

a *Grace Notes* course

## History of the Christian Church

By Philip Schaff

### **VOLUME 1. First Period – Apostolic Christianity**<sup>1</sup>

Chapter 11: Theology of the Apostolic Church

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# History of the Christian Church

## VOLUME 1. First Period – Apostolic Christianity

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## **VOL 1: Chapter 11. Theology of the Apostolic Church**

### **1.66 Literature.**

I. Works on the Theology of the whole New Testament.

AUGUST NEANDER (d. 1850): *Geschichte der Pflanzung und Leitung der christl. Kirche durch die Apostel*. Hamburg, 1832; 4th ed., 1847, 2 vols. (in the second vol.); Engl. transl. by J. A. Ryland, Edinb., 1842; revised and corrected by E. G. Robinson, New York, 1865. Neander and Schmid take the lead in a historical analysis of the different types of Apostolic doctrine (James, Peter, Paul, John).

SAM. LUTZ: *Biblische Dogmatik*, herausgeg. von R. Rüetschi. Pforzheim, 1847.

CHRIST. FRIEDR. SCHMIDT (an independent collaborer of Neander, d. 1852): *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*. Ed. by Weizsäcker. Stuttg., 1853, 2d ed. 1859. 2 vols. (The Engl. translation by G. H. VENABLES, Edinb., 1870, is merely an abridgment.)

EDWARD REUSS (Prof. in Strassburg): *Histoire de la théologie chétienne au siècle apostolique*. Strassb., 1852. 3d ed., Paris, 1864. 2 vols. English translation from the third French ed. by Annie Harwood. London, 1872. 2 vols.

LUTTERBECK (a liberal Rom. Cath.): *Die N. T. lichen Lehrbegriffe, oder Untersuchungen über das Zeitalter der Religionswende*. Mainz, 1852. 2 vols.

G. L. HAHN: *Die Theologie des Neuen Testaments*. Bd. I. Leipzig, 1854.

H. MESSNER: *Die Lehre der Apostel*. Leipz., 1856. Follows in the path of Neander.

P. CHR. BAUR (d. 1860): *Vorlesungen über neutestamentliche Theologie*. Leipz., 1864. Published after his death, by his son. Sums up the bold critical speculations of the founder of the Tübingen School. The most important part is the section on the system of Paul.

W. BEYSCHLAG: *Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments*. Berlin, 1866 (260 pages).

THOMAS DEHANEY BERNARD: *Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament*. Lectures on the Bampton Foundation. London and Boston, 1867.

H. EWALD: *Die Lehre der Bibel von Gott oder die Theologie des alten und neuen Bundes*. Leipzig, 1871–76. 4 vols. (More important for the Old Test. than for the New.)

A. IMMER: *Theologie des neuen Testaments*. Bern, 1877.

J. J. VAN OOSTERZEE: *Biblische Theol. des N. T.* (translated from the Dutch). Elberf., 1868. Engl. transl. by Prof. G. E. Day. New Haven, 1870. Another English translation by Maurice J. Evans: *The Theology of the New Test.*, etc. London, 1870.

BERNH. WEISS: *Bibl. Theologie des Neuen Testaments*. Berlin, 1868; 4th ed., 1884. Engl. translation, Edinb., 1883, 2 vols.

II. Separate works on the doctrinal types of the several apostles, by W. G. SCHMIDT, AND BEYERSCHLAG, ON JAMES; BY MAYERHOFF, WEISS, AND MORICH, ON PETER; BY USTERI, PFLEIDERER, HOLSTEN, LEATHES, IRONS, ON PAUL; BY REIHM, ON HEBREWS; BY FROMMANN, KÖSTLIN, WEISS, LEATHES, on John—quoted in previous sections.

III. The doctrinal sections in the *Histories of the Apostolic Church* by LANGE, LECHLER, THIERSCH, STANLEY, AND SCHAFF (PP. 614–679), BESIDES NEANDER ALREADY MENTIONED. COMP. ALSO CHARLES A. BRIGGS: *The idea, history and importance of Biblical Theology*, in the "Presbyterian Review," New York, July, 1882.

IV. For the contrast between the apostolic and the rabbinical theology, see FERD. WEBER (a missionary among the Jews, d. 1879): *System der altsynagogalen paltästinsichen Theologie*, aus Targum, Midrasch, und Talmud dargestellt. Nach des Verf. Tode herausgeg. von Frz. Delitzsch und G. Schnedermann. Leipz., 1880.

### **1.67 Unity of Apostolic Teaching.**

Christianity is not merely doctrine, but life, a new moral creation, a saving fact, first personally embodied in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, the God-man, to spread from him and embrace gradually the whole body of the race, and bring it into saving fellowship with God. The same is true of Christianity as it exists subjectively in single individuals. It begins not with religious views and notions simply; though it includes these, at least in germ.

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It comes as a new life; as regeneration, conversion, and sanctification; as a creative fact in experience, taking up the whole man with all his faculties and capacities, releasing him from the guilt and the power of sin, and reconciling him with God, restoring harmony and peace to the soul, and at last glorifying the body itself. Thus, the life of Christ is mirrored in his people, rising gradually, through the use of the means of grace and the continued exercise of faith and love to its maturity in the resurrection.

But the new life necessarily contains the element of doctrine, or knowledge of the truth. Christ calls himself "the way, the truth, and the life." He is himself the personal revelation of saving truth, and of the normal relation of man to God. Yet this element of doctrine itself appears in the New Testament, not in the form of an abstract theory, the product of speculation, a scientific system of ideas subject to logical and mathematical demonstration; but as the fresh, immediate utterance of the supernatural, divine life, a life-giving power, equally practical and theoretical, coming with divine authority to the heart, the will, and the conscience, as well as to the mind, and irresistibly drawing them to itself. The knowledge of God in Christ, as it meets us here, is at the same time eternal life.

We must not confound truth with dogma. Truth is the divine substance, doctrine or dogma is the human apprehension and statement of it; truth is a living and life-giving power, dogma a logical formula; truth is infinite, unchanging, and eternal; dogma is finite, changeable, and perfectible.

The Bible, therefore, is not only, nor principally, a book for the learned, but a book of life for every one, an epistle written by the Holy Spirit to mankind. In the words of Christ and his apostles there breathes the highest and holiest spiritual power, the vivifying breath of God, piercing bone and marrow, thrilling through the heart and conscience, and quickening the dead.

The life, the eternal life, which was from the beginning with the Father, and is manifested to us, there comes upon us, as it were, sensibly, now as the mighty tornado, now as the gentle zephyr; now overwhelming and casting us down in the dust of humility and penitence, now reviving and raising us to the joy of faith and peace; but always bringing forth a new creature, like the word of power, which said at the first creation. "Let there be light!"

Here verily is holy ground. Here is the door of eternity, the true ladder to heaven, on which the angels of God are ascending and descending in unbroken line. No number of systems of Christian faith and morals, therefore, indispensable as they are to the scientific purposes of the church and of theology, can ever fill the place of the Bible, whose words are spirit and life.

When we say the New Testament is no logically arranged system of doctrines and precepts, we are far from meaning that it has no internal order and consistency. On the contrary, it exhibits the most beautiful harmony, like the external creation, and like a true work of art. It is the very task of the historian, and especially of the theologian, to bring this hidden living order to view, and present it in logical and scientific forms.

For this work Paul, the only one of the apostles who received a learned education, himself furnishes the first fruitful suggestions, especially in his epistle to the Romans. This epistle follows a logical arrangement even in form, and approaches as nearly to a scientific treatise as it could consistently with the fervent, direct, practical, popular spirit and style essential to the Holy Scriptures and inseparable from their great mission for all Christendom.

The substance of all the apostolic teaching is the witness of Christ, the gospel, and the free message of that divine love and salvation, which appeared in the person of Christ, was secured to mankind by his work, is gradually realized in the kingdom of God on earth, and

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will be completed with the second coming of Christ in glory.

This salvation also comes in close connection with Judaism, as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, the substance of all the Old Testament types and shadows. The several doctrines entering essentially into this apostolic preaching are most beautifully and simply arranged and presented in what is called the Apostles' Creed, which, though not in its precise form, yet, as regards its matter, certainly dates from the primitive age of Christianity.

On all the leading points, the person of Jesus as the promised Messiah, his holy life, his atoning death, his triumphant resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of God, and his second coming to judge the world, the establishment of the church as a divine institution, the communion of believers, the word of God, and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, the work of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of repentance and conversion, of regeneration and sanctification, the final completion of salvation in the day of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting—on all these points the apostles are perfectly unanimous, so far as their writings have come down to us.

The apostles all drew their doctrine in common from personal contact with the divine-human history of the crucified and risen Saviour, and from the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit, revealing the person and the work of Christ in them, and opening to them the understanding of his words and acts.

This divine enlightenment is inspiration, governing not only the composition of the sacred writings, but also the oral instructions of their authors; not merely an act, but a permanent state. The apostles lived and moved continually in the element of truth. They spoke, wrote, and acted from the spirit of truth; and this, not as passive instruments, but as conscious and free organs.

The Holy Spirit does not supersede the gifts and peculiarities of nature, which are ordained by God; it sanctifies them to the service of his kingdom. Inspiration, however, is concerned only with moral and religious truths, and the communication of what is necessary to salvation. Incidental matters of geography, history, archeology, and of mere personal interest, can be regarded as directed by inspiration only so far as they really affect religious truth.

The revelation of the body of Christian truth essential to salvation coincides in extent with the received canon of the New Testament. There is indeed constant growth and development in the Christian church, which progresses outwardly and inwardly in proportion to the degree of its vitality and zeal, but it is a progress of apprehension and appropriation by man, not of communication or revelation by God.

We may speak of a secondary inspiration of extraordinary men whom God raises from time to time, but their writings must be measured by the only infallible standard, the teaching of Christ and his apostles. Every true advance in Christian knowledge and life is conditioned by a deeper descent into the mind and spirit of Christ, who declared the whole counsel of God and the way of salvation, first in person, and then through his apostles.

The New Testament is thus but one book, the teaching of one mind, the mind of Christ. He gave to his disciples the words of life which the Father gave him, and inspired them with the spirit of truth to reveal his glory to them. Herein consists the unity and harmony of the twenty-seven writings which constitute the New Testament, for all emergencies and for perpetual use, until the written and printed word shall be superseded by the reappearance of the personal Word, and the beatific vision of saints in light.

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### 1.68 Types of Apostolic Teaching.

With all this harmony, the Christian doctrine appears in the New Testament in different forms according to the peculiar character, education, and sphere of the several sacred writers. The truth of the gospel, in itself infinite, can adapt itself to every class, to every temperament, every order of talent, and every habit of thought. Like the light of the sun, it breaks into various colors according to the nature of the bodies on which it falls; like the jewel, it emits a new radiance at every turn.

Irenaeus speaks of a fourfold "Gospel." In like manner we may distinguish a fourfold "Apostle," or four corresponding types of apostolic doctrine. The Epistle of James corresponds to the Gospel of Matthew; the Epistles of Peter and his addresses in the Acts to that of Mark; the Epistles of Paul to the Gospel of Luke and his Acts; and the Epistles of John to the Gospel of the same apostle.

This division, however, both as regards the Gospels and the Epistles, is subordinate to a broader difference between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, which runs through the entire history of the apostolic period and affects even the doctrine, the polity, the worship, and the practical life of the church. The difference rests on the great religious division of the world, before and at the time of Christ, and continued until a native Christian race took the place of the first generation of converts. The Jews naturally took the Christian faith into intimate association with the divinely revealed religion of the old covenant, and adhered as far as possible to their sacred institutions and rites; while the heathen converts, not having known the law of Moses, passed at once from the state of nature to the state of grace. The former represented the historical, traditional, conservative principle; the latter, the principle of freedom, independence, and progress.

Accordingly we have two classes of teachers: apostles of the Jews or of the circumcision,

and apostles of the Gentiles or of the uncircumcision. That this distinction extends farther than the mere missionary field, and enters into all the doctrinal views and practical life of the parties, we see from the accounts of the apostolic council which was held for the express purpose of adjusting the difference respecting the authority of the Mosaic law.

But the opposition was only relative, though it caused collisions at times, and even temporary alienation, as between Paul and Peter at Antioch. As the two forms of Christianity had a common root in the full life of Christ, the Saviour of both Gentiles and Jews, so they gradually grew together into the unity of the catholic church. And as Peter represents the Jewish church, and Paul the Gentile, so John, at the close of the apostolic age, embodies the higher union of the two.

With this difference of standpoint are connected subordinate differences, as of temperament, style, method. James has been distinguished as the apostle of the law or of works; Peter, as the apostle of hope; Paul, as the apostle of faith; and John, as the apostle of love. To the first has been assigned the phlegmatic (?) temperament, in its sanctified Christian state, to the second the sanguine, to the third the choleric, and to the fourth the melancholic; a distribution, however, only admissible in a very limited sense. The four gospels also present similar differences; the first having close affinity to the position of James, the second to that of Peter, the third to that of Paul, and the fourth representing in its doctrinal element the spirit of John.

If we make the difference between Jewish and Gentile Christianity the basis of classification, we may reduce the books of the New Testament to three types of doctrine: the Jewish Christian, the Gentile Christian, and the ideal or unionistic Christian. The first is chiefly represented by Peter, the second by Paul, the third by John. As to James, he must be ranked under the first type as the local head of the Jerusalem wing of the

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conservative school, while Peter war, the ecumenical head of the whole church of the circumcision.

### 1.69 The Jewish Christian Theology

#### I. JAMES AND THE GOSPEL OF LAW.

The Jewish Christian type embraces the Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, and to some extent the Revelation of John; for John is placed by Paul among the "pillars" of the church of the circumcision, though in his later writings he took an independent position above the distinction of Jew and Gentile.

In these books, originally designed mainly, though not exclusively, for Jewish Christian readers, Christianity is exhibited in its unity with the Old Testament, as the fulfillment of the same. They unfold the fundamental idea of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:17), that Christ did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to "fulfill." The Gospels, especially that of Matthew, show historically that Jesus is the Messiah, the lawgiver, the prophet, priest, and king of Israel.

On this historical basis James and Peter build their practical exhortations, with this difference, that the former shows chiefly the agreement of the gospel with the law, the latter with the prophets.

JAMES, the brother of the Lord, in keeping with his life-long labors in Jerusalem, his speech at the Council, and the letter of the Council—which he probably wrote himself—holds most closely to the Mosaic religion, and represents the gospel itself as law, yet as the "perfect law of liberty." Herein lies the difference as well as the unity of the two dispensations. The "law" points to the harmony, the qualifying "perfect" and "liberty" to the superiority of Christianity, and intimates that Judaism was imperfect and a law of bondage, from which Christ has set us free. Paul, on the contrary, distinguishes the gospel as freedom from the law, as a system of slavery; but he re-establishes the law on the basis of freedom, and sums up the whole

Christian life in the fulfillment of the law of love to God and to our neighbor; therein meeting James from the opposite starting-point.

James, the Christian legalist, lays great stress on good works which the law requires, but he demands works which are the fruit of faith in Him, whom he, as his servant, reverently calls "the Lord of glory," and whose words as reported by Matthew are the basis of his exhortations. Such faith, moreover, is the result of it new birth, which he traces to "the will of God" through the agency of "the word of truth," that is, the gospel.

As to the relation between faith and works and their connection with justification at the tribunal of God, he seems to teach the doctrine of justification by faith and works; while Paul teaches the doctrine of justification by faith alone, to be followed by good works, as the necessary evidence of faith. The two views as thus stated are embodied in the Roman Catholic and the evangelical Protestant confessions, and form one of the chief topics of controversy.

The contradiction between James and Paul is verbal rather than logical and doctrinal, and admits of a reconciliation which lies in the inseparable connection of a living faith and good works, or of justification and sanctification, so that they supplement and confirm each other, the one laying the true foundation in character, the other insisting on the practical manifestation. James wrote probably long before he had seen any of Paul's Epistles, certainly with no view to refute his doctrine or even to guard it against antinomian abuse; for this was quite unnecessary, as Paul did it clearly enough himself, and it would have been quite useless for Jewish Christian readers who were exposed to the danger of a barren legalism, but not of a pseudo-Pauline liberalism and antinomianism.

They cannot, indeed, be made to say precisely the same thing, only using one or more of the three terms, "to justify," "faith," "works" in

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different senses; but they wrote from different standpoints and opposed different errors, and thus presented two distinct aspects of the same truth. James says: Faith is dead without works. Paul says: Works are dead without faith.

The one insists on a working faith, the other on faithful works. Both are right: James in opposition to the dead Jewish orthodoxy, Paul in opposition to self-righteous legalism. James does not demand works without faith, but works prompted by faith; While Paul, on the other hand, likewise declares a faith worthless which is without love, though it remove mountains, and would never have attributed a justifying power to the mere belief in the existence of God, which James calls the trembling faith of demons.

James mainly looks at the fruit, Paul at the root; the one is concerned for the evidence, the other for the principle; the one takes the practical and experimental view, and reasons from the effect to the cause, the other goes deeper to the inmost springs of action, but comes to the same result: a holy life of love and obedience as the necessary evidence of true faith. And this, after all, is the ultimate standard of judgment according to Paul as well as James. Paul puts the solution of the difficulty in one sentence: "faith working through love." This is the Irenicon of contending apostles and contending churches.

The Epistle of James stands at the head of the Catholic Epistles, so called, and represents the first and lowest stage of Christian knowledge. It is doctrinally very meager, but eminently practical and popular. It enjoins a simple, earnest, and devout style of piety that visits the orphans and widows, and keeps itself unspotted from the world.

The close connection between the Epistle of James and the Gospel of Matthew arises naturally from their common Jewish Christian and Palestinian origin.

I. JAMES AND PAUL.. The apparent contradiction in the doctrine of justification

appears in James 2:14–26, as compared with Rom. 3:20 sqq.; 4:1 sqq.; Gal. 2:16 sqq. Paul says (Rom. 3:28): "Man is justified by faith apart from works of law", comp. Gal. 2:16 and appeals to the example of Abraham, who was justified by faith before he was circumcised (Gen. 17:10). James 2:24 says: "By works a man is justified, and not only by faith", and appeals to the example of the same Abraham who showed his true faith in God by offering up his son Isaac upon the altar (Gen. 22:9, 12). Luther makes the contradiction worse by unnecessarily inserting the word *allein* (*sola fide*) in Rom. 3:28, though not without precedent (see my note on the passage in the Am. ed. of Lange on Romans, p. 136). The great Reformer could not reconcile the two apostles, and rashly called the Epistle of James an "epistle of straw".

Baur, from a purely critical point of view, comes to the same conclusion; he regards the Epistle of James as a direct attack upon the very heart of the doctrine of Paul, and treats all attempts at reconciliation as vain. (*Vorles. über neutestam. Theol.*, p. 277). So also Renan and Weiffenbach. Renan (*St. Paul*, ch. 10) asserts without proof that James organized a Jewish counter-mission to undermine Paul. But in this case, James, as a sensible and practical man, ought to have written to Gentile Christians, not to "the twelve tribes," who needed no warning against Paul and his doctrine.

His Epistle represents simply an earlier and lower form of Christianity ignorant of the higher, yet preparatory to it, as the preaching of John the Baptist prepared the way for that of Christ. It was written without any reference to Paul, probably before the Council of Jerusalem and before the circumcision controversy, in the earliest stage of the apostolic church as it is described in the first chapters of the Acts, when the Christians were not yet clearly distinguished and finally separated from the Jews.

II. JAMES AND MATTHEW. The correspondence has often been fully pointed

out by Theile and other commentators. James contains more reminiscences of the words of Christ than any other Epistle, especially from the Sermon on the Mount. Comp. James 1:2 with Matt. 5:10–12; James 1:4 with Matt. 5:48; James 1:17 with Matt. 7:11; James 1:20 with Matt. 5:22; James 1:22 sq. with Matt. 7:21 sq.; James 1:23 with Matt. 7:26; James 2:13 with Matt. 6:14 sq.; James 2:14 with Matt. 7:21–23; James 3:2 with Matt. 12:36, 37; James 3:17, 18 with Matt. 5:9; James 4:3 with Matt. 7:7; James 4:4 with Matt. 6:24; James 5:12 with Matt. 5:34. According to a notice in the pseudo-Athanasian Synopsis, James "the Bishop of Jerusalem" translated the Gospel of Matthew from the Aramaic into the Greek. But there are also parallelisms between James and the first Epistle of Peter, and even between James and the apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon. See Plumptre, Com. on James, pp. 32 sq.

### 1.70 Peter and the Gospel of Hope.

PETER stands between James and Paul, and forms the transition from the extreme conservatism of the one to the progressive liberalism of the other. The germ of his doctrinal system is contained in his great confession that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. A short creed indeed, with only one article, but a fundamental and all-comprehensive article, the corner-stone of the Christian church. His system, therefore, is Christological, and supplements the anthropological type of James.

His addresses in the Acts and his Epistles are full of the fresh impressions which the personal intercourse with Christ made upon his noble, enthusiastic, and impulsive nature. Christianity is the fulfillment of all the Messianic prophecies; but it is at the same time itself a prophecy of the glorious return of the Lord. This future glorious manifestation is so certain that it is already anticipated here in blessed joy by a lively hope which stimulates to a holy life of preparation for the end. Hence, Peter

eminently deserves to be called "the Apostle of hope."

I. Peter began his testimony with the announcement of the historical facts of the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and represents these facts as the divine seal of his Messiahship, according to the prophets of old, who bear witness to him that through his name every one that believes shall receive remission of sins. The same Jesus whom God raised from the dead and exalted to his right hand as Lord and Saviour, will come again to judge his people and to bring in seasons of refreshing from his presence and the restitution of all things to their normal and perfect state, thus completely fulfilling the Messianic prophecies. There is no salvation out of the Lord Jesus Christ. The condition of this salvation is the acknowledgment of his Messiahship and the change of mind and conduct from the service of sin to holiness.

These views are so simple, primitive, and appropriate that we cannot conceive how Peter could have preached differently and more effectively in that early stage of Christianity. We need not wonder at the conversion of three thousand souls in consequence of his, Pentecostal sermon. His knowledge gradually widened and deepened with the expansion of Christianity and the conversion of Cornelius. A special revelation enlightened him on the question of circumcision and brought him to the conviction that "in every nation he that fears God and works righteousness, is acceptable to him," and that Jews and Gentiles are saved alike by the grace of Christ through faith, without the unbearable yoke of the ceremonial law.

II. The Epistles of Peter represent this riper stage of knowledge. They agree substantially with the teaching of Paul. The leading idea is the same as that presented in his addresses in the Acts: Christ the fulfiller of the Messianic prophecies, and the hope of the Christian. Peter's Christology is free of all speculative

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elements, and simply derived from the impression of the historical and risen Jesus. He emphasizes in the first Epistle, as in his earlier addresses, the resurrection whereby God "begat us again unto a lively hope, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven," when "the chief shepherd shall be manifested," and we "shall receive the crown of glory." And in the second Epistle he points forward to "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

He thus connects the resurrection of Christ with the final consummation of which it is the sure pledge. But, besides the resurrection, he brings out also the atoning efficacy of the death of Christ almost as strongly and clearly as Paul. Christ "suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God;" he himself "bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness;" he redeemed us "with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Christ is to him the only Saviour, the Lord, the Prince of life, the Judge of the world. He assigns him a majestic position far above all other men, and brings him into the closest contact with the eternal Jehovah, though in subordination to him.

The doctrine of the pre-existence seems to be intimated and implied, if not expressly stated, when Christ is spoken of as being "foreknown before the foundation of the world" and "manifested at the end of the time," and his Spirit as dwelling in the prophets of old and pointing them to his future sufferings and glory.

III. Peter extends the preaching, judging, and saving activity of Christ to the realm of the departed spirits in Hades during the mysterious triduum between the crucifixion and the resurrection. The descent into Hades is also taught by Paul (Eph. 4:9, 10).

IV. With this theory correspond the practical exhortations. Subjective Christianity is represented as faith in the historical Christ

and as a lively hope in his, glorious reappearance, which should make the Christians rejoice even amidst trials and persecution, after the example of their Lord and Saviour.

### **1.71 The Gentile Christian Theology. Paul and the Gospel of Faith.**

The Gentile Christian type of the gospel is embodied in the writings of Paul and Luke, and in the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews.

The sources of Paul's theology are his discourses in the Acts (especially the speech on the Areopagus) and his thirteen Epistles, namely, the Epistles to the Thessalonians—the earliest, but chiefly practical; the four great Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, which are the mature result of his conflict with the Judaizing tendency; the four Epistles of the captivity; and the Pastoral Epistles. These groups present as many phases of development of his system and discuss different questions with appropriate variations of style, but they are animated by the same spirit, and bear the marks of the same profound and comprehensive genius.

Paul is the pioneer of Christian theology. He alone among the apostles had received a learned rabbinical education and was skilled in logical and dialectical argument. But his logic is vitalized and set on fire. His theology springs from his heart as well as from his brain; it is the result of his conversion, and all aglow with the love of Christ; his scholasticism is warmed and deepened by mysticism, and his mysticism is regulated and sobered by scholasticism; the religious and moral elements, dogmatics, and ethics, are blended into a harmonious whole. Out of the depths of his personal experience, and in conflict with the Judaizing contraction and the Gnostic evaporation of the gospel he elaborated the fullest scheme of Christian doctrine which we possess from apostolic pens. It is essentially soteriological, or a system of the way of salvation. It goes far beyond the teaching of James and Peter, and

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yet is only a consistent development of the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels.

#### THE CENTRAL IDEA

Paul's personal experience embraced intense fanaticism for Judaism, and a more intense enthusiasm for Christianity. It was first an unavailing struggle of legalism towards human righteousness by works of the law, and then the apprehension of divine righteousness by faith in Christ. This dualism is reflected in his theology.

The idea of righteousness or conformity to God's holy will is the connecting link between the Jewish Saul and the Christian Paul. Law and works, was the motto of the self-righteous pupil of Moses; gospel and faith, the motto of the humble disciple of Jesus. He is the emancipator of the Christian consciousness from the oppressive bondage of legalism and bigotry, and the champion of freedom and catholicity.

Paul's gospel is emphatically the gospel of saving faith, the gospel of evangelical freedom, the gospel of universalism, centering in the person and work of Christ and conditioned by union with Christ. He determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified; but this included all—it is the soul of his theology.

The Christ who died is the Christ who was raised again and ever lives as Lord and Saviour, and was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. A dead Christ would be the grave of all our hopes, and the gospel of a dead Saviour a wretched delusion. "If Christ has not been raised then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain." His death becomes available only through his resurrection.

Paul puts the two facts together in the comprehensive statement: "Christ delivered up for our trespasses, and raised for our justification." He is a conditional universalist; he teaches the universal need of salvation, and the divine intention and

provision for a universal salvation, but the actual salvation of each man depends upon his faith or personal acceptance and appropriation of Christ. His doctrinal system, then, turns on the great antithesis of sin and grace. Before Christ and out of Christ is the reign of sin and death; after Christ and in Christ is the reign of righteousness and life.

We now proceed to an outline of the leading features of his theology as set forth in the order of the Epistle to the Romans, the most methodical and complete of his writings. Its central thought is: The Gospel of Christ, a power of God for the salvation of all men, Jew and Gentile.

1. THE UNIVERSAL NEED OF SALVATION.—It arises from the fall of Adam and the whole human race, which was included in him as the tree is included in the seed, so that his one act of disobedience brought sin and death upon the whole posterity. Paul proves the depravity of Gentiles and Jews without exception to the extent that they are absolutely unable to attain to righteousness and to save themselves. "There is none righteous, no, not one." They are all under the dominion of sin and under the sentence of condemnation.

He recognizes indeed, even among the heathen, the remaining good elements of reason and conscience, which are the connecting links for the regenerating work of divine grace; but for this very reason they are inexcusable, as they sin against better knowledge. There is a conflict between the higher and the lower nature in man, and this conflict is stimulated and brought to a crisis by the law of God; but this conflict, owing to the weakness of our carnal, fallen, depraved nature, ends in defeat and despair till the renewing grace of Christ emancipates us from the curse and bondage of sin and gives us liberty and victory. In the seventh chapter of the Romans, Paul gives from his personal experience a most remarkable and truthful description of the religious history of man from the natural or heathen state of carnal

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security (without the law, Rom. 7:7-9) to the Jewish state under the law which calls out sin from its hidden recess, reveals its true character, and awakens the sense of the wretchedness of slavery under sin (7:10-25), but in this very way prepares the way for the Christian state of freedom (7:24 and Rom. 8).

II. THE DIVINE INTENTION AND PROVISION OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION.—God sincerely wills that all men, even the greatest of sinners, should be saved, and come to the knowledge of truth through Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all. The extent of Christ's righteousness and life is as universal as the extent of Adam's sin and death, and its intensive power is even greater. The first and the second Adam are perfectly parallel by contrast in their representative character, but Christ is much stronger and remains victor of the field, having slain sin and death, and living for ever as the prince of life. Where sin abounds there grace super-abounds. As through the first Adam sin (as a pervading force) entered into the world, and death through sin, and thus death passed unto all men, inasmuch as they all sinned (in Adam generically and potentially, and by actual transgression individually); so much more through Christ, the second Adam, righteousness entered into the world and life through righteousness, and thus righteousness passed unto all men on condition of faith by which we partake of his righteousness. God shut up all men in disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all that believe.

(1.) The PREPARATION for this salvation was the promise and the law of the Old dispensation. The promise given to Abraham and the patriarchs is prior to the law, and not set aside by the law; it contained the germ and the pledge of salvation, and Abraham stands out as the father of the faithful, who was justified by faith even before he received circumcision as a sign and seal. The law came in besides, or between the promise and the gospel in order to develop the disease of sin, to reveal its true character as a transgression

of the divine will, and thus to excite the sense of the need of salvation. The law is in itself holy and good, but cannot give life; it commands and threatens, but gives no power to fulfil; it cannot renew the flesh, that is, the depraved, sinful nature of man; it can neither justify nor sanctify, but it brings the knowledge of sin, and by its discipline it prepares men for the freedom of Christ, as a schoolmaster prepares children for independent manhood.

(2.) The SALVATION ITSELF IS COMPREHENDED IN THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST. It was accomplished in the fullness of the time by the sinless life, the atoning death, and the glorious resurrection and exaltation of Christ, the eternal Son of God, who appeared in the likeness of the flesh of sin and as an offering for sin, and thus procured for us pardon, peace, and reconciliation. "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

This is the greatest gift of the eternal love of the Father for his creatures. The Son of God, prompted by the same infinite love, laid aside his divine glory and mode of existence, emptied himself exchanged the form of God for the form of a servant, humbled himself and became obedient, even unto the death of the cross. Though he was rich, being equal with God, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich. In reward for his active and passive obedience God exalted him and gave him a name above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord.

Formerly the cross of Christ had been to the carnal Messianic expectations and self-righteousness of Paul, as well as of other Jews, the greatest stumbling-block, as it was the height of folly to the worldly wisdom of the heathen mind. But the heavenly vision of the glory of Jesus at Damascus unlocked the key for the understanding of this mystery, and it was confirmed by the primitive apostolic tradition, and by his personal

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experience of the failure of the law and the power of the gospel to give peace to his troubled conscience.

The death of Christ appeared to him now as the divinely appointed means for procuring righteousness. It is the device of infinite wisdom and love to reconcile the conflicting claims of justice and mercy whereby God could justify the sinner and yet remain just himself. Christ, who knew no sin, became sin for us that we might become righteousness of God in him. He died in the place and for the benefit of sinners and enemies, so that his death has a universal significance.

If one died for all, they all died. He offered his spotless and holy life as a ransom or price for our sins, and thus effected our redemption, as prisoners of war are redeemed by the payment of an equivalent. His death, therefore, is a vicarious sacrifice, an atonement, an expiation or propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and secured full and final remission and reconciliation between God and man.

This the Mosaic law and sacrifices could not accomplish. They could only keep alive and deepen the sense of the necessity of an atonement. If righteousness came by the law, Christ's death would be needless and fruitless. His death removes not only the guilt of sin, but it destroyed also its power and dominion. Hence the great stress Paul laid on the preaching of the cross in which alone he would glory.

This rich doctrine of the atonement which pervades the Pauline Epistles is only a legitimate expansion of the word of Christ that he would give his life as a ransom for sinners and shed his blood for the remission of sins.

(3.) While Christ accomplished the salvation, the HOLY SPIRIT appropriates it to the believer. The Spirit is the religious and moral principle of the new life. Emanating from God, he dwells in the Christian as a renewing, sanctifying, comforting energy, as the higher conscience, as a divine guide and monitor. He

mediates between Christ and the church as Christ mediates between God and the world; he is the divine revealer of Christ to the individual consciousness and the source of all graces through which the new life manifests itself. "Christ in us" is equivalent to having the "Spirit of Christ." It is only by the inward revelation of the Spirit that we can call Christ our Lord and Saviour, and God our Father; by the Spirit the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts; the Spirit works in us faith and all virtues; it is the Spirit who transforms even the body of the believer into a holy temple; those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God and heirs of salvation; it is by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that we are made free from the law of sin and death and are able to walk in newness of life. Where the Spirit of God is there is true liberty.

(4.) There is, then, a threefold cause of our salvation: the Father who sends his Son, the Son who procures salvation, and the Holy Spirit who applies it to the believer. This threefold agency is set forth in the benediction, which comprehends all divine blessings: "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit." This is Paul's practical view of the Holy Trinity as revealed in the gospel. The grace of Christ is mentioned first because in it is exhibited to us the love of the Father in its highest aspect as a saving power; to the Holy Spirit is ascribed the communion because he is the bond of union between the Father and the Son, between Christ and the believer, and between the believers as members of one brotherhood of the redeemed.

To this divine trinity corresponds, we may say, the human trinity of Christian graces: faith, hope, love.

III. THE ORDER OF SALVATION.—(1.) SALVATION HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE ETERNAL COUNSEL OF GOD, HIS FOREKNOWLEDGE and his FOREORDINATION ; the former an act of his omniscient intellect, the latter of his omnipotent will. Logically, foreknowledge

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precedes foreordination, but in reality both coincide and are simultaneous in the divine mind, in which there is no before nor after.

Paul undoubtedly teaches an eternal election by the sovereign grace of God, that is an unconditioned and unchangeable predestination of his children to holiness and salvation in and through his Son Jesus Christ. He thus cuts off all human merit, and plants the salvation upon an immovable rock. But he does not thereby exclude human freedom and responsibility; on the contrary, he includes them as elements in the divine plan, and boldly puts them together. Hence he exhorts and warns men as if salvation might be gained or lost by their effort. Those who are lost, are lost by their own unbelief. Perdition is the righteous judgment for sin unrepented of and persisted in.

It is a strange misunderstanding to make Paul either a fatalist or a particularist; he is the strongest opponent of blind necessity and of Jewish particularism, even in the ninth chapter of Romans. But he aims at no philosophical solution of a problem which the finite understanding of man cannot settle; he contents himself with asserting its divine and human aspects, the religious and ethical view, the absolute sovereignty of God and the relative freedom of man, the free gift of salvation and the just punishment for neglecting it. Christian experience includes both truths, and we find no contradiction in praying as if all depended on God, and in working as if all depended on man. This is Pauline theology and practice.

Foreknowledge and foreordination are the eternal background of salvation: call, justification, sanctification, and glorification mark the progressive steps in the time of execution, and of the personal application of salvation.

(2.) The CALL proceeds from God the Father through the preaching of the gospel salvation which is sincerely offered to all. Faith comes from preaching, preaching from preachers, and the preachers from God who sends them.

The human act which corresponds to the divine call is the conversion of the sinner; and this includes repentance or turning away from sin, and faith or turning to Christ, under the influence of the Holy Spirit who acts through the word. The Holy Spirit is the objective principle of the new life of the Christian.

Faith is the free gift of God, and at the same time the highest act of man. It is unbounded trust in Christ, and the organ by which we apprehend him, his very life and benefits, and become as it were identified with him, or mystically incorporated with him.

(3.) JUSTIFICATION is the next step. This is a vital doctrine in Paul's system and forms the connecting link as well as the division line between the Jewish and the Christian period of his life. It was with him always a burning life-question. As a Jew he sought righteousness by works of the law, honestly and earnestly, but in vain; as a Christian he found it, as a free gift of grace, by faith in Christ.

Righteousness, as applied to man, is the normal relation of man to the holy, will of God as expressed in his revealed law, which requires supreme love to God and love to our neighbor; it is the moral and religious ideal, and carries in itself the divine favor and the highest happiness. It is the very end for which man was made; he is to be conformed to God who is absolutely holy and righteous. To be god-like is the highest conception of human perfection and bliss.

But there are two kinds of righteousness, or rather two ways of seeking it: one of the law, and sought by works of the law; but this is imaginary, at best very defective, and cannot stand before God; and the righteousness of Christ, or the righteousness of faith, which is freely communicated to the believer and accepted by God. Justification is the act of God by which he puts the repenting sinner in possession of the righteousness of Christ. It is the reverse of condemnation; it implies the remission of sins and the imputation of

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Christ's righteousness. It is based upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ and conditioned by faith, as the subjective organ of apprehending and appropriating Christ with all his benefits. We are therefore justified by grace alone through faith alone; yet faith remains not alone, but is ever fruitful of good works.

The result of justification is peace with God, and the state of adoption and this implies also the heirship of eternal life. "The Spirit itself bears 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." The root of Paul's theory of justification is found in the teaching of Christ: he requires from his disciples a far better righteousness than the legal righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, as a condition of entering the kingdom of heaven, namely, the righteousness of God; he holds up this righteousness of God as the first object to be sought; and teaches that it can only be obtained by faith, which he everywhere presents as the one and only condition of salvation on the part of man.

(4.) SANCTIFICATION. The divine act of justification is inseparable from the conversion and renewal of the sinner. It affects the will and conduct as well as the feeling. Although gratuitous, it is not unconditional. It is of necessity the beginning of sanctification, the birth into a new life which is to grow unto full manhood. We are not justified outside of Christ, but only in Christ by a living faith, which unites us with him in his death unto sin and resurrection unto holiness. Faith is operative in love and must produce good works as the inevitable proof of its existence. Without love, the greatest of Christian graces, even the strongest faith would be but "sounding brass or clanging cymbal."

Sanctification is not a single act, like justification, but a process. It is a continuous growth of the whole inner man in holiness from the moment of conversion and

justification to the reappearance of Jesus Christ in glory. On the part of God it is insured, for he is faithful and will perfect the good work which he began; on the part of man it involves constant watchfulness, lest he stumble and fall. In one view it depends all on the grace of God, in another view it depends all on the exertion of man.

There is a mysterious co-operation between the two agencies, which is expressed in the profound paradox: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." The believer is mystically identified with Christ from the moment of his conversion (sealed by baptism). He died with Christ unto sin so as to sin no more; and he rose with him to a new life unto God so as to live for God; he is crucified to the world and the world to him; he is a new creature in Christ; the old man of sin is dead and buried, the new man lives in holiness and righteousness. "It is no longer I (my own sinful self) that lives, but it is Christ that lives in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me."

Here is the whole doctrine of Christian life: it is Christ in us, and we in Christ. It consists in a vital union with Christ, the crucified and risen Redeemer, who is the indwelling, all-pervading, and controlling life of the believer; but the union is no pantheistic confusion or absorption; the believer continues to live as a self-conscious and distinct personality. For the believer "to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

In Romans 12, Paul sums up his ethics in the idea of gratitude which manifests itself in a cheerful sacrifice of our persons and services to the God of our salvation.

(5.) GLORIFICATION. This is the final completion of the work of grace in the believer and will appear at the parousia of

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our Lord. It cannot be hindered by any power present or future, visible or invisible, for God and Christ are stronger than all our enemies and will enable us to come out more than conquerors from the conflict of faith.

This lofty conviction of final victory finds most eloquent expression in the triumphal ode which closes the eighth chapter of Romans.

IV. THE HISTORICAL PROGRESS of the gospel of salvation from Jews to Gentiles and back again to the Jews. Salvation was first intended for and offered to the Jews, who were for centuries prepared for it by the law and the promise, and among whom the Saviour was born, lived, died, and rose again. But the Jews as a nation rejected Christ and his apostles, and hardened their hearts in unbelief. This fact filled the apostle with unutterable sadness, and made him willing to sacrifice even his own salvation (if it were possible) for the salvation of his kinsmen.

But he sees light in this dark mystery. First of all, God has a sovereign right over all his creatures and manifests both his mercy and his righteousness in the successive stages of the historical execution of his wise designs. His promise has not failed, for it was not given to all the carnal descendants of Abraham and Isaac, but only to the spiritual descendants, the true Israelites who have the faith of Abraham, and they have been saved, as individual Jews are saved to this day. And even in his relation to the vessels of wrath who by unbelief and ingratitude have fitted themselves for destruction, he shows his long-suffering.

In the next place, the real cause of the rejection of the body of the Jews is their own rejection of Christ. They sought their own righteousness by works of the law instead of accepting the righteousness of God by faith.

Finally, the rejection of the Jews is only temporary and incidental in the great drama of history. It is overruled for the speedier conversion of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the full number or the organic

totality of the Gentiles (not all individual Gentiles) will lead ultimately to the conversion of Israel. "A hardening in part has befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved."

With this hopeful prophecy, which seems yet far off, but which is steadily approaching fulfillment, and will be realized in God's own time and way, the apostle closes the doctrinal part of the Epistle to the Romans. "God has shut up all men unto disobedience that he might have mercy upon all men. O the depth of the riches" both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out. For of Him and through Him, and unto Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."

Before this glorious consummation, however, there will be a terrible conflict with Antichrist or "the man of sin," and the full revelation of the mystery of lawlessness now held in check. Then the Lord will appear as the conqueror in the field, raise the dead, judge the world, destroy the last enemy, and restore the kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all.

I. The PAULINE SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE has been more frequently explained than any other.

Among the earlier writers Neander, Usteri, and Schmid take the lead, and are still valuable. Neander and Schmid are in full sympathy with the spirit and views of Paul. Usteri adapted them somewhat to Schleiermacher's system, to which he adhered.

Next to them the Tübingen school, first the master, Baur (twice, in his Paul, and in his New Test. Theology), and then his pupils, Pfleiderer and Holsten, have done most for a critical reproduction. They rise far above the older rationalism in an earnest and intelligent appreciation of the sublime theology of Paul, and leave the impression that he was a most profound, bold, acute, and consistent thinker on the highest themes.

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They ignore the supernatural element of inspiration, they lack spiritual sympathy with the faith of the apostle, overstrain his antagonism to Judaism (as did Marcion of old), and confine the authentic sources to the four anti-Judaic Epistles to the Galatians, Romans, and Corinthians, although recognizing in the minor Epistles the "paulinische Grundlage." The more moderate followers of Baur, however, now admit the genuineness of from seven to ten Pauline Epistles, leaving only the three Pastoral Epistles and Ephesians in serious doubt.

The Paulinismus of Weiss (in the third ed. of his *Bibl. Theol.*, 1881, pp. 194–472) is based upon a very careful philological exegesis in detail, and is in this respect the most valuable of all attempts to reproduce Paul's theology. He divides it into three sections: 1st, the system of the four great doctrinal and polemical Epistles; 2d, the further development of Paulinism in the Epistles of the captivity; 3d, the doctrine of the Pastoral Epistles. He doubts only the genuineness of the last group, but admits a progress from the first to the second.

Renan, who professes so much sentimental admiration for the poetry and wisdom of Jesus, "the charming Galilaeen peasant," has no organ for the theology of Paul any more than Voltaire had for the poetry of Shakespeare. He regards him as a bold and vigorous, but uncouth and semi-barbarous genius, full of rabbinical subtleties, useless speculations, and polemical intolerance even against good old Peter at Antioch.

Several doctrines of Paul have been specially discussed by German scholars, as

TISCHENDORF: *Doctrina Pauli apostoli de Vi Mortis Christi Satisfactoria* (Leipz., 1837);

RÄBIGER: *De Christologia Paulina* (Breslau, 1852);

LIPSIUS: *Die paulinische Rechtfertigunglehre* (Leipz., 1853);

ERNESTI: *Vom Ursprung der Sünde nach paulinischem Lehrgehalt* (Wolfenbüttel, 1855); *Die Ethik des Paulus* (Braunschweig, 1868; 3d ed., 1881);

W. BEYSCHLAG *Die paulinische Theodicee* (Berlin, 1868);

R. SCHMIDT: *Die Christologie des Ap. Paulus* (Gött., 1870);

DELITZSCH: *Adam und Christus* (Bonn, 1871); H. LÜDEMANN: *Die Anthropologie des Ap. Paulus* (Kiel, 1872);

R. STÄHELIN: *Zur paulinischen Eschatologie* (1874);

A. SCHUMANN: *Der weltgeschichtl. Entwicklungsprozess nach dem Lehrsystem des Ap. Paulus* (Crefeld, 1875);

R. KÖSTLIN: *Die Lehre des Paulus von der Auferstehung* (1877);

H. H. WENDT: *Die Begriffe Fleisch und Geist in biblischen Sprachgebrauch* (Gotha, 1878).

II. The CHRISTOLOGY OF PAUL is closely interwoven with his soteriology. In Romans and Galatians the soteriological aspect prevails, in Philippians and Colossians the Christological. His Christology is very rich, and with that of the Epistle to the Hebrews prepares the way for the Christology of John. It is even more fully developed than John's, only less prominent in the system.

The chief passages on the person of Christ are: Rom. 1:3, 4; 8:3; 8:32; 9:5; (but the punctuation and consequently the application of the doxology—whether to God or to Christ—are disputed); 1 Cor. 1:19, a very frequent designation); 2 Cor. 5:21; 8:9; Phil. 2:5–11; Col. 1:15–18; 2:9; Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:13, where, however, commentators differ in the construction, as in Rom. 9:5).

From these and other passages the following doctrinal points may be inferred:

1. The eternal pre-existence of Christ as to his divine nature. The pre-existence generally is implied in Rom. 8:3, 32; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 2:5; the pre-existence before the creation is expressly asserted, Col. 1:15; the eternity of this pre-existence is a metaphysical inference from the nature of the case, since an existence before all creation must be an uncreated, therefore a divine or eternal existence which has no beginning as well as no end. (John carefully distinguishes between the eternal

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h\n of the pre-existent Logos, and the temporal egevneto of the incarnate Logos, John 1:1, 14; comp. 8:58.) This is not inconsistent with the designation of Christ as "the first-born of all creation," Col. 1:15; for prwtovtoko" is different from prwtovktisto" (first-created), as the Nicene fathers already remarked, in opposition to Arius, who inferred from the passage that Christ was the first creature of God and the creator of all other creatures. The word first-born corresponds to the Johannean monogenvh", only-begotten. "Both express," as Lightfoot says (Com. on Col.) "the same eternal fact; but while monogenvh" states it in itself, prwtovtoko" places it in relation to the universe." We may also compare the protovgono", first-begotten, which Philo applies to the Logos, as including the original archetypal idea of the created world. "The first-born," used absolutely (prwtovtoko" B]kror Ps. 89:28), became a recognized title of the Messiah. Moreover, the genitive pavsh" ktivsew" is not the partitive, but the comparative genitive: the first-born as compared with, that is, before, every creature. So Justin Martyr (pro; pavntwn tw'n ktismavtwn), Meyer, and Bp. Lightfoot, in loc.; also Weiss, *Bibl. Theol. d. N. T.*, p. 431 (who refutes the opposite view of Usteri, Reuss, and Baur, and says: "Da pavsh" krivsew" jede einzelne Creatur bezeichnet, so kann der Genii. nur comparativ genommen werden, und nur besagen, dass er im Vergleich mit jeden Creatur der Erstgeborne war"). The words immediately following, John 1:16, 17, exclude the possibility of regarding Christ himself as a creature. Lightfoot, in his masterly *Comm.* (p. 212 sq.), very fully explains the term as teaching the absolute pre-existence of the Son, his priority to and sovereignty over all creation.

The recent attempt of Dr. Beyschlag (*Christologie des N. T.*, pp. 149 sqq., 242 sqq.) to resolve the pre-existent Christ of Paul and John into an ideal principle, instead of a real personality, is an exegetical failure, like the similar attempts of the Socinians, and is as far

from the mark as the interpretation of some of the Nicene fathers (e.g., Marcellus) who, in order to escape the Arian argument, understood prototokos of the incarnate Logos as the head of the new spiritual creation.

2. Christ is the mediator and the end of creation. "All things were created in him, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible ...; all things have been created through him (di j aujtou' and unto him (eij" aujtovn); and he is before all things, and in him all things consist," Col. 1:15-18. The same doctrine is taught in 1 Cor. 8:6 ("Jesus Christ, through whom are all things"); 10:9; 15:47; as well as in the Ep. to the Hebrews 1:2: ("through whom he also made the worlds" or "ages"), and in John 1:3.

3. The divinity of Christ is clearly implied in the constant co-ordination of Christ with the Father as the author of "grace and peace," in the salutations of the Epistles, and in such expressions as, "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15); "in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (2:9); "existing in the form of God," and "being on an equality with God" (Phil. 2:6). In two passages he is, according to the usual interpretation, even called "God" (qeov"), but, as already remarked, the exegetes are still divided on the reference of qeov" in Rom. 9:5 and Tit. 2:13. Meyer admits that Paul, according to his christology, could call Christ "God" (as predicate, without the article, qeov" not o j qeov"); and Weiss, in the 6th edition of Meyer on Romans (1881), adopts the prevailing orthodox punctuation and interpretation in Rom. 9:5 as the most natural, on purely exegetical grounds (the necessity of a supplement to kata; savrka, and the position of eujlovghto" after qeov"): "Christ as concerning the flesh, who [at the same time according to his higher nature] is over all, even God blessed for ever." Westcott and Hort are not quite agreed on the punctuation. See their note in *Greek Test., Introd. and Appendix*, p. 109.

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4. The incarnation. This is designated by the terms "God sent his own Son (Rom. 8:3, comp. 8:32); Christ "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). Without entering here into the Kenosis controversy (the older one between Giessen and Tübingen, 1620–1630, and the recent one which began with Thomasius, 1845), it is enough to say that the Kenosis, or self-emanation, refers not to the incarnate, but to the pre-existent Son of God, and implies a certain kind of self-limitation or temporary surrender of the divine mode of existence during the state of humiliation. This humiliation was followed by exaltation as a reward for his obedience unto death (Phil 2:9–11); hence he is now "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). To define the limits of the Kenosis, and to adjust it to the immutability of the Godhead and the inter-trinitarian process, lies beyond the sphere of exegesis and belongs to speculative dogmatics.

5. The true, but sinless humanity of Christ. He appeared "in the likeness of the flesh of sin" (Rom. 8:3); he is a son of David "according to the flesh" (1:3), which includes the whole human nature, body, soul, and spirit (as in John 1:14); he is called a man (αἰνῶνθρωπος) in the full sense of the term (1 Cor. 15:21; Rom. 5:15; Acts 17:31). He was "born of a woman, born under the law"(Gal. 4:4); he was "found in fashion as a man" and became "obedient even unto death" (Phil. 2:8), and he truly suffered and died, like other men. But he "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). He could, of course, not be the Saviour of sinners if he himself were a sinner and in need of salvation.

Of the events of Christ's life, Paul mentions especially and frequently his death and resurrection, on which our salvation depends. He also reports the institution of the Lord's Supper, which perpetuates the memory and the blessing of the atoning sacrifice on the cross (1 Cor. 11:23–30). He presupposes, of course, a general knowledge of the historical Christ, as his Epistles are all addressed to believing converts; but he incidentally

preserves a gem of Christ's sayings not reported by the Evangelists, which shines like a lone star on the firmament of uncertain traditions; "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

### III. PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION.

Eternal foreknowledge of all persons and things is necessarily included in God's omniscience, and is uniformly taught in the Bible; eternal foreordination or predestination is included in his almighty power and sovereignty, but must be so conceived as to leave room for free agency and responsibility, and to exclude God from the authorship of sin. Self-limitation is a part of freedom even in man, and may be exercised by the sovereign God for holy purposes and from love to his creatures; in fact it is necessary, if salvation is to be a moral process, and not a physical or mechanical necessity. Religion is worth nothing except as the expression of free conviction and voluntary devotion. Paul represents sometimes the divine sovereignty, sometimes the human responsibility, sometimes, as in Phil. 2:12, 13, he combines both sides, without an attempt to solve the insolvable problem which really lies beyond the present capacity of the human mind. "He does not deal with speculative extremes; and in whatever way the question be speculatively adjusted, absolute dependence and moral self-determination are both involved in the immediate Christian self-consciousness," Baur, Paul, II. 249. "Practical teaching," says Reuss (II. 532) to the same effect, "will always be constrained to insist upon the fact that man's salvation is a free gift of God, and that his condemnation is only the just punishment of sin."

There can be no doubt that Paul teaches an eternal election to eternal salvation by free grace, an election which is to be actualized by faith in Christ and a holy life of obedience. But he does not teach a decree of reprobation or a predestination to sin and perdition (which would indeed be a "decretum horribile," if

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verum). This is a logical invention of supralapsarian theologians who deem it to be the necessary counterpart of the decree of election. But man's logic is not God's logic. A decree of reprobation is nowhere mentioned. The term disapproved, worthless, reprobate, is used five times only as a description of character (twice of things). Romans 9 is the Gibraltar of supralapsarianism, but it must be explained in connection with Rom. 10-11, which present the other aspects. The strongest passage is Rom. 9:22, where Paul speaks of "fitted unto destruction," or rather (as many of the best commentators from Chrysostom to Weiss take it) the middle: "who fitted themselves for destruction," and so deserved it; while of the vessels of mercy he says that God "before prepared" them unto glory (9:23). He studiously avoids to say of the vessels of wrath: , which would have corresponded to , and thus he exempts God from a direct and efficient agency in sin and destruction. When in 9:17, he says of Pharaoh, that God raised him up for the very purpose that he might show in him His power, he does not mean that God created him or called him into existence (which would require a different verb), but, according to the Hebrew (Ex. 9:16, the *hiphil* of [;m'd), that "he caused him to stand forth" as actor in the scene; and when he says with reference to the same history that God "hardens whom he will" (Rom. 9:18), it must be remembered that Pharaoh had already repeatedly hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34, 35), so that God punished him for his sin and abandoned him to its consequences. God does not cause evil, but he bends, guides, and overrules it and often punishes sin with sin.

In this mysterious problem of predestination Paul likewise faithfully carries out the teaching of his Master. For in the sublime description of the final judgment, Christ says to the "blessed of my Father:" "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34), but to those on the left hand he says, "Depart from

me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (25:41). The omission of the words "of my Father," after "ye cursed," and of the words, for you, "and, from the foundation of the world," is very significant, and implies that while the inheritance of the kingdom is traced to the eternal favor of God, the damnation is due to the guilt of man.

IV. The doctrine of JUSTIFICATION. This occupies a prominent space in Paul's system, though by no means to the disparagement of his doctrine of sanctification, which is treated with the same fullness even in Romans (comp. Rom. 6-8 and 12-15). Luther, in conflict with Judaizing Rome, overstated the importance of justification by faith when he called it the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*. This can only be said of Christ (comp. Matt. 16:16; 1 Cor. 3:11; 1 John 4:2, 3). It is not even the theme of the Epistle to the Romans, as often stated (e.g., by Farrar, St. Paul, II. 181); for it is there subordinated by *gavr* to the broader idea of salvation (*swthriwa*), which is the theme (Rom 1:16, 17). Justification by faith is the way by which salvation can be obtained.

The Pauline idea of righteousness is derived from the Old Testament, and is inseparable from the conception of the holy will of God and his revealed law. But the classical usage is quite consistent with it, and illustrates the biblical usage from a lower plane. The Greek words are derived from *jus*, right, and further back from *divca*, or *div*", two-fold, in two parts (according to Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, v. 2); hence they indicate a well-proportioned relation between parts or persons where each has his due. It may then apply to the relation between God and man, or to the relation between man and man, or to both at once. To the Greeks a righteous man was one who fulfils his obligations to God and man. It was a Greek proverb: "In righteousness all virtue is contained."

Righteousness is an attribute of God, and a corresponding moral condition of man, i.e.,

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man's conformity to the will of God as expressed in his holy law. It is therefore identical with true religion, with piety and virtue, as required by God, and insures his favor and blessing. The word occurs (according to Bruder's Concord.) sixty times in all the Pauline Epistles, namely: thirty-six times in Romans, four times in Galatians, seven times in 2 Corinthians, once in 1 Corinthians, four times in Philippians, three times in Ephesians, three times in 2 Timothy, once in 1 Timothy, and once in Titus.

Righteous is one who fulfils his duties to God and men, and is therefore well pleasing to God. It is used seventeen times by Paul (seven times in Romans), and often elsewhere in the New Testament.

Dikaivwsi" occurs only twice in the New Test. (Rom. 4:25; 5:18). It signifies justification, or the act of God by which he puts the sinner into the possession of righteousness.

Dikaivwma, which is found Rom. 1:32; 2:26; 5:16, 18; 8:4 means a righteous decree, or judgment. Aristotle (Eth. Nicom., v. 10) defines it as the amendment of an evil deed, or a legal adjustment; and this would suit the passage in Rom. 5:16, 18.

The verb occurs twenty-seven times in Paul, mostly in Romans, several times in the Synoptic Gospels, once in Acts, and three times in James 2:21, 24, 25. It may mean, etymologically, to make just, justificare; but in the Septuagint and the Greek Testament it hardly, ever has this meaning " says Grimm, , and is used in a forensic or judicial sense: to declare one righteous. This justification of the sinner is, of course, not a legal fiction, but perfectly true, for it is based on the real righteousness of Christ which the sinner makes his own by faith, and must prove his own by a life of holy obedience, or good works. For further expositions see my annotations to Lange on Romans, pp. 74, 130, 136, 138; and my Com on Gal. 2:16, 17. On the imputation controversies see my essay in Lange on Romans 5:12, pp. 190-195. On the

relation of Paul's doctrine of justification to that of James, see § 69 of this vol.

V. Paul's doctrine of the CHURCH has been stated in § 65 of this vol. But it requires more than one book to do anything like justice to the wonderful theology of this wonderful

### **1.72. John and the Gospel of Love.**

#### GENERAL CHARACTER.

The unity of Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian theology meets us in the writings of John, who, in the closing decades of the first century, summed up the final results of the preceding struggles of the apostolic age and transmitted them to posterity. Paul had fought out the great conflict with Judaism and secured the recognition of the freedom and universality of the gospel for all time to come. John disposes of this question with one sentence: "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." His theology marks the culminating height of divine knowledge in the apostolic age. It is impossible to soar higher than the eagle, which is his proper symbol. His views are so much identified with the words of his Lord, to whom he stood more closely related than any other disciple, that it is difficult to separate them; but the prologue to his Gospel contains his leading ideas, and his first Epistle the practical application. The theology of the Apocalypse is also essentially the same, and this goes far to confirm the identity of authorship.

John was not a logician, but a seer; not a reasoner, but a mystic; he does not argue, but assert; he arrives at conclusions with one bound, as by direct intuition. He speaks from personal experience and testifies of that which his eyes have seen and his ears heard and his hands have handled, of the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.

John's theology is marked by artless simplicity and spiritual depth. The highest art conceals art. As in poetry, so in religion, the most natural is the most perfect. He moves in

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a small circle of ideas as compared with Paul, but these ideas are fundamental and all-comprehensive. He goes back to first principles and sees the strong point without looking sideways or taking note of exceptions. Christ and Antichrist, believers and unbelievers, children of God and children of the devil, truth and falsehood, light and darkness, love and hatred, life and death: these are the great contrasts under which he views the religious world. These he sets forth again and again with majestic simplicity.

#### JOHN AND PAUL

John's type of doctrine is less developed and fortified than Paul's, but more ideal. His mind was neither so rich nor so strong, but it soared higher and anticipated the beatific vision. Although Paul was far superior to him as a scholar (and practical worker), yet the ancient Greek church saw in John the ideal theologian. John's spirit and style may be compared to a calm, clear mountain-lake which reflects the image of the sun) moon, and stars, while Paul resembles the mountain-torrent that rushes over precipices and carries everything before it; yet there are trumpets of war in John, and anthems of peace in Paul. The one begins from the summit, with God and the Logos, the other from the depths of man's sin and misery; but both meet in the God-man who brings God down to man and lifts man up to God. John is contemplative and serene, Paul is aggressive and polemical; but both unite in the victory of faith and the never-ending dominion of love. John's theology is Christological, Paul's soteriological; John starts from the person of Christ, Paul from his work; but their Christology and soteriology are essentially agreed. John's ideal is life eternal, Paul's ideal is righteousness; but both derive it from the same source, the union with Christ, and find in this the highest happiness of man. John represents the church triumphant, Paul the church militant of his day and of our day, but with the full assurance of final victory even over the last enemy.

#### THE CENTRAL IDEA.

John's Christianity centres in the idea of love and life, which in their last root are identical. His dogmatics are summed up in the word: God first loved us; his ethics in the exhortation: Therefore let us love Him and the brethren. He is justly called the apostle of love. Only we must not understand this word in a sentimental, but in the highest and purest moral sense. God's love is his self-communication to man; man's love is a holy self-consecration to God. We may recognize—in rising stages of transformation—the same fiery spirit in the Son of Thunder who called vengeance from heaven; in the Apocalyptic seer who poured out the vials of wrath against the enemies of Christ; and in the beloved disciple who knew no middle ground, but demanded undivided loyalty and whole-souled devotion to his Master. In him the highest knowledge and the highest love coincide: knowledge is the eye of love, love the heart of knowledge; both constitute eternal life, and eternal life is the fullness of happiness.

The central truth of John and the central fact in Christianity itself is the incarnation of the eternal Logos as the highest manifestation of God's love to the world. The denial of this truth is the criterion of Antichrist.

#### THE PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES.

I. The doctrine of GOD. He is spirit (pneu'ma), he is light (fw'") he is love (ajgavph). These are the briefest and yet the profoundest definitions which can be given of the infinite Being of all beings. The first is put into the mouth of Christ, the second and third are from the pen of John. The first sets forth God's metaphysical, the second his intellectual, the third his moral perfection; but they are blended in one.

God is spirit, all spirit, absolute spirit (in opposition to every materialistic conception and limitation); hence omnipresent, all-pervading, and should be worshipped,

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whether in Jerusalem or Gerizim or anywhere else, in spirit and in truth.

God is light, all light without a spot of darkness, and the fountain of all light, that is of truth, purity, and holiness.

God is love; this John repeats twice, looking upon love as the inmost moral essence of God, which animates, directs, and holds together all other attributes; it is the motive power of his revelations or self-communications, the beginning and the end of his ways and works, the core of his manifestation in Christ.

II. The doctrine of CHRIST'S PERSON. He is the eternal and the incarnate Logos or Revealer of God. No man has ever yet seen God (qeovn, without the article, God's nature, or God as God); the only-begotten Son (or God only-begotten), who is in the bosom of the Father, he and he alone (ekei'no") declared him and brought to light, once and forever, the hidden mystery of his being.

This perfect knowledge of the Father, Christ claims himself in that remarkable passage in Matthew 11:27, which strikingly confirms the essential harmony of the Johannean and Synoptical representations of Christ.

John (and he alone) calls Christ the "Logos" of God, i.e., the embodiment of God and the organ of all his revelations. As the human reason or thought is expressed in word, and as the word is the medium of making our thoughts known to others, so God is known to himself and to the world in and through Christ as the personal Word. While "Logos" designates the metaphysical and intellectual relation, the term "Son" designates the moral relation of Christ to God, as a relation of love, and the epithet "only-begotten" or "only-born" raises his sonship as entirely unique above every other sonship, which is only a reflection of it. It is a blessed relation of infinite knowledge and infinite love. The Logos is eternal, he is personal, he is divine. He was in the beginning before creation or from eternity. He is, on the one hand, distinct from God and in the closest communion with

him; on the other hand he is himself essentially divine, and therefore called "God".

This pre-existent Logos is the agent of the creation of all things visible and invisible. He is the fullness and fountain of life, the true, immortal life, as distinct from the natural, mortal life, and light (which includes intellectual and moral truth, reason and conscience) to all men. Whatever elements of truth, goodness, and beauty may be found shining like stars and meteors in the darkness of heathendom, must be traced to the Logos, the universal Life-giver and Illuminator.

Here Paul and John meet again; both teach the agency of Christ in the creation, but John more clearly connects him with all the preparatory revelations before the incarnation. This extension of the Logos revelation explains the high estimate which some of the Greek fathers, (Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen) put upon the Hellenic, especially the Platonic philosophy, as a training-school of the heathen mind for Christ.

The Logos revealed himself to every man, but in a special manner to his own chosen people; and this revelation culminated in John the Baptist, who summed up in himself the meaning of the law and the prophets, and pointed to Jesus of Nazareth as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

At last the Logos became flesh. He completed his revelation by uniting himself with man once and forever in all things, except sin. The Hebraizing term "flesh" best expresses his condescension to our fallen condition and the complete reality of his humanity as an object of sense, visible and tangible, in strong contrast with his immaterial divinity. It includes not only the body, but also a human soul and a rational spirit; for John ascribes them all to Christ. To use a later terminology, the incarnation is only a stronger term for the assumption of humanity. The Logos became man—not partially but totally, not apparently but really, not transiently but permanently, not by ceasing to be divine, nor by being

changed into a man, but by an abiding, personal union with man. He is henceforth the God-man. He tabernacled on earth as the true Shechinah, and manifested to his disciples the glory of the only begotten which shone from the veil of his humanity. This is the divine-human glory in the state of humiliation as distinct from the divine glory in his preexistent state, and from the final and perfect manifestation of his glory in the state of exaltation in which his disciples shall share.

The fourth Gospel is a commentary on the ideas of the Prologue. It was written for the purpose that the readers may believe "that Jesus is the Christ (the promised Messiah), the Son of God (in the sense of the only begotten and eternal Son), and that believing they may have life in his name."

III. THE WORK OF CHRIST (Soteriology). This implies the conquest over sin and Satan, and the procurement of eternal life. Christ appeared without sin, to the end that he might destroy the works of the devil, who was a liar and murderer from the beginning of history, who first fell away from the truth and then brought sin and death into mankind. Christ laid down his life and shed his blood for his sheep. By this self-consecration in death he became the propitiation for the sins of believers and for the sins of the whole world. His blood cleanses from all the guilt and contamination of sin. He is (in the language of the Baptist) the Lamb of God that bears and takes away the sin of the world; and (in the unconscious prophecy of Caiaphas) he died for the people. He was priest and sacrifice in one person. And he continues his priestly functions, being our Advocate in Heaven and ready to forgive us when we sin and come to him in true repentance.

This is the negative part of Christ's work, the removal of the obstruction which separated us from God. The positive part consists in the revelation of the Father, and in the communication of eternal life, which includes

eternal happiness. He is himself the Life and the Light of the world. He calls himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In him the true, the eternal life, which was from the beginning with the Father, appeared personally in human form. He came to communicate it to men. He is the bread of life from heaven, and feeds the believers everywhere spiritually without diminishing, as He fed the five thousand physically with five loaves. That miracle is continued in the mystical self-communication of Christ to his people. Whosoever believes in him has eternal life, which begins here in the new birth and will be completed in the resurrection of the body. Herein also the Apocalypse well agrees with the Gospel and Epistles of John. Christ is represented as the victor of the devil. He is the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah, but also the suffering Lamb slain for us. The figure of the lamb, whether it be referred to the paschal lamb, or to the lamb in the Messianic passage of Isaiah 53:7, expresses the idea of atoning sacrifice which is fully realized in the death of Christ. He "washed" (or, according to another reading, he "loosed") "us from our sins by his blood;" he redeemed men "of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests." The countless multitude of the redeemed "washed their robes and made them white (bright and shining) in the blood of the Lamb." This implies both purification and sanctification; white garments being the symbols of holiness. Love was the motive which prompted him to give his life for his people. Great stress is laid on the resurrection, as in the Gospel, where he is called the Resurrection and the Life. The exalted Logos-Messiah has the keys of death and Hades. He is a sharer in the universal government of God; he is the mediatorial ruler of the world, "the Prince of the kings of the earth" "King of kings and Lord of lords." The apocalyptic seer likewise brings in the idea of life in its highest sense as a reward of faith in Christ to those who overcome and are faithful unto

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death, Christ will give "a crown of life," and a seat on his throne. He "shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life; and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."

#### IV. THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Pneumatology). This is most fully set forth in the farewell discourses, of our Lord, which are reported by John exclusively. The Spirit whom Christ promised to send after his return to the Father, is called the Paraclete, i.e., the Advocate or Counselor, Helper, who pleads the cause of the believers, directs, supports, and comforts them. He is "another Advocate", Christ himself being the first Advocate who intercedes for believers at the throne of the Father, as their eternal High priest. The Spirit proceeds (eternally) from the Father, and was sent by the Father and the Son on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit, the Mediator and Intercessor between Christ and the believer, a "Christ i" the Mediator between God and the world. He i" the Spirit of truth and of holiness. He convicts the world, that is all men who come under his influence, in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment and this conviction will result either in the conversion, or in the impenitence of the sinner. The operation of the Spirit accompanies the preaching of the word, and is always internal in the sphere of the heart and conscience. He is one of the three witnesses and gives efficacy to the other two witnesses of Christ on earth, the baptism, and the atoning death of Christ.

V. CHRISTIAN LIFE. It begins with a new birth from above or from the Holy Spirit. Believers are children of God who are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is a "new" birth compared with the old, a birth "from God," as compared with that from man, a birth from the Holy "Spirit," in distinction from carnal birth, a birth "from heaven," as opposed to earthly birth. The life of the believer does not descend through the channels of fallen nature, but requires a creative act of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel. The life of the regenerate is free from the

principle and power of sin. "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God." Over him the devil has no power.

The new life is the life of Christ in the soul. It is eternal intrinsically and as to duration. Eternal life in man consists in the knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ—a knowledge which implies full sympathy and communion of love. It begins here in faith; hence the oft-repeated declaration that he who believes in Christ has (e[cei] eternal life. But it will not appear in its full development till the time of his glorious manifestation, when we shall be like him and see him even as he is. Faith is the medium of communication, the bond of union with Christ. Faith is the victory over the world, already here in principle.

John's idea of life eternal takes the place of Paul's idea of righteousness, but both agree in the high conception of faith as the one indispensable condition of securing it by uniting us to Christ, who is both righteousness and life eternal.

The life of the Christian, moreover, is a communion with Christ and with the Father in the Holy Spirit. Our Lord prayed before his passion that the believers of that and all future ages might be one with him, even as he is one with the Father, and that they may enjoy his glory. John writes his first Epistle for the purpose that his readers may have "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and that thus their joy may be made full." This fellowship is only another word for love, and love to God is inseparable from love to the brethren. "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God abideth in him." Love to the brethren is the true test of practical Christianity. This brotherly fellowship is the true essence of the Church, which is nowhere even mentioned in John's Gospel and First Epistle.

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Love to God and to the brethren is no mere sentiment, but an active power, and manifests itself in the keeping of God's commandments.

Here again John and Paul meet in the idea of love, as the highest of the Christian graces which abides forever when faith shall have passed into sight, and hope into fruition.

The INCARNATION is expressed by John briefly and tersely in the phrase "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14).

I. Apollinaris confined "flesh" to the body, including the animal soul, and taught that the Logos occupied the place of the rational soul or spirit in Christ; that consequently he was not a full man, but a sort of middle being between God and man, half divine and half human, not wholly divine and wholly human. This view was condemned as heretical by the Nicene church, but renewed substantially by the Tübingen school, as being the doctrine of John.

The incarnation was only an incidental phenomenon in the unchanging personality of the Logos. Moreover the flesh of Christ was not like that of other men, but almost immaterial, so as to be able to walk on the lake (John 6:16; Comp. 7:10, 15; 8:59 10:39). To this exegesis we object:

1. John expressly ascribes to Christ a soul, John 10:11, 15, 17; 12:27, and a spirit, 11:33; 13:21; 19:30. It may be said that pneuma is here nothing more than the animal soul, because the same affection is attributed to both, and because it was surrendered in death. But Christ calls himself in John frequently "the Son of man" 1:51, etc.), and once "a man", which certainly must include the more important intellectual and spiritual part as well as the body.

2. "Flesh" is often used in the Old and New Testament for the whole man, as in the phrase "all flesh" (every mortal man), or John 17:2; Rom. 3:20; 1 Cor. 1:29; Gal. 2:16). In this passage it suited John's idea better than, because it more strongly expresses the condescension of the Logos to the human nature in its present condition, with its

weakness, trials, temptations, and sufferings. He completely identified himself with our earthly lot, and became homogeneous with us, even to the likeness, though not the essence, of sin (Rom. 8:3; comp. Heb. 2:14; 5:8, 9). "Flesh" then, when ascribed to Christ, has the same comprehensive meaning in John as it has in Paul (comp. also 1 Tim. 3:16). It is animated flesh, and the soul of that flesh contains the spiritual as well as the physical life.

### **1.73 Heretical Perversions of the Apostolic Teaching.**

The three types of doctrine which we have briefly unfolded, exhibit Christianity in the whole fullness of its life; and they form the theme for the variations of the succeeding ages of the church. Christ is the key-note, harmonizing all the discords and resolving all the mysteries of the history of his kingdom.

But this heavenly body of apostolic truth is confronted with the ghost of heresy; as were the divine miracles of Moses with the satanic juggleries of the Egyptians, and as Christ was with demoniacal possessions. The more mightily the spirit of truth rises, the more active becomes the spirit of falsehood.

"Where God builds a church the devil builds, a chapel close by." But in the hands of Providence all errors must redound to the unfolding and the final victory of the truth. They stimulate inquiry and compel defense. Satan himself is that "power which constantly wills the bad, and works the good." Heresies in a disordered world are relatively necessary and negatively justifiable; though the teachers of them are, of course, not the less guilty. "It must needs be, that scandals come; but woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh."

The heresies of the apostolic age are, respectively, the caricatures of the several types of the true doctrine. Accordingly we distinguish three fundamental forms of heresy, which reappear, with various modifications, in almost every subsequent period. In this respect, as in others, the

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apostolic period stands as the type of the whole future; and the exhortations and warnings of the New Testament against false doctrine have force for every age.

1. The JUDAIZING tendency is the heretical counterpart of Jewish Christianity. It so insists on the unity of Christianity with Judaism, as to sink the former to the level of the latter, and to make the gospel no more than an improvement or a perfected law. It regards Christ as a mere prophet, a second Moses; and denies, or at least wholly overlooks, his divine nature and his priestly and kingly offices. The Judaizers were Jews in fact, and Christians only in appearance and in name. They held circumcision and the whole moral and ceremonial law of Moses to be still binding, and the observance of them necessary to salvation. Of Christianity as a new, free, and universal religion, they had no conception. Hence they hated Paul, the liberal apostle of the Gentiles, as a dangerous apostate and revolutionist, impugned his motives, and everywhere, especially in Galatia and Corinth, labored to undermine his authority in the churches. The epistles of Paul, especially that to the Galatians, can never be properly understood, unless their opposition to this false Judaizing Christianity be continually kept in view.

The same heresy, more fully developed, appears in the second century under the name of Ebionism.

2. The opposite extreme is a false Gentile Christianity, which may be called the PAGANIZING OR Gnostic heresy. It is as radical and revolutionary as the other is contracted and reactionary. It violently breaks away from the past, while the Judaizing heresies tenaciously and stubbornly cling to it as permanently binding. It exaggerates the Pauline view of the distinction of Christianity from Judaism, sunders Christianity from its historical basis, resolves the real humanity of the Saviour into a Dokeristic illusion, and perverts the freedom of the gospel into antinomian

licentiousness. The author, or first representative of this baptized heathenism, according to the uniform testimony of Christian antiquity, is Simon Magus, who unquestionably adulterated Christianity with pagan ideas and practices, and gave himself out, in pantheistic style, for an emanation of God. Plain traces of this error appear in the later epistles of Paul (to the Colossians, to Timothy, and to Titus), the second epistle of Peter, the first two epistles of John, the epistle of Jude, and the messages of the Apocalypse to the seven churches.

This heresy, in the second century, spread over the whole church, east and west, in the various schools of Gnosticism.

3. As attempts had already been made, before Christ, by Philo, by the Therapeutae and the Essenes, etc., to blend the Jewish religion with heathen philosophy, especially that of Pythagoras and Plato, so now, under the Christian name, there appeared confused combinations of these opposite systems, forming either a PAGANIZING JUDAISM, i.e., Gnostic Ebionism, or a JUDAIZING PAGANISM i.e., Ebionistic Gnosticism, according as the Jewish or the heathen element prevailed. This SYNCRETISTIC heresy was the caricature of John's theology, which truly reconciled Jewish and Gentile Christianity in the highest conception of the person and work of Christ. The errors combated in the later books of the New Testament are almost all more or less of this mixed sort, and it is often doubtful whether they come from Judaism or from heathenism. They were usually shrouded in a shadowy mysticism and surrounded by the halo of a self-made ascetic holiness, but sometimes degenerated into the opposite extreme of antinomian licentiousness.

Whatever their differences, however, all these three fundamental heresies amount at last to a more or less distinct denial of the central truth of the gospel—the incarnation of the Son of God for the salvation of the world. They make Christ either a mere man, or a mere superhuman phantom; they allow, at all

events, no real and abiding union of the divine and human in the person of the Redeemer. This is just what John gives as the mark of antichrist, which existed even in his day in various forms. It plainly undermines the foundation of the church. For if Christ be not God-man, neither is he mediator between God and men; Christianity sinks back into heathenism or Judaism. All turns at last on the answer to that fundamental question: "What think ye of Christ?" The true solution of this question is the radical refutation of every error.

"It has often been remarked that truths and error keep pace with each other. Error is the shadow cast by truth, truth the bright side brought out by error. Such is the relation between the heresies and the apostolic teaching of the first century. The Gospels indeed, as in other respects, so in this, rise almost entirely above the circumstances of the time, but the Epistles are, humanly speaking, the result of the very conflict between the good and the evil elements which existed together in the bosom of the early Christian society. As they exhibit the principles afterward to be unfolded into all truth and goodness, so the heresies which they attack exhibit the principles which were afterward to grow up into all the various forms of error, falsehood and wickedness. The energy, the freshness, nay, even the preternatural power which belonged to the one belonged also to the other. Neither the truths in the writings of the Apostles, nor the errors in the opinions of their opponents, can be said to exhibit the dogmatic form of any subsequent age. It is a higher and more universal good which is aimed at in the former; it is a deeper and more universal principle of evil which is attacked in the latter. Christ Himself, and no subordinate truths or speculations concerning Him, is reflected in the one; Antichrist, and not any of the particular outward manifestations of error which have since appeared, was justly regarded by the Apostles as foreshadowed in

the other." — Dean STANLEY (Apostolic Age, p. 182).