

ARTICLE II.

CHRIST AND PAUL.

BY REV. J. H. MOLLVAINÉ, D.D., NEWARK, N.J.

It is evident, even to a cursory reader of the New Testament, that there are differences between our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostle Paul with respect to the verbal and intellectual forms in which they set forth the truths of the gospel. These differences are regarded by all Christians, of course, not as involving anything of the nature of inconsistency, but as pertaining merely to forms of presentation; yet the more they are contemplated the more striking and significant they become. We propose, therefore, to examine them with some attention, in order to elicit their meaning, if they have any which can help us to a better understanding of revealed truth.

The general characteristics of the Lord's teaching to which we refer are the following: He reveals the truths of the spiritual world on his own absolute authority, as intuitively perceived by himself, with the least possible resort to logical processes, in concrete forms, and highly figurative language: "Never man spake like this man. . . . For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." He seldom refers to the preceding Scriptures, and then, as it would seem, quite as much for the purpose of confirming the truth of their declarations as that of his own. He does not hesitate to supersede their deliverances, upon occasion, by new revelations, as in the case of the Mosaic laws of marriage and divorce. He seems carefully to avoid abstractions and definitions. Figures and symbols of various kinds and great boldness abound in his discourses, which he seldom interprets, and then evidently without aiming at exactness or precision. He never explains how far his similitudes are to be carried.

The sublime truths which he throws out with almost every breath he leaves, without precise boundaries and necessary qualifications, to work as vital principles their own effects and consequences in human life. Such are the parables of the unjust steward, the unjust judge, the friend of whom one came to borrow bread at midnight, and the following words: "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Evidently he feels no solicitude or concern for the systematic harmony of the truths which he delivers, although they are often so remote from each other that they have the appearance of being inconsistent or contradictory. The following are examples: "I and my Father are one. . . . My Father is greater than I. . . . There is none good but one, that is God. . . . Which of you convinceth me of sin? . . . Ye will not come to me that ye might have life. . . . No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him. . . . All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. . . . To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give. . . . No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." Hence these and similar antinomies in our Lord's teaching have proved the fruitful germs of vast and hostile systems of theology. But so rigorously does he himself abstain from all attempts at systematization that even such words as regeneration, justification, and sanctification, together with their verbal forms, he hardly ever uses, and never, as it would seem, to express those defined theological ideas which they commonly represent in the writings of Paul. In his mouth they have a free and popular sense, as in the following quotations: "By thy words thou shalt be justified. . . . I sanctify myself. . . . Ye which have followed me in the regeneration." In the place of justification by faith, or being accepted as righteous, as this form of doctrine stands in Paul, he everywhere insists upon the forgiveness of sins and the more comprehensive form of salvation by faith: "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. . . . He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. . . . If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die

in your sins." In fine, he rather assumes by implication than enunciates the doctrines of the divine decrees, foreordination, and election, which, in the writings of Paul are carefully stated, copiously developed, and variously applied.

In all these and many other particulars of form, the teaching of the Master differs from that of his great apostle. For Paul appeals to the preceding Scriptures, and to Christ himself, as ultimate authorities, not only for his readers, but also for his own mind. He delivers the truth in abstract, rather than in concrete forms. His language is hardly more figurative or symbolical than was unavoidable. He interprets and applies the types and symbols of the Old Testament; but he does not teach by parables or allegories of his own. He is eminently systematic, argumentative, and logical. He delights in abstruse processes of reasoning, and canvasses with great rigor the objections which arise against his doctrines. He strongly insists upon the harmony of the whole scheme of revealed truth, both in itself and with the providential history of the people of God from Abraham to his own time; and he takes special pains to reconcile the legal dispensation under Moses with the doctrines of salvation by grace and faith as revealed in germ to Abraham, taught by Christ, and elaborated by himself. But above all, he lays the greatest stress upon the divine decrees, predestination, election, and justification by faith; which last he evidently regards as the most important form of truth for the object which he has in view, since it is the theme of his most labored epistles, and the substratum itself of all his writings.

Such, in general, without taking into account the qualifications which these statements may require, are the most obvious differences in form between the teaching of Christ and that of Paul, as represented in the reported words of the one and in the extant writings of the other. How are we to understand them? And how do they help us to a better appreciation of revealed truth? These are the questions which we have now to consider.

For our present purpose, however, it is hardly necessary

to observe that the absolute authority claimed by our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficiently accounted for by the orthodox doctrine of his divinity; whilst Paul, as his disciple and apostle, could not do otherwise than recognize the authority of his Master, and of the Scriptures as inspired by his Spirit — all the more, indeed, as he himself was under the same inspiration. Perhaps, also, some of these differences may be explained by the peculiarities of Paul's mental constitution and education, which, as in the case of the other sacred writers, his inspiration certainly did not obliterate. But most of those which have been indicated cannot be disposed of in this summary way, but must be regarded as having a deeper significance. Accordingly, some sceptical authors have maintained that they are not merely differences of form, but of essential doctrine; moreover, that in the history of the church the doctrinal system of the disciple has prevailed over, or thrown into the shade, the unsystematic teaching of the Master. Hence what we call Christianity they call Paulinism. We may find hereafter that this error, as in most other cases, is not without a shadow of truth. Others, who cannot be classed with sceptics, would account for these differences by the statement that Christ was the originator of Christianity, and Paul was its first great philosophical expounder. Among Christians, however, it seems to be the most received explanation that there is a progress of revelation in the New Testament, such that what Christ delivered in germ or principle Paul develops, formulates, and systematizes. In confirmation of this view, which differs but little from the preceding, the following declarations of the Lord are cited: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. . . . He will show you things to come. . . . He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." It is claimed that these and similar passages contain a promise of a more full and complete revelation than was given by the Lord himself, which, accordingly, we are supposed to have in the subsequent writings of his apostles.

We are constrained to reject all these explanations — the first, as sceptical and false, having but a single grain of truth to render it plausible ; the second, as savoring of rationalism, and, together with the third, as inadequate to account for the facts, and as otherwise objectionable. For they supply us with no good reason why those particular doctrines to which Christ only alludes should have been so treated by him, nor why the same doctrines should have been so strenuously insisted on by Paul. Justification by faith can hardly be conceived of as among those things which the disciples could not receive from the lips of the Divine Master ; since all the difficulties which it involves are quite as palpable in the doctrine of salvation by faith, upon which he everywhere insists. Nor is there anything hard to be received in Paul's treatment of the decrees, foreordination, and election, which is not contained in the teaching of Christ wherever he assumes or alludes to these mysterious doctrines. Still less satisfactory, if possible, are these views as an explanation of the Lord's unsystematic and figurative presentation of the truth, and of those startling antinomies with which it abounds ; for we find in these much greater difficulties than any which Paul has left us in his systematic and harmonized scheme of doctrine. But the strongest objection to such progress of revelation in the New Testament is, that it represents the highest — in fact, the only absolute and final — forms of the truth as delivered to us not in the words of the Master himself, but in those of his disciples ; so that we are dependent upon them, rather than upon him, for our last and best instruction in the knowledge of God and divine things. Now this, which might be accepted in the case of a merely human teacher, — Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle, for example, — is totally inadmissible in that of the incarnate Word and Wisdom of God, to whom, in teaching as in everything else, pre-eminence ought to be ascribed. Moreover, it seems to be inconsistent with that relation of personal trust and dependence upon him for salvation from error, as well as from all the other evils of sin, by which we become partakers of

his fulness, and in which none of his disciples, howsoever plenarily inspired, can stand in his place. Nor do his words which are cited in proof of such progress require to be so interpreted. For evidently the principal truth which they were intended to declare is, that the Holy Spirit should open the minds of the disciples to a more full reception and realization of the revelations which Christ had communicated to them, and which hitherto they had but very imperfectly comprehended. The declaration, "He shall . . . bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you," may properly be understood to qualify and explain whatever stands in the same connection. Moreover, the interpretation of these promises in the sense of a progressive revelation requires that they should be limited to the inspired apostles and writers of the subsequent Scriptures; otherwise they give assurance of divine inspiration extending beyond the apostles, and, for aught that appears, to the whole church in all subsequent ages. But no one has ever dared to maintain that they admit of any such limitation; for that would be inconsistent with the account which is given us of their fulfilment on the Day of Pentecost, and with the gift of the Spirit as enjoyed by all Christians. Consequently the interpretation which requires that they should be so limited cannot be maintained. We shall see hereafter what a disastrous influence this notion has exerted upon theology and the whole life of the church, by which, among other things, it has rendered colorable the charge of her enemies, that her actual faith is Paulinism, rather than Christianity.

These and similar errors upon this subject seem to be connected with false or inadequate views of the nature of spiritual truth, especially with respect to its higher and lower, its more or less symbolical forms, in which, for different purposes, it is capable of being, and often requires to be expressed. But their principal source is the failure to discriminate the object of Christ's teaching from that which Paul had in view, especially in his elaborate discussions with his countrymen. For it has been commonly assumed that

these objects were the same, not only in their general character, but also in their more special aspects, in which it will devolve upon us to show that they were very different. Hence, in order to refute these errors, and to disclose what seems to be the true significance of these differences, we shall endeavor to evince that the object of the Lord's teaching was of a paramount nature, according to the pre-eminence of his person and character, namely, to reveal the truths of the spiritual world in their highest and most adequate forms, for the satisfaction of the spiritual wants of mankind; and that the object which Paul had in view, in his principal writings, was of a subordinate and limited nature, suitably to his position and character as the disciple of a Master, namely, to present these truths in forms specially adapted to meet Jewish difficulties, and to convince the Jewish mind.

We proceed, then, to consider the evidence that this was the special object of the Apostle's principal writings, and that to it the differential characteristics of his mode of presenting the truth are chiefly due.

But here, at the outset, we are met with the objection, which immediately occurs to every one, that Paul was the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and the actual founder of nearly all the first Gentile churches. How, then, is it possible that he should have been so powerfully influenced by any peculiar relation to his countrymen? But this objection, which seems at first sight as if it might be insuperable, will be found, upon closer scrutiny, to confirm what we have undertaken to prove. For the people of the Jews at that time, just as they are now, were dispersed abroad throughout the civilized world. It has been estimated that there were forty thousand of them in Antioch, two hundred and fifty thousand in Alexandria, upwards of a million in the whole of Egypt, and an unknown multitude in Rome. There was hardly a Gentile city of any importance which had not its Jewish synagogue. Hence, wherever the Apostle of the Gentiles was led in his missionary travels he found there a colony of his countrymen and co-religionists, among whom it was his

custom, as it was evidently a dictate of wisdom and common sense, to commence his missionary labors. For in preaching to them he had the immense advantages of a common descent and nationality, a common acquaintance with the Hebrew language and history, and a common appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures. But above all these, that long course of divine training and preparation for the advent of their Messiah and the gospel dispensation, to which the children of Israel had been subjected, under their ritual and moral laws, the ministry of their prophets, their civil and religious institutions, and their providential history, was now finished, and its fruit was ripe. In so far, therefore, as this divine scheme of national education had proved a success, were they better prepared to understand and appreciate the gospel than were the Gentiles among whom they dwelt, and who had enjoyed no such training. Hence the first thing which Paul in his work of planting the Gentile churches had to do, was to adapt his teaching to meet the difficulties and win the faith of his countrymen. Nor does the character of his principal writings differ materially from that of his preaching. For in this way it came to pass that the first churches among the Gentiles were chiefly composed of Jewish converts. The proof of this, which will be more fully unfolded in the sequel, is, that they manifested a constant tendency or proneness to lose their hold upon the distinctive truths of the gospel, and to relapse into Judaism. For this acknowledged fact is not sufficiently accounted for by the hypothesis of Judaizing teachers having crept in among them. Such teachers would never have been able to persuade Gentiles, with all their inveterate contempt for Jewish rites, to be circumcised. Hence, as from this point of view we might anticipate, the longest and most elaborate of Paul's epistles to these churches, namely, those to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Hebrews — if this last is to be ascribed to him — consist, in whole or in great part, of arguments to refute Judaizing errors, and of such presentations of the gospel as were evidently intended, as they were eminently

adapted, to meet the objections and win the faith of the Jewish mind.

We proceed now to consider the evidence in these three epistles—though such evidence is by no means confined to them—that it was a special object with Paul to present the truths of the gospel in forms adapted to the spiritual wants of those who had been trained under the Mosaic law, rather than of those upon whom it had never exerted its all-moulding influence. For in this object we shall find the source of those peculiarities in his teaching which have been indicated, by which it differs from that of Christ, as also, though in a less degree, from that of all the other inspired writers. Nor need we be surprised if it should appear that these Pauline forms of truth, the object of which was of a subordinate and limited nature, have not that universal adaptation to the spiritual wants of mankind which has been commonly ascribed to them, and which, as we shall see, is eminently characteristic of the gospel as delivered by the Lord himself.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, as we might anticipate, affords us the clearest and most palpable evidence. For even upon the supposition of some eminent authorities that it was not written by Paul, it yet evinces, in the most striking manner, how fully the necessity of commending the gospel to the Jews was recognized, and how deeply some other inspired author sympathised with him, and shared in his labors for the accomplishment of this object. Accordingly it is addressed to the Hebrews, in distinction from the Gentiles, and is wholly occupied with arguments and exhortations adapted to meet their difficulties, and to settle their minds in the faith of the gospel. With this object ever in view the author discusses a number of subjects which were of vital importance to them, but of secondary or no interest at all for others. Among these is the question whether Christ was the Messiah of the Old Testament Scriptures, which was one for those who had been educated Jews, rather than for others, because the authority of these Scriptures could not

be assumed with the heathen, and because the form under which Christ could be most fitly offered to the Gentiles was not that of the Jewish Messiah, but that of Jesus, the Saviour of mankind, who had been crucified and raised from the dead. Hence we see that Paul himself, in his sermon to an Athenian audience in the hall of the Areopagus, assumed nothing from the Scriptures, and said nothing about the Messiah as such, but "preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection."

Another question which is argued at great length in this Epistle is, whether the priesthood of Christ was superior to that of Aaron and the house of Levi, which also was one in which none but Jews, or Jewish converts, could feel any direct or vital interest. For whatever might be the errors to which the rest of mankind were liable, they could never fall into this, that the Levitical priesthood was superior to that of Christ. What they needed was to be convinced that the mediation and sacrifices of their own heathen priests had no validity or efficacy to atone for their sins, or to reconcile them to God. A third question, though inseparable from the preceding, which occupies a great part of this Epistle, leads to the following conclusions, namely, that the ritual law, with its tabernacle and temple worship, its priesthood and sacrifices, was not of permanent obligation, but was typical and temporary in its nature and design — "a shadow of good things to come"; that it had now been fulfilled and superseded by the mediation and sacrifice of Christ, which alone had an eternal efficacy "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Now, although this presentation contains what is of fundamental importance for all men — for how could it express the truth of the gospel in any form if it did not? — yet, in its immediate design and adaptation, it concerned the Jews only, and was directed against errors to which they alone were liable. For the rest of mankind had never believed in the Mosaic ritual or sacrifices, and no obstacle to their faith in Christ could possibly arise from this source.

The same view is to be taken of all the Jewish errors which are controverted throughout this Epistle; they could present no temptation to the Gentiles, who had not been trained under the law of Moses. Consequently these elaborate arguments and eloquent exhortations against apostasy to Judaism, and the Epistle itself, in so far as it is occupied with such questions as these, can have little more than an historical and secondary interest for mankind at large. It is not here, then, that we are to look for those forms of gospel truth which are best adapted to satisfy the spiritual wants of the human race.

The evidence in the Epistle to the Galatians, unquestionably written by Paul, though not so obvious, is of still greater importance and weight. For these churches of Galatia had been established in the midst of a colony of Gauls or Celts, who had been settled for several centuries in Asia Minor, whose ethnic character and modes of thought were as remote as possible from those of the Jews, and where least of all we should have anticipated that a tendency to Jewish errors would have manifested itself. But even these churches, as it appears, were chiefly composed of converts from Judaism, in whom this tendency was so strong that it threatened to subvert their faith in the very principles of the gospel. For this Epistle is one elaborate argument from beginning to end against Judaism, which it represents as having "bewitched" the Galatian Christians. And the principal error against which the apostle here directs his battery is, that circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic law were still necessary to acceptance with God. In order to drive this obstinate delusion out of their minds, he labors to convince them that they had been once and forever emancipated from the yoke of the law by the mediation and sacrifice of Christ; that by faith in him alone they were justified from all their offences against the law; and he solemnly warns them that if they continued to depend upon their ritual observances now that these were abolished, they would frustrate, in so far as they themselves were concerned, all the promises and blessings

of the gospel: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you? . . . Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. . . . Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing. . . . Christ has become of no effect unto you." Now, it is true that errors are here represented to which human nature itself is ever liable, and there are profound gospel truths here set forth which can never lose their interest or importance; yet is it abundantly evident that in this whole discussion it was Paul's direct and immediate aim to refute these errors under peculiar forms to which his countrymen alone were exposed, and to exhibit these truths in special adaptation to meet their difficulties and to establish their faith. For who else but Jews could ever have fallen into the error that circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic law were necessary to salvation? Consequently we are not obliged to accept these special forms of the truth as those which are best adapted to the spiritual wants of mankind at large.

We have touched lightly, however, upon this Epistle to the Galatians, because in its theme and object it is identical with the Epistle to the Romans, and many of its arguments are substantially the same. This latter we shall examine more particularly, because it is the longest, most elaborate, and every way most important of all the apostle's extant writings; in which, therefore, we may expect to find the clearest evidence of the degree of prominence given in his teachings to the special object which has been indicated, and of the influence which this object exerted to mould and shape the forms in which he presents the gospel.

We observe, then, that although this Epistle was written by Paul in his character of the Apostle to the Gentiles, to a church which had been established in the centre and capital

of the Gentile world, yet, like that to the Galatians, it consists chiefly of arguments to refute Judaizing errors, and of such presentations of gospel truth as were evidently intended and adapted to win and establish the faith of those who had Jewish difficulties to overcome. These arguments with his countrymen he commences about the middle of the second chapter, and carries them on, with more or less of interruption, nearly to the close of the eleventh; so that they run through the whole Epistle, except the introduction and the exhortations and greetings with which it concludes. It is true, he sometimes turns aside from the main drift of his discourse to address and instruct the Gentiles, who must have constituted some portion at least of the church at Rome, yet what he says in such passages is evidently intended quite as much for the edification of his countrymen. Such, for example, are his declarations that the rest of the world were included in the object and promises of the gospel together with the covenant people, and that blindness in part had happened unto Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in. For the latter of these statements was one of interest chiefly for those who stood in danger of perishing from this blindness. Throughout the Epistle his special object — the instruction and salvation of his countrymen — is never lost sight of for a moment; his direct address is preferably to them; and the deepest and most tender interest which he represents himself as having at heart is that they might be saved. We have sufficient evidence of this in the following quotations, which might be almost indefinitely multiplied:

“ Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast in God, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law. . . . Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? . . . I say, then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid. . . . What shall we say, then, that Abraham our father . . . hath found? . . . What advantage, then, hath the

Jew? and what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God. . . . Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. . . . For I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came."

Thus he proceeds through the body of the Epistle, with his direct address preferably to his own countrymen, expressing his deepest interest in their welfare, and making it a special object to refute their errors and to present the gospel in adaptation to their peculiar states of mind which had resulted from their training under the law. For here, also, as in the Epistle to the Galatians, the principal error against which he has to contend is that of reliance upon the law as the ground of acceptance with God. In order to undermine and overthrow this legality, he proves that the Jews, from the imperfection of their obedience and their many grievous violations of the law, which thundered its penalties against every transgression, had no claim whatever to its righteousness, but were necessarily under its condemnation, and as hopelessly lost as the Gentiles themselves: "What then? Are we better than they? No, in nowise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." Consequently there rested upon them an overwhelming necessity to find some other way of attaining to righteousness, since that of their own obedience was forever closed against them. Here, then, as also in the Epistle to the Galatians, in formal argument with his countrymen, in his efforts to reach and convince their minds, Paul lays himself out to establish the doctrine of justification by faith; in other words, that of the attainment of righteousness without the works of the law by faith alone in Christ: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ."

Accordingly, one of his strongest arguments, which must have had overwhelming force with Jews, is, that Abraham himself, their great forefather and covenant head, had been justified without the works of "the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after," and before he was circumcised, thus becoming the father of all the faithful: "Faith was reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness, . . . being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe." Consequently they were no longer under the law, but were forever delivered from its claims as a condition of their acceptance and peace with God: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Ye are not under the law, but under grace."

But, now, this great truth of their deliverance from the law which had been ordained by God himself with prodigious signs and wonders, because it was one which the Jews, after their fifteen hundred years' training under legal ordinances, must find extremely difficult to comprehend or receive, the apostle goes on to elaborate at great length, and with all his unrivalled force of argument and illustration. Their relation to the law he compares with that of a woman to her husband, and labors to convince them that by the sacrifice of Christ they were as completely emancipated from its claims as the woman is from the authority of her husband by his death: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law of her husband so long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband. . . . Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ. . . . Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held."

Such is a meagre sketch of the main drift of the apostle's argument throughout this Epistle. In the course of the discussion, however, and in answer to an objection which had been raised at an early stage of it, that comparatively few of God's covenant people could be persuaded to renounce their hope of attaining to righteousness under the law and to accept Christ, so that as a body they seemed to have been

cast away, — in answer to this pressing objection, Paul sets forth and insists upon the doctrines of fore-ordination and election : “ I say, then, hath God cast away his people ? God forbid. . . . God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew. . . . Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for ; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. . . . For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. . . . There is a remnant according to the election of grace. . . . For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called ; and whom he called them he also justified ; and whom he justified them he also glorified.”

Thus we see how great and controlling an object it was with Paul to refute the errors, meet the objections, and present the truths of the gospel so as to convince the minds of his countrymen ; also, that it is in his arguments with them that he develops and applies these special forms of truth by the prominence of which his teaching is so remarkably distinguished from that of Christ. Nor can we conceive of a more effectual method to convince them of the insufficiency of Judaism, and to fix their faith and their hope of salvation upon Christ alone, than that which is here adopted. For the need of justification, or of righteousness, or of being accepted of God as righteous, was that form of spiritual want in the Jew which, from his thirty generations of training under the law, was paramount. In fact, after his sensibility to all others had been well nigh lost, this one, as is evident from the prodigious development of his pharisaic self-righteousness, continued to press upon his soul. The Jew could never do without some way of attaining to righteousness. No offer of salvation which did not include this could ever, by any possibility, be made acceptable or credible to him. Hence, as soon as it had been proved to him that righteousness under the law was forever precluded, and that Abraham himself had been justified without it, his understanding would be

opened, if by any means this were possible, to appreciate the evidence of that new and living way of attaining to righteousness which the gospel provided. Nothing, indeed, remained for him but to seek it in this way, or to remain forever under the soul-destroying condemnation and penalties of the violated law.

But it is evident, when we come to consider it, that this peculiar form in which the truth was presented by Paul to his countrymen, although it contains implicitly the very heart and marrow of the gospel, consequently, what is indispensable to the spiritual wants of all mankind, could not have had any such attractions for the Gentiles, and was not equally adapted to their necessities. For they could not feel, as did the Jew, this need of being accepted as righteous, because that training under the law out of which it grew had never been brought to bear upon them. In fact, it may be gravely questioned whether this peculiar form of spiritual want is ever felt, except by those who have been educated into it, either as Jews or under Judaizing systems of theology; for if any plain man, who has not been so educated, be asked now whether he feels the need of being accepted of God as righteous, he will hardly understand what is meant; and if it be explained to him, probably he will answer: I am not conscious of any such need; for I do not think that I am righteous, and what good could it do me to be accepted for what I am not? But if such a man be asked: Do you feel any need of the forgiveness of your sins, or of being reconciled to God? and if he have any seriousness of mind, or feeling of spiritual want in any form, he can hardly fail to answer: I certainly do; for I acknowledge that I am a sinner, and have become alienated from God by my erring and worldly life. Consequently the doctrine of justification by faith, although it implicitly contains a fundamental truth of the gospel, upon which, as Luther rightly discerned, the church of Christ must stand, or must fall, does not present this truth in that form in which the want of it is universally felt.

The universal form of this spiritual want is that of the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation and peace with God. This is evident, in part, from the experience of mankind, but more abundantly from the fact that the gospel as delivered by our Lord Jesus Christ, whilst it contains no formal statement of the doctrine of justification by faith, is always or preferably directed and adapted to meet and satisfy the want of the forgiveness of sins. For the publican who went up into the temple to pray, and, standing afar off, would not lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," — this truly penitent soul does not seem to have felt any need of being accepted as righteous. Certainly he expresses no such feeling. It is for mercy — the forgiveness of his sins — that he bows his head, and smites upon his breast, and cries to God; whilst it is the Pharisee with whom he is contrasted who feels the need of being accepted as righteous, and who must convince himself that he is righteous, or he cannot live. It is true, this publican "went down to his house justified"; but here, as everywhere else in the Lord's use of it, this word is not to be taken in its strict Pauline sense of being accepted as righteous, but rather as expressing that the man obtained that for which he had prayed, which was mercy for his sinful soul, or the forgiveness of his sins. Again, in "the parable of parables," — that of the prodigal son, — which exhibits the Lord's own map or chart of the wandering soul's return to God, and of the manner in which it is received, not a word is said about justification or righteousness; but the soul returns from its wanderings and alienation, and is received again to its Father's house and its Father's table as a reconciled and forgiven sinner, whose transgressions shall never more be remembered. Also, in the case of the penitent woman who anointed the Lord's feet, having washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair, he said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much," and, "Thy sins are forgiven." In like manner, to the paralytic who had been let down through the roof of a house

into his presence, he said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." And when the Scribes charged him with blasphemy for these words, he added, "For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins,— then saith he to the sick of the palsy,— Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine house." In fine,— for we must limit ourselves to a few out of innumerable examples,— we have the same presentation of the gospel in the case of the judicially blinded: "That seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand; lest at any time they might be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

Thus it is that the universal form of this great truth of the gospel is set forth by the Lord, in distinction from that peculiar adaptation of it which we find in the writings of Paul. Nor ought we to be surprised at this or other differences. For it could not reasonably be expected that the Master, with the paramount aim to satisfy the spiritual wants of human nature, without specific reference to that small section of it with which he came into personal contact, should deliver the truths of the spiritual world in precisely the same forms in which they might be subsequently formulated by his inspired apostle for the subordinate and limited purpose of convincing and persuading his countrymen, who had been peculiarly trained for so many generations under the law. But we must ever bear in mind that this difference, together with all others, is one of mere form and adaptation. For it is evident that the forgiveness of sins, in the teaching of Christ, is not the bare remittance of legal penalties, but it includes, also, complete restoration to the favor and love of God; in fact, all that Paul so earnestly presses upon his countrymen under the form of justification by faith.

A precisely similar view is to be taken of the doctrines of predestination and election, to which the apostle gives prominence and systematic development, in contrast with the fact that they are only alluded to, though certainly implied

and assumed in the teaching of Christ. For not only did these doctrines answer the objection, that comparatively few of the covenant people actually embraced the gospel, but also they were eminently adapted to commend it to their faith. In order to appreciate this we must observe that these truths embodied a principle of the divine government and providence which had been familiar to the children of Israel throughout their whole history, and which had uniformly operated in their favor. For it had been exemplified in the original calling of Abraham out of his country and kindred to become their national founder and covenant head. Thus, also, Ishmael had been rejected, and Isaac had been chosen, so that all the covenant promises and blessings should be transmitted in the line of his posterity. In the same way Jacob had been preferred before Esau, to whom, according to the patriarchal institutions and customs, the birthright and headship of the family belonged: "That the purpose of God according to election might stand. . . . As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." David, moreover, had thus been selected out of the eight goodly sons of Jesse, though the youngest of them all, and exalted from the sheepfolds to become the royal shepherd and sweet psalmist of Israel, their greatest national hero, from whose loins the Messiah himself should descend. And, passing over innumerable other examples, it was in the exercise of God's electing grace that they themselves had been selected from all the rest of mankind to be his covenant people, to whom his sacred oracles should be committed, together with the glory of the shekinah, the temple service, and all the other privileges and blessings of their high vocation. These doctrines, therefore, must have been peculiarly dear, and admirably adapted to commend the gospel in which they were embosomed, to every Jewish heart. But the principle of the divine government which they represent could have had no such attraction, — no such adaptation to win the faith or to awaken the hopes of the rest of mankind, because they had enjoyed no such training under the electing grace of

God. On the contrary, it could not fail to discourage and repel them, for the reason that hitherto it had always discriminated against them, had operated to their disadvantage and exclusion from the covenant blessings and privileges. And this, doubtless, is one reason why in the teaching of Christ it is not brought forward into that prominence which it has in the writings of Paul, but, in comparison with other gospel truths, is left in abeyance.

In fine, this special object which Paul had so much at heart will go far to explain his logical and systematic presentation of the truths of the gospel. It is true, indeed, as has been suggested, that this may be due in part to his peculiar mental constitution and education; but it cannot be adequately comprehended without taking into view the necessity under which he was placed, to refute by logical processes the objections of his countrymen, and to harmonize, in a rational manner, the sweeping changes introduced by the new dispensation with all that had gone before in their wonderful providential history. For during forty generations of mankind they had been the elect people of God, to the exclusion of all other nations; and now they could be such no longer; but the Gentiles, who had been their eternal enemies, yea, the uncircumcised and unclean, were to stand on an equality with them before the God of Israel. For thirty generations they had been rigorously trained under that vast system of legal ordinances and ritual observances which God himself, by Moses, had enjoined upon them as "an everlasting statute . . . an ordinance forever"; and now all this was to be swept away as with a besom. Also the moral law itself, which had been proclaimed to their fathers by the voice of God in thunder-words from the summit of Mount Sinai — what could Paul mean when he talked to them about this law's having been fulfilled by another for them, and of their being delivered from its claims? Why did he not try to convince them that they were delivered from the laws that fire would burn and water drown? It is not possible for us at this day to appreciate the peculiar

difficulties and almost insuperable obstacles which these changes must have placed in the way of their acceptance of the gospel. Hence a most pressing necessity rested upon Paul in his labors for their salvation, to show and convince them that all these new and astonishing developments were contained as germs in, and consequently were in perfect harmony with, all their preceding revelations and history. But this he could not do without applying to the whole subject his great powers of analysis, and treating it in a more or less systematic manner. On the other hand, there was no such necessity for a harmonized scheme of truth to commend the gospel to the Gentiles, because they had not been trained under these preceding revelations, and had no such providential history. This, however, is only a partial explanation of the fact, which will require to be more fully treated in the sequel, that the gospel as presented by the Lord has nothing of a systematic form.

We come now to exhibit the evidence of the pre-eminent object and character of Christ's teaching; in other words, that it was to reveal the truths of the spiritual world in their highest and most adequate forms, as adapted to satisfy the spiritual wants of all mankind alike; and, consequently, without specific reference to states of mind which were peculiar to the Jews.

We observe, then, paradoxical as it may be, that Christ was no Jew. Though of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the tribe of Judah, and of the royal line of David, as concerning the flesh, we cannot even imagine him with the distinctive type of Jewish features. The church has never been able so to conceive or represent his personal appearance. The earliest representation of it which has come down to us, and which, however short it may fall of being a correct likeness, certainly gives us the idea of him which was impressed upon the minds of the primitive Christians, is as far as possible from being that of a Jew. The writer once had the fortune to see a fancy portrait of Christ with strongly marked Jewish features, and he hopes never to see another;

for it was revolting and disgusting in the extreme, and such, he is well assured, it would have been to all Christians. Nor is there anything more wonderful or miraculous, when we consider how he was born and brought up, than his sublime exaltation above the prejudices and peculiar forms of thought, the character and whole life, of his countrymen and kindred. For he did not take upon himself in his incarnation the nature of the Jew, in distinction from the rest of mankind, but the nature of man as such,—our common humanity. Consequently he never speaks of himself as a Jew, nor of his brethren or kindred according to the flesh, after the manner of Paul. On the contrary, he disclaims, in some sort, his own relations. For when, on a certain occasion, it was said to him, “Thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee, . . . he answered, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? . . . For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven the same is my brother and sister and mother.” Even his mother he never addresses by this dear and sacred name, but always simply as woman: “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” Even when she stood by the cross, with the prophetic sword in her heart, he committed her to the care of his beloved disciple, saying, “Woman, behold thy son.” Of himself he always speaks as “the Son of God” and “Son of Man,” thereby signifying, doubtless, that he was the perfect embodiment and only adequate manifestation of God, and that he represented our common humanity as no other man ever did, or could do.

Now, with these views of the incarnation, person, and character of Christ, it awakens no surprise in us that his teaching gives no special prominence to doctrinal forms which had any peculiar relation to Jewish states of mind, such as those of predestination, election, and justification by faith. Here, also, we have one reason why his personal ministry found so little acceptance with his countrymen, when “he came to his own, and his own received him not.” For although there were other causes of their fierce and ran-

corous hatred against him, which could be satisfied with nothing short of his ignominious and cruel death, yet it did not lie in "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" that they should receive the gospel until it had been commended to them by that peculiar adaptation which Paul was raised up and inspired to give it. From these views, moreover, we might anticipate that the truths of the gospel, as delivered by the Lord, would have the largest and most perfect adaptation to the spiritual wants of mankind, irrespective of the distinction between Jew and Gentile, as we have seen that they have in the case of the forgiveness of sins; also that they would be clothed in the highest and most adequate forms of which they are capable in human words, which forms are given them, as it now remains for us to show, in the Lord's unsystematic and highly figurative teaching.

In order, then, that this may become evident, it is necessary that we should here take into consideration an old common-place, the significance of which, however, has not yet been exhausted, namely, that all great truths are manifold and many-sided. Hence it seldom occurs that any one definite expression can give more than a single aspect of such a truth, leaving out many others, perhaps, of equal or greater importance. Again, the highest, not to say all truths of the spiritual world, are transcendent and ineffable; in other words, they cannot be adequately conceived of by the human faculties, much less expressed in human language. The reason of this is, that they belong to the realm of the infinite, whilst our faculties are finite, and all our words have necessarily a defining or limiting power. Such truths are God in his being, attributes, purposes, and providence; the human soul in its self-consciousness, freedom, morality, and immortality; holiness and sin, mediation and redemption, heaven and hell — what are all these but unfathomable mysteries to the finite intellect? Our most perfect comprehension of them can be nothing better than an infant's conception of the solar system. It is not possible to understand the

revelation which God has given us without the recognition of this truth. For even the parallelisms of Hebrew poetry, representing the same truth in two balanced clauses, of which the former is felt to be unsatisfactory, and the latter is an effort to supplement it. This mode of expression evidently sprang from the deep feeling in the sacred writers, that their words were inadequate to their conceptions of spiritual truths, and their conceptions to the truths themselves. Hence, also, in the attempt to express such truths, they instinctively lay hold upon metaphor, similitude, analogy, — all the various forms of symbolization, — in which their immediate aim is to touch the sensibilities, stimulate the imagination, exalt and quicken all the intellectual powers, in order to a more enlarged receptivity of the truths which they reveal.

In consequence of this manifold, transcendent and ineffable nature of the truth, it cannot be fully expressed even in the words of inspiration itself. These words are not to be interpreted as complete revelations, but they are to be regarded rather as index fingers pointing upwards, and directing us where to look in order that we may see for ourselves as much as we have capacity for seeing of the things which they can only indicate. For the Scriptures, in all their fulness, give us nothing more than glimpses into the infinite. That which is revealed, and is capable of being known by us, bears no proportion to that which is unrevealed, and incapable of being known. At the same time we know that all truth is one, and, consequently, that every particular truth which has been revealed bears relations to, and is necessarily conditioned and modified by every other truth of the great whole which remains unknown. We have the most striking examples of such modification in the revelations of the Old Testament as affected by the more full disclosures of the New, especially where the Lord, by his own teaching, completes, or even supersedes, what had been "said to them of old time."

Now from all this it seems abundantly evident that the

truths of the spiritual world which have been revealed to us, are incapable of being adequately systematized. For these glimpses into the infinite are comparatively so few and far between that the logical connections between them cannot be traced out. They constitute so small a part of the great whole to which they belong; they must be conceived of as bearing so many and such vital, yet such indeterminate, relations to the infinite unknown; and the forms in which they are expressed are necessarily so inadequate to the reality, that every systematic view of them which can be taken by the finite mind, if it be regarded as absolute, or other than incomplete and provisional, cannot fail to misinterpret and distort them, nor to prove the source of innumerable errors and practical evils. A partial system, so constructed, and taken for no more than what it is, may, indeed, have its uses for the accomplishment of subordinate objects, as in the case of Paul's writings to convince his countrymen; but it can never give to these truths of the spiritual world their highest forms and most adequate expression. We might as well attempt to construct the map or chart of a coast from the lighthouses alone which beam from its headlands, leaving out the bays, mouths of rivers, and other indentations and projections which lie between. Such an imperfect sketch, regarded in its true character, might have its uses; but taken as a representation of the whole coast, it could lead to nothing but shipwreck and disaster.

Here, then, we have a good and sufficient reason why our Lord adopted and consistently followed his highly figurative and unsystematic method of teaching. In fact, no other was possible to him, as the revealer of the spiritual world in the highest forms in which it could be made known to us. For if he had undertaken to define and systematize the truth, to eliminate its antinomies, to harmonize its apparently conflicting aspects by tracing out the logical connections between them, it would have been necessary for him either to reveal the whole truth, which was impossible, or to clothe these glimpses or fragments of it in lower and less adequate forms;

in which case he must have renounced the pre-eminent character and object in and for which, as "a teacher sent from God," he had come into the world.

We come now to inquire how it came to pass that this discrimination between the object of Christ's teaching and that of Paul in his controversies with his countrymen was not made at the Reformation, and to what extent the history of the Protestant church has been affected by regarding these objects as identical, or on a par with each other. Nor need we be surprised if we should find that from this cause alone the church's understanding of the nature of spiritual truth, her appreciation of the importance of catholic unity, her systems of theology, confessions of faith, creeds, and preaching, are all very different from what they would otherwise have been.

It seems evident, then, that the great Reformers of the sixteenth century were prevented from making this discrimination by the relations which the Protestant movement bore to the papacy. For at that time, as is well known, the church of Rome had reached her utmost development, both in her priestly hierarchy and in the Arminian character of her theology. What were called the Augustinian, and subsequently the Calvinistic, but which are properly the Pauline forms of doctrine, had well nigh or quite disappeared from her teaching. Her theologians no longer perceived, as Augustine and Ambrose and Anselm had done, that the forms of truth upon which Paul had so strenuously insisted, though specially adapted to meet the difficulties and convince the minds of his countrymen, did yet contain the very marrow of the gospel as taught by the Master. In fact, the Scriptures themselves, from a variety of causes, had become a sealed book to the people, and were but little known to the clergy themselves. In this state of things the Reformers appeared, and the first thing they did was to throw open the Bible, study it for themselves, and teach it to the people. Thus commenced the great struggle and conflict in which the most vital and paramount interest of Protestantism was

that of successful resistance against the overshadowing authority and power of Rome. For to fail here was to fail in everything else. But it is hardly possible for us, at this day, to imagine how great was the delight of the Reformers, when, in their study of the Bible, they discovered in the Pauline Epistles a perfect thesaurus of arguments against the papacy; not only against its Arminian theology, in Paul's systematic presentation of the doctrines of the decrees, foreordination, election, and justification by faith, but also against its priestly hierarchy, founded upon and modelled after that of the Jewish church, which the great apostle had overthrown. In consequence of this, and inevitably, these Epistles, in which the Reformers found their keenest weapons for the conflict in which success was everything to them, came to exert a greater influence upon their minds — to mould their faith and shape their doctrines — than all the other Scriptures. It was under this peculiar influence that they were led to adopt and imitate Paul's logical, argumentative, and systematic presentation of the truth, as the highest form of which it was capable, in preference to the alogical, unsystematic, figurative, and symbolical forms in which it had been clothed by the other sacred writers in general, and by the Master himself. In the all-controlling interest of making good their protest against Rome, they constructed their systems of theology, confessions of faith and creeds bodily out of Paul's writings, rather than as an unbiassed expression of the truth gathered from, and representing the whole word of God. It could not have been otherwise, and yet it is wonderful, when we consider what is generally acknowledged, and which, indeed, is evident of itself, that they made the doctrine of the decrees of God — his secret and eternal purpose of foreordination and election — the germinal and governing principle of their whole system of doctrine, and all other truths of the revelation to centre in it, revolve around it, and take their place, shape, and color from it, instead of assigning to this post of honor the person and work of Christ, which, beyond a question, at this day is the centre and heart of the gospel.

The consequences of this systematizing spirit or tendency which was thus developed in the church of the Reformation beyond all that had ever before been known, even among the scholastic theologians, could not fail to prove disastrous. For although this tendency springs from an innate striving after unity in our knowledge which is common to human nature, and has many important uses, yet it requires to be held under severe restraint, because it is naturally impatient, and the love of system is ever liable to become stronger than the love of truth, than which there is no more copious source of human errors. For under its influence we are sorely tempted to misunderstand, or to explain away, or even to deny, the most obvious facts and truths, whenever they prove refractory, and refuse to take their places quietly in the speculative systems which we construct for their accommodation. But these consequences are most disastrous in the domain of religion and theology. For since, as we have seen, it requires the knowledge of the whole truth to construct the true system, and all our revelations amount to no more than glimpses into the infinite, it is impossible to concentrate these scattered rays in a focus of logical unity without deflecting and distorting them. Moreover, each separate truth of the gospel is so vast in itself, and involves such all-absorbing human interests, that it can easily come to fill the most capacious mind, to the exclusion of other truths of equal importance, and no less clearly revealed. In this way, one class of minds, filled with the revelations which God has given of his goodness and love, and not being able to harmonize them systematically with other attributes in the infinitude of the divine nature, are led to deny his justice, and, with their utmost diligence and ingenuity, to explain away all those innumerable passages of Scripture in which it is affirmed. These become what are called Universalists. Another class, taking the freedom of the human will, which is matter of consciousness no less than of revelation, as the governing principle of their theological speculations, and not being able to bring this great truth into logical consistency

with the decrees of God, do not hesitate to impugn the divine sovereignty, nor even, in some cases, to deny the divine foreknowledge. Thus we have Arminianism. Conversely, yet by a precisely similar process, the absoluteness of the decrees is made to rule out the freedom of the will and man's responsibility, the result of which is Antinomianism. In like manner, they who insist exclusively upon the humanity of Christ are led to the denial of his divinity, and thus become Unitarians. Whilst the Orthodox, who are most strenuous in affirming and maintaining his divinity, often lose the practical significance and benefit of the doctrine of his humanity, even when they would be shocked at the thought of denying it in words.

Here, now, we have the explanation of those vast and hostile systems of theology, and of all the schisms, conflicting sects, and sectarian strifes and controversies to which Protestantism has given prodigious birth. They have all sprung from failure to recognize in the unsystematic teaching of Christ the highest and most adequate forms of which the truths of the spiritual world are capable in human words, and from adopting in place of these Paul's method of presentation, which was employed by him for a special and subordinate object, and which was never intended to supersede, as it has been made to do, the higher and only adequate method of Paul's Master. It is this which has shivered the Protestant church into a thousand disjointed and angular fragments, such that they can no longer fit together as the "living stones" of that "spiritual house" which God is building for his own everlasting inhabitation. It is this which has well nigh obliterated from the bosoms of her people and clergy even the sentiment of catholic unity, together with the knowledge of that vital and indissoluble connection which subsists between this unity and the conversion of the world. For nothing less than such a connection can be fairly understood from the words of that last prayer which the Lord offered with his disciples before he suffered: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which

shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me [of being one with thee] I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me." Hence, also, that which is otherwise the most inexplicable fact in the whole history of the church, namely, that whilst she was thus occupied in rending the body of her Lord, and scattering the bleeding members as far apart as possible from each other, she lost, together with the sentiment of catholic unity, all consciousness of her character as Christ's missionary society, of her relation to the conversion of the world — the very object of her existence. For two hundred years the Protestant church never sent a missionary to the heathen. When it was proposed to do so, her leading minds scouted the idea. And now it is quite evident that the re-awakening of this sentiment, and the nascent striving after the restoration of catholic unity of which she is becoming conscious, are chiefly due to the influence of the missionary spirit and work.

We have yet to consider the character of the preaching which has prevailed in the church of the Reformation, and which, of course, has been moulded and governed by her theology, confessions, and creeds. Hence, as evidently in fact, it has presented the truth in the forms of Paul, rather than in those of Christ. It has been eminently systematic, logical, and argumentative, rather than figurative, authoritative, and practical. It has dwelt more upon the doctrines of fore-ordination, election, and justification by faith than upon the person and work of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and salvation by faith. These statements, however, require to be qualified in certain respects, especially by the rise and spread of Methodism, which must be understood as a protest and reaction against some of these prevailing tendencies. That this is its character is evident from other

and better things besides the notorious undervaluation which this denomination places upon the writings of Paul. Yet through this error it has been led to a higher appreciation than otherwise it might have attained of the forms of truth in the teaching of Christ as peculiarly adapted to the wants of the masses of mankind. Hence that vast influence which it exerts upon the less cultivated classes, and the unparalleled growth of the denomination.

Meanwhile, the doctrinal preaching which has prevailed in most of the Protestant churches has continued to represent Paul's discussions with his countrymen, rather than Christ's proclamation of the gospel to mankind. It still continues to address the Gentiles in those forms of truth which were originally intended and adapted to meet Jewish difficulties, and to commend the gospel to the Jewish mind, precisely as if they had been born and educated Jews. It warns them against Judaizing errors, to which they have never had any temptation, whilst their real dangers often lie in the opposite direction. It takes no less pains to convince them that they are delivered from legal ordinances than if they had the same difficulties upon this point with those who for thirty generations had been "kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." It offers them salvation under the form of being accepted as righteous, and spends itself in abstruse and endless discussions, after the manner of Paul, to render it acceptable in this form, when they have never felt the need of any such righteousness; but their souls, it may be, are crying out for the pardon of their sins and reconciliation with God. And if it were not that common sense has some little influence to neutralize speculative absurdities, this preaching would be laboring still to convince the people that the priesthood of Christ is superior to that of Levi; that the ritual law was of temporary obligation; that it has been fulfilled and superseded by the mediation and sacrifice of Christ; and that circumcision is no longer necessary — of all which, in so far as they believe anything, they have never had a doubt, and which never had a particle of interest for any but Jews.

Yet it must be acknowledged that this preaching once had enormous and well nigh irresistible power; but this was due to the peculiar circumstances in which the church was placed, and which are very different now. For whilst the paramount interest with all Protestant Christians was that of success in their life-and-death struggle with Rome, they recognized in this preaching which gave distinguished prominence to the Pauline forms of doctrine, justification by faith, election, and predestination, their battle-cries in defence of their dearest liberties, and against their deadliest enemy. Hence their interest in sermons of which these doctrines were the staple arguments and themes of declamation could be sustained hour after hour, on each occasion; and they went away from them rejoicing and triumphing in the victories which, through the valiant leadership of their favorite ministers, they had gained over Antichrist himself. This was the secret of that enormous power which this preaching undeniably possessed whilst the battle raged, with doubtful results, through the civilized world.

But as soon as the ultimate triumph of the Protestant cause was no longer doubtful, then it began to lose its power. When success in this conflict ceased to be the paramount Protestant interest; when Rome had been shorn of her temporal and persecuting power; when the great currents of human thought and advancing civilization had all set in against the Vatican; when it began to be felt that indifference, scepticism, infidelity, and immorality were enemies more to be feared than the effete papacy, then this preaching in the manner and forms of Paul's Epistles, rather than in those of Christ's teaching, lost all interest for the people—an interest which it can nevermore regain. For it is self-evident that Paul's logical and abstruse discussions cannot be intelligently comprehended by any but well-educated and trained minds; nor could it have been anticipated by the apostle himself that they would be intelligible to the common people among the Gentiles. For, as we have seen, they were not originally addressed to them, but to those who had inherited

the results of fifteen hundred years' education and training in the ideas which constituted the staple of his arguments. To his countrymen these ideas were as familiar as household words. Such preaching could not fail to lose its power, because it did not, and does not, feed the souls of the people. When they ask for bread, it offers them, not, indeed, a stone, but spiritual food prepared and seasoned for Jewish palates, for which they can have no genuine relish or appetite. Hence it is that the churches which were formerly crowded are now so thinly attended, and that the great masses of the people have fallen out from under the influence of the gospel, become hopelessly alienated from the Christian religion, and are living in a state of godlessness which is worse than heathenism. For it has been estimated that of the three millions of inhabitants of the city of London not more than one in six has ever seen the inside of a church. Our own large cities are hardly in a better condition; whilst of those who continue to attend the worship of the sanctuary there are multitudes who prefer any kind of sensational exhibitions in the pulpit to this "doctrinal preaching." And not unreasonably do they prefer that which produces some sort of emotion to this which produces none at all.

If, now, we have rightly discerned the significance of these differences between Christ and Paul, with respect to forms of truth, it would seem that we have need of another reformation hardly inferior to that of the sixteenth century. The man to head such a movement is the great want of our time — another Luther, who shall be able to liberate his mind from the authority of the last three hundred years of the church's history, to think himself out of the errors in which he must be born and educated, as the great men of that day had to do — a man with Luther's pen for the intelligent and cultivated, and Luther's voice for the masses of the people — the times in which we live cry out for such a man, nor does it seem that his advent can be much longer delayed.

What, then, from the preceding discussion, may we humbly

and reverently anticipate will probably be the burden of his message? If we have not erred altogether, he can hardly fail to treat with some of Luther's scorn the notion of a progress of revelation by means of disciples and subordinates, beyond and above that which was delivered by the Master himself. He will recognize in the unsystematic and authoritative teaching of Christ the highest, most adequate, and every way most perfect forms of which the truths of the spiritual world are capable in human words. He will brand with some of Luther's contempt that systematizing spirit which presumes to exhibit a more symmetrical and harmonious scheme of doctrine, for the spiritual wants of mankind, than that which Christ has revealed; which perverts and distorts the revelations of the gospel; which misunderstands one truth, explains away another, and denies everything which cannot be successfully manipulated; in order that the miserable remnants may be made to fit and dovetail together in logical connections. In the schism of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin by the worship of the golden calves, in consequence of which the people of God were involved in long and bloody civil wars, so that they could no longer make successful resistance against the heathen, but were all carried away into captivity and bondage to the world, from which a few only returned — in all this some future Luther will find prefigured, in graphic details, the schisms, sectarianism, and theological wars of the church during the last three hundred years, in which she lost the consciousness of her high calling to subdue the heathen nations unto Christ, set up the idolatry of material wealth, and sold herself for nought into captivity and bondage to the world. He will recall the remnant of God's people out of this worse than Babylonish captivity and Egyptian bondage, from this slavery to the world, and lead them back into spiritual freedom and true holiness, so that the church will be enabled to exhibit, in the restoration of her catholic unity, that sign from God upon which Christ has covenanted that the world shall believe and be saved. He

will trample under his feet, or burn in the market-place, as Luther burned the pope's bull, all sectarian creeds and symbols, as not conformed to the deliverances of Christ, and which make no due allowances for those differences of opinion in non-essentials which are inseparable from various degrees of intellectual ability and culture and spiritual enlightenment, and which are essential to all healthy growth and progress. He will believe and trust to the promise of the gift of the Spirit of God to all true believers to guide them into all necessary truth, so that they cannot be left to go fatally astray. He will understand that which is essential to a true and living faith as it was understood when the Apostles' Creed was the only symbol of the church, with which inscribed upon her banners she fought the great battle of the ages, and the ancient towers and bulwarks of paganism went down in flaming ruins before the strength of her faith and the fervor of her zeal.

Finally, our coming Luther, we venture to forecast, will set us a new example of preaching in the manner of Christ in the Gospels, rather than of Paul in his abstruse discussions with his countrymen. He will not preach to Gentiles as if they were Jews, and had Jewish prejudices and difficulties to overcome. The staple of his sermons will not be the secret purposes of God, but things revealed; not predestination, nor election, nor justification by faith, but the person and work of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and salvation by faith. He will address his preaching to those spiritual wants which all men feel, rather than to those into which they must be laboriously educated before they can feel them. And the common people will hear him gladly, as they heard Christ. They will no longer run to the Circean swine-troughs of sensationalism, when the bread of life is offered them as Christ offered it. And then, not before, the vast multitudes who now seem to be hopelessly alienated from the church will return to her sacred pale.