

διελθόντες . . . κωλυθέντες . . . ἐλθόντες . . . ἐπιείραζον. Prof. Ramsay's interpretation of the text which lay before him cannot be right, when, as he himself points out, it is identical with the translation of a text differing from his just at the critical point.

It was in reference to the construction διήλθον . . . κωλυθέντες that I said that in my belief "the South-Galatian theory is shipwrecked on the rock of Greek grammar." I venture to repeat this verdict.

F. H. CHASE.

ST. PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

XVI.—THE LAW.

THE negative side of St. Paul's doctrine of justification was, we have seen, that a God-pleasing righteousness is not attainable through the keeping of the law. "Apart from law a righteousness of God has been manifested."¹ The negative thesis is not less startling than the positive one that righteousness comes through the imputation of faith. One who breaks so completely with tradition is in danger of going to extremes. A temper of indiscriminate depreciation is apt to be engendered under the influence of which the innovator, not content with setting existing institutions in their own proper place, is tempted to refuse them any legitimate place and function. On a superficial view it might appear that some traces of this temper are discernible in the Pauline Epistles, and especially in the earliest of them, the Epistle to the Galatians. The tone in which the law is spoken of in that Epistle is certainly depreciatory in comparison with that which pervades the Epistle to the Romans. The expression "weak and beggarly elements,"² whatever its precise reference, applies at least generally to the Jewish law, and conveys the opposite of an exalted con-

¹ Rom. iii. 21.

² Gal. iv. 9.

ception of its use and value. In the later Epistle, on the other hand, the law appears as embodying the moral ideal, as holy, just, good, spiritual, as only realised, not transcended, by the highest attainments of the Christian life. The difference is due in part to the fact that in the Epistle to the Romans the apostle writes in a non-controversial, ironical spirit, while in the Epistle to the Galatians his attitude and tone are vehemently polemical. But besides that it has to be noted that in *Galatians* he has chiefly in view the ritual aspect of the law, while in *Romans* it is the ethical aspect as embodied in the Decalogue that is mainly before his mind. And, as showing that the contrast between the two Epistles in this connection is only on the surface, it must further be pointed out that when in the earlier Epistle the writer has occasion to refer to the ethical side of the law, his manner of expressing himself is not a whit less reverential than in the later. "The whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."¹

It was indeed not possible for a man of Paul's mental and moral calibre to become under any provocation a reckless critic of so venerable and valuable an institution as the Jewish law. A clever, but comparatively superficial, flippant man like Marcion might play that rôle, but hardly the great apostle of Gentile Christianity, with his religious earnestness, moral depth, and intellectual affinity for great, comprehensive views of history. However decisive the reaction brought about by the spiritual crisis he passed through when he became a Christian, he must continue to believe in the Divine Origin of the law of Moses, and therefore in its immense importance as a factor in the moral education of the world. That it had a real, vitally significant function remained for him a matter of course; the only question requiring reconsideration was, What is the true function of the law?

¹ *Gal.* v. 14.

We know what the converted Pharisee's answer to that question was. The law, said St. Paul, was given to bring the knowledge of sin, to provoke latent sin into manifestation, to breed despair of salvation through self-righteousness, and so to prepare the despairing for welcoming Christ as the Redeemer from the dominion of sin. It was a grave, serious answer to a weighty question. It cannot be said that in giving such an answer the apostle trifled with the subject, or assigned to the Jewish law a function unworthy of its alleged Divine origin. But three questions may legitimately be asked with reference to this part of the Pauline apologetic. (1) Is the Pauline view of the law in accordance with the function assigned to it in the Hebrew Scriptures? (2) Are the functions the apostle ascribes to the law real, and recognised in the Old Testament? (3) Is the account he gives of the law's functions in the four Epistles exhaustive, or does it need supplementing?

1. To the first of these three questions Dr. Baur's reply was a decided negative. His view of the matter is in substance as follows: In the great controversy between Judaists and himself the apostle was naturally led to make the antithesis between law and faith as broad and distinct as possible. Hence the "works of the law" in his anti-Judaistic dialectics mean works of a purely external character into which right motive and disposition do not enter, and the position of the Judaist is supposed to be that by such external works a man may make himself just before God. Faith, on the other hand, is emptied of all ethical contents in so far as it is viewed as the instrument of justification, a mere empty form, in itself nothing and receiving any contents it has from its object. But the legal works and the faith of the Pauline polemics are both alike mere abstractions, or controversial exaggerations to which there is nothing answering in the world of realities, or in Old Testament scriptures. Especially is this true of the works of the law, which as

they appear in the Hebrew scriptures are not purely external, but the fruit of pious, God-fearing dispositions, and as such acceptable to God. Moreover, as the works of Old Testament saints are not Pharisaical in character, neither are they Pharisaical in spirit. They are not wrought by men who imagine that they stand in no need of Divine forgiveness. The Old Testament saint knows full well that he comes short of perfection, that he needs Divine mercy; and he believes that there is forgiveness with God, and believing this he serves God hopefully and gratefully, striving to do God's will in all things with a pure heart, and trusting thereby to please God. And according to these Scriptures it is possible so to please God. A pious man can do substantially the things prescribed by the law, and he that doeth them is blessed in his deed, pleases God and wins His favour. And the law was given for that end, that it might be kept, and that so men might attain unto the blessedness of the righteous.

Dr. Baur further maintained that even Paul himself seemed to regard the antithesis between works of the law and faith, as a mere affair of controversial dialectics, and to be only half in earnest about it, the proof of this being that when not actually engaged in polemics, he forgets his hair-spun distinctions, and speaks of works as the ground of the Divine Judgement on men, just as any ordinary Jew might have done. The texts cited to substantiate this statement are *Rom.* ii. 6; *1 Cor.* iii. 13; *2 Cor.* v. 10; *Gal.* vi. 7.

The account given by Dr. Baur, of the Old Testament attitude toward the law and legal righteousness, is not entirely baseless. It is the fact that Old Testament saints confessed sin and trusted in God's mercy, and had no thought of being able to do without it. It is further true that they practised works of righteousness in accordance with the law, and hoped by these to please God, and are represented

as actually pleasing God thereby. It is furthermore true that these works, proceeding from the love of God and a genuine passion for righteousness, were not merely externally good works of the Pharisaic order, but works such as God who looketh on the heart could regard with complacency. All this is broadly true of the piety depicted in the Hebrew Sacred Books, even though a certain deduction may have to be made from the estimate on account of the influence of the incipient legalism, traceable in some of the later additions to the collection.¹ But all this the apostle knew as well as we, and his quarrel was not with Old Testament piety, or with the Old Testament itself. He was in accord with the *prophetic* spirit, out of accord only with the *Judaistic* spirit. He believed that the truly representative men of the Old Testament—Abraham, David, etc., were on his side. His very position is that his gospel of justification by faith is that which best interprets the Hebrew Scriptures, is true to their deepest spirit, and that the men who oppose him do not understand these sacred books, but read them with a veil upon their faces. He believes himself to be in close touch with the spirit of the ancient worthies, and doubts not that had they lived in his time they would have been in cordial sympathy with him. Was this assuming too much? Is it going too far, to say, that had all the Christians of the apostolic generation been like minded with the authors of the 51st, 103rd, 116th, 130th Psalms, the Judaistic controversy would never have arisen? In that case faith in Christ and reverence for the law in its essential elements might have co-existed peaceably in the consciousness of the Church as a whole, as of St. Paul himself in particular. But unhappily the righteousness of the time was not a righteousness like that of prophets and psalmists, but rather a righteousness like that of Scribes and Pharisees,

¹ Vide on this my *Apologetics*, pp. 321-336.

the sinister growth of the post-exilian time. The apostle knew it well, for he had been tainted with the disease himself. It was a leaven of that kind, combined with a nominal Christianity, that gave rise to the great controversy about the law. The manner in which the apostle speaks of his opponents proves this. They appear in the four epistles not as men whose general moral and religious character commands respect, but rather as men who have their own ends to serve, and make zeal for the law a cloak for self-seeking. Of course it is a plausible suggestion that this is their character not in truth, but only as seen through the distorting medium of polemical prejudice. But the fact probably is that there is little or no distortion, but merely genuine character, shown with the unreserve of a time of war, when the interests at stake demand the suspension of the conventional rules of courteous speech. Such men having found their way into the church, controversy of the most determined kind, was inevitable. The apostle will have to fight over again with them the battle he has already fought with himself, and to formulate for the guidance of the church the principles his own religious experience made clear to his mind many years previously. For it was there the dialectic began, and it is in that region it may best be understood. The individual man, Saul of Tarsus, was a mirror of his time, and the process of his religious consciousness was but the rehearsal on a small scale of the conflict through which the church attained to an understanding of its own faith. Thence we understand why the works of the law, spoken of in the Judaistic controversy, are not works like those of Old Testament saints, but either ritual performances, or works of any sort done from impure motives. The reason is that it was only with such works Saul the Pharisee had been occupied. By reflection on the same experience, we further understand whence came the doctrine that the law itself was not given for the attain-

ment of righteousness. When Saul the Pharisee began to see into the spiritual inwardness of the law, through the contact of his conscience with such a precept as, "Thou shalt not covet," he knew that there was no hope for him save in the mercy of God, and he drew the conclusion: by the law at its best, as a spiritual code of duty, comes not righteousness as I have hitherto been seeking it, *i.e.* as a righteousness with which I can go into the presence of a merely just God, and demand a verdict of approval. By the law comes rather the consciousness of sin, and through that a clear perception that the only attitude it becomes me to take up is that of one who prays, "God be merciful to me." The apostle's doctrine concerning the law must be read in the light of this experience. When he says, righteousness comes not by the law, he means, righteousness such as I sought when a Pharisee, the approval of God *as Phari-saically conceived*. This doctrine was an axiom to the man who wrote Psalm 130. But it was not an axiom to Saul of Tarsus, nor to the Judaistic opponents of Paul the Apostle. Therefore it needed to be affirmed with emphasis, as in the controversial epistles. It is not a new doctrine. It is a commonplace, proclaimed with vehemence by one who discovered its truth only after a momentous struggle to men who altogether or to a great extent ignored it. The doctrine rests on two propositions which the truly good have believed in all ages: that man is sinful and that God is gracious. No man, therefore, who has self-knowledge, and who cherishes a Christian idea of God, will have much quarrel with the doctrine, or fall into the mistake of imagining that Paulinism at this point is in conflict with the general spirit of the Old Testament.

As to the alleged inconsistency of the apostle's utterances concerning the law, two things must be borne in mind. First, his *whole* doctrine as to faith's function. Faith in the Pauline epistles is by no means the empty form it is some-

times represented to be. It is not only an attitude of receptivity to God's forgiving grace, but an energetic, ethical principle working towards personal holiness. Secondly, it has to be remembered that according to the apostle's doctrine, faith works by love. The good works of his justified man are done in a filial spirit, spring out of the consciousness of redemption, and as such are acceptable to God here and hereafter, as truly good in quality, though not necessarily free from all defect. Hence the apostle's conception of the final judgment is not the same with that of the Pharisee. The two conceptions agree, in so far as both make judgment proceed on the basis of works. They differ as to the character of the Judge, and of the works judged. The Judge of the Pharisaic creed is the God of mere justice, the Judge of St. Paul's creed is the God of grace; for the gracious character is indefeasible, and underlies the work of judgment. Then the works judged, as conceived by Pharisaism, are works done not in the consciousness of redemption and the spirit of sonship, but in the mercenary spirit of a hireling, or in the fear-stricken spirit of a slave. The apostle's conception of the judgment is in affinity with that of Christ. It is the judgment of the God of love making the great test of character the presence or absence of His own spirit of charity. This we may say in all fairness, while freely acknowledging that the Judgment Programme in Matt. xxv. 31-46 reaches a high-water mark of Christianised ethics, not touched by any utterance in the Pauline epistles. Here, as in many other respects, the disciple comes behind the Master. It is not easy altogether to escape from the system under which one has been reared. Some traces of Rabbinism may cling to one who has made the most radical revolt from Rabbinism.

2. Our second question is: Are the functions St. Paul ascribes to the law real, and are they recognised in the Old Testament? Now there can be no question that the

functions ascribed to the law in the Pauline letters, as enumerated on a previous page, were based on actual results of the law's action in the apostle's own case. And on careful consideration it appears that the same result followed from the discipline of law in the history of the Jewish people. By the law came to that people a deepened consciousness of sin, an intensified keen-visioned moral sense. There came, also, an enhanced sinfulness. The Jewish people not only knew themselves to be sinners better than other men, but they were greater sinners than other men. For the law, though it showed them their duty, did not incline them to do it, rather provoked reaction, and made their sin more criminal by putting them in the position of sinning against the light. Despair and longing for redemption were the natural results of those two effects on all the better minds in Israel, as is apparent from the utterances of the prophets, very specially from Jeremiah's oracle of the new Covenant. The only point, therefore, on which there is room for doubt is: Whether the results of the law's action, as unfolded in Israel's history, were those contemplated from the first as the design of the lawgiving, or whether they were not rather the proof that the law had failed of its end. Now here a distinction may be taken between the divine end of the law, and the end which was consciously present to the instruments of revelation, *e.g.*, Moses. From the view-point of theistic teleology, as conceived by the Hebrew mind, the apostle's doctrine of the law is unassailable. The ultimate result reveals the initial divine aim.¹ On this principle it is true, as St. Paul taught, that what God had in view from the first was the promise, and that the law entered to prepare for the recep-

¹ This principle must be applied with caution, else it will lead to some unwelcome conclusions, *e.g.*, that God created man that he might fall, and the lost that they might be condemned; and that Christ taught in parables expressly in order to make his insusceptible hearers spiritually blind.

tion of the promise, to be a pedagogue, a gaoler, a tutor to make Christ and the era of grace, liberty, and love welcome. In philosophical language, the law was a lower stage in the development of humanity preparing for a higher, in presence of which it lost its rights, though the good that was in it was taken up into the higher, and united to the initial stage of the promise to which it stood in opposition. As to the view taken of the end of the law by those who lived in the early time, without doubt it was very different from that of St. Paul. They looked with hope on an institution which was destined to end in failure. The commandment which the apostle found to be unto death, they regarded as ordained unto life. They did not see to the end of that which was to be abolished. There was a veil upon their faces in reference to the law. But as time went on the veil began to be taken away by sorrowful experience. Spirit-taught men began to see that the law was given, not so much for life and blessedness, as for the knowledge of sin and misery, and that if any good was to come to Israel it must be through the supersession of the Sinaitic covenant by a new covenant of grace. That by the law is the knowledge of sin he understood, who asked: "Who can understand his errors?" That the law was an irritant to transgression, Jeremiah understood when he said in God's name: "Which my covenant they brake, and I loathed them." And the very prophecy of a new covenant is a witness to the despair of any good coming out of the old one. It is an anticipation of the apostle's cry of anguish: "Wretched man! who shall deliver me?"

We can now answer the question, How far are the functions assigned to the law in the Pauline theology recognised in the Old Testament? There is not a little in the Hebrew Scriptures which might lead one to think that the law's functions, as conceived by men of the older time, were very different from those assigned to it in that theology in

the light of history. In the initial period, antecedent to experience, the tone was naturally hopeful. From the law they expected life and blessing, not death and cursing. But there were thoughts in God's heart which men at first did not understand, and that could be revealed only in the course of ages. At length these deeper thoughts did dawn upon devout minds and find utterance in prophetic oracles, though to men of another temper living in the "night of legalism" they remained hidden. The prophets were on Paul's side, if Moses and Ezra seemed to be on the side of his opponents. The dispute between him and them as to the purpose of the law is one which might be raised in reference to any epoch-making event or institution. What *e.g.* was the purpose of the American civil war? If the question be regarded as referring to the aims of men, the answer might be, It was a fight on one side for independence, on the other for unity. But if the question be taken as referring to the design of Providence, the answer might be, It was a struggle designed to issue in the emancipation of oppressed bondsmen. How many, as the struggle went on, were earnestly on the side of Providence, who had little sympathy either with north or with south! Even so in the case of the great debate regarding the Jewish law. Our sympathies go with Providence and with St. Paul, though we admit that the prosaic Judaistic constitutionalist might be right in his views as to the aims of Moses the legislator and of Ezra the scribe.

3. One question more remains to be considered. Is the account of the law's function given in the anti-Judaistic epistles exhaustive or does it admit of supplementing? Our reply must be that that account, while true and valuable so far as it goes, stands in need of supplement in order to a complete view of the subject. The remark of course applies to the ritual law. On the ethical side the apostle's doctrine leaves nothing to be desired. The law summed up

in love, and truly kept only when the outward commandment is transformed into an inward spirit of life—this is teaching thoroughly in sympathy with the mind of Christ, to which nothing needs to be added. It is otherwise with the representations of the law's functions and value in which the ritual aspect is mainly in view. Here the apostle's attitude is chiefly negative. Yet even for apologetic purposes in connection with the Judaistic controversy a positive conception of the law's function might usefully have been presented that, viz., according to which it was a sort of rudimentary gospel during the pre-Christian time setting forth spiritual truths in emblems, as pictures are employed in the training of children. This is the view actually set forth at length in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and epitomized in the motto: the law a shadow of good things to come.¹ On this view priests, sacrifices, festivals, the tabernacle, and its furniture were emblems of the spiritual verities which came with Christ and Christianity the final eternal religion. By the adequate exposition of this idea the author of that Epistle rendered an important apologetic aid to the Christian faith in a transition time. One naturally wonders why St. Paul did not employ it for the same purpose in his conflict with the legalist party, and that all the more that even in the letters provoked by that controversy there are not wanting indications that the point of view was not altogether foreign to his system of thought.² It has been suggested that he was prevented from doing so by the fact of the allegorical or symbolic method of interpreting the Levitical ritual having been previously employed in a conservative interest. But it is not easy to see why such a reason should have weighed with him any more than with the author of *Hebrews*. The true reason why St. Paul did not adopt the typical method of justifying the abrogation of the law, while assigning to it an important function in its own time and

¹ Heb. x. 1.

² Vide note at the end.

place, doubtless is that he had not himself arrived at the revolutionary conclusion along that road. His manner of viewing the law was determined for him by the part it had played in his religious history. It may be assumed that a similar explanation is to be given of the point of view adopted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that its author gained insight into the transient character of the Levitical religion, and the glory of the New Testament religion, not through a fruitless attempt at keeping the law with Pharisaic scrupulosity, but through a mental discipline which enabled him to distinguish between symbol and spiritual reality, shadow and substance. In other words, while St. Paul was a moralist he was a religious philosopher, while for St. Paul the organ of spiritual knowledge was the conscience, for him it was devout reason. With this difference between the two men was associated a corresponding difference in temper: the apostle, impetuous, passionate, vehement; the unknown author of *Hebrews* calm, contemplative, leisurely. The diversity of spirit is so markedly reflected in their respective styles as writers, that to accept *Hebrews* as a Pauline writing is out of the question.

Yet the apostle was not disqualified for writing that Epistle by any radical contrariety of view. As already hinted, there are indications of the idea that the law had a symbolical function in his anti-Judaistic writings, although he did not think fit to make much use of it for controversial purposes. Such an indication might be discovered even in the depreciatory phrase "weak and poor elements." It suggests an educational view of the law, and specially of the ritual portion of it, which is in advance of the merely negative view of its function. It likens the Levitical ritual to the alphabet arranged in rows (*στοιχεῖα*) which children were taught when they first went to school. The comparison implies that in the ancient ritual might be found all the elements of the Christian Religion, as in the alpha-

bet all the elements of speech. This educational view of the ritual law is applied to the whole Mosaic law, by the figure of the heir under tutors and governors. The work of a tutor is not merely negative; it is not merely to make the ward acquainted with his faults, or to dispose him to rebel against irksome restraints, or to discourage him by a discovery of his ignorance, and by all these effects to awaken in his breast a hearty desire to be rid of an unwelcome yoke. It is also to train him in moral habits, from which he will reap benefit all the days of his life. By implication it is taught that Israel derived a similar benefit from the discipline of law. In this great apologetic word concerning the heir it is recognised that the discipline of external law forms a necessary stage in the education of mankind, good while it lasts, and fitting for a higher stage, when the heir arrived at length at maturity, can be trusted to himself, because he has within him the eternal law of study, the reason firm, and temperate will, the self-regulating spirit of a manly life.¹

A. B. BRUCE.

REST IN THE WILDERNESS.

PALESTINE has two great natural boundaries—the sea, and the wilderness. It is not too much to say that the Jew disliked the one, and hated the other. Certainly there is no trace of any passion for the former in the national poetry. The Psalmists, so quick to mark the phenomena of Nature, and to refer them to the great First Cause, are silent as to

¹ A particular instance of the typical mode of viewing the Levitical ritual may be found in 1 Cor. v. 7, where Christ is called "our passover" (τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν). The idea in general form finds expression in one of the later christological epistles, that [to the Colossians (ii. 17), in the identical terms used in *Hebrews*: "a shadow of things to come."