not to the poor. In the apostolic Church, every man was made to know his own faults, not the faults of other people. The rich were rebuked for their covetousness and selfishness; but the poor were commanded, with just as much vehemence, to labor for their own support. "If any will not work," said Paul, "neither let him eat." II Thess. 3 : 10. In short, apostolic Christianity sought to remove the evils of an unequal distribution of wealth, not by a violent uprising of the poor against the rich, but by changing the hearts of the rich men themselves. Modern reform movements are often very different; but it cannot be said that the apostolic method is altogether antiquated.

(3) The Ennobling of Existing Institutions.—Certainly the apostolic method has been extraordinarily successful; it has accomplished far more than could have been accomplished by a violent reform movement. A good example is afforded by the institution of slavery. Here, if anywhere, we might seem to have an institution which was contrary to the gospel. Yet Paul sent back a runaway slave to his master, and evidently without the slightest hesitation or compunction. That action was a consistent carrying out of the principle that a Christian man, instead of seeking

an immediate change in his social position, was first of all to learn to make the best of whatever position was his already. "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called being a bondservant? care not for it: nay, even if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called being free, is Christ's bondservant. Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men. Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God." I Cor. 7 : 20-24. The freedom of the Christian, in other words, is entirely independent of freedom in this world; a slave can be just as free in the higher, spiritual sense as his earthly master. In this way the position of the slave was ennobled; evidently the relation of Onesimus to Philemon was expected to afford both slave and master genuine opportunity for the development of Christian character and for the performance of Christian service.

(4) The Substitution of Good Institutions for Bad.—In the long run, however, such conceptions were bound to exert a pervasive influence even upon earthly institutions. If Philemon really adopted the Christian attitude toward one who was now "more than a servant, a brother beloved" in Christ, then in the course of time he would naturally desire to make even the outward relationship conform more perfectly to the inward spiritual fact. The final result would naturally be emancipation; and such was the actual process in the history of the Church. Slavery, moreover, is only an example; a host of other imperfect social institutions have similarly been modified or removed. What a world of progress, for example, is contained in Gal. 3 : 28: "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus." Not battles and revolutions, the taking of cities and the pulling down of empires, are the really great events of history, but rather the enunciation of great principles such as this. "Ye are all one man in Christ Jesus"—these words with others like them have moved armies like puppets, and will finally transform the face of the world.

IN THE LIBRARY.—R. E. Thompson, "De Civitate Dei. The Divine Order of Human Society." Clow, "Christ in the Social Order." Cunningham, "Christianity and Social Questions." Schmidt, "The Social Results of Early Christianity."

LESSON L

THE CHRISTIAN USE OF THE INTELLECT

1. THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE

The last two lessons have emphasized the duty of consecration. The enjoyment of simple, physical blessings, the opportunities afforded by earthly relationships, are all to be devoted to the service of God. Exactly the same principle must be applied in the lesson for to-day. If physical health and strength and the companionship of human friends may be made useful in the Christian life, surely the same thing is true of intellectual gifts. The most powerful thing that a man possesses is the power of his mind. Brute force is comparatively useless; the really great achievements of modern times have been accomplished by the intellect. If the principle of consecration is true at all—if it be true that God desires, not the destruction of human powers, but the proper use of them—then surely the principle must be applied in the intellectual sphere.

The field should not be limited too narrowly; with the purely logical and acquisitive faculties of the mind should be included the imagination and the sense of beauty. In a word, we have to do to-day with the relation between "culture" and Christianity. For the modern Church there is no greater problem. A mighty civilization has been built up in recent years, which to a considerable extent is out of relation to the gospel. Great intellectual forces which are rampant in the world are grievously perplexing the Church. The situation calls for earnest intellectual effort on the part of Christians. Modern culture must either be refuted as evil, or else be made helpful to the gospel. So great a power cannot safely be ignored.

(1) The Obscurantist Solution.—Some men in the Church are inclined to choose a simple way out of the difficulty; they are inclined to reject the whole of modern culture as either evil or worthless; this wisdom of the world, they maintain, must be deserted for the divine "foolishness" of the gospel. Undoubtedly such a view contains an element of truth, but in its entirety it is impracticable. The achievements of modern culture are being made useful for the spread of the gospel by the very advocates of the view now in

question; these achievements, therefore, cannot be altogether the work of Satan. It is inconsistent to use the printing press, the railroad, the telegraph in the propagation of our gospel and at the same time denounce as evil those activities of the human mind by which these inventions were produced. Indeed, much of modern culture, far from being hostile to Christianity, has really been produced by Christianity. Such Christian elements should not be destroyed; the wheat should not be rooted up with the tares.

(2) **The Worldly Solution.**—If, however, the Christian man is in danger of adopting a negative attitude toward modern culture, of withdrawing from the world into a sort of unhealthy, modernized, intellectual monastery, the opposite danger is even more serious. The most serious danger is the danger of being so much engrossed in the wonderful achievements of modern science that the gospel is altogether forgotten.

(3) **The True Solution.**—The true solution is consecration. Modern culture is a stumblingblock when it is regarded as an end in itself, but when it is used as a means to the service of God it becomes a blessing. Undoubtedly much of modern thinking is hostile to the gospel. Such hostile elements should be refuted and destroyed; the rest should be made subservient; but nothing should be neglected. Modern culture is a mighty force; it is either helpful to the gospel or else it is a deadly enemy of the gospel. For making it helpful neither wholesale denunciation nor wholesale acceptance is in place; careful discrimination is required, and such discrimination requires intellectual effort. There lies a supreme duty of the modern Church. Patient study should not be abandoned to the men of the world; men who have really received the blessed experience of the love of God in Christ must seek to bring that experience to bear upon the culture of the modern world, in order that Christ may rule, not only in all nations, but also in every department of human life. The Church must seek to conquer not only every man, but also the whole of man. Such intellectual effort is really necessary even to the external advancement of the kingdom. Men cannot be convinced of the truth of Christianity so long as the whole of their thinking is dominated by ideas which make acceptance of the gospel logically impossible; false ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. And false ideas cannot be destroyed without intellectual effort.

Such effort is indeed of itself insufficient. No man was ever argued into Christianity; the renewing of the Holy Spirit is the

really decisive thing. But the Spirit works when and how he will, and he chooses to employ the intellectual activities of Christian people in order to prepare for his gracious coming.

2. THE APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE

Abundant support for what has just been said may be discovered in the history of the apostolic Church. Paul's speech at Athens, for example, shows how the Christian preacher exhibited the connection between the gospel and the religious aspirations of the time. This line of thought, it is true, was merely preliminary; the main thing with which the apostles were concerned was the presentation and explanation of the gospel itself. Such presentation and explanation, however, certainly required intellectual effort; and the effort was not avoided. The epistles of Paul are full of profound thinking; only superficiality can ignore the apostolic use of the intellect.

(1) Christianity Based Upon Facts.—The fundamental reason why this intellectual activity was so prominent in the apostolic age is that the apostles thought of Christianity as based upon facts. Modern Christians sometimes cherish a different notion. A false antithesis is now sometimes set up between belief and practice; Christianity, it is said, is not a doctrine, but a life. In reality, Christianity is not only a doctrine, but neither is it only a life; it is both. It is, as has been well said, a life because it is a doctrine. What is characteristic of Christianity is not so much that it holds up a lofty ethical ideal as that it provides the power by which the ideal is to be realized. That power proceeds from the great facts upon which Christian belief is founded, especially the blessed facts of Christ's atoning death and triumphant resurrection. Where belief in these facts has been lost, the Christian life may seem to proceed for a time as before, but it proceeds only as a locomotive runs after the steam has been shut off; the momentum is soon lost. If, however, Christianity is based upon facts, it cannot do without the use of the mind; whatever may be said of mere emotions, facts cannot be received without employment of the reason. Christian faith is indeed more than intellectual; it involves rejoicing in the heart and acceptance by the will, but the intellectual element in it can never be removed. We cannot trust in Christ, in the Christian sense, unless we are convinced that he lived a holy life when he was on earth, that he claimed justly to be divine, that he died on the cross, and that he rose again from the dead.

(2) **Christianity Involves Theology.**—Furthermore, Christian faith involves not only a bare acceptance of these facts, it involves also some explanation of them. That explanation can never be complete; the gospel contains mysteries in the presence of which only wondering reverence is in place; but some explanation there must be. It is quite useless, for example, to know merely that a holy man, Jesus, died on the cross; it is even useless to know that the Son of God came to earth and died in that way. The death of Christ has meaning for us only because it was a death for our sins; the story of the cross becomes a gospel only when the blessed meaning of it is explained. The explanation of that meaning forms the subject of a large part of the New Testament. The apostolic Church had none of our modern aversion to theology.

It is time for us to return to the apostolic example. Mere bustling philanthropy will never conquer the world. The real springs of the Church's power lie in an inward, spiritual realm; they can be reached only by genuine meditation. The eighth chapter of Romans has been neglected long enough; neglect of it is bringing deadly weakness. Instead of adapting her message to the changing fashions of the time, the Church should seek to understand the message itself. The effort will not be easy; in a "practical" age, honest thinking is hard. But the results will be plain. Power lies in the deep things of God.

(3) **The Duty of Every Man.**—The great intellectual duty of the modern Church is not confined to a few men of scholarly tastes. On the contrary, the simplest Christian may have his part; what is needed first of all is common sense. By an unhealthy sentimentalism, old-fashioned study has been discredited. If God is speaking in the Bible, surely the logical thing for us to do is to hear. Yet modern Christians are strangely neglectful of this simple duty. Bible study is regarded as of less importance than social service; improvement of earthly conditions is preferred to acquaintance with God's Word. The evil may easily be corrected, and it may be corrected first of all by the old-fashioned reading of the Bible. That requires intellectual effort—there is no use in turning the pages if the mind is elsewhere—but the effort can be made by the plain man as well as by the scholar. Simple acquaintance with the Bible facts by the rank and file of the Church will accomplish as much as anything else toward meeting the arguments of opponents. By learning what Christianity is, we shall be able, almost unconsciously, to refute what can be said against it.

3. THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH

This intellectual effort, however, should never be separated from practice. The best way to fix truth in the mind is to practice it in life. If our study teaches us that God is holy, let us hate sin as God hates it. If we learn that God is loving, let us love our fellow men as God loves them. If the Bible tells us of the salvation offered by Christ, let us accept it with a holy joy, and live in the power of it day by day. That is the true "practical Christianity", a Christianity that is based solidly upon facts. Conduct goes hand in hand with doctrine; love is the sister of truth.

4. GOD THE SOURCE OF TRUTH

The ultimate Source of all truth, as of all love, is God. The knowledge for which we are pleading can never result in pride, for it is a knowledge that God gives, and a knowledge consecrated at every point to God's service. Presumptuous reliance upon human wisdom comes from knowledge that ignores part of the facts; true science leads to humility. If we accept all other facts, but ignore the supreme fact of God's love in Jesus Christ, then of course our knowledge will be one-sided. It may succeed in producing creature comforts; it may improve the external conditions of life upon this earth; it may afford purely intellectual pleasure; but it will never reveal the really important things. This one-sided knowledge is what Paul was speaking of in I Cor. 1 : 21 when he said that "the world through its wisdom knew not God." The true wisdom takes account of the "foolishness" of God's message, and finds that that foolishness is wiser than men. The true wisdom of the gospel is revealed only through the Holy Spirit; only the Spirit of God can reveal the things of God. Without the Spirit, the human mind becomes hopeless in dismal error; it is the Spirit of truth who sheds the true light over our path.

"O grant us light, that we may know
The wisdom Thou alone canst give;
That truth may guide where'er we go,
And virtue bless where'er we live."

IN THE LIBRARY.—Patton, "A Summary of Christian Doctrine." Greene, "Christian Doctrine." A. A. Hodge, "Outlines of Theology" and "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes."

LESSON LI

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE AND THE PRESENT POSSESSION

A type of religious effort has become prevalent to-day which is directed chiefly to the present life; the improvement of worldly conditions is often regarded as the chief end of man. All such tendencies are strikingly at variance with apostolic Christianity. The apostolic Church was intensely other-worldly. The chief gift that the apostles offered was not a better and more comfortable life in this world, but an entrance into heaven.

1. THE END OF THE WORLD

Only the great outlines of the events connected with the end of the world are revealed in the New Testament. Minute details cannot be discovered except by an excessively literal method of interpretation, which is not really in accord with the meaning of the apostolic writers. Some have supposed, for example, that there are to be two resurrections, first a resurrection of the Christian dead and long afterwards a resurrection of other men; expectation of a thousand-year reign of Christ upon earth has been widely prevalent. Such beliefs are not to be lightly rejected, since they are based upon an interpretation of certain New Testament passages which is not altogether devoid of plausibility; but on the whole they are at least doubtful in view of other passages, and especially in view of the true nature of prophecy. God has revealed, not details to satisfy our curiosity, but certain basal facts which should determine our lives.

Those basal facts, connected with the end of the world, are a second coming of Christ, a resurrection of the dead, a final judgment, an eternity of punishment for the wicked and of blessing for those who have trusted in Christ. It is not maintained that these facts stand absolutely alone; certainly they are fully explained, at least in their spiritual significance; but the devout Bible-reader should be cautious about his interpretation of details.

2. FEAR AND JOY

The practical effect of the apostolic teaching about the end of the world should be a combination of earnestness with joy. A man

who lives under the expectation of meeting Christ as Judge will desert the worldly standard of values for a higher standard. He will rate happiness and worldly splendor lower, in order to place the supreme emphasis upon goodness. The difference between evil and good, between sin and holiness, is not a trifle, not a thing of merely relative importance, as many men regard it; it enters deep into the constitution of the universe, it is the question of really eternal moment. Again and again, in the New Testament, the thought of Christ's coming and of the judgment which he will hold is made the supreme motive to a pure and holy life. The apostolic example may well be borne in mind. When we are tempted to commit a mean or dishonest or unclean act, when unholy thoughts crowd in upon us like a noisome flood, we cannot do better than think of the day when we shall stand in the presence of the pure and holy Judge.

On the other hand, the thought of Christ's coming is to the believer the source of inexpressible joy. Christ has saved us from a terrible abyss. Our joy in salvation is in proportion to our dread of the destruction from which we have been saved. To the truly penitent man, the thought of the righteous God is full of terror. God is holy; we would sometimes endeavor vainly to shrink from his presence. Yet such a God has stretched out his hand to save—there is the wonder of the gospel—and if we trust in the Saviour the last great day need cause no fear. We are lost in sin, but God looks not upon us but upon him who died to save us. "Salvation" to the apostolic Church meant "rescue," rescue from the just and awful judgment of God.

3. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

The time of that judgment has not been revealed, but so far as any offer of repentance is concerned the time comes to every man at death. One question of detail cannot altogether be ignored. What did the apostles teach about the condition of the believer between death and the final resurrection? Upon this subject, the New Testament says very little, but it becomes clear at least that the believer, even when absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord, II Cor. 5 : 8, and that to die is to be with Christ. Phil. 1 : 23. On the whole, no better statement of the apostolic teaching about the "intermediate state" can be formulated than that which is contained in the Shorter Catechism: "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into

glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection." The hope of an immediate entrance into bliss at the time of death should not be allowed, however, to obscure the importance of the resurrection. The resurrection of the body will be necessary to "the full enjoying of God to all eternity."

4. THE FINAL BLESSEDNESS

That enjoying of God is no mere selfish pleasure; it means first of all a triumph of holiness. Every last vestige of evil will be removed. No taint of sin will separate the redeemed creature from his God. Service will be free and joyous. The consummation, moreover, will concern not merely individuals, but the race; no mere expectation of the personal immortality of individuals begins to do justice to the apostolic teaching. The ultimate end, indeed, is not our own enjoyment, but the glory of God. Some carnal, materialistic conceptions of the future age would really remove God from his own heaven, but such is not the teaching of the New Testament. God will be all and in all; only in his glory is to be found the true glory of a redeemed race. The power of loving God is the highest joy that heaven contains.

5. THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT

The present age, according to the New Testament, is a time of waiting and striving; it is related to the future glory as a battle is related to the subsequent victory. Satisfaction with the present life, even as it is led by the best of Christians, would to the apostles have been abhorrent; the Christian is still far from perfect. A prime condition of progress is a divine discontent. Jesus pronounced a blessing upon them that "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Eternal things to us are unseen; they can be discovered only by the eye of faith; we long for a time when hope will be supplanted by sight. Nevertheless, there is no room for despondency; the blessed time is surely coming.

Its coming is rendered certain by the presence, here and now, of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit may be relied upon to prepare us, both in soul and in body, for the glory of heaven.

(1) **The Spirit in the Old Testament and in the Life of Jesus.**—The Spirit of God was mentioned even in the Old Testament. At the beginning he "moved upon the face of the waters," Gen. 1 : 2; he was the source of the mighty deeds of heroes and of the prophets' inspired words. In the life and teaching of Jesus, however, the

Spirit was far more fully revealed than he had ever been revealed before. He was the source of Jesus' human nature, Matt. 1 : 18, 20; Luke 1 : 35; he descended upon the newly proclaimed Messiah, Matt. 3 : 16, and was operative in all the earthly ministry of the Lord.

(2) **The Spirit in the Church.**—For the disciples, however, the full glory of the Spirit's presence was manifested only after Jesus himself had been taken up into heaven; the present age, from Pentecost to the second coming of the Lord, is peculiarly the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Discontent with the Church's imperfections and dismay at her many adversaries should never cause us to lose confidence in the work that is being done by the Spirit of God. It was expedient that Jesus should go away; through the other "Comforter" whom he has sent, he manifests himself even more gloriously than he did to the disciples in Galilee.

(3) **The Nature of the Spirit.**—The apostles never discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in any thoroughly systematic way. But two great facts are really presupposed in the whole New Testament. In the first place, the Holy Spirit is God, and in the second place he is a person distinct from the Father and from the Son. The divinity of the Spirit appears, for example, in I Cor. 2 : 11. The point of that verse is that the Spirit is as closely related to God as the human spirit is to a man. "For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God." The distinct personality of the Spirit appears with special clearness in Rom. 8 : 26, 27. There the Spirit is represented as making intercession with him "that searcheth the hearts"; the one who intercedes is personally distinct from him before whom he makes intercession. Even more convincing, perhaps, is the great promise of Christ in John 14 : 16, 17, 26; 15 : 26; 16 : 7-15, where the other "Comforter" is spoken of in clearly personal terms and is distinguished both from the Father and from the Son. Personal distinctness, however, is not inconsistent with a perfect unity of nature. What the Spirit does the Son and the Father do; when the other Comforter comes to the Church, Christ himself comes. The doctrine of the "Trinity" is a profound mystery, but its mysteriousness is no obstacle to the acceptance of its truth. Mystery in the depths of God's nature is surely to be expected. This mystery, taught by the pen of inspired writers, has brought salvation and peace into the lives of men. Distinctly Trinitarian passages, such as Matt. 28 : 19; II Cor. 13 : 14, are merely the summation of the

New Testament teaching about God, and that teaching has worked itself out in unspeakable blessing in the life of the Church.

(4) **The Work of the Spirit.**—A complete summary of the belief of the apostolic Church about the work of the Holy Spirit would be impossible in one brief lesson. The Christian life is begun by the Spirit, and continued by his beneficent power. Conversion, according to Jesus and his apostles, is only the manward aspect of a profound change in the depths of the soul. That change is "regeneration," a new birth. Christian experience is no mere improvement of existing conditions, but the entrance of something entirely new. Man is not merely sick in trespasses and sins, but "dead"; only a new birth will bring life. That new birth is a mysterious, creative act of the Spirit of God. John 3 : 3-8.

But the Spirit does not leave those whom he has regenerated to walk alone; he dwells in them and enables them to overcome sin. The motive of his work is love. He is no blind force, but a loving Person; the Christian can enjoy a real communion with him as with the Father and the Son. In the presence of the Spirit we have communion with God; the Persons of the Godhead are united in a manner far beyond all human analogies. There is no imperfect medium separating us from the divine presence; by the gracious work of the Holy Spirit we come into vital contact with the living God.

The Spirit is the ground and cause of Christian freedom. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." II Cor. 3 : 17. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Rom. 8 : 14, 15. This liberty that the Spirit brings is, however, not a liberty to sin; it is liberation from sin. The body of the Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit; in that temple only purity is in place. The inward power of the Holy Spirit in the heart is more powerful than the law; if a man yields to that power he will overcome the flesh; the law of God is fulfilled by those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

IN THE LIBRARY.—Vos, "The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church." Crane, "The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Holy Spirit." Swete, "The Holy Spirit in the New Testament." Thomas, "The Holy Spirit of God."

LESSON LII

RETROSPECT: THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CENTURY

The apostolic example can be applied intelligently to the problems of our time only if there be some understanding of the intervening centuries. We are connected with the apostolic Church by an unbroken succession. A study of Church history would help us to apply the New Testament teaching to our own age.

The Christian writings which have been preserved from the early part of the second century show a marked decline from the spiritual level of the apostles. Evidently the special inspiration which had made the New Testament a guide for all ages had been withdrawn. Yet the Spirit of God continued to lead the Church. Even in the darkest periods of Church history God did not forget his people.

Only scanty Christian writings have been preserved from the first three-quarters of the second century; the extant works of the so-called "Apostolic Fathers" and of the "Apologists" are of limited extent. About the close of the century, however, the record becomes more complete. Clement of Alexandria, Irenæus of Asia Minor and Gaul, and Tertullian of North Africa, give a varied picture of the Christian life of the time. The Church had gained rapidly in influence since the conclusion of the apostolic age; persecutions had not succeeded in checking her advance. Finally, under Constantine, in the first part of the fourth century, Christianity became the favored religion of the Roman Empire.

About the same time, in A. D. 325, the first ecumenical council, at Nicæa, undertook the work of formulating the belief of the Church. The creeds which were adopted at the great ancient councils are accepted to-day in all parts of Christendom. During the same general period, the power of the bishop of Rome was gradually increased until it culminated in the papacy.

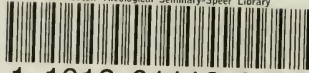
After the conquest of the western part of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, Christianity was accepted by the barbarian conquerors, and during the dark ages that followed the Church preserved the light of learning and piety until a better day should dawn. During the middle ages, though there was for the most

part little originality in Christian thinking, great scholars and theologians formed striking exceptions to the general condition. The political power of the papacy became enormous, but was hindered by the personal weakness and immorality of many of the popes. The degraded moral and spiritual condition of the Church was counteracted here and there by the establishment of monastic orders, whose purpose at the beginning was good, by the writings of certain mystics, and by the work of the three "pre-reformers," Wyclif in England, Huss in Bohemia and Savonarola in Italy.

A genuine advance, however, did not come until the Reformation of the fifteenth century, when Luther in Germany and Zwingli in Switzerland, almost at the same time and at first independently, became the leaders in a mighty protest. A little later Calvin carried out the principles of the Reformation in a comprehensive theological system, and by the power of his intellect and the fervency of his piety exerted an enormous influence throughout the world. The Reformation was distinctly a religious movement, though it had been prepared for by that revival of learning which is called the Renaissance. The work of Luther was a rediscovery of Paul. Not the performance of a set of external acts prescribed by the Church, but, as Paul taught, the grace of God received by faith alone, is, according to Luther, the means of salvation.

The Reformation brought about a counter-reformation in the Roman Catholic Church, and the western European world was finally divided between the two great branches of Christendom. After a period of controversy and wars between Protestants and Catholics, the Church was called upon to fight a great battle against unbelief. That battle, begun in its modern form about the middle of the eighteenth century, continues unabated until the present day. We are living in a time of intellectual changes. To maintain the truth of the gospel at such a time and to present it faithfully and intelligently to the modern world is the supreme task of the Church. The task to some extent has been accomplished; and the missionary movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries attests the vitality of the ancient faith. God has not deserted his Church. There are enemies without and within, compromise will surely bring disaster; but the gospel of Christ has not lost its power. This is not the first time of discouragement in the history of the Church. The darkest hour has always been followed by the dawn. Who can tell what God has now in store?

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