

THE QUINTESSENCE OF PAULINISM.¹

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WHEN we speak of Paulinism we imply, first that Paul had a theology, and secondly that this theology was so distinctive that we are justified in using a specific name for it. Both contentions are exposed to criticism. Some would deem it a grave injustice to describe Paul as a theologian. He was [rather a prophet, or even a poet, who felt deeply and had a keen insight into religious experience but was careless of logical consistency and indifferent to the creation of a system. Now it is true that Paul was gifted with the mystic's vision, and that in moments of ecstasy his utterance glows with a lyrical rapture. But it is part of his greatness that his thought is set on fire by noble emotion, and that emotion is redeemed from vagueness and incoherence by thought. Indeed the belief that Paul was a seer but no thinker, could hardly survive a careful study even of one of his more characteristic writings. But, it may be retorted, Paul was in a sense a thinker, the sense in which a debater must be a thinker. In other words he is master of the argumentative style, and shows great skill in marshalling objections to the position of his opponents. He is a pleader rather than a philosopher. For my own part I believe that this is a profound mistake. Paul was not a mere controversialist who took the arguments that might be convenient for disposing of one antagonist without reference to their consistency with those he had used against another. Behind his occasional utterances there lies a closely knit and carefully constructed system of thought. He moves in his attack with such speed and confidence because he is in possession of a standard to which he relates each new

¹ An elaboration of the lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library, 11 October, 1916.

issue as it confronts him. No series of hastily extemporized defences could have produced the same impression of unity and consistency unless they had belonged to a system. But in saying this I desire to disengage the word "system" from any unfortunate association. It would be a serious misapprehension were we to think of Paulinism as representing for its author a complete and exact reflection of the whole realm of religious reality. He was indeed so convinced of the truth of his Gospel that he did not shrink from hurling an anathema at any, though it might be an angel from heaven, who should dare to contradict it. But his certainty as to the truth of his central doctrine did not blind him to the imperfection of his knowledge, or quench the sense of mystery with which he confronted the ultimate realities. He was conscious that beyond all the regions which he had explored and charted there stretched an illimitable realm, the knowledge of which was not disclosed in time but was reserved for eternity. Here he could prophesy only in part, because he was aware that he knew only in part; and though he soared, free and daring, in the rare atmosphere of speculative thought, he veiled his face in the presence of the ultimate mysteries. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."

Paul, then, believed himself to be in possession of a system of interdependent facts and ideas, arranged in due proportion and controlled from a centre. His epistles do not present us with a number of detached and independent ideas, still less with fluid opinions, fluctuating in response to changing conditions. He who builds on the Pauline theology, be that foundation false or true, ample or inadequate, is building on firm granite, not on sinking and shifting sand. But some will challenge our right to use the term "Paulinism". It is, of course, true, they would say, that Paul had a coherent, self-consistent, and true system of thought. But this was just the same body of revealed truth as is present everywhere, explicitly or implicitly, in the New Testament, or even in the whole of Scripture. The traditional attitude to the Bible is that it everywhere says substantially the same thing on matters of doctrine, and that differences of expression involve no material disagreement. Now it may be argued, and with some measure of success, that beneath the various types of theology we find in the New Testament there is a fundamental

harmony. But the science of Biblical Theology has demonstrated that these various types exist. It is accordingly our duty to study and estimate each of them for itself before we try to work behind them to a more fundamental unity. There is no type more distinctive, there is none so fully worked out as Paulinism.

The term "Paulinism" might, of course, be used to cover the whole range of Paul's teaching ; but I am concerned specially with those elements in it which were Paul's peculiar contribution to the interpretation of the Gospel. That contribution had its source, I believe, in the experience through which Paul passed. But he owed much to other influences. These affected, however, the distinctive elements of his teaching much less than those which he shared with his fellow-Christians. On this part of the subject I will dwell briefly, since it is rather my purpose to disengage from Paul's teaching as a whole that which is most characteristically his own. Of the external influences which originated or fashioned his doctrines I think we should attribute more to Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian theology than to Gentile philosophy or religious mysteries. It was inevitable that he should be profoundly impressed by the Old Testament. Apart from it, indeed, his theology could not have come into existence. It is the basis on which it rests, it largely supplied the moulds in which it was cast, and the substance as well as the form of much in the teaching itself. He presupposes the Old Testament, and regards his own doctrine as in continuity with it. When he became a Christian, he did not abandon the religion of Israel, but he saw in the Gospel the fulfilment and expansion of it. Yet it is a mistake to over-emphasize the Old Testament factor in the origin or formulation of Paulinism. Indeed that theology in one of its leading features is, from the Old Testament standpoint, a startling paradox. The estimate of the Law in the Old Testament is strangely different from that given by Paul. The Law inspires the Old Testament saints with a passionate devotion, as we may see from the glowing panegyric in the latter part of the nineteenth psalm, or the prolix enthusiasm of the hundred and nineteenth psalm. The ideal of the righteous man is the student whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates upon it day and night. It is the safeguard and guide of youth, the stay of manhood, the comfort of age. It commanded more than sober approval or quiet acceptance ; it drew to itself a passionate loyalty,

an enthusiastic love, which nerved martyrs to face the most exquisite torture for its sake. But how different it is with Paul, who had himself in his earlier days experienced the same fervour as his countrymen, and indeed surpassed them in his zeal for it. It is true that even as a Christian he admits the sanctity and righteousness of the Law and the excellence of its purpose. He recognizes in his philosophy of history a Divinely appointed function for it. But for him the Law is no fount of refreshment and joy, it is a yoke and a burden, from which the Christian rejoices to be set free. It brings with it not a blessing but a curse. It is the instrument of sin, from which indeed that fatal tyrant draws its strength. It breaks up the old life of innocence by creating the consciousness of sin ; it stimulates antagonism by its prohibitions, which suggest the lines of opposition along which the rebellious flesh may express its hostility. It was interpolated between God's gracious promise and its glorious fulfilment, that by its harsh and servile discipline men might be educated for freedom. So foreign, indeed, is the attitude of Paul to that of the Old Testament and Judaism, that one can easily understand how some Jewish scholars feel it hard to admit that anyone who had known Judaism from the inside could ever have written the criticism of the Law, which we find in the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. I believe that this is not so difficult if the problem is approached from the right starting-point ; but it emphasizes the revolutionary character of the Pauline doctrine. Similarly I regard it as a serious error to interpret Paul's conception of the flesh by that which we find in the Old Testament. In the latter case it stands for human nature as a whole, the weak and perishable creature in contrast to the mighty immortals. The contrast gains occasionally a moral significance, but this is wholly subordinate. In Paul, however, instead of a metaphysical we have an ethical contrast. The flesh is not the synonym for man in his creaturely infirmity, whose moral lapses are indulgently excused by God as simply what must be expected from a being so frail and evanescent. It stands for one side only of human nature, that is the lower. It is evil through and through. It is so irretrievably the slave and instrument of sin, it is entrenched in such deep and abiding hostility to God and His will, that no redemption or even improvement of it is possible, it must be put to death on the cross of Christ. To reduce Paul's doctrine to the Old Testament level is

to miss its tragic intensity and eviscerate it of its bitter moral significance.

If from the Old Testament we turn to the contemporary Judaism, there also we are constrained to admit a measure of influence on the apostle's thought. He had been a Pharisee, trained by Gamaliel. Naturally he did not break completely with the past when he became a Christian. He brought over current Jewish ideas and modes of argument. His Rabbinical interpretation of Scripture has been long familiar, but it is only within recent years that a fuller acquaintance with Jewish literature has revealed more fully the affinities he has with contemporary Jewish thought. Few things in the Epistles have been more richly illustrated from this source than his doctrine of angels and demons, which now stands before us in quite a new light. But I am less disposed than some scholars to rate the influence of contemporary Judaism high, at least so far as Paul's central doctrines are concerned. We have all too slender a knowledge of Judaism in Paul's day. The literary sources for the study of Rabbinic theology are considerably later, and the question arises how far we may use them for the reconstruction of a considerably earlier stage of thought. It may be plausibly argued that we can confidently explain coincidences with Paulinism much more readily on the assumption that Paul was the debtor. It is unlikely that the Rabbis consciously adopted Christian ideas. But this by no means settles the question. The amazingly rapid spread of Christianity quickly created a Christian atmosphere, in which it would not be unreasonable to suppose that Judaism itself experienced some modification. We know that there was considerable controversy between Jews and Christians. And we may well believe that its inevitable result would be that where Christians fastened on the weak points of Judaism and demonstrated the superiority of the Christian view, the Jew would be naturally tempted to change his ground and persuade himself that really these views were his own. It is also possible that we have commonly overestimated the hostility between the adherents of the two religions, and unduly underrated the extent to which friendly relations existed in the early period. In this way Christian influence may have filtered into contemporary Judaism. We have, however, a number of Jewish Apocalypses, earlier than Paul or roughly contemporary with him. These, it must be remembered, represent a peculiar tendency; how

far Paul stood under its influence we hardly know. But where we find coincidences, Paul's indebtedness can hardly be denied. In determining the extent to which we can rely on later Rabbinical documents in reconstructing the Judaism of the first century, it must not be forgotten that the appalling catastrophes, which overwhelmed the Jewish race in the first and second centuries of our era, must have changed the conditions profoundly in the theological as well as the political world. The Judaism of the later centuries was hardly identical with the Judaism in which Paul was trained.

At present it is fashionable to make much of Greek influence on Paul. Not so long ago one of the most eminent exponents of Paulinism explained it as a mixture of Rabbinical and Alexandrian Judaism, in which the incongruous elements were so badly blended that the theology contradicted itself on fundamental principles. Radical contradictions in the system of such a thinker as Paul are antecedently improbable and to be admitted only on cogent evidence. This verdict rests on no assumption as to Paul's inspiration, it is simply a tribute due to a thinker of the highest eminence. Alexandrian Judaism contained a large element of Greek philosophy. Nowadays it is specially in Stoicism and the Greek mysteries that the source of much in the Pauline theology is discovered. The presence of Greek elements would not be in any way surprising. Paul was born and bred in a famous University city; he mixed freely with Greeks, converted and unconverted, in his evangelistic work. It would not have been astonishing that one who became a Greek to the Greeks should have incorporated in his theology ideas derived from Greek philosophy. I am by no means concerned to deny points of contact, but I believe that it is here as with Jewish theology that these are to be found not so much in the centre as in the outlying regions of his theology. I may quote on this point the pronouncement of Harnack whose judgment is exceptionally weighty. He says, with reference to Paul: "Criticism, which is to-day more than ever inclined to make him into a Hellenist (so e.g. Reitzenstein), would do well to gain at the outset a more accurate knowledge of the Jew and the Christian Paul before it estimates the secondary elements which he took over from the Greek Mysteries. It would then see at once that these elements could have obtruded themselves on him only as uninvited guests, and that a deliberate acceptance is out of the question." I will illustrate this

point from a notable instance in the last century. I choose this because it concerns the right interpretation of a crucial element in Paulinism. I have already explained why I cannot accept the view that Paul's doctrine of the flesh is to be interpreted through the Old Testament. Several scholars derived it from Greek philosophy, and among them the name of Holsten deserves special mention. He discovered in Paul's doctrine the Greek contrast between matter and spirit. The flesh he identified with the body, explaining that when the body was spoken of as "flesh" the emphasis was on the material of which it was composed, and when the flesh was spoken of as "body" the stress lay on the form into which it was organized. It is very dubious if this interpretation can be successfully sustained in detailed exegesis. But, apart from that, there are more general difficulties which appear to me to be insuperable. In the first place Paul's language varies very significantly when he is speaking of the flesh and when he is speaking of the body. The flesh is so thoroughly vicious and so utterly hostile to God that Christianity does not redeem but crucifies it. But while the flesh is crucified, the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Ghost and destined to share in the spirit's immortality. Further, when Paul enumerates the works of the flesh he includes sins which are not physical, especially sins of temper. Again, his doctrine would surely have taken a very different turn if he had regarded the body as the seat of sin. The way of salvation would have lain through asceticism, a starving and a crushing of the body under the rule of the spirit. And I am not sure that a rigorous logic would not go still further. If the body is the seat of sin then death is the means of redemption. And this would have had a two-fold consequence, that while men were in the body they could not be free from sin, and on the other hand, that complete redemption might be at once secured by suicide. Now Paul drew neither of these conclusions; on the contrary it was a commonplace in his theology that while a man was in the body he might have ceased to be in the flesh. On these grounds I am compelled to reject the view that for Paul the flesh and the body were identical, and that his doctrine of the flesh embodies the antithesis of matter and spirit borrowed from Greek philosophy. And finally, as indicating how improbable it is that Paul should have derived his fundamental doctrines in general, and this in particular, from Greek philosophy, we have his whole treat-

ment of the question of the resurrection. In discussing it he treats the resurrection of the body and the extinction of being as if they were the only two alternatives, and does not take into account the third possibility of the immortality of the disembodied spirit. The importance of this fact will be more clearly seen, when we remember that the Greek doctrine of immortality was closely connected with that view of matter as evil, and the antithesis of body and spirit which Paul is supposed to have derived from Greek philosophy. If he borrowed the one why should he be so unconscious of the other ?

I pass on to the question of the relation of Paulinism to the teaching of Jesus. The view that Paul owed little to the teaching of Jesus was more fashionable at one time than it is to-day, though it still finds advocates. We are told that the apostle had but little interest in the earthly life of Jesus. His attention was concentrated on the Pre-existence, the Incarnation, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Session at God's right hand. His thought and emotion were concentrated on these great theological facts ; to the details of His earthly career and to His teaching He was almost entirely indifferent. Although the remarkable silence of the Pauline Epistles on the life and teaching of Jesus renders such a view plausible, I cannot believe that it will bear searching scrutiny. The extent of the silence may be exaggerated. Paul appeals to the sayings of Jesus as finally settling certain questions of conduct. His knowledge of the facts of Christ's career and the details of His teaching was probably more extensive than has often been admitted ; and his attachment to His person, the depth of His gratitude to Him, were too profound for such indifference to be at all natural. I do not institute any detailed comparison between the utterances of Jesus and the epistles of His apostle, but I remind you of the situation in which Paul was placed. There is unquestionably a change in the centre of gravity. Paul's emphasis is thrown much more fully on the great facts of redemption, the Death and the Resurrection. This indeed is not unnatural. Jesus was naturally reticent as to the theological significance of facts, the possibility of which His disciples were unwilling to contemplate. And the Cross itself inevitably put the teaching into a secondary place. The deed of Jesus was mightier than His word. At first an insuperable objection to the acceptance of Him as Messiah, it had become for

Paul the Divine solution of his problem, his deliverance from condemnation and from moral impotence. It contained a deeper revelation of God's nature and His love than the loftiest teaching of Jesus could convey. Here was the climax of God's slow self-disclosure, manifested not in words however sweet, tender, and uplifting, but in a mighty act, which filled that teaching with wholly new depth and intensity of meaning. And if it is true that the greatest contribution which Jesus made to religion was just the personality of Jesus Himself and His supreme act of sacrifice, then Paul was right in placing the emphasis where he did, even though one might wish he had drawn more fully on the words of Jesus when writing his epistles. Those epistles, however, were written to Christian communities, the majority of them founded by Paul himself, and in any case in possession of a background of information as to Jesus. But the situation of Paul had a peculiarity which must never be overlooked in considering this question. However content he may have been with his own experience, however deeply convinced of its evidential value, he could not forget that it was incommunicable, and that his own bare word was insufficient to substantiate the truth of his message. Through much of his career he was on his defence against those who stigmatized him as no genuine exponent of the Gospel. The other apostles looked coldly on his presentation of Christianity. He had to fight the battle of Christian freedom not only against them but even against his own trusted comrade, Barnabas. His enemies followed him from church to church, to poison the minds of his converts against him. Is it conceivable that, placed in this situation, Paul could have been indifferent to the life and teaching of the Founder? Even if he had not needed the knowledge for his own satisfaction, it was a strategic necessity to him. How could he have afforded to insist on his right to be a genuine apostle of Jesus, a true herald of His Gospel, if all the time he was presenting his opponents in the Judaizing controversy with the opening given to them by such ignorance and indifference? Often contrasted unfavourably with the other apostles, he could not have failed to diminish by diligent inquiry their advantage over him as companions and pupils of Jesus. We must infer therefore that he had an adequate knowledge of the historical facts and the Founder's teaching, whatever view we take as to the evidence of such knowledge afforded by the epistles.

Something he must have owed to the apostles, notably to Peter. Much of his knowledge of the facts of Christ's life, His Passion and His Resurrection would be derived from this source. He shared with them the belief in certain fundamental facts, but their agreement went beyond this point. There was an element of theological interpretation common to them. Paul explicitly mentions, not only the fact that Christ died, but the vital interpretation, which turned the fact into a Gospel, that Christ died for our sins. From them he derived the institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and the expectation of Christ's speedy return. Yet Paul emphatically asserts that he did not receive his Gospel from man but that it came to him by revelation. His distinctive presentation of Christianity was accordingly original, not borrowed; and the fullest recognition of that fact is not incompatible with the admission that there was not a little in his thought which he owed to others. That which he received from others by no means accounted for Paulinism. It is not so difficult to accumulate parallels to this detail and that; what is not possible is to discover a parallel to the system as a whole. Views which Paul did not originate he treated in an original way, stamped them with his own genius, and fused them into harmony with his general point of view. He was a speculative thinker of no mean order, not the second-rate eclectic whom some would make him out to be.

Paul's original contribution to Christian theology grew directly out of his own experience. This will be most clearly seen if, so far as we can, we trace the development of that experience. He had been trained as a Pharisee in the most rigorous type of Judaism. He had sought for righteousness, for a right standing before God, with a burning passion and unflagging energy. The standard of righteousness had been laid down in the Law, and he sought to fashion his life in strict and punctilious conformity with it. He achieved such success that he could claim to have outstripped all his contemporaries in the pursuit of righteousness, and could describe himself as blameless with reference to the Law. Yet his efforts, so strenuous and outwardly so successful, left him with a sense of desires unsatisfied and a goal always unreached. In the classic fragment of autobiography that he has given us in Romans VII., he has sketched with inimitable insight and in graphic and telling language, his spiritual

career while he was under the Law. It was the flesh that made him weak, sin had seized it and used it as a base of operations, had conquered and brought him into captivity. It had not always been so with him. He looked wistfully back to the time when he was alive in happy childish innocence, wholly unconscious of sin. From this he was roused by the coming of the Law into his life. Conscious now of the holy Law of God, he realized his own disharmony with it. Moreover he felt that the Law's prohibitions were turned by sin into suggestions of transgression. Such then was his bitter experience. He had lost his innocence, his happy unconsciousness of a moral order had given place to a sense of disunion with it; he felt himself sold in helpless and hopeless captivity to sin, and the fact that the Law forbade a certain course of action became, in this perversion of his moral nature, the very reason why he should follow it. But all this implied that a higher element was present within him; otherwise he could never have felt the wretchedness of his condition or been sensible of the tragic schism in his soul. Looking more deeply into himself, he realized that within his own personality competing powers struggled for supremacy. On the one side there was his lower nature to which he gives the name "the flesh," wherein sin had lain in a sleep like that of death till the Law had come and provoked it into revolt. While the mind consented to the Law of God that it was good, it was overmatched by the flesh which constantly insisted on his disobedience to it. The utmost strain of effort never altered the inward conditions; the sense of defeat remained. Now, as a pious Jew, this state of things must have seemed inexplicable to him. With a conscientiousness so acute, a nature so strenuous, and an ethical standard pitched so high, a moral tragedy was inevitable. The fault could not rest with the Law of God which could set forth no unattainable ideal, and therefore it must lie in himself. And yet how could he be at fault, since in his zeal for righteousness nothing had been left undone? This experience became clear to him later and supplied him with a large section of his theology, but at this time it could only have been an insoluble puzzle.

Then he came into contact with the Christians, and was stirred to the depths by their proclamation of a crucified Messiah. Their preaching would fill him with abhorrence, for the curse of the Law rested on him who was hanged on a tree. It was not simply that the

religious leaders of the nation had decided against Jesus ; the decisive verdict had been given by God. ; It was conceivable, however improbable, that God's Messiah should have been executed ; it was unthinkable that he should have been executed by such a death. The doctrine of a crucified Messiah was a blasphemous paradox. But if he pressed the Christians with the dilemma their position seemed to involve, they must have escaped it by their confident assertion that God Himself had intervened in the resurrection of the Crucified to vindicate His character and establish the truth of His claim. But they would not leave the death itself without attempt at explanation. It was not for them simply an ugly and unwelcome incident, an inexplicable mystery, its burden lifted, but its obscurity unremoved, by the Resurrection. It was not an irrational accident violating the moral order ; it was a deed that testified to the sin and ignorance of man, but also a part of God's plan for human redemption. But they did not realize, as Paul did, how fundamental were the problems which their position involved, and to what radical solution they must be carried if they maintained their belief in Jesus. Hate sharpened Paul's insight into the instability of their position, and it was his interest as a controversialist to push the logical conclusions from it to an extreme. With the swift intuition of genius he realized that to accept the Cross was to bid farewell to the Law. His ruthlessness as a persecutor is not to be palliated by the plea that he had failed to understand the Gospel. We may excuse it on the ground that he understood it so well. To a certain extent we may even say that one side of Paulinism was a theoretical construction formed by Paul in the period before he became a Christian. For if Jesus was indeed the Messiah, how did it stand with the Law ? In condemning the Messiah, the Law condemned itself. But not on this ground alone would the acceptance of Christianity carry with it a renunciation of the Law. So tremendous a fact as the Messiah's death, and a death in this form, must have an adequate explanation. Such an explanation was actually given in the theory that the death of Jesus was to atone for sin and establish a new righteousness. It was obvious that a new righteousness through Christ would supplant the righteousness of the Law, and thus the privilege of the Jew disappeared and he sank to the level of the Gentiles.

Now, however strongly Paul pressed the Christians with the logic of their position, he could hardly help feeling as the controversy went

on that his own position was not impregnable. He could not help being impressed by the constancy of the Christians under persecution, and the serenity with which they met their fate. Nor could he deny the possibility that their case might be true, however he despised and disbelieved it. As a Pharisee he could not reject the possibility of the Resurrection, nor evade the inference that it would neutralize the curse of the Law. The assertion that the Messiah had died to atone for sin was not intrinsically incredible, and it met very well the need of which he was himself conscious. To deny the fact of the Resurrection in face of the unwavering testimony of the Christian must have become always more difficult. Even while rejecting their belief as blasphemous, there was probably an undercurrent of uneasy questioning whether they might not be right after all. And this was strengthened by his consciousness of dissatisfaction with his own life under the Law, his realization that the Law had not brought him happiness, or assured him of his standing with God. Subconsciously at least it would seem probable that the issue had narrowed itself to this, Had Jesus risen from the dead or not? We may then sum up his position just before his conversion in this way: he passionately held fast the Law as God's appointed way of righteousness, but was conscious of inability on his own part to attain his ideal. For himself personally righteousness had not come through the Law. On the other hand he held Jesus to be a blasphemous pretender to Messiahship, cursed by the Law and therefore by God, but with misgivings whether after all He might not be the true Messiah; in which case His death was intended as an atonement for sin and to create that righteousness before God, which in Paul's own experience at least the Law had been unable to do. In which case again the Law was abolished, and Jew and Gentile were placed on the same level before God.

There came to Paul in this state of mind the overwhelming experience on the road to Damascus. The Nazarene, whom his countrymen had sent to the Cross and whose followers he had persecuted to the death, appeared to him in a blinding blaze of heavenly glory. In that experience the Pauline theology came to birth. The full and radiant conviction now and for ever possessed him, that the crucified Jesus had risen from the dead and now reigned in glory, and was therefore the Messiah whom He had proclaimed Himself to be. The inferences

he had previously drawn in order to fortify himself in his rejection of Christianity and persecution of the Christians still held good. When he accepted Christianity, he accepted the conclusions which he had previously regarded as inevitable. Once for all he abandoned the belief that righteousness could come through the Law. He acquiesced in the abolition of the Law, which had pronounced its curse upon his Master, and he freely admitted the universality of salvation and the abolition of all distinction between Gentile and Jew. But theoretical inferences, drawn from the standpoint of Judaism, were wholly inadequate to express the fulness of blessing which had come to him in his conversion. The splendour of illumination which had flooded his soul was miraculous to him, matching the marvel of the light which burst on the primæval chaos, when God began to deliver the earth from darkness and disorder. It had brought to him the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. A description of his experience even more pregnant and suggestive is given in the Epistle to the Galatians: "When it pleased God, who before my birth set me apart for His service and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me". It would be vain to attempt a psychological analysis of the inmost fact in Paul's experience, and inquire in what way this revelation was imparted. But the words are full of significance. The passage carries us a long way into the heart of the Pauline theology. It was God who had taken the initiative in this great act of revelation. Thus the Gospel was not a wholly new thing. It did not make an absolute breach with the past but stood in continuity with it; it was the God of the Old Covenant who was also the God of the New. Thus Paul secured the inclusion of the Old Testament revelation in Christianity. His disciple Marcion at a later period rejected the God of the Jews and the Hebrew Scriptures, and regarded Christianity as a sudden irruption of the new order into the old without any preparation in history. For Paul the new religion proclaims the ancient God. And this God reveals His Son. Jesus is thus not merely a national Messiah. The Messianic category, true so far as it goes, is inadequate. Paul claims for Him a loftier title. Thus, while his monotheism remained, it was not a bare monotheism, but a monotheism which, while maintaining the unity of the Godhead, found room for distinctions within it. And this revelation was made within him. It is an inward revelation that the phrase is intended to express; and we can hardly be wrong

in finding here his deepest experience in conversion, the vital and mystical union of his spirit with Christ Himself. But out of this certain consequences inevitably flow. If he was one with Christ then Christ's experiences had become his own, and Christ's resources were in a sense placed at his disposal. Thus he was free from the Law, and in Christ he stood righteous before God. And with the Law he had died in Christ to the flesh ; and therefore to sin which, apart from the flesh, had no foothold in man. We may then summarize the positions held by Paul at his conversion or given in it as follows : Monotheism, qualified by the recognition of distinctions within the Godhead ; the choice of Israel and revelation to it, qualified by the inability of the Law to produce righteousness ; the reign of sin in the individual by means of the flesh, against which the struggles of the mind were quite ineffectual ; the recognition of righteousness as a free gift of God apart from the merit or effort of the recipient ; the union of the human spirit with Christ, the crucified and risen Lord ; and through this union the forgiveness of sins, victory over sin, and power for a new life.

From this sketch of Paul's spiritual history we must now pass on to a more systematic and detailed exposition of his fundamental doctrines. We must of course remember that his recognition of a Divine revelation already given to Israel compelled him to adjust to the Old Testament as best he could the theology derived from experience. His experience before conversion, interpreted in the light of the Gospel, shaped his doctrines of sin, the flesh, and the Law. Of the flesh I have spoken already when considering the alleged derivation of Paul's conception from the Old Testament and Greek philosophy. On it therefore I need add only a few words. In his experience the flesh had been the seat and the instrument of sin. Apart from the flesh there could be no sin in man. Flesh without sin was also unknown. Now the flesh, unlike the body, is not a morally indifferent thing, which may become the slave of sin or the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is completely antagonistic to God and righteousness. In it there dwells no good thing ; it has a will and intent which leads to death ; it lusts against the spirit ; cannot be subject to God's law. Its works are altogether evil, and exclude those who practise them from the kingdom of God. Those whose life is lived in accordance with it are inevitably on the way to death ; and those who sow to it will of

it reap corruption. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. This dark and lurid picture shows us clearly how irretrievably evil a thing Paul considered the flesh to be.

But reflection on his own experience had taught him to find in the Law the stimulus which wakened this hateful impulse to its malign activity. In this he detected one of the darkest shades in the character of sin. Nothing brought out its true heinousness more clearly than this that it perverted into an instrument of its baneful energy God's holy law itself. Thus the Law could not secure obedience because it was weak through the flesh, while it proved in experience to be the strength of sin. So there emerges one of the most paradoxical features in the Pauline theology. It would have seemed as though there could be but one answer to the question, Why had the Law been given to Israel? For what purpose could it have been given, save to teach man the way of righteousness, and guide and stimulate him as he sought to tread it? But though such was its obvious design, Paul felt that in his own career it had failed to achieve it. It would not have been so strange had he simply said that the Law was given to convince man of his own sinfulness by setting before him a moral ideal of which he fell lamentably short. But he goes further than this and teaches that it was given for the sake of transgression, and came in besides that the trespass might abound. We must, it is true, maintain the distinction between sin and trespass, and not understand him to mean that the Law was given in order that sin might be increased. It was in order that the sin already latent in man should reveal itself in its true colours through abundant manifestation in acts of transgression. Such he had found it to be. He says, "I was alive apart from the Law once: but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died". In his innocent childhood, when he was just a creature of impulse and knew the restraint of no moral law, he lived his happy untroubled life, conscious of no schism within his own breast. But when he came to years of moral discernment, and realized that he was placed in a moral order, the flesh chafed at its pressure, and the sin which had been slumbering in it woke to life and disclosed its native antagonism to God. Thus the Law, holy, just, and good, so framed that obedience to it would have brought life and righteousness, had issued in condemnation and death. It had brought the consciousness of sin, it had become its strength and stronghold. Thus

Paul is led to the paradoxical doctrine that the Law had not been intended to produce righteousness, but to produce the effects, which it had in fact achieved. God had meant it to give sin its opportunity, to prove an incentive to transgression. It is not strange that Jewish writers, for whom the Law is not an intolerable yoke and brings not a curse but a blessing, should criticize Paul's doctrine as utterly contrary to the facts. Indeed we can hardly wonder that some should doubt whether anyone capable of formulating it could ever have known Judaism from the inside. Yet it is not difficult to see how Paul was driven to take up this position. It is one of those cases where the necessity of adjustment to the Old Testament has shaped the doctrine which yet it did not create. There is nothing to show that he ever contemplated the solution adopted by Marcion that Judaism with its Law and Old Testament Canon should be frankly abandoned. We cannot doubt that he would have utterly repudiated it. But, realizing that Christianity stood in continuity with Judaism, and that for it too the Old Testament was sacred Scripture, and that the Law had actually been given by God, though through angelic intermediaries, he had the difficult task of combining his conviction of its Divine origin with the fact that it had proved to be the strength of sin. He solved his difficulty by the bold contention that the Law had never been intended to bring righteousness, for God could not have adopted a means so ill designed to serve His end. Now it may be urged that this is just a piece of desperate apologetic, to which Paul would never have been driven but for a certain morbid strain in his own piety. With a conscience more robust, less scrupulous and sensitive, he might have had a happier life under the Law, more free from incessant strain and sense of failure. And no doubt it is true that Paul's case was quite exceptional. Yet the following considerations must be borne in mind. Paul as we know him in his epistles is remarkably sane and balanced in his handling of ethical questions. It is not easy to believe that the man who holds the scales so evenly between the strong and the weak, who shows himself so conscious of the merits and perils of both, should himself have been the victim of a too scrupulous, not to say diseased, conscience. Further it may be freely granted that in multitudes of instances legalism worked well. Judaism could point, and can point, to a noble roll of saints and martyrs. Yet legalism is not, I believe, the highest type of religious experience ;

and the defects which Paul believed it had shown in his own case are such as might have been theoretically deduced. A legal religion may with shallower natures produce self-satisfaction on too low a level of attainment, while in the more strenuous and sensitive it may create a depressing sense of failure. With Paul this depression passed into despair. Are we unjust to others if we say that this was rooted in a wholly exceptional realization of the lofty standard which the Law challenged him to reach, and a keener sense of his own shortcomings? Surely remembering that Paul is one of the greatest personalities in history, a religious genius who ranks among the foremost of his order, we may hesitate before we dismiss his judgment on the Law with the cheap explanation that Paul was the victim of ethical nightmare.

His doctrine of salvation and the new life is similarly an interpretation of his own experience. I have already expressed the opinion that when Paul uses the words "it pleased God to reveal His Son in me" he was speaking of that mystical union with Christ, which was fundamental in his doctrine as it was central in his experience. This is not merely a moral union, that is a union of will and thought. Such a union of course is involved; he wills the things which Christ wills and judges as He judges. But the union of which Paul speaks is deeper and more intimate; it is a blending of personalities in which, while in a sense the personalities remain distinct, in another sense they are one. To express a merely moral union he must have chosen other language. The language he actually uses would be too extravagant. Christ is in the believer, the believer in Christ. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Paul even says, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me". He has transcended the narrow limits of his personality, and become one with a personality vaster and more universal. He has been lifted into a larger life, and in that life he has found an answer to the problems which had been insoluble. As one with Christ he makes his own the experience through which Christ has passed. He suffers with Christ, he is nailed to His Cross, he dies and rises with Him, he sits with Him in the heavenly places. He shares Christ's status before God, His character, and His destiny. In Christ he is a new creature; the old life with its claims and its sin, its guilt and its condemnation, has passed away and all is new. The secret of this mystical union is hidden from us in the thick darkness where God

dwells. It is an ultimate fact of experience which admits of no further analysis.

In his life under the Law he had a passion for righteousness, that is for a right standing before God. But he was conscious that he fell short of what God required, and was not justified as he stood at God's bar. But having passed from the old life to the new he realized that because he was one with Christ, Christ's righteousness was his. He was justified or acquitted or pronounced righteous in Christ ; or to put the thought in its negative form, there was no condemnation for him. The verdict God utters on Christ, He utters on those who are identified with Him. This doctrine of justification is of course important, but it is secondary rather than primary ; it is part of his larger doctrine of mystical union. And when we understand this we have the answer to the criticism that the doctrine involves a fiction and is therefore immoral. To pronounce the sinner righteous is apparently a fiction. But this does no justice to Paul's meaning. The act of trust creates the mystical union and it is the new man, who is one with Christ, on whom the verdict of justification is pronounced. Union with Christ creates the new character which requires the new status. Paul was conscious that the life in harmony with God's will, which he had sought to gain by the works of the Law, had become his possession without effort of his own. And he shares also in Christ's blessed immortality. To these points I must return in connexion with the larger aspects of the theology.

These larger aspects we may consider as Paul's philosophy of history. This also is intimately associated with his experience. He starts from the individual, from himself, and regards his own history as typical. As he had sinned and found salvation, so had others. But he was not content till, with the philosopher's instinct, he had pressed behind the multifariousness of phenomena to a principle of unity. The individual he generalizes into a racial experience. He explains sin and redemption through the acts of Adam and Christ. The moulds into which his thought is poured were given him by history, yet his doctrine is essentially a philosopher's generalization of experience.

I do not accept the view that Paul attached little importance to his doctrine of Adam, since he introduces it incidentally and as an illustration of the act of Christ. It was rather of fundamental

importance. To do it justice we must detach ourselves completely from modern interpretations. We must not read Romans in the light of the story of Eden, nor yet the story of Eden in the light of Romans. The ideas are quite different in the two passages. Nor must we suppose that the validity of the Pauline doctrine depends on the historicity of the story in Genesis. Unquestionably Paul took that story to be literal history, nothing else could be reasonably expected from him. What I find remarkable, however, is that substantially his doctrine is so constructed as to be unaffected by our answer to the question whether the narrative of the Fall is history or myth. So far as Adam has any significance for Paul it is not Adam as a mere individual, but as one who is in a sense the race. It is surely improbable that Paul could have been content to regard the whole of humanity as committed by the accidental act of one unit in its many millions. To assign such momentous significance to the arbitrary and the capricious, would be to take the control of history out of the hands of reason. For him Adam is typical of the race. He does not think of man's moral nature as damaged by the act of Adam, nor does he suppose that the moral status of humanity is fixed by what was nothing more than the act of an irresponsible individual. What alone could rightly make the act of Adam the act of the race, stamping humanity as good or evil, would be an identity of Adam with the race, so that in his acts the whole quality of humanity is manifest. The act of Adam is crucial just because it is typical; the nature of Adam is our common nature; he is the natural man, moulded from the dust. The sin latent in us was latent also in him, and at the touch of the Law it was roused to life and activity. Only because Adam was truly representative, could the individual act be charged with universal significance. His act involved God's judgment of the race as sinful, and brought on all men the penalty of death. Such is the tragic history of the natural man left to himself. But it was not from the Old Testament in the first instance that Paul learnt this doctrine, as will be clear to anyone, if he does not read the third of Genesis through Pauline spectacles. Closer parallels may, it is true, be found in Jewish theology. But it was his own experience that was his starting-point. We should read the discussion of Adam and Christ in the light of the autobiographical fragment in the seventh of Romans. As he pondered on the conflict within his own nature, the

struggle between the flesh and the mind, the victory of sin, the impotence of the Law for righteousness, its capture by sin for its own evil ends, he sought the explanation at the fountain head of history. In his own heart he found the key to the long tragedy of man's sin and guilt. As he was so was mankind. His own breast was a tiny stage on which the vast elemental conflict of good and evil was re-enacted. So had it been with the first man, so from the very outset of the race's history at the touch of the Law the sin that slumbered in the flesh had sprung to consciousness and revolt. And all the generations, as they came and went, had but vindicated by their universal transgression God's treatment of that first disobedience as a racial act.

But before the second racial personality could come, and by his act reverse the verdict on humanity and release new streams of energy to cleanse and redeem it and lift it from the natural to the spiritual plane, a long interval had to elapse. Another pair of contrasted figures, Abraham and Moses, play a subordinate part in the drama. With the former is associated the promise of the Seed and the election of Israel, with the latter the Law. Against those who claimed that the Law was permanent and not abolished by the Gospel, that both it and circumcision were essential to justification, Paul urges the case of Abraham. Long before the Law was given, the promise of God had been made to Abraham, a promise of the Seed in whom all nations should be blest, a promise fulfilled in the Gospel. But the very principles of the Gospel were already in operation, for Abraham was justified by faith and not by works, and while he was still uncircumcised. And the promise by its very nature offered a contrast to the Law. For Law has within it an element of bargain, the performance of its demand implies a corresponding right to receive a reward. But the promise stands on the higher plane of free grace; it guarantees a gift bestowed by God's bounty apart from any desert in the recipient. The promise then is not only more ancient than the Law and cannot be superseded by it, it belongs also to a loftier moral order. And with the promise there comes the election, the choice of Abraham's descendants. But not of all of them; for the principle of election still works on, choosing Isaac and Jacob, passing by Ishmael and Esau. And in the chosen people itself it still works; not all of Israel after the flesh constitutes the spiritual Israel. The Old Testament more than once speaks of a remnant, and now the Israel of God

is identical with the Christian Church. Yet the natural Israel is not ultimately rejected, for Paul looks forward to the time when it shall accept its Messiah, and form part of the elect people once more.

But why, it may be asked, if already in Abraham the principles of the Gospel found expression, could not the Messiah have come at once, and why was there any need for the Law? It was because a prolonged period of discipline was necessary to educate the chosen people and prepare for the coming of the Messiah. The weakness of human nature had to be revealed by its inability to fulfil the Law, so too, the ineradicable vice of the flesh and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It was only the Law that could disclose the mutinous character of the flesh, or wake to evil activity the sin that was dormant within it. But while on the one hand the Law disclosed to man his true nature and exhibited sin in its true colours, it also served as moral discipline. It revealed man's duty, though it gave no power to fulfil it. It was a "paidagogos" to bring us to Christ. The paidagogos was charged with the moral supervision of children. By the use of this term Paul suggests the menial and temporary character of the Law. Israel was like a child in its tutelage under harsh and ungenial tutors. But with the coming of Christ the period of bondage is over, the heir achieves his freedom, and passes into that liberty for which Christ has set him free. The Law itself by its very imperfections pointed forward to Christ; it set before man a moral ideal, and since it gave no power to fulfil its own commands and was the weak, unwilling tool of sin, it pointed to a new revelation, in which the moral ideal should be united with the power of fulfilment.

In the fulness of time the promise, so long obstructed by the Law, came to realization. God sent His Son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, a member of the human race and of the Hebrew people. He did not begin to be with His human origin; a heavenly life lay behind His life of humiliation and suffering on earth. Image of the invisible God, firstborn of creation, sharing the Divine essence, God's agent in the formation of the universe, He did not clutch greedily at that equality with God, which was nevertheless His right, but emptied Himself and for our sake exchanged His heavenly riches for our earthly poverty. Stooping to our human estate He obediently accepted the Cross which God appointed Him, and has in recompense been highly exalted and received the name above every name.

While the act of Adam had been critical and representative, since it expressed our common nature, the act of Christ was a critical and racial act in virtue of his self-identification with us. As Adam in this crucial act is the race, so also in His crucial act is Christ ; and as the act of one is valid for the race, so also the act of the other. Each of them is the fountain-head of humanity, the one of the natural, the other of the redeemed. Their significance is not merely individual, it is universal. The point of expression is in each case personal ; it is Adam who eats the forbidden fruit, it is Jesus of Nazareth who hangs upon the Cross. But when viewed not from the standpoint of historical incident but of eternal significance, Adam and Christ are co-extensive with humanity.

Yet the question emerges whether we can rightly draw a parallel between the racial function of the first and the second Adam. Obviously they do not seem to stand in the same relation to the body for which they act. There is clearly no such hereditary connexion in the one case as obtains in the other. But it is not on the hereditary connexion that Paul's thought rests, but on the possession of a common nature. Yet is there not a difference here also ? The act of Adam was not in violation of his nature, it sprang spontaneously from it ; and it was a racial act because his nature and that of all other men were identical. There is, it is true, a higher element than the flesh within us, but it makes no successful stand against the lower. In Christ, on the contrary, the higher element is all powerful ; He is the spiritual man of heavenly origin. Here then, it might seem, that the parallel between the two Adams breaks down, since while a natural man might fitly represent the sinful race, a spiritual man could not do so. On this the following suggestions may be offered. In the first place Paul does hint at an essential relation subsisting between the pre-existent Christ and the human race. In the next place the element of spirit is not absent even from sinful humanity, so that what is needed is not so much the introduction of a new element as such a readjustment of the old as shall emancipate the higher nature from the dominion of the lower. And thirdly, if such a readjustment is not only realized in Christ but through Him becomes possible to the race and to individuals, He may be regarded as acting for the race with as much right as Adam. In fact the "much more" which rings so loudly in Paul's great passage on Adam and Christ is perhaps the

key to this difficulty. Christ acts for the race not simply because He shares its nature and its fortunes, but because there dwells within Him a spring of redemptive energy, which makes it possible for the achievements He accomplishes in His own case, to be repeated in the experience of the race and of individuals. We need to hold fast as our guiding clue not simply that Christ reverses all that Adam did, but that He much more than reverses it.

But what was the significance of Christ's racial act? Paul describes it as an act of obedience. As such it reversed Adam's act of disobedience and the consequences that followed from it. These consequences Paul took to be the penalty of physical death and Divine condemnation of the race as guilty. Through the obedience of Christ, physical death is cancelled by the resurrection of the body, and God now passes a new judgment on the race as He sees it in Christ. The act of Christ stood also in a relation to the old order under which men had lived. That order had been under the control of inferior spiritual powers. There was a kingdom of evil with Satan the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air at its head. Still the Christian finds that his "wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*". Clad in the armour of God he may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil, and equipped with the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. Behind the whole system of idolatry Paul sees the baneful activity of the demons; to them the heathen sacrifices are offered, and the Christian who feasts in the idol's temple enters into ruinous fellowship with demons. But there were also the angels. It is not easy for us to enter into Paul's thought here. Paul's conception of angels has been borrowed from Jewish theology, and it has little in common with our popular notions of angels. They are the elemental spirits who rule the present world. They are not sinless, they have shared in the effects of Christ's redemption and therefore need to be redeemed. They are to stand before the judgment bar of the saints. Women are in danger from them if they pray or prophesy in the Christian assemblies with uncovered head, and therefore need the protection of the veil, to which a magical power is often assigned. In particular the angels had been concerned with the giving of the Law. This was a tenet of Jewish theology and references are

made to it in the speech of Stephen and in the Epistle to the Hebrews ; while Paul accepts the belief in the Epistle to the Galatians, and it underlies much that is said in the Epistle to the Colossians. The angels, as the world-rulers, brought Christ to His Cross, for they are absorbed in their function and have no significance beyond it. If then there rests on Jesus the condemnation and the curse of the Law, when we pass from the abstract to the concrete, the responsibility rests with those who are the givers and administrators of the Law. And these are not primarily the Jewish or Roman authorities. Just as behind the Empires of Persia and Greece the Book of Daniel shows us their angelic princes, so angelic principalities and powers stand behind their human tools, the priest and the procurator. They act not in malevolence but in ignorance. Had they known the wisdom of God, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. The ignorance of the angels is mentioned also in the Epistle to the Ephesians. Through the Church the variegated wisdom of God is to be divulged to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. But their action in bringing Christ to His Cross recoiled upon themselves. The Law launched its curse against Christ, but in doing so its curse was exhausted and its tyranny was broken. In His death Christ spoiled the principalities and powers, exhibited them in their true position of inferiority, and led them in triumph in His train. Foolishly then did the false teachers at Colossæ worship these deposed potentates and look to them for help. For the fulness of Godhead is not distributed among a multitude of angels. It exists in its undivided totality in Christ, it dwells in Him as a body, that is as an organic whole.

But while the Law has thus been abolished by being nailed to Christ's cross, sin and the flesh have also been brought to nought. For the crucifixion of the physical flesh carries with it the destruction of the carnal nature. And similarly the death of Christ broke the dominion of sin. For while the sinful flesh was crucified, the sin which dwelt within it was done away. Thus the death of Christ was a death to sin. And just as the physical death, so also the physical resurrection was the efficient symbol of a spiritual fact. The one broke with the past, the other inaugurated the future. The resurrection involved the resurrection to a new life. The negative death to sin is completed by the positive life unto God. And what Christ thus achieved, the race achieved in Him. It atoned for its

sin, broke loose from its power, and was pronounced righteous as it stood before the bar of God.

So far, then, I have spoken of the two great racial acts. I have pointed out already that Paul traces certain consequences to these acts, which automatically affect the whole race apart from any individual choice. But other consequences, and these more momentous, depend on such choice. As a matter of historical fact, all men have by personal choice endorsed the act of Adam and made it their own, and thus vindicated the treatment of it as a racial act. But all do not by a similar act of choice so endorse the racial act of Christ and make it their own. It lies within the option of the individual whether he will remain a natural man, and live in the flesh on the level of Adam, or whether he will take his stand with Christ and become a spiritual man. If he does so, then by an act of faith he becomes one with Christ. Faith is a very rich idea with Paul, it is that act of personal trust and self-surrender, the movement of man's whole soul in confidence towards Christ, which makes him one spirit with Him. And thus the great racial act of Calvary is repeated in the believer's experience. Because he is one with Christ he is dead to sin; for the flesh in which it lived and through which it worked has been crucified on Christ's cross. He has also in death paid the penalty of his sin, and is thus free from its guilt and its claim. And since he is one spirit with Christ he has risen to the new life of holiness, and there works within him the power of Christ's resurrection life. No condemnation rests upon him before God's bar, he is justified in Christ. Thus not only sin and the flesh but the Law also has passed away. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and Christians have died to the Law in which they were holden. For they have escaped into the freedom of the Spirit and dwell with Christ at the right hand of God. Christ has taken the place of self as the deepest and inmost element in their personality; they have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer they that live but Christ that liveth in them. Conduct thus ceases to be the studied and even painful adjustment to an external code of laws. It is the joyful, instinctive, spontaneous expression of the new personality. With the abolition of the Law the great barrier between Jew and Gentile has been broken down and Christianity stands revealed as a universal religion.

At present, it is true, the Christian realizes that his redemption is incomplete. What is ideally concentrated in the ecstatic moment of vision and emancipation, may in actual experience be achieved only through a tedious process. And complete redemption is not possible till the consummation. At present we groan beneath our burden ; and all Nature moans also, looking eagerly for final redemption. At present we have but the earnest of the Spirit, but this is the pledge that all His fulness will be granted to us. For God, who did not spare His beloved Son but freely surrendered Him for our sakes, cannot withhold any good from us. If the status of Christ and His character become ours, we must share also His blessed immortality and His heavenly reign.

The secret of the spell which the theology of Paul has cast on such multitudes is to be found in the illumination which it has brought to their own spiritual history. They have understood their bondage and their deliverance, their misery and their rapture, as they have entered into his despair or watched him as he passed from that strain of inward conflict and sense of failure to harmony of spirit and untroubled peace with God. A theology created by experience speaks with directness and power to those whose pilgrimage has taken them along the same way. The influence of Paul ebbs and flows across long stretches of history. It shrinks and seems as if it would vanish, and then all suddenly it gathers volume and velocity and the arid waste becomes a garden of God.