

## ARTICLE V.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE DAMASCUS VISION  
UPON PAUL'S THEOLOGY.

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PUT into the form of a query, the subject reads thus: What change in theological views was necessitated by Paul's vision of Jesus, and by what processes of thought was the change made? Two considerations make this an important subject; namely, the influence of the Pauline theology upon Christian thought, and the relation of Paul's theology to his personal religious experience.

Paul's theology has been a mighty force in the development of the church. His ways of putting things have been more influential, even than those of Jesus, in shaping theological phraseology, though probably not in shaping the expression of individual Christian experience. Even now, when the popular cry is "Back to Christ," the Pauline theology is fascinating the newer scholarship; and some of the best work that has ever been done upon it has been recently produced. The revulsion from Paul, which is expressed in some cases by the cry "Back to Christ," is a revulsion from an unconscious misunderstanding of Paul; and the outcome of the closer scrutiny which the Pauline literature is now undergoing will probably be such a clearer understanding of Pauline thought as will result in a new lease of its influence. The reason for this is not far to seek. It is evident that a body of literature so increasingly influential in the world's thought and life as that which we call the New Testament, must have come into exist-

ence by the plan of God. The production of this literature was also evidently left, in the providence of God, to the apostles. The miraculous character of Rabbi Saul's conversion, and the simple fact that he wrote more of the New Testament than did any one else, except his associate Luke, make it evident that he was appointed of God to do this great work.

Further, it is becoming more and more evident, that the literature of the New Testament, so far as it is not history and biography, was produced out of the inspired experience of its authors. These letters of Paul contain the thoughts that he, as a busy missionary, had preached through and through, over and over, to many audiences for many years, before he finally put them into the form in which they have come down to us. They were born of a long and unique experience, inspired and shaped by the Holy Spirit. Now Paul seems to have had larger experience, than did the other apostles, in presenting the gospel to irreligious men. Others worked largely among the Jews, the religious specialists of their day. Paul was the apostle to the irreligious Gentile world. His experience led him to put the gospel into the literary form in which he had effectively presented it to irreligious men. It follows, therefore, that the minister of to-day, who is to be so largely occupied in presenting the gospel to irreligious men, must take large account of the Pauline literature. It is true, then, that the influential character of the Pauline thought, and its close relation to the Pauline experience, make it important to study that experience in its various aspects. In this experience there is no more important event than Paul's significant interview with Jesus near Damascus.

The first step in the prosecution of the present inquiry is to settle upon certain points as fundamental in the Pauline theology, and then to reproduce as accurately as possi-

ble the Pharisaic views held by Paul upon these same points before his interview with Jesus. We shall then be in a position to consider the processes of thought by which he passed from the one to the other, and the influence in these processes of the interview with Jesus. Several things that might be separately discussed, are assumed at the outset. The first is, that Saul was a Pharisee. We know, from his own statement, that his father, grandfather, and probably his ancestors still further back were Pharisees. "I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees" (Acts xxiii. 6). He was a conspicuous figure even among the young Pharisaic enthusiasts that flocked to the Jewish capital. "I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. i. 14). It is also assumed, that the older portions of the Talmud, especially where their statements are corroborated by allusions in the New Testament, are a trustworthy source of information for the reconstruction of Pharisaic theology; that the book of Acts is a reliable historical source of information; and that at least such Pauline epistles as are used in this discussion are genuine.

#### CONTRAST BETWEEN PAUL'S PHARISAIC AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

It is necessary first to state briefly certain positions in the Pauline theology that may properly be regarded as fundamental, and to place over against them the views held by Saul the Pharisee upon the same points. Four such have been selected for the present discussion, though such selection is not intended to imply that there may not be others equally important.

1. The first of these is the Pauline view of law. Law, whether in the form known as the Mosaic law, or in the form of the instinctive imperatives of the moral nature, is

designed by God not to serve as a sufficient means for attaining righteousness, but as a means of revealing sin. The language used by Paul in making this point is characterized by a nervous intensity suggestive of the fierce opposition which provoked it. Although Adam's sin introduced sin into the race, still at a later period God gave the Mosaic law for the purpose of making man's sinful disposition reveal itself in an increased number of overt transgressions. "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, . . . and law came in beside, that the trespass might *abound*" (Rom. v. 19, 20). The presence of the fatal ailment, sin, would not be duly recognized in the moral nature, were it not for law, which tempts it into active expression. "I had not recognized sin (*τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων*), except through law: for I had not recognized coveting, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet'" (Rom. vii. 7). The immediate effect of law is not to bless, but to curse. "They which be of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse" (Gal. iii. 9, 10). God never intended law to serve as a sufficient means of obtaining righteousness, as is evident from his declaration, made long ago through the prophet, "Now that no man is pronounced righteous by law in God's sight, is evident: for, the righteous shall live by faith [Hab. ii. 4], and the law is not of faith" (Gal. iii. 11, 12).

What different statements would have been made by young Rabbi Saul, if he had been questioned on a Jerusalem street-corner as he was returning to his lodging after the daily session with Gamaliel! That which was most characteristic of Pharisaism was its exaltation of law. The following statements are taken from Weber's "Die Lehren des Talmud":<sup>1</sup> God's reason for creating the world was

<sup>1</sup> A third edition has recently appeared under the new title, "Jüdische Theologie auf Grund des Talmud."

to have a place where the glorious Mosaic law might operate. Israel became God's people by accepting the law on Mt. Sinai. The possession and practice of the law give Israel an indestructible holiness of character, and make it a congregation of saints among the nations.<sup>1</sup> God gave the law as something by the study and fulfilment of which men might gain sufficient merit to constitute them righteous.<sup>2</sup> When Adam realized that his descendants were destined for Gehenna, he ceased to beget offspring; but when it was revealed to him that the law was to be given as a means by which men might become righteous, he began again.<sup>3</sup> That this Talmudic exaltation of law as a means of gaining righteousness characterized the Pharisees of Paul's day is amply shown by the Pauline argument upon the subject.

2. A second fundamental position in Pauline theology is closely connected with his view of law. It is his view of "righteousness." Righteousness is attained by that attitude of mind called faith. Faith in this sense is used by Paul to describe an attitude toward a person. To have faith in a person is to believe him to be what he represents himself as being, and to treat him accordingly. Faith in God, or in God manifested in Jesus, consists in believing that Jesus is what he represents himself as being, namely, Christ of God, and rightful Lord of all men; and in treating him as such, namely, surrendering the whole being to him in loving obedience and trust forever. He who takes this attitude of faith is "righteous"—*δικαιος*—what he ought to be, so far as his present state is concerned, in his relations to God and men. Furthermore, when he takes this attitude of faith, God treats him as lovingly as though he had always been in this state; or, in other words, forgives all the sin of his past life, and takes measures to keep him righteous in the future. This, briefly put, is Paul's

<sup>1</sup>Weber, p. 50.   <sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.   <sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 253.

great doctrine of righteousness through faith,—or justification by faith, as it is more commonly though less happily described. This view finds distinct statement in such passages as the following: "Abraham believed God, and it [namely, his believing God, his faith] was reckoned unto him for righteousness"; "But to him that . . . believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3, 5).

The Pharisaic view of righteousness, which Paul at one time held, was profoundly different from this. To the Pharisee's mind, righteousness was a state of rightness in the sight of God which could be attained by a certain number of external acts of obedience. One's acts of obedience to individual commandments are items placed to his credit, and *vice versa*. No one is ever sure on which side the account exceeds. A single obedience may save; a single disobedience may destroy.<sup>1</sup> A man's account can be closed at any minute. Satan is constantly his accuser, and he lives in constant fear of Gehenna.<sup>2</sup> Alms-giving has great value as righteousness. A certain man at death reckoned up the alms he had given during his lifetime, and, finding the amount too small to make him reasonably sure of righteousness, gave away the half of his estate to make the matter certain.<sup>3</sup> Whether or not all this is the oldest Talmudic tradition, it agrees in spirit with the Pharisaism depicted in the New Testament. The rich young member of the Sanhedrin asked Jesus to specify some good thing the doing of which should guarantee him righteousness sufficient for his entrance upon the eternal life of the Messianic kingdom (Matt. xix. 16). In the picture which Jesus drew of the self-righteous Pharisee, he made the man rest his conviction of positive righteousness upon his Monday and Thursday fastings and his scrupulous tithing of all his income: "I fast twice in the week; I give tithes

<sup>1</sup> Weber, p. 270.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

of all that I get" (Luke xviii. 12). It was Jesus' different conception of righteousness that brought him into sharp and fatal conflict with the Pharisees. He taught with bold unreserve, that, unless the people had some better kind of righteousness than that practiced and advocated by the Pharisees, they would never enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. v. 20).

3. A third fundamental position in the Pauline theology is his view of the significance of the Messiah's death. It is in view of the death of Jesus Christ that God reckons faith to be righteousness, as Paul puts it, or that a penitent man's sins are forgiven, as we more commonly express the same thought. "Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith, by his blood, to show his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season; that he might himself be righteous (*δικαιον*), and pronounce righteous (*δικαιοῦντα*) him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26).

The death of the Messiah was a thought entirely foreign to the Pharisaic theology of the first century. "The Messiah's work, the redemption of Israel from foreign rule, the establishment of Israel's dominion over the nations, and the revival of Israel as the people of God, was to be accomplished, according to the old Palestinian-Jewish theology, without being interrupted by the expiatory suffering and death of the Messiah."<sup>1</sup> The New Testament confirmation of the supposition that this was the popular view appears most conspicuously in the fact that the death of Jesus plunged his disciples into the deep sorrow of a disappointed hope. The death of the Messiah had no place in their conception of Messiahship. Since, then, the Pharisees had no thought that the Messiah would die, there

<sup>1</sup> Weber, p. 346.

was, of course, nothing in their theology corresponding to Paul's view of the significance of his death.

4. A fourth fundamental position in the Pauline theology is, that any man is granted the privilege of having his faith in Jesus Christ counted as righteousness without connecting himself with the Jewish nation or subjecting himself to its law. A Gentile may become a Christian without first becoming a Jewish proselyte. This thought is so generally recognized as running all through Paul's writings, that there is no need of special citation to prove it Pauline.

The Pharisaic view as presented in the Talmud represents the Gentiles as absolutely shut out from God and the plan of his kingdom. They have fallen away from the service of God to the service of the flesh. In the service of the flesh they have lost human nature, and have been transformed into animal nature, so that they are morally and physically unclean.<sup>1</sup> God cannot speak through the conscience of the heathen, since they know no law. The Holy Spirit is taken from them; and, if they should repent of their sins, they would receive no forgiveness.<sup>2</sup> The New Testament corroboration of all this is the fact that even the apostles themselves, during the first months, or more probably years, after the resurrection, had no idea that Gentiles could become Christians. It required supernatural enlightenment to persuade Peter that even a devout Roman officer like Cornelius of Cæsarea, who worshiped Jehovah, and was familiar with the history of Jesus, could have the privilege of believing on Jesus, and be admitted into the kingdom of God. When the leaders of the church in Jerusalem heard Peter's apology for his conduct in the house of Cornelius, they exclaimed in amazement, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18). Such was the attitude of Rabbi Saul, the

<sup>1</sup>Weber, p. 64. <sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 66.

Pharisee, before he received his appointment as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

It has become evident, that the views held by Paul the apostle upon these four fundamental points of his theology are either diametrically opposed, or entirely foreign, to those held by him upon these same points when he was an unconverted Pharisee.

#### INTERVIEW WITH JESUS.

Before attempting to trace the process of thought by which he changed from one set of views to the other, and to note the influence of the interview with Jesus upon this process, we have need to consider the young Pharisee in the period just preceding this interview.

His first appearance in history is as a persecutor, taking an eager and conspicuous part in the killing of a prominent Nazarene named Stephen, and we must endeavor to understand Saul's state of mind at this time. Jesus was known to him as a man whose views of righteousness and religion had been so different from those of the Pharisees that he seemed irreligious. In several fundamental particulars Jesus had flagrantly failed to conform to the Pharisee's conception of a righteous man. He had not fasted twice in the week; he had not kept himself from the contaminating society of the submerged tenth; he had seemed to encourage Sabbath-breaking; and he had attacked the interpretation of the Mosaic law promulgated by the great rabbis. And yet he had claimed to be the Messiah, and had deluded many people into believing that he was. The awful curse of God, however, had rested upon the blasphemous pretender. He had hung naked for six hours upon a cross, between two brigands, derided by the populace. He had suffered the form of death that to the Jewish mind was reserved for the peculiarly accursed,—“Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.”

The movement had not died out with the execution of its leader; for his followers had maintained that he had risen from the dead, and, with an ignorance to be expected of uneducated men, had advanced the absurd view that the prophets had predicted a death and resurrection of the Messiah. The meetings of these fanatics were held in one of the colonnades of the Temple area called Solomon's Porch, and therefore the Sadducean priests, the natural custodians of the temple, first took cognizance of the new movement, and punished its leaders. No decisive action, however, was taken until a man named Stephen began to present the new movement in some of the Jerusalem synagogues. A charge was brought against him that was peculiarly calculated to enrage all classes of society. He was charged with being a persistent ranter against the law, so sacred to the Pharisees, and with having made the anarchistic threat, so blasphemous in the estimation of the people, that the beautiful and holy temple would be destroyed. The defense made by Stephen before the Sanhedrin shows the following to have been his real attitude. He knew, as did all the Nazarenes, that Jesus had predicted the overthrow of the temple. He had, however, gone beyond the position of the Nazarenes, in that, while perfectly loyal to the law and the temple ritual, so long as they existed, he had come to see that they were not essential to true religion, and that, after the destruction of the temple, and the alterations in the Mosaic law necessitated by the cessation of temple worship, instead of having a new temple they would be able to get on very well without a temple, as they had been able to do before the law was given or the temple erected. The fact that Stephen, "full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts vi. 8), made him an exceedingly dangerous advocate of such irreligious views. It is not strange that an intense Pharisee like Saul should have felt himself bound to extirpate this

mischievous depreciation of the law and the temple that was ruining an increasing number of his countrymen. Many years afterward, Paul said of his state of mind at this time: "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem; and I both shut up many of the saints in prison, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities" (Acts xxvi. 9-11).

In this headlong course of persecuting frenzy, Saul was abruptly stopped. A little distance from Damascus, as he and his company, after several days of riding, were nearly at their journey's end, under the hot noonday sun there suddenly descended upon the terrified company a blinding light that threw them all to the ground. After a moment all but Saul rose, and stood, dumb with terror (Acts ix. 7). The attendants heard a sound emanating from the brightness. To Saul the sound was a human voice, speaking Aramaic words. From it he learned, to his horror, that this blinding glory clothed the personal presence of the Nazarene Jesus. The irreligious pretender, upon whom the awful curse of God had rested in the shameful death of crucifixion, stood quietly before him in the quivering splendor of Messiahship. The fierce persecutor received his first order from the lips of the Nazarene, "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do" (Acts xxii. 10). He instantly started to obey, but found himself groping in darkness: "And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus" (Acts xxii. 11). There is no need to discuss here the various theories regarding the real

nature of this appearance; for it is Paul's own conception of it that we are at present concerned with, and there is no doubt that Paul conceived it to be such an appearance as might be classed with the appearances to the disciples during the weeks immediately following the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 8).

Three days he sat fasting in the darkness; while two thoughts burned themselves into his soul, that never after left it. One was that of guilty humiliation for having actually persecuted the church of God. Years afterward, under the shadow of this same humiliation, he wrote, "I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor. xv. 9). The other thought was one of passionate gratitude to the Messiah. He was not merely allowed to go unpunished, but was actually admitted to a great career of service. Years afterward he said, "I thank him, . . . even Christ Jesus, our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service; though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim. i. 12, 13). As he sat in darkness, he felt friendly hands laid upon him, heard a voice calling him "Brother Saul," bidding him in Jesus' name come out from the darkness and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Something like scales peeled from his eyes, and he looked up into the face of a fellow-Nazarene, a converted Pharisee like himself (Acts xxii. 12). At once in the Damascus synagogues he began to advocate the Messiahship of Jesus.

After a short period of synagogue preaching he went away into Arabia—probably to some place in Arabia Petræa, not far from Damascus. There is no certain indication as to the length of time Paul spent in this region, nor as to his purpose in making the excursion. He may have spent at least several months there, and it may very well have been a period of some significance in the development of his theological views.

PROCESS OF CHANGE FROM PHARISAIC TO CHRISTIAN  
THEOLOGY.

The way is now prepared for a direct consideration of the intellectual processes through which Paul's mind was logically forced by his acceptance of the Messiahship of Jesus. It is sometimes maintained that there was little or no development in Paul's thought after his conversion. He is supposed to have considered carefully beforehand all the theological consequences that would follow the acceptance of Jesus' Messiahship, and to have accepted them as soon as he was convinced of Jesus' Messiahship. Had he recorded his views at that time, we should find them to be those that have come down to us in his epistles.

It is, of course, true that Paul regarded the Nazarene movement as inimical to the interests of true religion as represented in his mind by Pharisaism; otherwise he would not have persecuted the Nazarenes. He knew that Jesus' conception of the religious life had been different from that of the Pharisees. It must, therefore, have been clear to him beforehand, in a general way, that the acceptance of Jesus' Messiahship would involve the abandonment of some views he was then holding. It seems improbable, however, that Paul had thought the situation through with any careful attention to detail. The simple fact that God had so conspicuously cursed Jesus in the crucifixion, must have made it seem entirely superfluous to follow out in detail the logical consequences of admitting his Messiahship.

The fact that Jesus is represented, in Acts xxvi. 14, as saying to Paul, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad," may indicate a restlessness of spirit previous to his conversion, but a restlessness due, as will be shown later, to another cause than a growing suspicion that Jesus was the Messiah, and an unwillingness to take theological po-

sitions clearly foreseen to be necessitated by the admission of Jesus' Messiahship.

His statement, in Gal. i. 11, 12, that he was not taught his gospel in catechetical classes, or by the other apostles, but that he received it through revelation of Jesus Christ, is sometimes thought to indicate a wholesale delivery of all his theology to him at his conversion. But this statement in Galatians does not necessarily mean that there was no development in his thinking after his first recognition of Jesus' Messiahship. Certain things did at once become clear to him, as will soon be suggested, but he had many revelations from Jesus Christ. He went up to Jerusalem long after "by revelation" (Gal. ii. 2), and, in 1 Cor. xii. 1, he speaks of "visions and revelations of the Lord" as though they were not unusual in his experience. The gospel through revelation, therefore, may have come to him through various revelations. It may certainly be assumed, also, that God in his revelations would utilize intellectual processes of thought, rather than act in entire independence of them.

Granting, then, that there was a development of thought in Paul's experience, shaped by the Spirit of God, and affected by distinct revelations from Jesus, let us endeavor to trace it. The two thoughts habitually uppermost in an educated Pharisee's mind would be the two closely related thoughts of law and righteousness. There is evidence that even before Paul's conversion he had felt dissatisfied with the result of his effort to gain righteousness by observing the law. His outward conduct was exemplary, and in accord with the interpretations of the law generally current among Pharisees; so that he could later say of himself at this time, "as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless" (Phil. iii. 6). There was, however, one of the ten commands that a conscientious Pharisee had not sufficient ingenuity to relegate wholly to the do-

main of external conduct. This was the commandment against coveting, and this commandment he found himself failing to obey. Something, we know not what, the young rabbi coveted. In his statement in the seventh chapter of Romans, regarding the purpose of law and the futility of attempting to secure righteousness by means of law, he apparently draws upon his own personal experience: "I had not known sin, except through the law; for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet; but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting" (vss. 7, 8). He may have started for Damascus in this troubled frame of mind, with a conscience accusing him of coveting, and producing in him a keen sense of God's displeasure because of his persistent disobedience to the law. This use of the law was God's way of goading him on to the abandonment of Pharisaism; and to this Jesus may have referred when he said to him, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." Whether this be so or not, certain it is, that as soon as Saul recognized the Messiahship of Jesus, he had to admit that Pharisaic law-keeping failed to secure righteousness. It at once became evident to him, that those who were keeping the law most zealously, namely, himself and his fellow-Pharisees, were the greatest sinners he knew. Their devotion to the law and their boasted nearness to God had not kept them from the awful sin of murdering the Messiah and his faithful adherents.

One other thing at once became evident to Paul. He discovered that the acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Christ brought him peace. Just at the time when he found himself unable to keep the Mosaic law, and in consequent distress of mind; when the impracticability of law-keeping as a means of gaining righteousness and peace was being forced upon his unwilling mind, he found that believing in Jesus as Lord and Christ did bring such peace as his

Pharisaic mind knew very well could come only from being right with God, that is, from righteousness.

Doubtless for a time he rested content in the joy of his new experience, without attempting to analyze it or draw conclusions from it. The joy and novelty of his new discovery, that Jesus was the Christ, filled all his mind. The record of his first preaching in the Damascus synagogues gives no hint that he had any other message than that usual among the apostles at this stage of their thinking; namely, that Jesus was proved by his death and resurrection, of which they were witnesses, to be the Messiah. "He confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ" (Acts ix. 22).

Before very long, however, three of the four points we have already designated (pp. 280-286) as fundamental in the Pauline theology must have been definitely forced by all Paul's previous education upon his attention.

1. The first took the form of the question, What is the holy law of God, which we have so long revered, really for? Paul probably gained his idea of the purpose of the law (cf. p. 292) from his own experience with the law; and in his own experience, as we know from the seventh of Romans, the law had been serviceable in making him see how great a sinner he was. Not all the early Christians had this experience. There were converted Pharisees who were just as reverently devoted to the law after conversion as before. When Paul returned from his third missionary journey, there were many thousands among the Jews of them that had believed, and "all zealous for the law" (Acts xxi. 20). That which led Paul to take so different a view of the function of law from that taken by the majority of converted Pharisees must have been, as has been said, his own divinely appointed experience of its effects upon himself. This logical process may have been complete within a few months after Paul's conversion. Perhaps during his so-

jour in Arabia the Spirit of God carried him through the intellectual processes by which he reached this conclusion. The earliest documentary evidence of this view is in the synagogue address at Pisidian Antioch, where he speaks depreciatingly of the Mosaic law as a means of securing righteousness, saying, that whoever believes on Jesus can be justified from all things, as he could not be by Moses' law (Acts xiii. 39); but there is no reason to suppose that the thought was new to him at that time.

2. In close connection with the above must have arisen the question, What constitutes a man righteous? How soon after his conversion he was led by the Spirit to reason upon his experience, and reach the conclusion that faith constitutes a man righteous, we cannot tell. A prominent theme in rabbinical discussion was the righteousness of Abraham. As Paul turned back again to the familiar history of Abraham, one sentence appealed to him in a new and startling significance, and became ever after prominent in his discussion of faith-righteousness: "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Gen. xv. 6). That which constituted Abraham righteous, and gave him the peace consequent upon righteousness, was his unreserved yielding of himself in trustful obedience to Jehovah and his promise. It was just such yielding of himself to Jesus, God's Messianic vicegerent, in trustful obedience, that had given Paul such peace as could come only from righteousness.

If we accept the early date of the Epistle of James, and regard it as addressed to Jewish Christians of the Diaspora, there is evidence that Paul had already preached his doctrine of faith-righteousness among James' readers. The much-discussed paragraph (James ii. 14-26) in which James cites the case of Abraham, as an illustration of the fact that faith without works does not constitute a man righteous, is best explained upon the supposition that

James was trying to correct a misunderstanding of Paul's preaching.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of faith-righteousness was one very easily misunderstood, as is evident from the pains Paul takes to guard against such misunderstanding in the Epistle to the Romans (chap. vi.). Very likely in the early years of his preaching he had not realized the danger of being misunderstood, and did not guard his statements as carefully as he had learned to guard them some fifteen or twenty years later, when he wrote Romans. The region where Paul had been preaching before the earliest date that can be assigned to James' Epistle, is Syria and Cilicia, to which region Paul fled after his disappointing fortnight's visit in Jerusalem (Acts ix. 30; Gal. i. 21). As early as this period, perhaps about the year 40, Paul was preaching the truth, that faith constitutes a man righteous. It is entirely possible that James had heard this doctrine from the lips of Paul himself during the two weeks when Paul preached in the Jerusalem synagogues on the occasion of his first visit to the city after his conversion, and just before he went to Syria and Cilicia, for James was in the city at the time (Gal. i. 19). We know, too, that Paul was then laboring under the delusion that he could bring his old Pharisaic associates in the city over to the new movement (Acts xxii. 18-21), and this line of thought is one that he might naturally be expected to present to Pharisees, interested as they were in theories of righteousness.

3. Another question which Paul must have raised in the early years of his Christian experience was, Why did the

<sup>1</sup> He even cites Paul's favorite proof-text, which had been used so freely in Paul's preaching: "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith but have not works? Can that faith save him?" "Was not Abraham our father pronounced righteous because of works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. . . . Ye see that by works a man is pronounced righteous, and not only by faith."

Messiah die? It was enough for him, as for Peter and the other apostles, in their first surprise at so unexpected a fact as the Messiah's death, to find that such a death and resurrection were actually foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the apostolic discourses, as they are recorded in Acts, there is no distinct mention of the death and resurrection of the Messiah except as a fulfilment of prophecy identifying Jesus as the Messiah. Only in Paul's address in Pisidian Antioch is there a possible allusion to a connection between the Messiah's death and the forgiveness of sin (Acts xiii. 38). Their reverence for the Scriptures led them to rest content for a time with the thought that the prophecy of an event in Scripture was ample reason for the occurrence of the event.

To Paul's mind, the crucifixion of Jesus had long been one obvious, *prima facie* objection to the Messiahship of Jesus, which made it unnecessary to give the question of his Messiahship any serious consideration. Now that he was convinced of his Messiahship, he must before long have asked himself, What was the necessity for the death of the Messiah that led God to order it, and foretell it in Scripture? The answer to this question he seems to have found in the system of bloody sacrifice prevalent among the Jews. The sacrificial system, doubtless, had large significance in the thought of the Pharisees that lived before its abrogation at the destruction of the temple. Paul had probably always believed that an unrighteous man, in drawing near to God, must be penitent and bring an offering. To be sure, he had very possibly regarded penitence and sacrificial offering as meritorious acts that earned righteousness, and as unnecessary for some men. He had, however, been profoundly convinced by his Damascus vision that he and all his Pharisaic colleagues were unrighteous men. As he gained a truer idea of what righteousness really was, he saw that there were no men in all the history of the

race, not excepting even Abraham and David (Rom. iv. 1-8), against whom a charge of unrighteousness could not be brought. It then perhaps began to dawn upon him, that the death of the Messiah was a colossal sacrifice offered for the whole world. In Romans, after elaborately proving the unrighteousness of the whole world, he introduces the death and blood of Jesus as *ἱλαστήριον*, or "propitiatory," evidently having in mind the sprinkling of blood upon the mercy-seat, so often called *ἱλαστήριον* in the Septuagint.

But why should a sacrifice be necessary, in order to bring the penitent sinner into right relation to God? This deeper question Paul does not discuss. The nearest approach to its discussion is in Rom. iii. 25, where he asserts that the death of Jesus has a propitiatory value, enabling God to act righteously in pronouncing the man of penitent faith to be righteous; but even there he does not raise the deeper question, of how it enables God to act righteously in so doing. There is in Paul's full recognition of the fatherhood of God, and of the perfect revelation of the Father in Jesus Christ the Son, material for an attempt at an explanation of the way in which the sufferings of Jesus serve to secure the penitent sinner's forgiveness, but Paul nowhere gives such an explanation. He simply asserts a necessary connection between such suffering and forgiveness. To an adequate discussion of this subject, there is requisite a fresh investigation of the original idea that underlay Jewish sacrifice; of the Pharisaic conception of the rationale of temple sacrifice, which may, conceivably, have been quite different from that which originally prevailed; and of Paul's view of the sacrificial system after his conversion.

4. It remains to trace, if possible, the process of thought by which Paul came to see that a Gentile could enjoy the privilege of having his faith in Jesus Christ reckoned righteousness without precedent or subsequent connection

with the Jewish nation and Jewish law. All three accounts of Paul's interview with Jesus make it evident that he knew, at the time of his conversion, that he was to be connected with some great movement of the Gentiles toward the kingdom of God. The turning of a great number of Gentiles to the Messianic kingdom of God was not foreign to Jewish thought,<sup>1</sup> but such were to enter the Messianic kingdom by becoming Jewish proselytes. Paul's earliest conception of his mission to the Gentiles was probably, that through his instrumentality large numbers of them would enter the kingdom of God by way of Judaism. A number of years, perhaps eight or ten, seem to have passed before Paul saw that his mission to the Gentiles was to be of another sort. If Paul had invited uncircumcised Gentiles into the kingdom of God before his year with Barnabas in the Jewish-Gentile church at Antioch, Luke would surely have mentioned it; for the unmistakable purpose of the book of Acts is to show the steps by which Christianity passed out from the Jew to the Gentile. It is significant, too, that in Paul's summary of his experience as a preacher, Luke makes him speak of his preaching to the Gentiles as though it were chronologically latest: "I declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles that they should repent" (Acts xxvi. 20). In the Antioch church Paul found uncircumcised Gentiles living consistent Christian lives. About that time or a little earlier he also learned that God had poured out his Spirit in approval of uncircumcised Gentile believers in the house of Cornelius of Cæsarea.

Paul's spiritual history had probably prepared him for these revelations. He had already ceased to think of the Mosaic law as an eternal, unchangeable thing of glory to which all lives must conform. Its function was not to

<sup>1</sup> Weber, p. 368.

serve as a means of securing righteousness, but to show men how unrighteous they were, and to make them cast themselves in faith upon Jesus Christ as the only available way of attaining righteousness. If Gentiles could be made to realize their unrighteousness in some other way, it was unnecessary to subject them to the law. When Paul talked with one and another of the Gentile members of the Antioch church about their religious experience, he learned from them that, before ever they knew anything about the Jewish law, their consciences had, in the main, accused and excused them in accordance with the principles of the Jewish law. To be sure, these Gentile Christians in Antioch seem all to have been synagogue-Gentiles, that is, Gentiles who, though not circumcised, had been regular attendants upon the synagogue service and had conformed to Jewish law in the few particulars necessary to make their presence in the synagogue tolerable. It may be that only later, in the crisis through which Paul and Barnabas passed in South Galatia, at Pisidian Antioch, when they left the synagogues, and in some other building, apart from all connection with Jewish worship, preached directly to Gentiles uninfluenced by Judaism (Acts xiii. 44-49)—it may be that only then did Paul come fully to see that there was absolutely no distinction to be made between Jew and Gentile in the presentation of the gospel.

A man's personal prejudices are the last things to change. They remain after the theories that produced them have been given up. A man in India may give up the positions that logically necessitate the caste system, and yet be slow to see that the caste system itself is an impropriety. Peter saw theoretically that there was no difference between Jew and Gentile before he was ready, in the social life of the Antioch church, practically to admit and stand by all the consequences of that position. So it may well be, that the perfect equality of the uncircumcised Gentile wholly un-

touched by Jewish influence, with the Jew, so far as his right to the gospel is concerned, was the last truth to which Paul was led by the Holy Spirit and by revelation.

There is another fundamental position in the Pauline theology, the genesis of which cannot here be discussed, but which may be mentioned in the hope that some one of you<sup>1</sup> will be led to its investigation. It is this: Death, the effect of sin upon the spirit and body of all men, is overcome, in the case of the believer, by the indwelling spiritual presence of Jesus. Paul teaches that the effect of sin is death, and that death is a blight upon the whole of a man. As it affects his spiritual part, it consists in separation from God's Spirit. As it affects his physical body, it consists in the phenomenon ordinarily called death. Death is overcome in the believer by the indwelling Spirit of Christ; for such indwelling restores spiritual union with God, and guarantees a better body than the one that perishes. Paul's views on this subject before and after conversion were not so diametrically opposed as those upon the subjects we have discussed, and they were probably more largely influenced by the thought current in the Christian church at the time of his conversion. But here, too, Paul's experience furnished him with new material for his theology. His experience with the glorified body of Jesus in the Damascus vision probably gave him his conception of the glorious spiritual body to be possessed by believers, of which he makes so much in his eschatology; and his experience of companionship with the Christ, who ever after that Damascus interview dwelt in Paul ready to burst forth with all his glory in the twinkling of an eye, had much to do in shaping his doctrine of the indwelling Spirit, which has thrilled the heart of the church as could nothing but a statement of truth born of experience.

<sup>1</sup> Delivered before the students of Oberlin Theological Seminary.