

*ST. PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF THE SPIRIT AS  
PLEDGE.*

It has become a commonplace of New Testament scholarship to recognize the eschatological background of the Apostolic writings. No doubt the prominence of the Last Things in early Christian thought was due partly to that Messianic hope which, from the first, had been influential in leading the disciples to Christ, and partly, if one may separate the two lines of thinking, to their firm conviction, based on their present experience, that the Parousia could not be long delayed. In any case, a strain of eschatological reference runs through the leading conceptions of the New Testament writers. It may be worth while to examine this reference more minutely as it comes to view in St. Paul's doctrine of the Spirit.

The passages in which the conception to be discussed is most clearly set forth are 2 Corinthians i. 22, v. 5; Romans viii. 15-17, 23; Ephesians i. 14, iv. 30.

Let us take first the most general expression of the truth. In 2 Corinthians i. 22 St. Paul, in emphasizing the faithfulness of God, speaks of Him as "having given the pledge (*ἀρραβῶνα*) of the Spirit in our hearts." Obviously the phrase means "the pledge consisting of the Spirit." But the statement is left undefined. All that can be gathered is that the gift of the *πνεῦμα* is not complete in itself, but points forward to some future attainment of which it is the guarantee. In the next passage, however, a wider horizon is revealed. In 2 Corinthians v. 5 the Apostle introduces this identical phrase in another description of God. The context is the famous one in which he utters his yearning desire "to be clothed upon (*ἐπενδύσασθαι*) with our house which is from heaven." This particular "clothing upon" he defines (v. 4) as "mortality being swallowed up by life." Then he proceeds: "Now, He that hath wrought us

for this very thing is God, who gave us the pledge (*ἀρραβώνα*) of the Spirit." Here, plainly, the Spirit is the pledge of that purpose of God which he specifies, the "clothing upon with the house from heaven." This brings us into the very heart of St. Paul's eschatology. For no conception is dearer to his mind than that of the "spiritual organism" (*σῶμα πνευματικόν*) which the *πνεῦμα* ultimately creates for itself. We need not dwell upon this point in the meantime, as we shall have to return to it immediately. It may suffice to note the emphatic connexion here postulated between the pledge of the Spirit and the wholly new constitution of life which awaits those who have received the Divine gift of the *πνεῦμα*.

Fresh light is shed on the whole tenor of St. Paul's thought by the next passage which must be considered, Romans viii. 15-16. Here, indeed, he does not speak in so many words of the Spirit as pledge, but he leaves no doubt that such is the thought which regulates his point of view. In fact the passage is all the more instructive as containing no *direct* reference to the *ἀρραβών* or to the actual conditions of the future life, for it shows indirectly how easily the Apostle's mind moved from the subject of the Spirit and the Spirit's indwelling to that of the glorified existence which is the Christian's goal. "Ye received the Spirit of sonship" (*υιοθεσίας*), he says: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him." He defines the Spirit which has been bestowed upon them. It is the Spirit which makes them realize already that they are sons of God. But what does "sons of God" mean for them? Its ultimate meaning is clearly expressed in the final clause of the verse, "glorified along with Christ." A remarkable parallel is found in 1 John iii. 2: "Beloved, now are we children of

God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested, *we shall be like Him.*" This last clause corresponds exactly with that which we emphasized in the verse above. The future *δόξα* of the New Testament is really synonymous with "likeness to Christ." But this likeness to Christ is the content of the *σῶμα πνευματικόν* for St. Paul. This is its essential value. It is, of course, the *σῶμα σαρκικόν* which prevents the *υἱοὶ θεοῦ* from reaching their true end in this present life. For that reason the Apostle, in writing to the Philippians (ii. 21), speaks of himself as "eagerly awaiting (*ἀπεκδεχόμεθα*) the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall transform the body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of His glory." As soon as the *σῶμα σαρκικόν* has been exchanged for the *σῶμα πνευματικόν*, which is equivalent to the *σῶμα τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ*, the Christian shall have come into possession of his *κληρονομία*. The conception whose outlines are delineated in the verse we have just examined finds complete expression in our next passage, Romans viii. 23, which relates it immediately, on the one hand, to the verses in 2 Corinthians already discussed, and, on the other, to Philippians iii. 21 which has been quoted above. "We also who have the firstfruits (*ἀπαρχήν*) of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting (our) sonship (*υἰοθεσίαν*), (namely) the redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσιν*) of our body." These words are extraordinarily rich in their content. They may be said to embody all the separate ideas to which reference has been made, while giving them a fuller significance. Christians in their present condition have "the firstfruits consisting in the Spirit." Here we come back to the Spirit as *ἀρραβών*. Of what is it the *ἀπαρχή*? Obviously of the *υἰοθεσία*, and the *υἰοθεσία* is expressly defined as the *ἀπολύτρωσις τοῦ σώματος*. The passage unmistakably confirms the train of thought traced in the verse above. The possession of the Spirit, which is

the pledge or firstfruits of the *νόθεσία*, points beyond the present to the complete realization of that *νόθεσία* which means the *ἀπολύτρωσις* of the body. The *νόθεσία* is therefore an all-embracing condition. It affects not only the spirit but the body. It is valid for the *whole person* in Paul's judgment. The body is to be Christ's as well as the spirit. The body is to share in the Divine nature, not however as a *σῶμα σαρκικόν* but as a *σῶμα πνευματικόν*. It has to be redeemed as well as the soul. The possession of the Spirit is already related to both sides of the redemption, but in the one case as proof, in the other as pledge.

In this, as in every other province, Jesus Christ is the *πρόδρομος* of His followers. He has entered upon His full *κληρονομία*. He has vindicated His position of Sonship in the most glorious fashion. St. Paul gives a remarkable description of the process. "Declared (or "determined," R.V. mg.) to be the Son of God, in power, according to the spirit of holiness, in virtue of the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. i. 4). The resurrection of Jesus Christ, here designated by a striking phrase "the resurrection of the dead," as being the first of a great series, the type of what should follow, marks Him out infallibly to the gaze of men as the Son of God. That resurrection was the inevitable consequence of His possession of the Spirit of holiness, which He possessed without measure. As risen, He appeared to His disciples in the *σῶμα τῆς δόξης*, that *σῶμα* which was, if one may say so, the outward expression of the Spirit of holiness. It was in this guise that He must have revealed Himself to Paul. It was natural that the Apostle should make that experience the basis of his thought concerning the future life of believers. If they are to be "joint-heirs with Christ," they must attain along the lines of Christ's exaltation. What was not so marvellous in Christ's case, the glorifying of His body, not so marvellous because that body had never

been stained by sin, appeared to St. Paul unspeakably wonderful in the case of the Christian, whose body of flesh seemed to be the very seed-plot of all sinful desires and passions. To have a sure pledge that that body should one day be redeemed was as valuable a spiritual attainment as the Apostle could conceive in this present existence.

The doctrine we have been discussing is signally corroborated by the two separate passages from Ephesians which have been cited. And these passages bring us back to the very language we already quoted from 2 Corinthians. Take Ephesians i. 14: "In whom (sc. Christ), having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is a pledge (*ἀρραβών*) of our inheritance, with a view to (*εἰς*) the redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) of the (purchased) possession" (*περιποίησεως*). The Holy Spirit, probably here regarded as having been bestowed upon them in baptism (*ἐσφραγίσθητε*), which symbolizes the cleansing of the whole nature, is designated as the Spirit "of promise," "a pledge of our inheritance." These are precisely the expressions we have found the Apostle using again and again in the passages already considered. The inheritance can be nothing else, in view of what we have previously observed, than the sonship in which believers are to follow the Captain of their salvation. The function of the Spirit is to point forward, to make the Christian sure of what awaits him. The closing phrase is noteworthy, *εἰς ἀπολύτρωσις τῆς περιποίησεως*. We are already familiar with *ἀπολύτρωσις*. In Romans viii. 23 it was joined with *τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν*. The noun *περιποίησις* is rare. It occurs two or three times in the LXX., the example most relevant for our passage being in Malachi iii. 17, *καὶ ἔσονται* (sc. *οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον*) *μοι, λέγει Κύριος Παντοκράτωρ . . . εἰς περιποίησιν*. Very similar is its use in 1 Peter ii. 9, *λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν* (a free quotation of Isaiah xliii. 20 where the verb occurs). These instances, however, shed little light on the collocation

before us. Calvin interprets περιποίησις here as *ipsa Ecclesia*. Probably that is due to the influence of Acts xx. 28, τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἣν περιποίησατο διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου. Is it too fanciful to correlate περιποιήσεως here with σώματος in Romans viii. 23? There is, at least, as much ground for this interpretation as for that which refers it to the Church. The context never goes beyond the personal reference ἡμεῖς or ὑμεῖς. And something of the same train of thought, the redemption of the Christian as immediately concerned with the bodily organism, seems to lie behind St. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians vi. 20, ἡγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς· δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν (according to the correct reading). If ἐσφραγίσθητε refers to baptism, as is most probable, the exegesis suggested receives powerful confirmation. For this rite must have inevitably called up before the minds of the primitive Christians that bodily purity demanded by their new faith which stood in such glaring contrast to the foulness of heathen practice, a purity whose ultimate issue must be the complete dominion of the spirit over flesh.

The last passage to be glanced at adds nothing new to the content of the related conceptions which have been discussed. In Ephesians iv. 30 the Apostle reiterates the idea examined in this paper: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed (ἐσφραγίσθητε) with a view to (εἰς) the day of redemption" (ἀπολυτρώσεως). There is still the forward look in the operations of the Spirit. There is still emphasized the final purpose of these operations, the ἀπολύτρωσις. But, for the first time in the passages cited, the Spirit is designated ἅγιος. Perhaps this epithet, which, of course, is the normal one, is introduced to sharpen the contrast with λόγος σαπρός. Now σαπρός, which means literally "rotten," "putrid," was used in the vernacular, according to Phrynichus, as a synonym for αἰσχρός (σαπρὰν οἱ πολλοὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ αἰσχράν, *New Phrynichus*, p. 474), pre-

cisely equivalent to our use of "filthy" as applied to language, etc. That connexion of thought usually centres round coarse, sensual forms of evil, those associated with bodily lusts. Further, as we have just noted, *ἐσφραγίσθητε*, which occurs here also, inevitably suggests the cleansing of baptism, a cleansing which pointed to an ultimate purity of the whole nature. Putting those several facts together, it does not seem to us far-fetched to suppose that the bodily aspect of the final *ἀπολύτρωσις* is prominent to the Apostle's mind in this passage also.

Enough has been said to bring out the decisively eschatological bearing of St. Paul's teaching on the Spirit. To realize that the ultimate end of the Spirit's operation is the redemption of the whole human nature along the lines of Christ's own exaltation to glory is to possess a clue which will guide us safely along the obscurer paths of the Apostle's religious conceptions.

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### RECENT NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

#### V.

#### THE SUPREME EVIDENCE OF THE HISTORICITY OF THE EVANGELIC JESUS.

IT is written in the opening chapter of the Fourth Gospel how Philip, in the wonder and gladness of his discovery of the Messiah, sought out Nathanael and told him of it. "Him of whom Moses in the Law wrote and the Prophets, we have found—Jesus the son of Joseph, the Man of Nazareth!" Nathanael would not believe it. A Galilæan himself, he knew the ignorance of that northern province (John vii. 52) and the evil reputation of that particular town. "From Nazareth," he retorted incredulously, quoting a common proverb, "can there be anything