

CHAPTER I

THE TYRANNY OF A TRADITION

“Surely the individual, the person in the singular number, is the more fundamental phenomenon, and the social institution, of whatever grade, is but secondary and ministerial.”—WILLIAM JAMES.

As far back as history extends, it is possible to discern, in one phase or another, the process of the ancient controversy between the individual and the institution. In turn they assert themselves, each seeking to disparage and exclude the other. “Prophets expect everything from God,” says Duhm;¹ “the mere followers believe that they have received of God through their masters all that is important, and now they have only to order, regulate and organize what they have received.” The two forces are not of equal persistence, and, for generations together, nothing may appear but a certain passive acquiescence in what is customary. The institution is in possession, and does not need to obtrude its authority, for the mass of new-comers are sure to

¹ “The Ever Coming Kingdom” (Eng. trans.), p. 14.

accept that which visibly holds the field. But from time to time there appears a man, protestant born, whose instinct it is to interrogate and to dispute. For him that which exists has no peculiar sanctity, and the fact that it has stood so long is rather a suggestion that the time for change has fully come. So his challenge rings out. The ancient things are put upon their trial; and if he has energy and truth enough upon his side, the forecast of Jeremiah (himself a chief among the heretics) may be justified, and "in the day of their visitation" these long-established powers may perish (10¹⁵). What many lenient generations have allowed may suddenly be dissolved, and a new order introduced.

No one need imagine that, in this conflict, all the argument is on either side. A religion, as Dr. Inge¹ puts it, "must have an institutional as well as a mystical element. . . . Just as, if the feeling of immediate communion with God has faded, we shall have a dead Church worshipping 'a dead Christ,' as Fox the Quaker said of the Anglican Church of his day; so, if the seer and prophet expel the priest, there will be no discipline and no cohesion." And, on the other hand, I may quote two sentences from William James² about his friend, Thomas Davidson: "The memory of Davidson will always strengthen my faith in

¹ "Christian Mysticism" (2nd edit.), p. 329.

² "Memories and Studies," p. 102.

personal freedom and its spontaneities, and make me less unqualifiedly respectful than ever of 'civilization,' with its herding and branding, its licensing and degree-giving, its authorizing and appointing, and, in general, regulating and administering by system the lives of human beings. Surely the individual, the person in the singular number, is the more fundamental phenomenon, and the social institution, of whatever grade, is but secondary and ministerial." These competing forces have been ingeniously compared to the oxygen and nitrogen in the atmosphere,—the one which quickens life and action, and the other which tends to neutralize and conserve; and it is wholesome for energetic reformers to remember that, in the atmosphere, the more active element exists only in the proportion of one in five. "The active, voluntary part of a man," says Walter Bagehot,¹ "is very small; and if it were not economized by a sleepy sort of habit, its results would be null. It is the dull, traditional habit of mankind that guides most men's actions, and is the steady frame in which each new artist must set the picture that he paints. . . . Other things being equal, yesterday's institutions are by far the best for to-day; they are the most ready, the most influential, the most easy to get obeyed, the most likely to retain the reverence which they inherit, and every other must win." In such a

¹ "The English Constitution," chap. I.

debate we are not required to be partisans, even though an apostle takes a side. What is essential is that the rights of the individual should not be overlooked, and that even in the interest of the institution itself, which cannot be maintained in health if these rights are denied. "The voice of the majority," says Dr. MacCunn,¹ "is more likely to be *Vox Diaboli* than *Vox Dei*, if it be not, at bottom, the voice of individual judgment and personal conviction. . . . It is only out of men prepared, if need be, to withstand the majority to the face, that a reasonable majority can be made."

Our Lord Jesus, who came to a society sorely hampered by traditions, threw all His weight on the side of freedom. In that age, the expectation of upheaval was lively amongst the pious, and it is not surprising that many of His pictorial phases should have been interpreted in conformity with that devout hope. But His characteristic outlook was in a very different direction. He anticipated a community growing slowly, and affecting the world as leaven works upon the mass of dough; yet He gave no laws for its guidance, He appointed no ritual, He outlined no constitution. In the Church of His education He had everywhere met with men interested and even engrossed with religion of a sort, who yet had no fresh spring of piety in their hearts. For their religion they were indebted to imitation and to tradition. Their

¹ "The Ethics of Citizenship," p. 116.

memories were stored with sound opinions, which they were able to defend on the authority of famous men, but they had no faculty for originating such opinions. They could not recognise the truth itself unless it came with the commendation of antiquity. To Jesus such a condition appeared disastrous, for religion, in His view, was an original thing, just as Professor Raleigh¹ says that poetry is. It "is original or it is nothing. . . . All poetry begins at the beginning. . . . The poet, so far as he is a poet, accepts nothing on authority. The truths that he discovers may have been discovered by many before him; but what makes them worth communicating is that now he has discovered them again, reaching them, it may be, by a new track, but, in any case, by his own efforts, so that they come to him as the crown of his own labours, the fruit of his own sorrows and struggles and joys." With the alteration of a word, that might serve as a description of religion at its best, for it also begins from the beginning. The hopes and joys and confidence it imparts have been the possession of many before, but there is no title on which a man can *securely* hold them except that which is given in his own experience. When Peter hailed his Master as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16¹⁶), uttering not a customary phrase but a personal audacity, Jesus declared him to be

¹ "Wordsworth," p. 11.

the first stone surely laid in the new temple He had come to rear. His whole Church, as He conceived it,¹ was to be composed of men of that temper, with eyes and heart and courage of their own. Like a true teacher, He refrained even from imposing His mind upon them, for He wished them to make free use of their own minds. If two or three were gathered in His name, He gave them full authority to judge on moral questions; and He was so confident that they would judge rightly that He promised them that what they bound on earth should be bound in heaven. "The Evangel," says Wellhausen,² "proclaims religious individualism, the freedom of the children of God."

In harmony with this conception, our Lord boldly broke off from His friends whatever shackles of merely conventional duty were detaining them. When one of His hearers urged that he could do nothing until his old father was dead and in his

¹ In strong contrast with this I may set some words of Newman's ("Letters and Correspondence," II. 367): "Our difficulties in faith and obedience are just those which a subject in a decaying empire has in matters of allegiance. We sometimes do not know what is of authority and what is not, who has credentials and who has not: when local authorities are exceeding their power and when they are not: how far old precedents must be modified in existing circumstances and how far not." To some people this unquestionably will seem a fair ground of objection, but the objection really lies against the ordinance of Christ, for it was thus that He framed His Kingdom.

² "Israel, und Jüdische Geschichte," p. 356.

grave, Jesus bade him leave such cares to other members of the family; the dead may bury their dead (Mt. 8²²). Since the lines of the new society would at every possible angle traverse the lines of what was customary, He pressed upon the multitude the absolute necessity of decision. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Mt. 10³⁷). This sense of a brotherhood superseding older ties appears most touchingly in the Christian Catacombs, where men and women of position, who might have lain beside their kindred, have come, of their own choice, to take their place along with nameless men from far lands, to whom they were united by nothing except their faith.¹ It is true that this has been remarked of other religions than Christianity. M. Cumont² says that whilst "the worship of the gods of Rome was a civic duty, that of foreign gods was the expression of a personal faith". And, coming still closer to our point, he says:³ "Whatever part may be assigned to the instinct of imitation and the contagion of example, one always comes at last to a series of individual conversions. . . . The tie which formerly bound them in devotion to city or tribe is broken; and, in place of the ancient

¹ So Boissier, "Promenades Archéologiques," p. 150.

² Cumont, "Les religions orientales dans le Paganisme Romain," p. 68.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 41-2.

groupings, there are substituted communities of initiates, who all regard each other, wherever they come, as brothers." But one far-reaching distinction must be made, even in this matter, between Christianity and Mithraism or the worship of Isis. At its home, Isis worship was much like any other national cult, and it was mainly the accident of foreignness which made it an isolating force. But Jesus was deliberately an individualist in His method; He gathered men one by one; His teaching and His call were constantly addressed to the individual man.

But though He thought thus of the new life, the religion which He proclaimed was born into a world in which custom was enthroned; and the writings even of His greatest servants bear traces of confusions which He, by implication, had condemned. As soon as they were left to themselves, His disciples began to yield to the more servile spirit. It seemed as if their boldness had all been spent in His society, for originalities which had been encouraged and commended by Him began to be quoted as binding precedents. Since they had once shown themselves possessed of eyes, the humble people gathering round them were left to feel that they need not have any. To the period of seeing there succeeded a period of remembrance, in which men's business was to repeat the words and copy the behaviour of the Apostles. Within the new community a standard of ex-

perience and propriety was fixed, in which even the gropings of the Eleven had a place. It was natural for them to think that they were to be Jews, as their Master, in outward seeming, had been, worshipping in the Temple and observing the Feasts; and with such a conception of duty one need not quarrel. But when they suggested that their successors must follow the same uncertain and meandering track, with Christian impulses, fearless and original, confused by Jewish traditions, they clearly were in error. It was natural that their minds should be like a palimpsest, with fragments of an older writing dimly appearing below the Christian text; but it was against nature that those who had not known the Synagogue should be forced to learn to think and feel as if they had. There is an old grumble against our railway system that a gauge was adhered to which had become customary when traction was all by horses. A broader gauge, it was contended, would have allowed of heavier wagons and greater speed; but, in front of every locomotive and checking its progress, there trotted some phantom of the forgotten tram horse. That is scarcely an exaggerated image of the way in which the movement of the growing Church was obstructed by this precedent of uncertainty and groping. The lesson of the Transfiguration had not been learned, for though Jesus in their vision was the central figure, yet Moses and Elijah

held their place on either side, demanding a consideration only less than His. Men looked to their leaders, watching how they behaved, more than to the Lord who is always asking for new obedience; and thus the wonder and the freshness of the revelation faded, and the Church was beginning to bear a certain aspect of stereotyped formality. That is the common fate of human institutions; they constantly tend to return to the earth. Even of the lowest type of religion—of Animism—Dr. John Warneck¹ reports that it “gives the impression of a worship no longer understood and become an empty ceremony. Former generations clothed in myths and names of God their astonished and reverential thoughts about the inconceivable powers of sun and earth; but now they repose listlessly on the inheritance of their fathers, and scarcely a trace of reverence can be found.” Tennyson’s “Northern Farmer,”² heard the parson:—

A bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ower my 'eäd,
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summat to
 saäy,
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, an' I coom'd awaäy.

That is Christianity sunk to the level of paganism; but the description which Froude gives of the religion in which he was brought up has little more of spontaneity in it. “People went

¹ “The Living Forces of the Gospel,” p. 99.

² “Northern Farmer—Old Style.”

to church because they liked it, because they knew they ought to go, and because it was the custom. They had received the creeds from their fathers, and doubts about them never crossed their minds. Christianity had wrought itself into the constitution of their natures. It was a part of the existing order of the universe, as little to be debated about as the movements of the planets or the changes of the seasons." In such an attitude there is much to commend; but, at its best, it belongs¹ rather to the school of the Pharisees than to that of Jesus, whose supreme authority was the immediate intuition of God in the individual soul.

It was when the tyranny of tradition was thus tending to limit any free impulse in religion that Paul wrote the first of his central Epistles, which has been called² "the most remarkable letter that ever was written". He belonged to the slender company of those who speak not to one generation only but to every age in turn, and thus it is said by Schmiedel³ that "Galatians will in all times be the charter of freedom, not only from the

¹ Cf. Herford, "Pharisaism," p. 167: "The conflict between the Pharisees and Jesus was between two fundamentally different conceptions of religion, viz. that in which the supreme authority was Torah, and that in which the supreme authority was the immediate intuition of God in the individual soul".

² Ramsay, "Cities of St. Paul," p. 85.

³ "Encycl. Biblica," art. Galatians.

Mosaic Law, but from every yoke that is imposed upon the religious life as an external condition of salvation". "This Epistle marks an epoch in the history of man," says Godet; "it is the ever precious document of his spiritual emancipation." The letter is marked by an almost passionate unity of subject. "It is not a carefully framed series of sentences and paragraphs," says Sir William Ramsay,¹ "but an absolute unity, a single expression, a crystallization of Paul's mind at a moment of intense feeling; or, to change the metaphor, it is a volcanic flood poured forth in one moment and in one effort." "No other Epistle has sprung to the same extent as this from a single thought,² and no Epistle pours itself out like this in one stream, strong, stormy, unrestrainable, uninterrupted." And in a vivid and splendid metaphor, Glöel says, "it is not a sermon, it is not a treatise; it is a sword-cut, delivered in the hour of extreme peril by a combatant assailed by dangerous foes". An Epistle which is thus described cannot be *fully* understood apart from the situation which gave occasion for it, although it is possible to make far too much of that situation. Keats,³ in one of his letters, admits that "when a man has arrived at a certain ripeness of intellect, any one grand and spiritual passage may serve him as a starting-point for all

¹ "Historical Commentary on the Galatians," p. 474.

² Ewald, "Paulus," p. 55.

³ "Letters," p. 73.

'the two-and-thirty palaces''; and in Paul's case, an obscure incident in the history of an almost unknown group of Churches must not be taken as *accounting* for this great Epistle; at most, it gave him an occasion for delivering his mind of convictions which had long been present with him.

The letter is so rich in biographic suggestion as to give us most of the information we require. The Churches to which it was addressed were scattered over a district through which, as it seems, the Apostle was travelling on his way to some other field, when he was arrested by illness (4¹³). He was a sedulous watcher of providences, and though he was conscious of the huge disadvantage under which, as a sick man, he accosted strangers (4¹⁴), he caught at the opportunity of preaching. Like John Knox, he could scarcely show himself in any place without some infection of life appearing; and from these Galatians he received the kindest welcome,¹ and had the joy of seeing a community formed which exhibited

¹ Moffatt ("N.T. Introd.," p. 99) takes Paul's acknowledgment of their cordiality as one proof that the Galatian Churches are not to be looked for in Antioch and its neighbour cities, where he had a somewhat stormy reception. "There is not a hint in the Epistle of any persecution or suffering endured by him in his evangelization of Galatia." But a preacher who is urged to give the same sermon again the next Sabbath (Acts 13⁴²) has little to complain of, and it was not Paul's habit to magnify discomforts. The presence of adversaries was to him an attraction rather than the reverse (I Cor. 16⁹).

all the tokens of genuine Christian life. They counted themselves the happiest of men, he reports (4¹⁵); they had received the Spirit, and by the Spirit they wrought marvels (3⁵); and he saw them running famously in their new career (5⁷). Their cordiality drew out his heart towards them, and no Epistle is richer in touches of winning affection. He bears witness that they were ready to pluck out their eyes for him (4¹⁵), and he, in turn, professes a mother's yearning tenderness for them (4¹⁹). "My children," he calls them (4¹⁹); and the expression has vastly greater force when used by him than it has on the lips of John, whose endearments were habitual. Even his reproaches are graciously turned, for there was that between him and them which could not be forgotten. "Will you not come to meet me, when I, a Jew born, have come so far to meet you? Do not think that you have hurt my feelings," he says (4¹²). "Christ makes me confident about you that you and I will be of one mind in this" (5¹⁰). Half playfully he says (3¹), "you have been bewitched, I think, and lost your heads". "Come," he says in one place (4²¹), "and let me tell you a story¹ in which you will see my point." And in the closing words of his letter he makes one last appeal to their affection (6¹⁷): "look at my wounds, the marks of scourg-

¹ So Findlay, "Expos. Bible"; Bruce, "St. Paul's Conception of Christianity," p. 68.

ing and hard usage, and then trouble me if you can". "Paul does not write a dogmatic essay," says Deissmann;¹ "but with all the flame of his nature he pleads for the restoration of the old affection."

He seems to have visited them a second² time, and discovered reason³ for disquiet, which gave colour to his preaching at that time. "As we said before, so say I now again," he writes, betraying his sense of urgent danger, "if any man preach any other Gospel than that ye have received, God's curse be on him" (1⁹). And the character of this "other Gospel" appears in a phrase in the fifth chapter (5³): "I testify *again* to every man who is letting himself be circumcised that he becomes bound to keep the whole law". During the absence which followed, the assault upon them had been pressed by some man of standing (5¹⁰), belonging to the narrower

¹ "Paulus," p. 14.

² τὸ πρότερον (4¹³): Lake ("The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul," p. 266) argues from New Testament usage of the word that nothing more than "formerly" is meant; but Lightfoot thinks the rendering in the text "the probable interpretation". So more dogmatically Ramsay, "Hist. Comm. on Galatians," pp. 405, 414, and Moffatt, "N.T. Introd.," p. 84.

³ Moffatt ("N.T. Introd.," p. 85) thinks this doubtful, mainly because of certain indications of "surprise" at the opening of the Epistle. But the suggestion of the phrases quoted above is unmistakable, that Paul had already laboured to put them on their guard,

party of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 15¹; Gal. 2¹²). Ramsay¹ thinks that the Galatians were unduly influenced by this man "because of a lack of individuality and freedom in the Oriental mind as distinguished from the Western," but this defect belongs to all simple peoples in East and West alike. "The individual among savages has but a thin and meagre personality," says Dr. Jane Harrison;² "high emotional tension is to him only caused and maintained by a thing felt socially; it is what the tribe feels that is sacred, and is matter for ritual." In writing of missions among the stalwart German tribes, Dr. Hauck³ has said that "the old methods were bound to fail among peoples in whom the sense of individuality was very slightly developed. . . . The acceptance of Christianity by a decree of the people may be almost said to have been the typical way in which Germans became Christians." And it is interesting to notice in II Corinthians (II²⁰) how even a Greek city population allowed itself to be browbeaten by these emissaries: "Ye take it patiently when a man makes slaves of you, when he eats up your substance, when he exalts himself, when he even smites you on the face". The fact is that, all the world over, there are hosts of people ready to submit to an authority,

¹ "Hist. Comm.," p. 443.

² "Ancient Art and Ritual," pp. 36-7.

³ Quoted by Warneck, "Living Forces," p. 137.

if only it is asserted with sufficient confidence, and it is little wonder that the Galatians should have succumbed. Their misleader was able to appeal both to higher and to lower motives. He told them (and this was a serious argument) that until they were incorporated into Israel in the one lawful way, they would still be outsiders, with no ascertained right to the promises and the privileges of God's people; and, on the lower side, he suggested that by taking this step, they would also escape from boycott, and from the risk of more active persecution (6¹²). But what was most effective was the persistent disparagement of Paul, as not an apostle and as a man without consistency of mind. This is referred to throughout the Epistle, and some of the most biting phrases used against him seem to be actually quoted¹ by

¹ Wendland ("Die urchristlichen Literaturformen," p. 281) says: "The difficulties of interpretation depend on this that the Epistle assumes the Judaistic attacks made upon Paul as known, whilst we, in part, can only guess at them, and reconstruct them by way of hypothesis". So W. Lock, "Expositor," July, 1897. A free use of inverted commas would be a help to the reader, only there might be some difficulty in distributing them. Ramsay cautiously marks the phrases (1¹⁰), "persuade men," "seek to please men," and (4¹⁰) "enemy," as quotations. More doubtfully, he treats "did not wrong me" (4¹²) in the same way. With less of judgment Moffatt ("N.T. Introd.," p. 86) offers "those of repute" (2⁰), "we are Abraham's seed" (3¹⁰), and "Jerusalem which is our mother" (4³⁰), as phrases quoted from the Judaizers. The last is certainly a mistake (see p. 311). He also

Paul. He is your "enemy" (4¹⁰), it was alleged, keeping you back from a privilege which might be yours. And who is he? A man who trims and suits his message to his circumstances, "seeking to please men" (1¹⁰). He is willing to comply with the authorities in Jerusalem when that is convenient; the other day he circumcised a half-bred Jewish lad at Derbe, and sometimes he actually "preaches circumcision" (5¹¹; I Cor. 7¹⁸; Acts 16³), whilst at other times he talks against it (Acts 21²¹). So why concern yourselves with what he says? There are Apostles whose voice we all regard; and if you fall back on Jerusalem for authority, you will find a Church which has not broken with the Temple, a new Israel, purified and enriched by Christ, to which you may come, and have all the promises secured to you. "Thus," says Paul indignantly, "they would like to shut you out of the Church, in order that you might make suit to them to gain admission on their terms" (4¹⁷). It is not surprising that an un-instructed and emotional people should have been bewildered by such a campaign of insinuation. The way of ritual is always the easier way in religion, as it gives men something definite to do; and the peculiar traditions of their life had given them a bent in that direction (4^{8.9}). So rightly gives "sinners of the Gentiles" (2¹⁰); and one should probably add "nations" (3^{8.14}) as denoting the whole body of the human race referred to in the promise given to Abraham.

Paul had no harsh words for them; but of the clique of disturbers and of their leader he spoke with concentrated fierceness in a phrase (5¹²)¹ which shocks our modern sense: "since the knife of circumcision plays so large a part in their religion, I wish they would strike it deeper, and, like the priests of Cybele in your temples, mutilate themselves once for all".

There are intricate questions bearing on the situation which would have to be dealt with if we were concerned with the detail of chronology; and there is one enormous question which, in recent years, has spread itself over the whole discussion of the Epistle. It concerns the geographical situation of the Churches addressed, and, incidentally also, the period in Paul's career at which these came into existence. They have been sought for in towns like Pessinus and Tavium, on the western fringe of the old kingdom of Galatia in the north,² and in Antioch, Iconium, and the rest within the Roman province of Galatia, in the south. In the one case, they must have been

¹ So, in effect, Lightfoot, who notes that Pessinus, in North Galatia, was the home of Cybele's worship, and that, as mutilation was "a recognised form of self-devotion, it could not possibly be shunned in conversation". Ramsay (p. 438) thinks the phrase so interpreted would be "a pure insult, as irrational as it is disgusting," so he holds to the rendering in A.V.—"cut off," i.e. from the Church as useless members.

² Deissmann, without giving a reason, holds that Ancyra was visited ("Paulus," p. 29).

a half-accidental result of his second missionary tour (Acts 16⁶), whilst, in the other case, they were the main achievement of the first. A decision on this point would affect one's view of the order of events, and, in a measure, one's conception of the policy¹ which Paul followed in his Gentile mission; but the evidence is so evenly balanced as to require a verdict of *Non Liquet*,² and the question, however inviting it may be, does not affect any of the central interests of the

¹ This is not a matter on which it is safe to dogmatize. Certainly it may be allowed that Paul habitually "hurried to the great centres of civilization and education" (Ramsay, "Church and Roman Empire," p. 94), but we should not forget that he promises a visit to Rome only on his way to Spain (Rom. 15²⁸). His one declared policy was that of "not building on other men's foundations" (Rom. 15^{20, 21}), and of "preaching in the regions beyond" (II Cor. 10¹⁰). The famous passage in II Corinthians 11³³⁻³⁷ lets us see how mere a fragment of the labour and the adventure of his life has been recorded in Acts; so that it is in no way incredible that Paul on this occasion and on many others struck out over little travelled territory. It is clearly beyond the evidence to say that what "was not Roman territory was outside of his plans" (Ramsay, "Galatians," p. 417). All that we can say is that no record is preserved of any excursion beyond the limits of the Empire.

² Cf. Lietzmann, "Handbuch zum N.T., III, I., p. 228": "The champions of both theories, with great care and learning, seek for a decision on grounds of mere probability. . . . The actual position as regards sources is unquestionably in favour of the North Galatian theory, but I know that one or two added facts (discoveries of inscriptions or the like) might entirely change the aspect."

Epistle. When Ramsay and Moffatt, for example, these doughty champions of opposing views, have presented each his separate case, and exposed the weakness of each other's arguments, the human situation which they go on to describe (whether it be found in Antioch or in Pessinus), and the argument with which Paul confronts it are the same, in so far as two such differently constituted men can make them so. It is these, and not the matters in dispute, which make the interest of the letter, and it is with these I wish to deal.

Two main objections, as we have seen, had been raised against Paul's work in Galatia; the gospel he had preached was said to be defective, and he, the preacher, lacked the full authority of an apostle. But these two objections have their root in the one human instinct—of timorous adherencé to what is familiar. There was an accepted type of apostleship to which Paul did not conform; if he was an apostle at all, it must be of a new kind, and it is always difficult for men to find room in their minds for a fresh species. And there was an accepted form of Christian living, a Christianity only half-emerged from Judaism, in contrast with which this Pauline Christianity had an uncomfortable air of adventure and innovation. On both points, what had tradition on its side was confronted by something that was audaciously new and uncommended; and what binds the letter

together is the thought of freedom, the claim of a living thing to meet each fresh occasion as that occasion requires. "We can sum up the Epistle in a word," says Professor Godet;¹ "it is the proclamation of the new era of spiritual liberty." "I think that the most valuable thing Paul gave us," says Dr. Marcus Dods,² was the idea of the freedom of the sons of God. You can feel how his soul danced and exulted in that—all things are yours." Many subjects come up for consideration, but the one idea recurs. Paul speaks, for example, of sonship, but to him the supreme privilege of a son is freedom. "Thou art not a slave," he says (4⁷), "but a son;" he rejoices in what he calls "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8²¹). When a boy is grown up (Gal. 4⁶) then tutors and governors are put away, and the son with his father is a free man. "I should say," says Marcus Dods again,³ "that the key to Galatians is Paul's conception of sonship to which the Spirit of Christ raises. The son is free, and does not require to make good his claim to favour or provision. He needs no external compulsion, but lives from within." Again, in the Epistle, Paul has much to say of the Spirit of God which his converts had received, but he never suffers them to forget that "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" (II Cor. 3¹⁷).

¹ "N.T. Introduction," p. 224 (Eng. translation).

² "Letters," II, 94.

³ *Ibid.*, 210.

In Galatians, Luther¹ discerns nothing but "the doctrine of faith, grace, forgiveness of sins, or Christian righteousness"; and throughout that amazing Commentary, which Bunyan² found to be "before all the books that ever I have seen, the most fit for a wounded conscience," there resounds the one note of forgiveness without conditions for all who go to Christ for it. But in Paul's mind and feeling, the thought of liberty resurges even here. To be justified is to be "made free from sin" (Rom. 6^{18, 22}); and more arrestingly he declares that "he who has died has got his discharge from sin" (Rom. 6⁷). For freedom, in Paul's conception of it, is a various and a wealthy thing.

This large conception of freedom was probably a part of Paul's debt to the Greek world. Where self-development and self-realization were prized no greater wrong could be imagined than that a man should be kept from being himself and at his best. It mattered little at what point he first found himself restricted, for his demand of liberty covered all. In a tract of singular interest, Dr.

¹ "Galatians, Introduction," p. xciii.

² "Grace Abounding." There is a curious difference between John and Charles Wesley in their judgments of Luther on Galatians. Charles found it "nobly full of faith," whilst John complains that "the author makes nothing out, clears up not one considerable difficulty; that he is quite shallow in his remarks on many passages, and muddy and confused almost in all".

Johannes Weiss¹ has exhibited the diversity of meaning in the Stoics' use of the word, and he has elaborated the parallels and the contrasts in Paul's thought and theirs. Primarily, to them it was an intellectual thing; a wise man, they said, is free, because the delusions and misconceptions of his fellows have lost their hold upon him. But sometimes it was wholly moral, for no man can be free who is the slave of his passions, or who is entangled by the cares, or even by the affections of this world. "He only is free who takes none but God as guide," says Philo. "Good men, even though they be servants, are free; and bad men, though they be free, are slaves to many passions," says Bion. "What is freedom?" asks Cicero. "It is the power of living as one wishes. And who is it that lives as he wills, except the man who follows righteousness, who finds pleasure in his duty, who obeys the laws not from fear but because he reckons that the mark of health?" "Free am I," says Epictetus, "and a friend of God, and I serve Him with a willing mind." This richly conceived idea was not held in any fragmentary fashion, with political freedom separated off from moral, or from intellectual, as it often is with us. What Weiss² says of Paul's conception

¹ "Die Christliche Freiheit nach der Verkündigung des Apostels Paulus"; the classical quotations which follow are from Weiss.

² "Die Christliche Freiheit," p. 11.

of liberty, that "there is something iridescent in it," is true of the Greek idea throughout; and sometimes one colour comes out and sometimes another. A very fine example of this underlying sense of unity appears in Dante,¹ when, at the foot of the Mount of Cleansing, Virgil presents him to Cato with the words, "He comes seeking freedom (i.e. from sin) which is so dear as none knows better than he who gave up life for it. Thou knowest it, Cato; since, for the sake of freedom, death was not bitter to thee in Utica." There, without a thought of incongruity, Dante passes within a single sentence from the emancipation from sin to the resistance of a brave man to tyranny. For freedom is one thing, noble and prized under many various aspects. Paul had grown up in a society in which such phrases and ideas were current, and it could not be surprising if his thought were found to bear traces of their influence. Weiss² oddly puts it that there was "a close relation extending inwards even to the expression (*bis in den Ausdruck hinein*)"; but I suspect that it was mainly the expression which was borrowed, and that the deeper one penetrates

¹ "Purgatorio," l. 71. In the Middle Ages, the Roman Cato was confused with a Dionysius Cato of uncertain faith and date ("Shadow of Dante," p. 109). Wicksteed ("Dante and Aquinas," p. 134) remarks on "the systematic parallelism in the Comedy between the sacred and secular examples of virtue and vice".

² *Op. cit*, p. 33.

into Paul's thought of liberty the more profoundly and intimately Christian it is seen to be. But certainly in him, one notes, as in Dante and as in the Greeks, the large, underlying idea, which binds all the various manifestations together as of one group. "It may be said," says Sir William Ramsay,¹ "that the freedom on which Paul insists as a fundamental part of the Christian life is only freedom from Jewish ritual, not freedom generally in political, social and philosophical relations. The reply is that freedom in one direction tends to produce freedom of mind in general." Paul speaks of freedom from sin (Rom. 6^{18,22}), when the mastery of evil passion is broken: of freedom from the law (Gal. 4⁵), when a man ceases unintelligently to do what he is told, merely because he is told: of freedom from an un-instructed public opinion (I Cor. 4⁴, 9¹, 9¹⁰, 10²⁹): and of freedom from the slavery of corruption (Rom. 8²¹), through the Power which makes men young again. Throughout this Galatian Epistle there is a continual suggestion of the need of deliverance from the tyranny of tradition and institutions, resting in a man's right to trust his own experience and to call his soul his own. But what lies behind them all and accounts for them all is an experience at first hand of the grace of God, who took Paul out from under yokes of every sort, and made a man of him, free and fearless.

¹ "Cities of St. Paul," p. 37.

The old slave nature lay dead, and "he who has died has got his discharge". That was the path by which he had travelled, and on which he had seen them starting out; and this dealing with God at first hand is taken in the letter as the basis and the supposition of all their liberties. By dealing with men one by one, God gives to each a standing of his own.

Taking as our guiding clue this idea of the liberty which God gives to His friends, I may hastily, for the sake of clearness, run over the stages of the Epistle, even though it will be necessary later to travel by the same road. The stages, essentially, are three;¹ the first is occupied with the vindication of an apostleship which, confessedly, was of a new type; the second with the conditions of their standing as Christians, apart from any Jewish tradition; and the third with the possibility for a man of having a conscience of his own.

I. Paul's reply to those who challenged his apostleship is quite Napoleonic in its audacity. He defends himself only by attacking; for not only does he maintain his own apostleship as good, he leaves no room for any of a different

¹ Dr. Lightfoot ("Galatians," p. 65) finds "the main breaks at the end of the second and the fourth chapters. At the latter, there is only such a break as a man makes with a hatchet; the thought runs on, if you let it alone, and the new subject is only taken up at 5¹⁸."

kind. What his ill-wishers laid hold of in proof of the weakness of his position, he thrusts forward in proof that no other position is maintainable. Vaguely and tentatively, a conception had been taking shape of what an apostle ought to be,—one of the Eleven, or some man acknowledged by the Church as their substitute. Some of these latter, like Barnabas, were worthy of all honour, but the authority which they exercised was, in all cases, secondary and derivative, for their task was to carry on the work and witness of the Eleven. If this order had been perpetuated (and it did last until the end of the century), there would have been in Christendom a very feeble sort of apostolical succession, in which each man in turn would find a place, not in virtue of any direct call or inspiration, but merely as the successor of some one else. Dr. Bliss¹ describes how a Syrian dervish, in proof of his authority to ordain or “give the way,” will draw from his bosom a roll several feet long. “In reading this diploma, he unwound an apparently endless chain of names; the first link was his own name; the next the name of his ordaining sheikh, from whom he had ‘received the way’; and so, on and on, through names well known in Moslem history, till he paused for breath at the name of the founder of the order who died in 1335. Then the line receded back through the Middle and Dark Ages

¹ “The Religions of Modern Syria and Palestine,” p. 244.

with a list of names unknown to me, from whose obscurity flashed that of the great imam, Ja'afar-es-Sádiq, till at last I was thrilled to hear the words 'who received it from Hosein, who received it from Ali, who received it from Mohammed'. The spiritual succession had now reached its source." Of another, "Sheikh Mohammed, a lowly artisan of Jerusalem," he relates¹ that he also "had his spiritual pedigree, but he made little of it. 'The main matter,' he said very simply when I referred to the diploma, 'is that the thoughts and the heart should be pure.'" This may seem the nobler descent, but the statement of it for worldly ears has none of the pomp of the rolling catalogue of names; and in all lands, it is easier for the multitude to understand and to submit to an authority which, like a king's, is not personal but derived. But Paul says bluntly, I have none of that. "My apostolate has not its source in the community; it has not even its procuring cause in the choice or the furtherance of any single man" (*Παῦλος ἀπόστολος οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου*—Gal. 1¹); God chose me for this work before I was born, and in His own time He revealed His Son within me, and sent me to preach of Him to others. So, if to make his title good, a man requires to trace it back from one human authority of a regular sort to another, then my title is worthless. On the mere dignity

¹ P. 261; cf. p. 252.

of his office, Paul never laid much stress. He called himself (I Cor. 15⁹) "the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle." Borrowing a name of abuse which the Jews had invented for him, he refers to himself as "the abortion"¹— a shapeless thing cast forth from the womb of Judaism before it had come to life (I Cor. 15⁸). He admits that to many people he never would seem like an apostle at all (I Cor. 9²). That was when his own interest and standing were in question; but if the question were of Christ's interest, of His right to lay His hand on whom He will, and confer the insignia of authority in the Church, then Paul must be fearless in maintaining his position. When Prussian presbyters proposed to join in consecrating a new Bishop of Jerusalem, Liddon scornfully said: "It is much as if a hen owl were to undertake to lay an eagle's egg". In this rational world of ours things can produce only on their own level; and Paul would joyfully have turned Liddon's phrase against visible authority, of whatever rank, which claimed the exclusive right to make a man an apostle. It is

¹ τῷ ἐκτρώματι: Joh. Weiss (1 Korintherbrief, p. 352), "If Paul had coined the phrase for himself, he would scarcely have used the definite article; that shows that he is catching up a word of abuse hurled at him, and using it for his own purpose". Weiss attributes its origin to the Judaizing party in the Church, which fiercely denied that Paul's apostleship, however hopeful its beginning, ever came to life. Schmiedel, with much greater probability, attributes it to the Jews.

Christ who must do that, apart from any human intervention, and He did it for me.

Frankly he exposes his own defects so far as men's notions were concerned. As soon as I was baptized, I fell to work in Arabia¹ (1¹⁷), and only after three years did I even visit Jerusalem, where I spent a few days with Peter, informal and uncommitting (1¹⁸). Then for eleven years I was away again, working in my own fashion, planting churches and watching them grow by teachings which my own heart suggested. After that came the famine,² when I was sent with Barnabas to

¹ So Lake, "Earlier Epistles of St. Paul," p. 321. But for the notion that Arabia is a land of deserts, the sequence of vv. 16-17 would have suggested that it was to preach rather than to meditate that Paul went; and it must be remembered that Justin says that "Damascus itself was and is a part of the Arabian territory". As in harmony with the common view, one might refer to Mohammed's dictum, "Verily, there hath no prophet been raised up, who performed not the work of a shepherd". It was in his time of solitary brooding that his conviction became absolute that God Himself had spoken, cf. Qoran LXIX. It is precarious, however, to reason from Mohammed to Paul. John, in order to receive a vision, must go to Patmos, but Paul saw as clearly in the crowded streets of a town as in any solitude.

² In spite of great authorities on the other side, I am convinced that the interview in Gal. 2¹⁻¹⁰ is not to be identified with the so-called Council in Acts 15, but with Acts 11³⁰. A graver question is whether Paul was present at that Council at all. Its decisions certainly never affected his teaching, and they can only with an effort be reconciled with his saying that the

carry help to Jerusalem; and there, in private, I told the leaders what my message had been, and they added nothing to me. Intrusive people,¹ who

Apostles "added nothing" to him. To insist upon a ritual precept like abstaining from blood as "necessary" (15³⁸) is surely to "add" more than Paul's doctrine could admit. (I think it must be held that Lake (*op. cit.*, p. 48 *seq.*) has failed to prove that what is prohibited in Acts 15²⁹ is impurity, idolatry and murder. All New Testament usage is against rendering εἰδωλόθυτον as = idolatry; it is extremely doubtful if αἵματος ἀπέχεσθαι could bear the sense of "abstain from murder": so Wendland,— "Literaturformen," p. 254,—and Blass.) Even Ramsay ("Cities of St. Paul," p. 298), who is Luke's most eager advocate, admits his "inattention to precise statements of the lapse of time". Paul, e.g. was long enough in Thessalonica not only to see men converted but to know their "patience of hope" (1 Thess. 1³); he worked night and day at his trade so as to burden nobody (1 Thess. 2⁹), yet the kindly Philippians "once and again" found occasion to send money for his support (Phil. 4^{15, 16}); and these things can scarcely be fitted into the three weeks which Luke allows (Acts 17³). This looseness is exaggerated when he speaks of Jerusalem, about which his information was evidently scanty: e.g. compare the story of Pentecost with Paul's account of the tongues in 1 Cor. 14, or Acts 9²⁶⁻⁷ with Gal. 1¹⁸⁻⁹. The balance of probability seems to be in favour of the view that the "Decrees" were passed in Paul's absence, and were only communicated to him on his return from his third missionary tour (Acts 21³⁵).

¹ διὰ δὲ τοὺς παρεισάκτους—Lietzmann refers this "not to any scene in Jerusalem but to the general situation in the Pauline communities," but this hardly accounts for Paul's phrase—"to spy out our liberties". Ramsay ("Histor. Comm.," p. 299) refers it to men coming to visit as pretended friends, and using the knowledge thus acquired to injure Paul. But I think it is clearly

had been thrust upon us at the interview, would have liked to drive me past my purpose; but I declined even to have Titus circumcised, and the leaders did not insist. The Rabbinical schools had so long practised the method of authority, that their students were concerned not only with the question, Is this true? but with the very different question, Who said this? or What is your authority for repeating it? And it was natural that, within the Church at Jerusalem, what Peter or John or James had said should be quoted as determining. But Paul declares, "I did not receive my message of men, nor was I taught it; it came through a revelation given by Jesus Christ" (I¹²). He told me. And, in support of this daring assertion, he adds a story which has little consolation for any blind believer in the authority which mere position confers. Peter came down to us at Antioch, he says, and lived as friend with friends, frankly a member of the brotherhood of Jesus. But when visitors came from Jerusalem, he remembered that he was more than this, that he was a dignitary¹ of whom something was expected; so he drew

best to read it as above, which accounts for the cavalier tone of v. 6, in which it is scarcely possible to miss a note of defiance.

¹We are told that the Pope as an individual may err, but that speaking as Pope, *ex cathedra*, he is infallible. It is interesting to notice that Peter acting as a private Christian was right, and that he went wrong only when he tried to behave as an Apostle.

back and denied the fellowship. Paul is perfectly clear that, in essential opinion, Peter and he were at one¹ (2^{15, 16}), but the narrative is the most incisive reply to his opponents. You would have me go for my authority to a man who can blunder like that, when it may be taken from the Master Himself! "I said the Christian must judge for himself," said Luther at Worms, "as he must live and die for himself; and the Pope is not umpire in spiritual things." In fighting his own battle, Paul was fighting our battle too, keeping open for all men the way of intercourse with Jesus Christ.

II. The second point which was pressed upon these new-made Gentile Christians was that, if they were to inherit the blessing, they must become Israelites. In the lives of the first believers there had been a certain blending of Jewish and Christian elements, which was naturally accepted as the normal condition. Paul himself, like Luther, was utterly disdainful of forms, in regard to which he felt that, if their

¹ It is difficult to say how much of the section 2¹⁴⁻²¹ was actually spoken; Luther ends Paul's speech at v. 16, Moffatt ("N.T. Introd.," p. 87) at v. 17; Ramsay (p. 305) cannot decide. At least vv. 19-20 must be soliloquy. The Judaizing party never forgave Paul for this outburst in which he says (2¹¹) that Peter "stood condemned". In the "Clem. Homilies" XVII, 19, Peter says to Simon Magus, who is intentionally confused with Paul, "If thou callest me condemned, thou accusest God who revealed the Christ to me".

retention could strengthen or unite the Church, it was foolish to clamour for their abolition. "Although such ceremonials do not promote holiness," says Luther,¹ "they may arrest the attention of coarser natures." "Such things, if not abused, neither add to nor take from the Gospel, but they must never be regarded as necessary, nor made a matter of conscience."² In the same large spirit of tolerance, Paul was willing that, after their baptism, Jews should continue to live as Jews (1 Cor. 7¹⁸); and when he saw that prejudice was bitter against Timothy as a half-caste and dissident Jew, he bowed to the storm and had him circumcised. But the more general claim that every Christian convert must pass that way could not be so readily allowed, for it implied that man's beginning is as indispensable as God's beginning, the symbol as important as the grace for which it stood. God had already spoken in their hearts, flooding them with sunshine; He had given them the Spirit, and marvels had been wrought among them. What could be asked for more? Old-fashioned people to whom every step of the way by which they had come to Christ was equally significant and necessary, might say,—You must, like us, be circumcised, or you will not have the blessing quite secure; but Paul looked to a wider range of experience.

¹ "Letters" (Currie's translation), p. 259.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 379.

Four hundred and thirty years before the Law was heard of, Abraham had *believed God*, and that was enough; that was an experience complete in itself, with all the radiance of the Divine blessing lying upon it. "Paul and his Pharisaic opponents alike in some sense believed in Christ," says Dr. Denney;¹ "the question was whether for *perfect* Christianity anything else was required. The Pharisaic Christians said, Yes: the Gentile faith in Christ was very well as a beginning. But if these foreign believers were to be completely Christian, and to inherit the blessings of the Messianic kingdom on the same footing with them, their faith in Christ must be supplemented by circumcision and the keeping of the Mosaic Law. Paul said, No: Christ is the whole of Christianity, Christ crucified and risen. . . . In the religion of Paul, Christ filled an absolute and unshared place." So there he stood on guard. He did not dispute the Christian standing of those who held to older forms, but he was resolute in maintaining the possibility of living with Christ apart from these, and he was clear that to treat these as indispensable was "nothing else than to pervert the Gospel of Christ." (1⁶, 7). John Howe, the Puritan, in his unanswerable way, has declared² that "the main inlet of all the distractions, confusions and divisions of the Christian

¹ "Jesus and the Gospel," p. 27.

² R. F. Horton's "Life of John Howe," p. 141.

world hath been by adding other conditions of Church communion than Christ hath done"; and he says again:¹ "A man may continue of the judgment that such additions are, in the matter of them, lawful, yet the making them additional terms of Church communion must be highly sinful, as being the introduction of a new Christianity—Christian communion being of Christians as such." Paul uses language less vehement than this; he is content to speak² of "another Gospel which is different from mine only in so far as there are people who would trouble you and pervert the Gospel of Christ". In spite of the ritual intrusion, he recognised the elements of Gospel in

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 72.

² The force of the distinction in 1^{5,7} between *ἕτερον* and *ἄλλο* has been much debated. Ramsay (p. 262) understands *ἕτερον* as meaning another of the same kind, and *ἄλλο* as one of a different kind, whilst Lightfoot, Meyer, J. H. Moulton reverse the relation; and in favour of both views passages may be produced. Ramsay asserts that "it is not possible within the limits of the Greek language to admit the translation" which marks the contrast in Lightfoot's way, for professors like to speak with authority. But the usage of the N.T. is extremely uncertain, and scribes in copying seem readily to have substituted one word for the other. In Luke 7^{19, 30}, Codex B. supplies *ἕτερον* for *ἄλλον*. The parable of the sower taken from the same source by Mark (4^{5,8}) and Luke (8^{6,8}), has *ἄλλο* in Mark and *ἕτερον* in Luke. Lietzmann is possibly right in saying that "the change of word carries no change of meaning, just as in II Cor. II⁴." But I prefer, with Meyer and others, to alter the punctuation and read the sentence as above.

what they believed, and sought to have these liberated from what was mixed up with them. These forms, he says, are not of the essence of our faith; it is possible to come to God apart from them, and surely it is better so.

But when this is said, a question arises for Paul. If apart from the Law, Abraham and his true children have enjoyed the blessing, why should the Law have come in at all? Has it not, throughout its history, served only as a by-path, up which men have wandered to find it leading nowhere? This is the bewildering suggestion which troubles Paul through the tangled section —3¹⁵-4⁷. If he had possessed the arid virtue of logical consistency, he would have taken Marcion's way and pronounced the Law superfluous; but his nature was too spacious to be merely consistent. He was persuaded that essentially and from the beginning, there had been one dispensation only—a dispensation, on God's part, of grace, and on man's part, of faith; and yet with a kind of hereditary piety he clung to the Law, unwilling to admit that it had always been without a function. At least, he says, if it did nothing else, it so fretted men's impatience as to put them in a mood for welcoming a Deliverer, and when Jesus came He found a people waiting for Him. That is Paul's apology for the interlude of law; but when the Christ is here, how strange a policy it would be to forbid men to go straight to Him,

the Healer, and to compel them to travel round by all the ancient indirectnesses! The day of law's service now is over, and to maintain it in authority is to turn what was God's instrument into an enemy of human life. It is an old saying that "Frederick the Great lost the battle of Jena," and the meaning is plain and pertinent. The system which he had established, blindly adhered to and continued into a different age when other needs were pressing, brought Prussia to ruin; and in that sober historical sense, Paul saw the Law condemned.

III. The last section of the Epistle calls for no elucidation. From his great teacher Jeremiah¹ Paul had learned that the essential matter in a good life is the circumcision of the heart, that is to say, a heart possessed by God and marked as His own. The mass of people, then as now, wished to have their duty set down before them in some precise and manageable form, and thus a blight of sameness was infecting the community, an inability to do or even to conceive of unusual things, such as the Master often requires. And for this also Paul finds a remedy in His principle of individuality; let the Spirit of Jesus dwell in you,

¹ Jer. 4⁴; cf. the great promise of the law in the heart, 31³¹⁻³⁴. W. E. Addis ("Hebrew Religion," p. 202) says: "Spiritual circumcision is mentioned in Deut. 10¹⁶, 30⁶; but these passages are additions to the code, and the idea probably originated with Jeremiah".

and you will not need to ask of men for guidance. "If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not subject to precept" (Gal. 5¹⁸). Christ living in you, controlling heart and instinct, will enable you to see the duty which He appoints and to fulfil it.

Thus wherever Paul turned, the same lesson seemed thrust upon him. It is the life at first hand, the life in which a man for himself touches God, that first gives him energy to burst his bonds, and then enables him to walk as a free man. The Emperor Vespasian is reported to have said, "I have passed seventy years upon the earth, and I have *lived* seven of them"—and the New Testament gives the distinction meaning. Rousseau,¹ in the same way, says of one sunny chapter in his tormented story: "Apart from this brief but precious period, I might have remained uncertain about myself for all the rest of my life, facile and unresisting. I have been agitated and beaten about by the passions of others . . . so that I should find it hard to unravel what in my conduct is my own. . . . But during these few years, I did what I wished to do, I was what I wished to be . . . I was entirely free and better than free, for, subjected by my affections alone, I did only what I wished to do." That, in substance, is the witness of the Apostle, which animates his Letter and binds its parts together. For so long a period,

¹ "Les Rêveries d'un Promeneur Solitaire—Dixième Promenade."

Paul had had a fashion of conduct thrust upon him by his neighbours and superiors,—ways of thinking, behaving, believing, which left him scant opportunity of revealing his individuality. Every thing was at second hand. But that, by the grace of God to him, had been changed, and he now knew the joy of thinking thoughts, and giving himself up to sentiments and energies which were his own; his life ran out untrammelled, with nothing of mere imitation about it. This freedom from men brought others with it, for when a man is right he is much more right than he thinks; he had freedom in God's presence also, for fear had gone, and love and sonship had taken its place. God no longer talked to him as a master, issuing bare commands, but as a friend. And there was freedom from sin; for though he was not yet done with it, the fetters seemed broken, and, running in the way of God's commandments, he was leaving the life of servitude behind. Thus, the more he dwelt upon his new conditions, the more the religion of the crowd seemed condemned, whilst the faith of the unveiled face, the individual, mystical religion seemed to be justified. "He exalts the inner light into an absolute criterion of right and wrong, that no corner of the moral life may remain in bondage to Pharisaism."¹

"St. Paul's is a heroic doctrine," says Professor

¹ Inge, "Christian Mysticism," p. 62.

Bruce,¹ "and it needs spiritual heroes to appreciate it and to do it justice"; so, since heroes are few, the doctrine has been often in the shadow. Sir William Ramsay² is conceiving of the point at issue far too narrowly when he asserts that "the history of Christianity in Asia Minor during the immediately following period shows that the victory was won once and for ever. The question never again emerges." No doubt, in this crude, Galatian form, the question does not emerge, but that is because, in Ramsay's own phrase, "the Judaistic tendency had taken another and more subtle direction"; and one does not talk of victory, when the mischief has entrenched itself more firmly out of sight. "Mankind is as lazy as it dares to be," says Emerson; and a doctrine which casts on every man the burden of seeing God for himself, and of shaping his life under God for himself will always be unpalatable. "Pope and Pelagius," as Luther says, "are born in each man's belly," and the Christian literature³

¹ "St. Paul's Conception of Christianity," p. 60.

² "Galatians," p. 476.

³ Gardner, "Religious Experience of St. Paul," p. 229: "In the Christian teaching of the second century we find little appreciation of the Pauline teaching. His letters were above the heads of ordinary Christians; and though some of his views appealed to the many, his more complete appreciation was delayed until the leaders of the Church began to come from a higher social station, and from a class more given to advanced religious thought." The statement of the first sentence is cer-

of the second century shows that Paul was scarcely understood, and legalism settled down upon the Church. "In the century succeeding Paul," says one of our most brilliant scholars,¹ "the Gospel was construed as a *nova lex*, similar in its demand and character to the Law of Moses; and the whole system, against which Paul made his protest, was established again in the Catholic Church. Luther rediscovered the central Pauline idea; but in Protestantism also the religion of the letter, of submission to some outward yoke of bondage, has never ceased to maintain itself over against the religion of the Spirit. The Judaism, which was the ultimate object of Paul's attack, had its ground in certain permanent tendencies of human nature; and, for this reason if for no other, the Epistles are of lasting significance and value. A time will never be in which it will not be necessary to fight Paul's battle over again, and the Christian apolo-

tainly true; but what follows is governed by the very Oxonian notion that no one but an educated person can understand Paul. Six martyrs at Scilli in the year 180 had in their box "the books we use and in addition the letters of that holy man Paul"; and these, says Harnack, were not scholars but "certainly mere plebeians". Sabatier ("The Apostle Paul," p. ix) tells of an eminent professor of history at the Sorbonne who first learned the meaning of Paul's theology from a Christian shoemaker at Lyons. "The moral crisis of conversion is the first and best initiation into the truths of Paulinism," says Sabatier. On this see Deissmann's "Paulus," p. 55.

¹ Ernest F. Scott, "Apologetic of the N.T.," p. 109.

gist must always go back to Paul for his truest guidance and inspiration." The victory, certainly, was not "won once and for all," nor will it ever, under our present conditions, be complete; but it is continually being won in individual lives, and for this we should give thanks to God.