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ARTICLE IV.

GENESIS OF PAUL'S THEOLOGY.

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM H. H. MARSH, D.D.

PAUL, antecedent to his conversion, was providentially prepared for his great life-work. For this he was "a chosen vessel" before he was converted.¹ Born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia and a center of Greek culture, there is no sufficient reason for minimizing the influence of that intellectual environment upon his early mental development, as, for example, Sabatier has done.² For if Greek thought and culture was not a factor in the genesis of his theology, as it was not, it doubtless was in the cultivation of his mental habits. His mind was naturally active and observant, and therefore must have been open, to a certain extent, to the intellectual influences in the midst of which his youth was spent, and the chaotic civilization by which he was surrounded. To say that his references to Greek authors were nothing more than proverbial sentences "Paul may frequently have heard quoted in pagan society"³ seems to us a very far-fetched explanation of their appearance in one of his discourses and two of his Epistles.⁴ The fact that his father had become a Roman citizen, and consequently that Paul himself was free born,—a thing he evidently greatly appreciated,⁵—makes it highly probable that, if for social and commercial reasons only, he received considerable instruction and training in Greek literature and current philosophy; for, in his references to the latter,

¹ Acts ix. 15; Gal. i. 15. ² *The Apostle Paul* (4th ed.), p. 46.

³ *Ibid.* ⁴ Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 33; Titus i. 12.

⁵ See Acts xvi. 36-38; xxii. 25-28.

he does not speak like one who scorns what he knew nothing of, but rather like one who condemns what he evidently understood.¹ This, briefly, it seems to us, is the view of the question as to the relation of Paul to Greek thought and culture that the few hints in the New Testament warrant. We need say nothing more of it. What we have said is sufficient for our purpose.

But his antecedent training as a Jew in the strictest orthodoxy of post-exilian Judaism as believed and expounded by the Pharisees, is of incomparably greater importance for our purpose. We shall have occasion to refer to it more than once in this article, and therefore need not say much upon it here. But there is one thing of greatest importance that must not be omitted now. It is this. Greek learning and culture, in any case, was intellectual essentially, and in its better and higher phases was æsthetic. In its ethical phase it was speculative. In what we may term its theological, in the era of Paul, it was skeptical. With all this, the sort of instruction and training the Pharisee youth received in post-exilian Judaism was in strongest contrast. It was designed to lay hold of, and mold after its likeness, the whole man,—to sway and control him in all his relation to God, to man, to society, to the world. It was to this instruction and training that Paul had been subjected, and he was both a willing and an apt scholar. He doubted nothing, accepted everything. Gamaliel, one of the most famous of the doctors of post-exilian Judaism, had been his teacher. Paul had been so taught that he held nothing provisionally, regarded nothing as a subject of speculation. To him all was authoritative and final. As a Jew he believed with all his heart in the tenets of Judaism. Those tenets were embodied in his ideal of life and conduct as well as of belief. His faith

¹ Comp. his discourse at Athens, Acts xvii. 24, 25, 29; 1 Cor. i. 17, 19, 20, 21; ii. 4, 5, 6, 13, etc.

in them was absolute. It was not nominal. It was real. It wholly mastered his motives. He never thought of, or dared to do, anything contrary to it. He was opposed to all who were antagonistic to it. Paul, therefore, was an ideal product of post-exilic Judaism as it had developed into the infallible orthodoxy of Phariseeism. What the latter may have hoped for in Saul of Tarsus we can never know. It is highly probable they hoped much from his training, character, ability, and zeal. This at least is certain, he is made their agent in waging persecution against the believers.

It was when he was "exceedingly mad against them," and was persecuting "them even unto strange cities," and had been given "authority and commission from the chief priests," that on the Damascus road he was converted. We need not discuss the several questions raised by the accounts we have of his conversion, for that would be foreign to our present purpose. It is enough to say that we accept the statement of Weiss, that "his conversion was a sudden one. In the midst of his fanatical persecuting zeal, instead of being punished for it, he was by an unparalleled gracious deed of God, vouchsafed a special manifestation of Christ, which entirely changed his opinion of the persecuted Nazarene."¹ What that opinion had been before his conversion we know from Paul himself.² Whether or not he had seen or heard Jesus of Nazareth during his earthly life we need not inquire. But it is certain that he knew that the apostles had and were declaring that this Jesus had risen from the dead, and that thousands of Jews believed their testimony, and had openly confessed that he was the promised Messiah. Moreover, Paul was among those who heard the discourse of Stephen, and doubtless he too stopped his ears when Stephen said, "Behold, I see

¹ *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. i. p. 276.

² Acts vii. 56-60.

the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." He too kept the garments of those who stoned Stephen, and heard his last prayer, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and "lay not this sin to their charge."¹ Whatever may be true of this as determining his psychological state more immediately prior to his conversion, we need not here inquire.

But there is a phase of it to which we must advert briefly. It is this. If Jesus of Nazareth had risen from the dead, and was living in the invisible world, at the right hand of God, not only Paul, but all the Jews must have understood that their preconceptions of the Messiah were utterly untenable and wholly false. Especially must one whose mental training was such as Paul received, have understood this at once and with great lucidness of perception. But, granting all this, it does not follow that at any time, nor even on the Damascus road, the mind and conscience of Paul were profoundly agitated, and finally converted and changed, because of it. There is no evidence, in either narrative of his conversion or in any allusion he subsequently makes to it, that supports the speculation. Everywhere the objective fact, the fundamental reason why he "entirely changed his opinion of the persecuted Nazarene," was that by the manifestation of himself on the Damascus road he had convinced Paul that he was the Messiah—the Risen and Glorified One—whom he had scorned and hated as Jesus of Nazareth. We shall refer to this again.

But there is a subjective side in the conversion of Paul. "This is in truth the keynote of which we may hear the sound in all the apostle's letters, in which he is constantly depositing his personal relation to the cross of Christ. It is never the mere relation of objective theory, but always at the same time and essentially the subjective union of the inmost teachings with the Crucified, a mystic union with

¹ Acts vii. 56-60.

the death on the cross and with the life of Christ risen."¹ Of his initial experience of personal salvation, he says enough to show us that he recognizes it as a fact of which he became conscious at a definite time.² He never dissociates it from his knowledge of the risen and glorified Christ.³ But he never represents it as if it were a thing normally unfolding itself from anything in his unrest of mind and heart while he was a Pharisee. It was in no sense of himself. It became his when it pleased God to reveal himself through Christ in him. He recognized, and above all besides he desired, the development of this spiritual life.⁴ Once he had surrendered himself to all there was in post-exilian Judaism, to be molded in its image and likeness.⁵ Now he surrenders himself to Christ that he may be found in him, not having his "own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."⁶ This life imparted by Christ, and having its own normal development in the increase of his knowledge of Christ, is a factor in the genesis of his theology. By this we do not mean that Paul ever, for a moment, thought of making his subjective experience a determining and constructive factor in his theology. Matheson, in our judgment, puts an emphasis on the spiritual development of Paul in its relation to his theology, greater than anything in the writings of Paul warrants.⁷ So too does Somerville when he says, "The Christ of Paul, in a word, is the Christ of his experience, Christ interpreted to him by his vivid consciousness of the Divine life which he owed to him."⁸

A more correct definition of the relation of the spiritual

¹ Pfeiderer, *Paulinismus* (ed. 1877), Vol. i. p. 17.

² Comp. Sabatier (*The Apostle Paul*, pp. 60-64), who proves this conclusively. ³ Comp. Gal. i. 12-17 with 1 Cor. xv. 8.

⁴ Gal. ii. 20; Phil. ii. 10-14. ⁵ Phil. iii. 5-6. ⁶ *Ibid.* 9.

⁷ *The Spiritual Development of Paul.*

⁸ *Paul's Conception of Christ*, pp. 14-15. Comp. p. 16.

life of Paul to the genesis of his theology is, it seems to us, that *it was an essential subjective condition*, without which he would have been unfitted for his great work, whatever qualification he might have possessed beside. Of course he nowhere says anything of this, nor does he ever assert that he possesses any qualifications whatever. The nearest he comes to such an assertion is when he defends his apostolic authority.¹ But he does make positive statements of a general character which assume what we have said. We refer to those passages in which he declares that the right subjective spiritual condition is imperatively necessary to the right interpretation of the truths of the gospel.² But there is a distinction between his spiritual and intellectual development which is most important in the study of the genesis of his theology. We mean this. All intellectual development has a sphere of its own. Within that sphere the intellect may exercise its functions irrespective of the spiritual condition or the ethical character of the individual; as, in the investigation of the purely physical, the directly scientific. Hence there may be wide intellectual attainments, and even a high degree of æsthetic culture, where there is no spiritual life such as Paul had experienced and defines.

But to this spiritual life there are corresponding truths above and outside of the whole realm of physical truth and of all the utmost possibilities of æsthetic culture. The natural man is conscious of the spiritual, or soul, side of his being. Even if he deny a future state of being, and if he affirm that death ends all,—or if he rise a shade above this, and declare himself an agnostic as to both,—nevertheless, he recognizes that some provision must be made for this spiritual side of his being, whatever his definition of it may be. That provision Paul found in the gospel of

¹ I Cor. ix. 1-2; I Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11. Comp. Bruce, *Paul's Conception of Christianity*, pp. 74-83. ² As I Cor. ii. 11-14.

Christ. He had sought it for many years in the law, but did not find it there. And he never would have found it in the risen and glorified Christ, if he had not been "quickened together with him." Then his spiritual life and development became an essential condition of his intellectual processes and development in the genesis of his theology.¹ As we shall see, Paul was a fearless logician. Once sure of his premises, he boldly followed them to all their conclusions. He understood the province of reason in theology. Deep, pervasive, abiding, as was his personal sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of his personal salvation through Christ, and profound as was his conception of the union of the believer with Christ, he is nowhere a mystic. He never in his statements and arguments fails to make prominent the Divine personality of the incarnate, risen, and glorified Redeemer, and is always distinct as to the personality of the believer, who in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God is to advance "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."² Such, it seems to us, is the correct view of the spiritual life and development of Paul as a factor in the genesis of his theology.

We are now prepared to study another, the Resurrection and Glorification of Christ. It is a familiar statement that the theology of Paul is *Christocentric*; but, if we ponder this, it leads our thoughts into the unfathomable in all directions. It does this whether we think of the divine-human personality of Christ himself, or of his relation to man, or to God, or to the existing order of things, or to the unseen and the eternal. The question then germane to our purpose is, Granting that the theology of Paul is Christocentric, with what fact did he begin? For, as his starting-point, he must have had some one fact of the cer-

¹ Comp. Pfleiderer, *Influence of Paul on Christianity*, pp. 39-40; Weiss, *Biblical Theology of New Testament*, Vol. I. p. 275. ² Eph. iv. 13.

tainty of which he was firmly convinced concerning the Jesus whom the Jews had crucified, and whose followers he himself had persecuted. What, then, was this one fact?

All investigations must have a starting-point. Especially must Paul have had a starting-point of the certainty of which he was convinced beyond all doubt, because his self-renunciation of all dear to him in the past was complete and final. He at once enters a new realm of thought and investigation. Spiritually, intellectually, ethically, the purpose of his life, all are radically different. What one fact, then, of such momentous significance as to be the source of all this? Paul himself tells us, *on the Damascus road he saw the risen and glorified Christ, and heard his voice*. Of this he speaks definitely and emphatically as an objective reality. To King Agrippa he declares, "I heard a voice speaking to me," and that he who spoke to him said, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."¹ Defending his apostolic authority, he says, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"² In proof of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, having first adduced the testimony of others, he gives his own, "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."³ Definite and emphatic affirmations like these, made under different circumstances, and each for a special purpose, are evidence that he must have borne the same testimony wherever he was and throughout his ministry. Elsewhere he speaks of "visions and revelations of the Lord" he had received.⁴ Once indeed, he describes the personal manifestation of Christ to himself as "the heavenly vision."⁵ But the qualifying term "heavenly" that he there uses, differentiates this from the other visions and revelations he had received.⁶ Apart from this, the way in which he speaks of

¹ Acts xxvi. 14-15. ² 1 Cor. ix. 1. ³ *Ibid.* xv. 8.

⁴ Comp. Acts xvi. 9-10, xviii. 9-10, 2 Cor. xii. 1-9. ⁵ Acts xxvi. 19.

⁶ The Greek is τῆ ὑβρανίῳ ὁπρασίῳ. Another word translated "vision" is ὄραμα. Both words are from the same root, ὁράω. Thayer gives as the

having seen and heard the Lord, is conclusive evidence that he understood and believed what he so often dwelt upon, to be a reality. He never for a moment doubted or ever from the first questioned the testimony of his senses. It is unnecessary for our purpose to say more of this.

Convinced of and, without any reservations whatever, accepting the resurrection and glorification of Jesus of Nazareth as a fact, we say that it was the starting-point of the genesis of his theology. For himself, he had no other. Here is where his new intellectual development, after his conversion, begins. It begins with a fact concerning which he has no doubt, but, on the contrary, the strongest possible evidence. For primarily he did not receive it from the testimony of others. His evidence was what he had heard

primary meaning of the former, "the art of exhibiting one's self to view"; of the latter, "that which is seen" (Gr. Lex.). Paul uses *ὄρασις* in 2 Cor. xii. 1; and he employs *δραμα* once of himself (Acts xviii. 9). These are the only instances in which Paul uses these words applying them directly to himself. The word *δραμα* is the one much more frequently occurring in New Testament Greek, and rendered "vision." But only in this instance, whichever word is used, is the qualifying term "heavenly," or indeed any other, used. That Paul should use it here, and as descriptive of what he saw and heard on the Damascus road, is significant, because it points to what was objectively real in his experience there and at that time. (Compare use of *ὄρασις* in Luke xxiv. 23.) Hackett says that the words are to be understood of the manifestation of the Saviour's person (On Acts *in loco*). Meyer, after referring to Acts xxvi. 13, says of this phrase in connection with that verse, "In both places" the event on the Damascus road is recalled "for the purpose of exciting the royal interest," and of the phrase before us, "*τῆ οὐρανίῳ ὄρασίῳ*, the heavenly vision because it came *οὐρανίθεν*" (On Acts *in loco*). This phrase, then, is to be interpreted in accordance with all Paul says; and so emphatically elsewhere of the objective reality of what he heard and saw on the Damascus road. On his confidence in the objective reality of that, Pfeiderer, who decidedly favors the theory that all was subjective, says, "Paul was fully convinced of the objective reality of the appearing of Christ with which he was favored" (The Influence of Paul on Christianity, p. 27). See, also, Weiss, Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. i. pp. 151-153; Stevens, Pauline Theology, p. 15; Conybeare and Howson, pp. 82-83.

and seen. That at first he saw the momentous consequences that must certainly result from this fact, is a question that scarcely need be raised. For, among other reasons that might be given, is the sufficient one that God had now revealed himself in a way he had not done hitherto,—in the person and redemptive mission of his Son, whom Paul, at the time of his conversion, knew only as risen and glorified. By this he was fully convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah.¹ But, if he did not at first comprehend the momentous consequences of the fact of the resurrection of Christ, he certainly must have realized very soon that, as for himself, old things were to pass away, all things were to become new. For, having at once transferred his personal allegiance to Christ, he stood henceforth in a new and vital relation to Christ, as Christ also did to him.² He had surrendered himself: he recognized the indissoluble bond of union, but he understood neither all his surrender involved, nor all this bond of union included. That his conception of both was very soon clarified and greatly enlarged, there is no doubt. The one thing determined at first for Paul was that he must ponder and solve primarily for himself, in his own personal salvation, and faith, and hope of eternal life, the truths comprehended in, made known through, and infallibly confirmed by the resurrection and glorification of Jesus of Nazareth. We say primarily for himself, because he must first understand and make them his own before he could impart the knowledge of them to others. And this he did so really, so vividly, that, as we read thoughtfully his Epistles, we feel intuitively we are reading and pondering what the writer had made a reality to himself. The inner being and life of Paul, for this reason, throbs and is, so to speak, incarnate in all he teaches and commends to the faith of others.

¹ Comp. Acts ix. 22 with Gal. i. 23.

² Comp. Acts ix. 6; xxvi. 20, with Gal. i. 16; Phil. iiii. 8.

It has seemed to us that, in the study of the genesis of the theology of Paul, what we have said has not been given due prominence. For the more frequent conception is that the purpose of his controversial writings, especially, is to marshal arguments at least somewhat abstract in form, in defense of the gospel against those who opposed or perverted it, whether Jew or Gentile. In itself this is misleading, because it holds in abeyance the fact everywhere manifest in his Epistles, that Paul himself had a personal interest in every truth he stated and defended, commensurate with all that the salvation of his soul through Christ comprehended here and would secure for him hereafter. It has led to a conception of Paul which virtually regards him only as a keen logician, a masterful, metaphysical theologian, strongly grasping certain facts and premises, and then moving irresistibly on to his dogmatic conclusions and ethical applications. Because of this, it is too often forgotten that in his Epistles we have the outcome of a mighty spiritual and intellectual struggle, which commenced when he was converted, and was more or less present throughout his whole development. The eminent Andrew Fuller of Kettering, England, being asked his *opinion* on some topic then exciting much interest among theologians, replied, 'I have positive beliefs and profound convictions of duty and service in the work to which my Master has called me, which so engross me that I scarce have time to form what you call an opinion.' Using the word "opinion" as both Dr. Fuller and his questioner used it, that is, as denoting what may be thought speculatively and provisionally upon any question, it cannot be said that Paul had any *opinions*.

On the contrary, it was his absorbing purpose to settle for himself and finally, what he was to believe and preach and teach to others respecting the risen and glorified Christ and the doctrines of eternal redemption in him, of

Christ in his person, his work, his relation to the Godhead, to creation, to the ethical government of God, to man in all relating to his salvation, and to mankind in his relation to the final outcome of the existing order of things. Paul is ever advancing. He nowhere says that he absolutely comprehended Christ in any one of these respects. They are all deeper, higher, broader, than any conception of them he attained, or any dogmatic statement he made.¹ But, whatever his theme, he is sure that his own feet are on solid standing-ground before he formulates his argument and states his conclusions for the instruction and edification of others. The firmness of his tone, the decision of expression, the inflexible positiveness of every statement, is proof of this. He speaks and writes as one who had certified, both to his intellectual apprehension and to the peace and joy of his own soul, the truth of all he says, by independent and thorough investigation. Behind it all is the momentum of profound conviction and the calmness of a fixed belief,—a belief, never, in the substance of its statement, to need revision.

And here it is important to emphasize the fact that Paul was a Pharisee, if we would more fully and correctly understand the resurrection of Christ as a factor in his theology. Before we hear of Saul of Tarsus, the Sadducees were active in the persecution of the apostles,² although it is highly probable that some of the Pharisees were also. But it is a significant statement that, when the apostles were brought before the council, while the Sadducees were most insistent upon their condemnation,³ it was a Pharisee—Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul—who said, “Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.”⁴ Indeed, he made a plea in behalf of the apostles.⁵ The Sadducees had determined to slay

¹ Rom. xi. 33; Phil. iii. 18-19. ² Acts iv. 1-2.

³ v. 17. ⁴ v. 35. ⁵ v. 35-38.

the apostles,¹ but the address of Gamaliel moderated their rage and changed their purpose.² How far, if at all, the address of Gamaliel represented a like feeling among the Pharisees toward the apostles, we do not know. But, as the Pharisees are not mentioned by name in connection with these earlier persecutions, and as one of their most conspicuous teachers, of his own accord and evidently influenced by prudential motives, if not having a degree of sympathy,³ pleads in behalf of the persecuted apostles, it is reasonable to infer that, as yet, the Pharisees, as a class, had not become openly hostile and aggressive toward the apostles and the first believers.

And there was a special cause for the persecution of the apostles by the Sadducees, apart from their rejection and hatred of Jesus of Nazareth. It was this. They denied the resurrection of the dead.⁴ Nothing, we may suppose, therefore, could have aggravated their hostility anew, and made it so intense and relentless, as the proclamation of his resurrection from the dead. We know that it did.⁵ If he had risen, one of their tenets was proven false. But the Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead. And as yet the apostles had made no direct assault upon post-exilian Judaism, as its most rigidly orthodox phase was embodied in Phariseeism. It was the death and resurrection of Jesus to which the apostles had given preëminence thus far. The resurrection of Jesus was, for the time being, *the* one thing about which the general agitation centered. If for the reason given, it would aggravate the hostility of the Sadducees, for another reason it would, for a while at least, modify the hatred of the Pharisees. This seems a fair statement of the case.

But a crisis comes. The Hellenistic Jews who believed, had an aggressive representative in Stephen. His discourse,

¹v. 33. ²v. 40. ³Comp. v. 35 with ver. 38-39 especially.

⁴Comp. Matt. xx. 30; Acts xxiii. 8. ⁵*Ibid.* iv. 2.

preserved in the seventh chapter of Acts, followed very soon after his discussion with those of the Synagogue of the Libertines and others,¹ among whom were some from Cilicia, the province of which Paul was a native. It is altogether probable that Paul was present, possibly was one of the disputants. If Stephen did not convince his opponents, he confounded and silenced them.² His recorded discourse had its origin, undoubtedly, in the disputation in the synagogue. It is, we may presume, the substance of the arguments he used there,—their more systematic elaboration. But this, by the way. The discourse was evidently understood to be a direct assault upon some of the most cherished tenets of Phariseeism. Especially had Stephen impugned the sacredness of the temple;³ thereby striking at the very roots of Pharisaic ritualism and ceremonialism, as Christ himself had done, and by which he brought upon himself the unappeasable hatred and wrath of the Pharisees especially.

It was enough. The torch had been applied. From that hour the persecution, not only of the apostles, as heretofore, but of believers wherever they could be found, began. Saul of Tarsus threw himself into it with all the energy of his nature, and with the frenzied passion and devotion of the Phariseeism to which he had been so carefully and thoroughly trained. If any one would form an adequate idea of the sort of persecutor Paul was, let him study, especially, in the Greek, the terms in which he describes himself⁴ as he was, and gloried in being, up to the moment of his conversion. His is no outburst of hatred that may be modified by calmer moments of reflection. It is a hatred the sources of which are deeply imbedded in his very being. The temple and its ritual, Phariseeism,⁵ its dogmas,

¹ Acts vi. 9. ² *Ibid.* 10. ³ *Ibid.* vii. 47-50. ⁴ *Ibid.* xxvi. 9-11.

⁵ On the powerful influence of Pharisees, see Schfirer, *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, Vol. ii. p. 28.

its traditions, its ceremonies, had been assailed by Jesus of Nazareth. He had been crucified for this. His followers, too, and for the same thing, must be stoned, imprisoned, put to death. Saul of Tarsus is the representative of the rising wrath of the hitherto reticent Pharisees, as Stephen was of the incipency of broader and more radical and aggressive conceptions of the scope of the gospel of Jesus and the resurrection, boldly advanced by the Hellenistic Jews who believed.

Hence, after his conversion it was also—perhaps more correctly chiefly—from this view-point that Paul was constrained to ponder the significance of the resurrection and glorification of Jesus of Nazareth. Whether he at first thought of harmonizing the latter with the tenets of Phariseeism, we do not know. Paul may have wrought on many a scheme for the solution of this: he may have now and again, while he was in Arabia, constructed hypotheses in the process of his investigations. It is quite probable he did, and afterward too. For we know nothing of what he threw away. We have only the final results, the completed solution of the problem of post-exilian Judaism in its dogmas concerning the law, the Messiah, and the Messianic kingdom, as studied in the light of the resurrection and glorification of Jesus of Nazareth. We know how he solved this and all correlative problems. It was every way the problem he had to solve for himself, for the Jews, and for the Gentiles, for his own age and for all ages, for ours and for the world. The conflict of Paul with Phariseeism and with post-exilian Judaism in its entirety, was, in its outreach, the mightiest and most lasting the world has ever known or ever will know. It was waged but once. It never can be waged again as Paul waged it. The victory he won was complete. He won it at great cost of sacrifice and suffering to himself. He had seen the risen and glorified Christ and heard his voice. Convinced

by that of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, he smote down by his invincible logic, Jewish legalism in all its phases and representations. Thereby he gave to the church of our risen Lord his matchless exposition and application of the doctrinal contents of the gospel. His exposition ends, as it began, with the risen and glorified Christ.

We need not say more than this now. It was the central fact from which he developed not only his Christology, but his whole theology. Nor is there any reason to assume that he did so merely because he was convinced, by what he saw and heard on the Damascus road, that Jesus was the Christ. He did so because he saw clearly that it was the only logical and theological starting-point. If Paul had seen that the logical and theological starting-point was the miraculous birth of Christ, or his ethical teachings, or anything of the sort, he would have made it so. But he does not. This opens a wide field for the study of the development of the doctrinal contents of the gospel not only in the Epistles of Paul, but within the apostolic period. Upon that, however, our purpose does not require us to enter.

We come now to the Old Testament as a factor in the genesis of the theology of Paul. A Pharisee, Paul devoutly accepted the Old Testament as the Word of God and as given exclusively to the Jews.¹ Before his conversion he believed without a doubt that the entire structure of post-exilian Judaism was built upon the firm foundation of that word.² But from the time he was converted, and surrendered himself wholly to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, not only did he see that traditional Judaism must be abandoned, but he must have soon come to understand, also, that the Old Testament must have, in some way, a far more comprehensive purpose, and its contents a different signification, than hitherto traditional Judaism had

¹ Comp. Rom. ix. 4. ² Comp. Acts xxvi. 9 with 1 Tim. i. 13.

given it. It now became a new book to him. When, after his conversion, he first unrolled the scrolls of his Old Testament, he must have done so with emotions and reflections such as he never experienced before. In a word, Paul went at once to the Old Testament to understand Christ.¹

In this he promptly brought to the bar of his enlightened reason the traditional interpretations and glosses of Phariseeism. Whether at first he wholly and in all respects cast them aside as together utterly valueless, need not be assumed. But when he took the first step by bringing these and the risen and glorified Christ together, he did that which made his eventual rejection of the interpretation and glosses upon which the entire system of post-exilian Judaism was founded, inevitable. Before his conversion he had put Jesus of Nazareth and the Old Testament far apart. Now both are realities to him. He sees that they must have fundamental and living relations to each other. He brings them together. He does not cast the Old Testament aside because he finds he had misunderstood it. He does not say that the meaning and purpose of its contents cannot be understood, because they had been utterly wrested to establish a theory of the theocracy, and of predicted Messiah, and of the Messianic kingdom. In the risen and glorified Christ, whom he had seen and who had called him into his service, Paul found the meaning of the purpose and contents of the Old Testament.

We use the words "the purpose and contents of the Old Testament" intentionally. That Paul makes frequent use of what we may call proof-texts, need not be shown. Every one who has read his Epistles knows this. But he makes large use of the Old Testament in another way. Because Paul makes comparatively few direct references to

¹Sabatier, *The Apostle Paul*, pp. 85-88. See Acts xvii. 2, Rom. i. 1-4, 1 Cor. xv. 3-4.

the life of the historical Christ, it has been urged that he had but little knowledge of him. But besides Sabatier, to whom we have made reference on this subject in another connection, such eminent authorities upon it as Paret, Hausrath, and Jowett have shown conclusively that Paul has wrought into the warp and woof of his Epistles the life, claims, and teaching of the historical Christ.¹ In a like manner he has incorporated in the arguments and conclusions of his Epistles, the scope and purpose of the contents of the Old Testament. Our limits and the tentative design of this article forbid anything beyond the briefest possible illustration of our meaning. We select two. One is his use of the Old Testament in unfolding the doctrines of sin and redemption. In doing this he adduces relatively only a small number of proof-texts. But the way in which he builds his argument upon the Old Testament, he defines concisely, when he says, "The Scripture has concluded all under sin."² That is, he builds his entire argument for the nature, guilt, and condemnation of sin upon all the Old Testament says of it. He finds sin and the hope of

¹ Davidson, *per contra*, says, "Paul's temperament was epileptic, mystical, to some extent visionary, and the subject of apocalyptic revelation. Images of his mind often turned into objective revelations": of all of which there is no evidence either in what is recorded of Paul in the Acts or in his Epistles. And if Paul were physically and mentally a man such as the language cited describes, not a word he said or line he wrote would be worthy, for a moment, the serious thought of any one. But, by such assumptions, Davidson prepares the way to say of such scholars as we have mentioned, that, "going beyond the Pauline range," they "find in the Epistles of Paul evidence of a large knowledge of the earthly life of Christ . . . The mine is not so rich as they imagine . . . They force the Apostle Paul to evidence things for which he would not speak if present" (Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, Vol. i. pp. 181-182, 3d ed.). Regarding the results of such examinations of the Epistles of Paul as wholly in the interests of an *a priori* theory, he dismisses them as exaggerated, inconclusive, and, for either interpretation or criticism, valueless. In refutation he offers little more than his own assumptions. But the conclusions of these scholars will stand.

² Gal. iii. 22. Comp. v. 8.

redemption from sin in the contents of the Old Testament. The nature of the one, its seat in the very center of the ethical being of man, its universality, its invincible persistence in humanity, its inevitable depravation of the individual and of society; the hope of the other, and the announcement of that hope in Christ for the world of mankind, for Jew and Gentile through Jesus Christ,—these Paul finds fundamentally wrought into the contents, and fundamental to the purpose of the Old Testament. The other illustration of our meaning is his axiomatic declaration that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished into all good works.”¹ This was addressed to Timothy, his “dearly beloved son,” whom he had begotten in the gospel of Christ. It enjoined Timothy to study diligently the Old Testament,—the volume as a whole,—to familiarize himself with its scope, purpose, doctrinal and ethical contents. But to see the full force of what we have cited, and to bring out its decided confirmation of our position, we now cite the two preceding verses: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing from whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”² Not a syllable here from Paul in disparagement of the Old Testament. Everywhere in his discourses and Epistles he highly exalts it, but nowhere as he does in the entire paragraph we have cited. And nowhere has he made reference to it that defines for us so concisely, yet fully, the relation of its purpose and contents to the salvation the be-

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16-17.

² 2 Tim. iii. 14-19. Comp. Acts xvii. 11 with John v. 39 and Luke xxiv. 25-27.

liever has in Christ as he does here. Put the Old Testament where Paul did; grasp its purpose and contents as he did; emphasize as he did the great doctrines of sin and of redemption; and then, as he did, let the light of the incarnate, risen, and glorified Christ fall upon all its pages from Genesis to Malachi, and it will have a message for us to-day, and the same it had for Paul in his day. Paul in this way found in the Old Testament, as he could not when a Pharisee, the anticipation of preparation for the complete and final revelation of God in the incarnation of his Son. He in this way saw in the Old Testament—what we may now see clearly because of what he did—that it was a progressive unfolding, albeit never complete and final, of the plan and purpose of God in the outcome of the existing order of things in the glory of redemption when that plan is consummated and that purpose made fully manifest.

Much more might and ought to be said upon this. It leads to some questions respecting the Old Testament of greatest interest at the present time; but their discussion does not come within the scope of this article. Our object has been to emphasize one thing only,—Paul's distinct recognition of the unfolding in the Old Testament of the redemptive purposes of God. He sees this in the Old Testament is the consecutive thought of God, it is the revelation of the eternal divine purpose, which in the fullness of time had its complete and final manifestation in Christ.¹ In this conception of the purpose and contents of the Old Testament, the genesis of his theology roots itself. Hence nowhere have we such an exposition of the biblical theology of the Old Testament as in his Epistles, especially in Romans and Galatians. He forges into a compact and invulnerable system the doctrinal contents of the Old Testament. Nor does this statement disparage the teachings of

¹ Comp. Eph. ii. 5, 6; Col. i. 26, with Acts xvii. 26-31.

our Lord and his use of the Old Testament. For our Lord declared that it was only after his death and resurrection that both himself and what he taught could be understood.¹ Hence, during the forty days between his resurrection and his ascension, he expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.² What limitations in the receptivity of his disciples he recognized at the time we do not know, but evidently the degree of their receptivity was as yet restricted by preconceptions of his Messianic mission. Possibly what he then said was incorporated by Peter into his discourse on the Day of Pentecost. But be both these things as they may, it is certain, from the sermons of Peter especially, that the doctrines of the cross would now get a far more complete exposition. To give this was the work of Paul as of no other apostle. In doing it he investigates and sweeps as a master over the whole field of the purpose and doctrinal contents of the Old Testament. Christ applied the Old Testament to himself chiefly in relation to his sufferings and death, to show that these were not unexpected, but that in them the Scriptures were to be fulfilled. Paul is setting forth the vast significance of the resurrection and glorification of Christ. In doing this he goes to the same authority, his Lord so supremely honored. Paul reverently honored what his Lord himself appealed to. In fact, the Old Testament, understood in the light of the complete and final purpose of God in the whole of the existing order of things as made known in the gospel of Christ, is the basis of what may be termed Paul's cosmical conception of sin and redemption. For, from the first pages of the Old Testament to the last, God, who created the heavens and the earth, who created man, and who subordinated all things to himself, makes his own glory the final cause. In other words, in the conception of Paul the whole cosmos is mediatorial in origin,³ govern-

¹As Matt. xxvi. 31-36; Luke xxiii. 16; xxiv. 44. ²*Ibid.*, 27. ³Col. i. 16-17.

ment,¹ and purpose.² This was the one and only answer of Paul to all philosophical theories of the existing order of things in his day. If Paul were living to-day, while we cannot doubt he would accept what our modern science has proven to be true, he also would hold science rigidly to its legitimate sphere of investigation and demonstration; and, over against all its speculations and theories as to the existing order of things in their origin, government, and purpose, he would place, and as uncompromisingly, the same conception of the cosmos he did to the science falsely so-called of his own time.

What we have said shows wherein the genesis of the theology of Paul is differentiated essentially from that of Augustine. For the latter, while he had a most profound, subjective personal experience of the grace of God in his salvation, and a rich spiritual development; while he gave preëminence to the incarnation, death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ, and reverently recognized the authority of the Old Testament, and of the New, he was predetermined in his theology by the traditions and authority of the visible church. It is this that explains the logical and theological contradictions one so often finds in his statements, arguments, and conclusions. For this reason both the Reformers and the Romanists appealed to his works in their controversies. And what we have said of the genesis of the theology of Augustine, is true of that of the Reformers. They, in fact, magnified the supreme authority of the Word of God as, for the reason given, Augustine could not. But if they did not bow to the accepted traditions and the dogmatic decrees of the visible church in the sense and for the same reason that he did,—because they denied that the visible church was an infallible and universal corporation, from whose belief and authority there could be no appeal,—there was a traditional interpre-

¹ Phil. ii. 9-11.

² Rom. ii. 19-23.

tation of the Word of God, a conception of its contents and purpose, and a definite faith, all of which they recognized, and by which they were more or less predetermined in the genesis of their theology. So potent was this with Melancthon,—and others sympathized with him,—that he was ever ready to reduce the points in controversy between Protestants and Romanists to a minimum, that a compromise might be effected and the breach closed. In saying this both of Augustine and of the Reformers, we do not mean that all the conceptions of the truths of the gospel before the era of Augustine and before that of the Reformers, were erroneous and false. Far from it. Our position requires no such sweeping and unrighteous assertion. We only mean to emphasize the fact that, in the genesis of the theology of Paul, there was, there could be, nothing of the sort. It has been claimed that his training in the Rabbinism of post-exilian Judaism had a similar influence upon the formation of his theology to that of ecclesiastical tradition, belief, and authority upon Augustine and the Reformers, and like that which it is affirmed by some, they yet exert upon theologians of our day. But we do not think it has been, or can be, shown that the theology of Paul was influenced or molded in the least by Rabbinism. And the point of view from which, after his conversion, Paul regarded "the traditions of the elders," was wholly different from that from which Augustine and the Reformers regarded the traditions and authority of the visible church. But we cannot discuss here these questions. What we have said in this article is tentative only. We have raised several questions of vital importance. We must leave them there for the present. But we are sure that the genesis of the theology of Paul can be shown correctly only along the line of investigation we have defined.