

## CHAPTER IV.

### IS THERE A COMMON FAITH?

"Before I got thus far out of these my temptations, I did greatly long to see some ancient godly man's experience who had writ some hundreds of years before I was born."

—JOHN BUNYAN.

WHEN a man comes to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Paul did, not by any laborious process of argument but by a swifter operation of the mind, he does not need to seek about for confirmations. So far as he is himself concerned, and so long as the power of the vision holds him, he is possessed by a certainty which is complete. In Emerson's phrase, "the contradiction of all mankind cannot shake it, and the consent of all mankind cannot confirm it". "Whatever I feel, I feel beyond all doubt," says Professor Jevons.<sup>1</sup> "If I see blue sky, I may be quite sure that I do experience the sensation of blueness. We are very likely to confuse what we feel with what we associate with it or infer from it; but the whole of our consciousness, so far as it is the result of pure intuition and free from inference, is certain

<sup>1</sup> "Principles of Science," 1., 271.

knowledge beyond all doubt." And yet to every man there come changes of mood. Courage flags and the mists come down; and specially, the burden of the surrounding indifference may press upon him. He is convinced that he did see, but why is he alone in seeing? It is very well for Luther<sup>1</sup> to compare the simplicity of his own conviction to the straightforward sense that 3 and 7 make 10, as if there were no possible room for debate. But one uncomfortable difference obtrudes itself; for in the arithmetical case, everybody who is not an imbecile or a savage arrives at the same result, whilst in the spiritual a man may make the damping discovery that he is quite alone in his conclusion. Dr. Dale<sup>2</sup> confesses that he sometimes wondered whether he should be sure that his own perception of the sun and stars was trustworthy, if he were alone in seeing them. . . . "For myself, when I actually saw the sun rising morning after morning, and ascending the meridian, and when I actually saw the constellations glittering in the heavens at night, the conviction of their reality would be irresistible; and yet side by side with this conviction there would be doubt—doubt mastered and suppressed but with life in it still, and certain to grow large and strong if for many weeks brooding clouds con-

<sup>1</sup> "Primary Works," p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> "The Living Christ and the Four Gospels," p. 28.

cealed the celestial glories. But if, here and there, another man came to see what I saw, and by degrees, groups of men; if, by a surprising discovery of a lost literature, it became certain that the poets of a vanished people had sung of the stars and the sunrise and the sunset, and their sailors had steered their course by them, I should become sure of myself, and all doubt would vanish. So the knowledge that other men, as the result of their appeal to Christ, have passed into a diviner world, have received accessions of strength, . . . have seen evil passions wither, while it adds nothing to the distinction or power of similar experiences of my own, relieves me from the doubt which would worry my faith, if my experience were solitary and unique." Paul was little troubled by such fantastic bewilderments, for he knew Whom he had believed; and yet he did welcome confirmation when it came, because it served to enrich his thought of Jesus Christ, and thus might make his ministry more widely efficacious.

There is an excellent French saying that "when a man is right he is much more right than he thinks". He has arrived at his conclusion along some line which was suggested by previous study or by his temperament; but when he finds that there are considerations influencing other men which had not occurred to him, he feels that the truth is even more widely and convincingly

evident than he had supposed. Emerson<sup>1</sup> reports that in some New England towns before the Civil War, "every man was an Abolitionist by conviction, but he did not believe that his neighbour was. The opinions of masses of men, which the tactics of primary caucuses and the proverbial timidity of trade had concealed, were discovered by the War, and it was found, contrary to all popular belief, that the country was at heart Abolitionist, and for the Union was ready to die". The discovery of such agreement in opinion does not change belief, but it may give it a different quality. Galileo, with every one against him, might doggedly mutter, "And yet it does move," for his conviction was independent of the crowd; but if people whose judgment he valued had one by one come to his side, and if each new convert had arrived at his conclusion by observations and reflections of his own, the conviction would at least have been more triumphantly entertained. We are social creatures, made to drink at the overflowing cup of our fellow men;<sup>2</sup> and wise

<sup>1</sup> IV. 294, "Address at the Dedication of the Soldiers' Monument in Concord".

<sup>2</sup> Stearns, "The Evidence of Christian Experience," p. 118: "That is the ground of the diffusion of sin through the race, as the result of which each sinner, though not without his personal fault, becomes himself a sinner; and it accords with the fitness of things that redemption should avail itself of the same relation to accomplish its beneficent ends".

guides of souls have always discouraged solitary brooding, and by bringing soul in contact with soul have sought to kindle and maintain the fires of faith. Without disparagement of the swift certainties of the individual heart, there is a distinct place for conference and comparison, if dejection is to be avoided and progress is to be made. In his own faith Paul was most enviably free from the shadow of distrust; he never betrays any question either of the truth of his convictions or of their adequacy. Twice over in this Epistle (2<sup>5, 14</sup>) he sets forward his own view of the matter in dispute as "the truth of the Gospel". But resolute and even imperious as he was, he never forgot his responsibility for the men and women committed to his care; and when he came upon people to whom, in his own phrase, he "was not an apostle," the question thrust itself upon him if he might not be "running in vain" (2<sup>3</sup>). For years he had not visited Jerusalem; and in the Churches of Syria and Cilicia, since most of the members were probably his own converts, he would be confronted at every turn by small imitations of his own habits and expressions—an experience which is never palatable to a man of large nature, and certainly is not enriching. So after eleven years of absence, he caught at an occasion for breaking out of this charmed circle and comparing his own results with those of men of a different training. "Before I got thus far out

of these my temptations," writes Bunyan,<sup>1</sup> "I did greatly long to see some ancient godly man's experience, who had writ some hundreds of years before I was born. . . . This man could not know anything of the state of Christians now, but must needs write and speak the experience of former days." Bunyan discovered what he sought in Luther's "Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians"; and Paul gained something of the same advantage by journeying to Jerusalem, and hearing what the Eleven had discovered in the Lord, for they had come at their belief in ways less violent and dramatic than his.

If we accept his own account, it was not to any formal Council that he told his story, with diplomatic speeches made by leading men, such as Luke has outlined<sup>2</sup> (Acts 15). He made his statement, as he tells, to the three men to whom he was most glad to listen. If others were present, they were thrust in (*παρέρρακτοι*) for a mean purpose by an irreconcilable faction, who feared that the Apostles might sell the pass. The result of this interview was to Paul entirely consoling, for it appeared that in making, or, at least, in proving his doctrine as he went along, he had

<sup>1</sup> "Grace Abounding," p. 333.

<sup>2</sup> The private interview may, as Godet and others suggest, have preceded the Council. It is more probable, in view of Paul's silence, that he was not present at the Council, and only learned of its decisions later (Acts 21<sup>28</sup>). See pp. 31-2.

not strayed from the common teaching. Many details were clear to him which, to the others, were vague and hazy, for he had an infinitely keener mind, and he had enjoyed a different education. "But these men of reputation added nothing to me," he reports (2<sup>6,7</sup>). "On the contrary, recognising that I have been (and still am) entrusted<sup>1</sup> with the Gospel for the heathen world, even as Peter is with the Gospel for the Jews (for God, who wrought in Peter fitting him for his Jewish apostolate, wrought also in me, fitting me for the heathen), James and Cephas and John, who stood up like pillars in the Church, gave to me and Barnabas the pledges of fellowship." Such a recognition was more than a sullen consent to give a wilful man his way, it was an acknowledgment that the one ministry was of God as truly as the other. In 1<sup>23</sup>, Paul records that "the Churches of Judæa glorified God, because he who, the other day, was persecuting us, is now preaching the faith which so recently he was destroying". It was the one faith, theirs and his. And this agreement becomes still more articulate in Paul's stormy appeal to Peter (2<sup>10</sup>): "We who by birth are Jews, and not 'sinners,' as we used to call the Gentiles, know that a man

<sup>1</sup> *πεπίστευμαι* : "The perfect, implying a permanent commission, contrasts with the aorist in Rom. 3<sup>2</sup>," referring to a commission which might be and was withdrawn; so Lightfoot, p. 109.

is not justified by works done in obedience to a law but by such faith as Christ Jesus supplies; we put our trust in Christ Jesus that by this faith we might be justified and not by works of obedience, for by works of that kind there is no justification for any man". The whole force of that appeal depends on the identity of opinion in the two Apostles; it is taken for granted that Peter not only was a Christian, but a Christian of an almost Pauline type. There has never been a great thinker more heedless of merely speculative questions than Paul, or one more reverent of the solidity of a fact. And this, he explains, is what happened: I had lived apart at my work, thinking my thoughts, and hearkening to the Master's voice. Where the Eleven stood, or how they shaped their message, I had not cared to ask; but when we came together, they and I, we found ourselves at one. Such a narrative is fitted to raise questions, of which the two most important concern *the power of the individual soul to find its own way*, and *the extent or the content of this agreement at which Paul and the Eleven had arrived*.

I. *As to the power of the individual soul.* Is it actually true that a man, left to himself, might be trusted to find his way to the common faith? The idea is tempting but surely it is audacious. Mr. Walter Bagehot<sup>1</sup> speaks of an "old philoso-

<sup>1</sup> "English Constitution," VII.

pher," who "fancied that out of primitive truths which he could by ardent excogitation know, he might by pure deduction evolve the entire universe. Intense self-examination and intense reason would, he thought, make out everything. The soul 'itself by itself,' could tell all it wanted if it would be true to its sublimer isolation. The greatest enjoyment possible to man was that which this philosophy promises to its votaries—the pleasure of being always right and always reasoning—without ever being bound to look at anything." That is a type of philosophizing which used to be the object of somewhat easy jeering, for it seemed to practical Englishmen preposterous that a man should claim to be able to construct a universe out of his inner consciousness, much as a spider spins its web. If less is now heard of the gibe, it is partly because there is less of that daring activity of the intellect; but even in an age which has given a welcome to Pragmatism, it may surely be allowed that there is something magnificent in so enormous a claim for the unassisted human mind. After one crowded hour of experience, Paul is seen resolutely turning his back upon those who might have instructed him, and going out by himself to meditate and to preach. For himself, he must compare what his vision had given him with what the Old Testament had promised, and what the needs of his own life required.

He must mark its effect in himself and in those to whom he spoke of it, and thus, with materials lying to his hand, he must piece together the framework of a system. But in such a record of the process there are two huge omissions, which Paul would have been quick to remark. *In the first place*, no account is taken there of the activity of another Mind. Paul had come face to face with the true Teacher, and henceforth had lived in His society. It was not his soul, 'itself by itself,' which had accomplished great things. *Solus cum Solo*—alone with the Alone, listening while his Master talked, and bending his pride to accept His instruction, it was so he had occupied these years; could it be reckoned marvellous that he now should know the way? Dr. Dale<sup>1</sup> reverently suggests that, if the Gospels disappeared, though the loss would be immeasurable, yet all would not be lost. "For the experience of the Church would remain to bear witness to Christ's power to redeem men of every country and every age and every race, who trust in Him for redemption. It would still be certain that men of every description have discovered that, when they speak to Christ, they do not speak into the air, but that He answers them, gives them peace of conscience, strength for suffering and for righteousness, and the immediate knowledge of God." We have the Gospels in our

<sup>1</sup> "The Living Christ," etc., pp. 40-1.

hands, and all that confronts us in the Church is interpreted by their story. But before our eyes, we see another Gospel being written; and just as a man is revealed in the quality of his work, so Jesus Christ from day to day is seen, acting and enduring like Himself, recognisable and unique. The witness of experience is full of energies and activities in the soul which are not self-derived, but which mark the entrance of a Stronger than the Strong Man. "If the Tempter should persuade a man to doubt whether the Gospel be true," says Richard Baxter,<sup>1</sup> "he may have recourse into his soul for a testimony of it, for thence he can tell the Tempter by experience that he hath found the promises of the Gospel made good to him. Christ hath there promised to send His Spirit into the souls of His people, and so hath He done to me; He hath promised to give light to them that sit in darkness, to bind up the broken-hearted and set at liberty the captives, and all this He hath fulfilled upon me. . . . The helps which He hath promised in temptations, the hearing of prayer, the relief in distress, all these I have found performed, and thus I know that the Gospel is true." These sentences, in concrete and moving phrase, embody the Reformation doctrine of "the testimony of the Holy Spirit,"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Stearns, p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> Calvin, "Institutes," I, VII. 4; "For as God alone can properly bear witness to His own words, so these words will not

which is not a fanatical assertion of immediate revelations such as would make a man a judge of the world and of Scripture itself. This witness is granted rather by way of confirmation; for when there are works of God within a man, actual effects to be perceived in his character, he is emboldened by these to set his seal to the word that it is true. "How shall I know that I have the Spirit of Christ?" asks Baxter, and his answer is, "By the nature of its effects. The Spirit of Christ doth renew the soul to God's image. The Spirit of Christ is no fancy, dream, or delusion, nor worketh an imaginary change on the soul, but a real change, making the soul alive that was dead in sin, and becoming a principle of life within us." The Power is recognised by its effects. When St. Teresa's superiors tried to persuade her that her early visions were delusive, she allowed that she might mistake one person for another. "But if this person left behind him jewels as pledges of his love, and I found myself rich having before been poor, I could not believe, even if I wished, that I had been mistaken. And obtain full credit in the hearts of men until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit"; Luther (quoted by Barclay, "Apology," p. 23): "No man can rightly know God, or understand the word of God, unless he immediately receive it from the Holy Spirit; neither can any one receive it from the Holy Spirit except he find it by experience in himself; and in this experience the Holy Ghost teacheth as in His proper school, out of which school nothing is taught but mere talk".

these jewels I could show them ; for all who knew me saw clearly that my soul was changed ; the difference was great and palpable."<sup>1</sup> The Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light, in its customary form, lays stress more on the giving of a message than on the enriching of life, but it never fails in its acknowledgment that the primary activity is of Christ. "I knew not God but by revelation," says Fox<sup>2</sup> himself, "as He who hath the key did open." "I came to my knowledge of Eternal Life," says William Dewsbury, "not by the letter of Scripture, nor from hearing men speak of God, but by the inspiration of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who is worthy to open the seals." The thought of this active ministry of Christ goes far to transform the scheme of Bagehot's unnamed philosopher, who fancied that "the soul itself by itself could tell all it wanted"; it suggests that passivity of mind may sometimes count for at least as much as activity, and that he who will travel farthest in the way of Divine knowledge is not necessarily the man of most "ardent cogitation," who proceeds by way of pure deduction; it may be the man who submits most humbly to be taught.<sup>3</sup> "I had not the precious faculty,"

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Dr. Inge, "Christian Mysticism," p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> See Glover, "Nature of a Religious Society," p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> One difficulty which arises is as to the canon or rule by which these inner suggestions may be judged. Barclay ("Apology," p. 53) allows that, "it is one thing to affirm that the true

we read in Aylwin, "of being able on occasion to sit, and let the rich waters of life flow over me." And Wordsworth, in his "Expostulation and Reply," lays stress upon the same point:—

Nor less I deem that there are powers  
Which of themselves our minds impress ;  
That we can feed this mind of ours  
In a wise passiveness.

The *second omission* is seen in the failure to and undoubted revelation of God's Spirit is infallible, and another thing to affirm that this or that particular person is led infallibly by this revelation in what they speak or write". But how are men to discriminate? As, according to Barclay (p. 67), Scripture is "only a declaration of the fountain, not the fountain itself," and is only "a secondary rule," it cannot give the needed test. Fox ("Journal," p. 220, ed. 1694) pronounces decisively against James Nayler that he "ran out into imaginations and raised up a great darkness in the nation"; but he gives no hint of the authority by which he, with his Light, was entitled to judge of Nayler with his Light. A modern Friend, Caroline Mason ("Light Arising," p. 45), says: "Too often the Light Within seems to be understood as meaning such light as is contained within my or thy individual experience, rather than as the innermost Central Light whether of the individual or of all life. The teaching of inwardness seems to require, to make it either safe or adequate, the recognition of the *concentric structure* not only of human beings but of humanity and consciousness." There is, that is to say, a common Light which shines, and all men who are at the same nearness to the centre, however far apart they may be upon their circumference, are alike influenced by the Light, and thus are able to correct and supplement each other's view of what it brings. This suggests an interesting limitation of the theory of individualism.

take account of the previous contents of the mind. Many people have spoken as if they actually started with blank intelligences, so that the Divine Spirit or their own speculative originality, must account for everything in their conclusions. Paul's own language in some places gives countenance to such a view, as when he says that he "received of the Lord" even the account which he gives of the institution of the Supper (I Cor. 11<sup>23</sup>). As he looked back on these first days, in which his whole world of thought was transformed, he was prepared to acknowledge no other influence than the One; whatever lips might have uttered the words, it was the Lord who gave them. Ananias and the brethren dropped out of view, since they were merely instruments of the goodwill of Jesus who, from afar, had been seeking His servant, and had now laid His hand upon Him. In the lofty, transcendental sense, that was true; but when we are concerned with the shaping of his ideas and the forces which brought him and the Eleven into essential agreement, we must not ignore the human facts and instruments. Paul's mind was far indeed from being a blank in regard to the essential matters at stake. On the day of his conversion, many things began to be seen in a new perspective, but in themselves they were not new; and any fresh revelation which then was given was interpreted by lessons and ideas familiar since his childhood. One of the most penetrating of our

missionary thinkers has said of the Chinese,<sup>1</sup> "It is a complete misunderstanding of history to suppose that, simply with the Bible in their hands, native Christians would speedily find their way to a developed Protestant Christianity. The Bible is no more intelligible to native converts now than it was to saints of the early centuries." If a man is to see what the revelation means, some interpretative knowledge is required; and in Paul's case that was partly due to his new Christian environment, but partly also to his education in the Jewish Church.

There is more than a touch of *naïveté* in Paul's protestations of complete independence, and any one who was disposed to cavil might feel that the case, from the first, is given away. Fifteen days were spent with Peter in Jerusalem, says Paul; and though he went to "*see*" Peter, not to learn of him, yet a fortnight does not pass simply in looking, and a duller man than Paul might, in such a time, have learned, even by hints, all there was to know. The Church seems for the moment to have been scattered, so that Paul remained unknown even by sight to most of its members (1<sup>22</sup>), and he met with none of the Apostles except Peter and James;<sup>2</sup> but such members as were left would

<sup>1</sup> Moody, "The Heathen Heart," p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> As I have elsewhere noted, Luke's information about the Jerusalem Church was very defective, and the passage, Acts 9<sup>20-30</sup>, is not easily harmonized with Paul's express statements.

not fail to meet for prayer and the breaking of bread, so that no day could be unfruitful for an eager observer. When Paul left the Capital, it was to work in Syria and Cilicia, where in the Christian gatherings he would listen to the witness of the friends of Christ, into whose minds the thoughts and hopes of the growing Church were streaming from all quarters. That is to say, he was cast not simply upon God and the resources of his own mind, but upon the life of a community which was swiftly making progress in Divine understanding.

These Christian ideas and observations, as they came, were not suffered to lie confusedly in his mind, related to nothing, and thus interpreted by nothing. As an educated man and a thinker he had already his characteristic forms of thought, and certain conceptions of life and God which were common to all devout Hebrews; and the new material, so far as that was possible, would instinctively be adjusted to what he thus possessed. The whole Old Testament was a possession, and that zeal for God which marked the nobler Pharisees. With great acuteness and learning Dr. Schechter<sup>1</sup> has furnished evidence that a large part of Christian theology finds its origin, or, at least, its antecedents, in the Rabbinical schools: the strife in a man between the evil principle and the good, and the victory over evil

<sup>1</sup> "Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology," *passim*.

by the grace of God, the powers of repentance and reconciliation, the reality of an imputation both of sin and of righteousness—these were questions which had engaged Paul's thought in his pre-Christian days and they gave him ideas which made the Christian facts at once intelligible. What lies still closer to the heart of theology, there was in existence amongst Jews and Hellenists the material for a doctrine of the Messiah.<sup>1</sup> The great rabbis had discussed the relation in which He should stand to God, the place He should hold amongst the children of men, and the work He would do as deliverer and as judge. Thoughts of all degrees of dignity on this high theme were present in their minds; and as soon as the Messiah was actually discovered in the person of Jesus, the dispersed elements, which had only lacked something to unite them, shot together like crystals about their nucleus. Naturally the Eleven, who had no rabbinical training, knew much less of these preparatory discussions than Paul did, but they could not be wholly ignorant of so vital a part of the religious inheritance, and this knowledge could not fail to contribute to the agreement which Paul reports. It contributed to this, it does not by itself account for it. "Paul is as remote as possible,"<sup>2</sup> in his whole way of think-

<sup>1</sup> Joh. Weiss, "Christus," p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce, "St. Paul's Conception of Christianity," p. 26. Schweitzer ("Paulinische Forschungen," pp. 83-4, etc.) takes

ing, from the scholastic theologian, being eminently subjective, psychological, autobiographical in spirit and method." The materials were present in his mind, but so dispersed that they might as well have been absent altogether; and it was the revelation of God's Son within him which enabled him for the first time to see the significance of what he had always known. To ignore the element of revelation would, in Paul's view, have been a much graver error than to ignore the wealth of tradition which helped him to interpret that revelation. Faith in him had been cognitive. By a swifter divination he had penetrated to the meaning of things, and he was rewarded by this confirmation that, having come to his results by a way which was his own, he found himself on the same ground as those who had companied with the Lord in flesh, and received His teaching thus.

exactly the opposite view. He charges it against Holtzmann as "a fault in method" that he is always turning what is objective in Paul into a subjective. The rejection of the Law is to H. the result of an experience, to S. it is a logical conclusion. Paul's doctrine of "the new creature," in H.'s view, is based upon an actual sensation of deliverance, with new powers, motives, tasks, and aims coming from the Risen One. In S.'s view, it is a logical creation, which, outside of a classroom, is incredible. S.'s whole conception of what is objective sadly needs to be enlarged; Robert Barclay ("Apology," p. 3) speaks of "inward objective manifestations in the heart," by which he means such manifestations as have not their origin in the heart, but come from without and from above.

In this agreement Paul rejoiced, for he was never disposed to magnify distinctive opinions. Even when he speaks of "my gospel" or "our gospel,"<sup>1</sup> there is little of personal note. In his Letters, personal and individual as they are, he liked to associate other people with himself, as if the testimony were strengthened by their concurrence<sup>2</sup> (so I Cor. 1<sup>1</sup>; II Cor. 1<sup>1</sup>; Gal. 1<sup>1,2</sup>, etc.). He rejoiced in the persuasion that there is a *common* faith. But that must not obscure for us the other fact of his originality and independence; he did not catch at an accepted form of words or a mould of experience and apply it to his own case. Religion, as he regarded it, begins at the beginning; and at the most, it may be said to find confirmation of its own discoveries in the similar conclusions of other men. Paul would never have spoken of the power of the soul to make its own

<sup>1</sup> In Rom. 2<sup>16</sup> he speaks of the coming judgment of men by Jesus Christ "according to my gospel," which was a commonplace of Messianic doctrine before there was a Christian faith (Weiss, "Christus," p. 18); in Rom. 16<sup>25</sup> he ascribes glory to God, "who is of power to establish you according to my gospel"; II Thess. 2<sup>14</sup> and II Tim. 2<sup>8</sup> offer nothing distinctive; II Cor. 4<sup>3</sup>, "if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those who are perishing," may conceivably have a more personal quality.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer (*ad.* I John 1<sup>4</sup>): "The plural is here used, because John, as an Apostle, writes in the consciousness that his written word is in full agreement with the preaching of all the Apostles; they all, as it were, speak through him to the readers of the Epistle.

way, for it was not by his own powers of mind that he had made progress; he had not laid hold of the truth but had been laid hold of by it. And the utmost that he could ever claim for himself in the matter was that when he was mastered, he yielded frankly to the control, and gave Christ right of way in his whole nature, so that the Spirit of Christ now taught there as in His proper school. "It is not I that live," he writes, "but Christ who lives in me."

II. The other question which may be raised concerns the extent of the agreement which Paul reports. In clearness and in courage there certainly was difference between Paul and the Eleven; but how far were they in agreement? That is a question of some gravity, as it might lead on to the further question whether, under all diversities of aspect, there is a faith common to all Christians. It scarcely needs to be said that there is not a universal standard of experience.<sup>1</sup> "The wind

<sup>1</sup> The admission that no one single type of experience alone is legitimate may be held to imply that no single type of doctrine alone is lawful. A man's idiosyncrasy raises special problems for him, and suggests special conclusions. The freedom of a Christian man contains the freedom to think as God, in experience, has taught him. No Church is warranted or wise in imposing on all minds an elaborate scheme, in which all the details are of equal moment. The Scottish Churches have asked more of their office-bearers than is fitting; but, at least, they have shown their wisdom in asking for adherence to "the whole doctrine of the Confession," i.e., the doctrine *as a whole*, not in its minute detail.

bloweth where it listeth," said Jesus; and it is not for men to set limits to the gales of the Spirit. Newman<sup>1</sup> confesses that his own conversion contained none of the special evangelical experiences, "the prescribed stages of conviction of sin, terror, despair, news of free and full salvation, joy and peace," and yet "it cut at the root of doubt in me, it provided a chain between God and the soul that is, with every link, complete." Deissmann<sup>2</sup> puts in a plea that "the immediate experience of God is the privilege only of a few conspicuous religious figures . . . so, how many of us scholars can ever adventure the flight which leads to the face of God"? Another scholar of to-day, M. Loisy,<sup>3</sup> exclaims: "How many well-disposed people have none of this direct perception of God! And is the intimate experience from which it is supposed to proceed free from all risk of illusion?" Louis Stevenson describes the attitude of an old Edinburgh gentleman, which is typical of the large and honourable class of people to whom religion is a constant influence, without any sort of shock or crisis marking its development. It sustains them in duty and in reverent submission to all that God may send, but there is nothing to talk about in it or to report. Such people are the strength of our Churches on their institutional side, and yet they are parted by a

<sup>1</sup> Ward's "Life of Newman," I. 30.

<sup>2</sup> "Paulus," p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> "Choses Passées," p. 314.

whole world of feeling from the aggressive evangelical. "A moderate in religion," says Stevenson<sup>1</sup> of his old friend, "he was much struck in the last years of his life by a conversation with two young lads, revivalists. 'H'm,' he would say, 'new to me, I have had no such experience.' It struck him not with pain, but with a solemn philosophic interest that he, a Christian as he hoped and a Christian of so old a standing, should hear these young fellows talking of his own subject, his own weapons that he had fought the battle of life with—and not understand." Paul's own maxim in regard to such diversities is that "all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas"—the experience which springs from a sight of Jesus in His mercy, and that which is inspired by the terrors of an imminent Judgment,<sup>2</sup> as well as the homelier type which is the result of teaching rightly given and lasting over years. These all have a right to exist within the Church, says Paul, because God is in them all. Of those of the Eleven about whom we have information, we may say that there was nothing dramatic in their experience, but a continuous movement of heart

<sup>1</sup> "Memories and Portraits," p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently on the ground that he came from Alexandria and was eloquent, people have commonly thought of Apollos as a philosophic thinker; but he "knew only the baptism of John," and it is safer to think of him as hurrying on, in John's spirit, to the consummation.

which drew them first from the Synagogue to the Baptist, and thence to the Lord Himself, to whom clean souls tend at the last to come. They had no sense of ceasing to be Jews or of adventuring any new thing; under the Master's teaching and in fellowship with one another they had travelled farther than they knew. But Paul came by a path opened for him by an earthquake, amid sharp antagonisms and rejections. He knew better than they where he was going, but he came to the same end.

Before exploring more in detail this world of deep-lying consents, it may be useful to throw together some general descriptions of what Christianity implies, taken from modern scholars of different schools. "Christians are fully agreed as to what personal Christianity means," says Herrmann.<sup>1</sup> "It is a communion of soul with the living God through the mediation of Christ. That includes everything that is characteristic." "If we review all the men and women of the West since Augustine's time whom history has designated as eminent Christians, we have always the same type," says Harnack:<sup>2</sup> "we find marked conviction of sin, complete renunciation of their own strength, and trust in the grace of a personal God who is apprehended as merciful through the condescension of Christ. The variations of this

<sup>1</sup> "Communion with God," p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Hist. of Dogma," v. 74 (Eng. trans.).

frame of mind are innumerable, but the fundamental type is the same . . . preached by pious Romans and by Evangelicals alike." "Before Paul, people had experienced redemption but not described it," says Wernle<sup>1</sup>: "Jesus raised His disciples to be children of God without a word being heard about redemption. Through Him they had become strong in hope, victorious in doing what is good, free from trouble about sin, free from the world and its cares—ay and from the fear of death, true sons of God who together lived with God as their Father." "At the entrance of the Christian life," says Dr. Stearns,<sup>2</sup> "the first and essential fact which meets us is that the initiative is known as coming from God. . . . He comes with the arraignment, the demand, the offer and the promise of the Gospel." A great English teacher, Mr. P. H. Wicksteed,<sup>3</sup> describes "the Christian attitude as characterized by a belief in the redeeming power of love and the immeasurable worth of every human soul, by a sense of the personal pollution of sin, and a belief that peace and joy are to be found only in the personal consecration of the life to God." Amongst these there are marked differences and defects, but certain elements are common. There is the acknowledgment of de-

<sup>1</sup> "Die Anfänge unserer Religion," p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> "The Evidence of Christian Experience," p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> "Studies in Theology," p. 94.

merit and weakness, the recognition that, in spite of demerit, God has actually come to help men, and there is the surrender to Him of self in a life of trust and service. In these things the Church is at one. "The mystical body of Christ is so truly one," says Dr. Rendel Harris,<sup>1</sup> "not only at any given time but at all times, that one who is a disciple indeed is, if one may say so, all disciples in one. He has left nets with the Zebedees, and custom-houses with St. Matthew; his tears have flowed into the channels of the Magdalene's, and so have reached the sacred feet of our Lord. . . . He is in all crosses and pains of saints that suffer, and a partaker of all glories, and he wears all crowns." Diversity is of the surface, but if one goes deep enough there is, at least, the beginning of agreement.

It may be observed that these various dicta describe an attitude of mind rather than a body of opinion; and yet it is clear that such an attitude would tend to find expression in doctrinal forms, and in any exploration of doctrinal origins it is an attitude of mind and heart which is discovered at the source. Dean Milman,<sup>2</sup> for example, says of the theology of Augustine that it "was already deeply rooted in *the awe-struck piety of the Christian world*. . . . It was not a remote supremacy, a government through unseen

<sup>1</sup> "Union with God," p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "History of Christianity," III. 174.

and untraceable influences, which gave satisfaction to the agitated spirit, but an actually felt and immediate presence operating on each particular part of the creation, not a regular and unvarying emanation of the divine will but a special and peculiar intervention in each separate case." "What has been called the doctrine of justification by faith," says Principal Lindsay,<sup>1</sup> "is rather the description of a religious experience within the believer." "Doctrine," says Newman,<sup>2</sup> "is the voice of a religious body, its principles are of its substance. The principles may be turned into doctrines by being defined; but they live as necessities before definition, and are the less likely to be defined because they are so essential to life." There are many degrees and stages in the process by which individuals, or the whole Church, are enabled to realize what has come into their possession; and if, at any moment, attention were paid to the words they use, there might appear to be not agreement but dissonance. In every Christian heart there are fragments of express doctrine due to the man's special training or surroundings; but there are also present in him masses of devout feeling, not yet articulated into doctrine;<sup>3</sup> and in virtue of these, he may

<sup>1</sup> "History of the Reformation," I. 447.

<sup>2</sup> "Ward's Life," II. 234.

<sup>3</sup> In this sense there is a *fides implicita* which belongs to any true piety. Beyond what she expressly declares, the Church has

find himself in cordial inward sympathy with those whose definite opinions he detests. That deeper feeling is the real hope of the Church, for some day, it may shape itself into a faith worthier and more inclusive in which the divided Church may find a lasting peace. At his mother's knee Luther had learned, in substance, much of what he afterwards proclaimed; Staupitz and some unknown monks in Erfurt, who lived and died in the Roman Church, offered to him in his agony consolations which were wholly evangelical. Of the Church Fathers, Luther<sup>1</sup> confessed that

in her soul apprehensions, desires, submissions in presence of the wonderfulness of God and of salvation; and many wise and devout men might share in Pusey's last confession of faith (Russell's "Life of Pusey," p. 147), "I die in the faith of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, believing *explicité* all which I know Almighty God to have revealed in her, and *implicité* everything which he may have revealed in her, which I may not know". Unfortunately the Church has another fringe of things indefinite—of misapprehensions and delusions, and these also take shape from time to time; so to believe all that the Church, at any time, may teach is not piety, it is the surrender of mind and soul, for the Church often teaches wrongly. It is of this unquestioning attitude that Milton says, in the "Areopagitica," "there be of Protestants and professors who live and die in as arrant an implicit faith as any lay Papist of Loretto". See, by way of example, Newman's "Grammar of Assent," p. 247.

<sup>1</sup> Michelet's "Life," p. 274; cf. Sanday and Headlam's "Romans," p. 101, "the Greek theologians had not a clear conception of the doctrine of Justification".

"though they said nothing decisive about justification by grace, yet at their death they believed in it. These worthy Fathers lived better than they wrote." Their attitude of mind towards God and His Son implied much more than they had been able explicitly to declare; they had "the awe-struck piety," the look of the heart towards Christ the Crucified which is the essential element in faith; and thus it might have been predicted of them that some day, when they or their successors<sup>1</sup> (and the Church in all the generations is one) came to speak of the grounds of their justification, everything would be attributed to God, and everything be received by faith, which is what our evangelical doctrine proclaims.

When Paul compared his own message with the preaching of the Apostolic Church, he was really bringing together two stages in this process. In them and in him the feeling towards Christ was the same. In the estimation of them all, He was the First and the Last; but Paul had begun to find words, whilst they remained inarticulate. The conditions of his experience and the habit

<sup>1</sup> Taylor Innes's "John Knox," p. 95: "The Confession presented to the Parliament of 1560 was one of a group which sprang, as if from the soil, in almost every country in Europe. They had a strong family likeness, not because one imitated the other. They were honest attempts made to represent the impression made on that age by the newly discovered Scriptures, and that impression was everywhere the same, at least to begin with."

of his mind had hastened the maturing of his thought, so that he understood where they were content vaguely to feel. But heart speaks to heart, and in what he said the "pillar" Apostles recognised what they felt although they could not yet say it. They had experienced redemption though they had not described it; and their preaching was so coloured and kindled by the experience that they could not think Paul wrong, and "they added nothing to him". In many quarters we may find instances more or less parallel, where the heart seems to have anticipated the understanding, to have known something before it was clearly proclaimed. Augustine<sup>1</sup> is very bold in saying that "what is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist from the planting of the human race until Christ came in the flesh". More naively, the Red Indians told John Eliot<sup>2</sup> that "their forefathers knew God, but that after this, they fell into a deep sleep, and when they awoke they quite forgot Him". And in regions nearer home, in seemingly dead Churches, we have records of a sudden poignancy of impression. Words which had always been familiar and

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Emerson, IV. 329.

<sup>2</sup> Emerson, IV. 31; Warneck, "Living Forces of the Gospel," p. 148: "The heathen often assent emphatically to the decalogue when it is announced to them. We missionaries often enough hear them say, 'We knew all that long ago from our fathers'."

always unconsidered have suddenly revealed their tremendous significance; men had never avowed to themselves what these things meant, but, in the depth of their being, they knew, and thus the transformation was prompt and thorough. "One Sunday morning," says a historian,<sup>1</sup> "as Daniel Rowlands was reading the litany in Llangeitho Church, a great wave of spiritual emotion rolled over the worshippers when he repeated the words, 'By Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy Cross and Passion, by Thy precious death and burial, by Thy glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost.' At this point, some fell silent on the floor of the church, while many, through their tears, cried, 'Good Lord, deliver us!' These heart-subduing sentences had been spoken by clergymen and murmured by people for generations, and their meaning had scarcely been guessed. When it flashed out of the well-worn words, the Cross of Christ was revealed to penitent sinners as the only means of salvation." For people often know more than they seem to know, and feel more than they seem to feel. Somewhere, in the recesses of their hearts, these rustic Welshmen had concealed a vague sense of the awe of that revelation, and it only needed a word to call it into effective life.

It would not be just to say that the Eleven had no positive or explicit articles in their creed. In

<sup>1</sup> Simon, "Revival of Religion in England," p. 181.

Jerusalem the Christians had enjoyed a common life; they had prayed and sung their praises, they had admonished and exhorted one another as God enriched them with His gifts; individuals were caught up in sudden ecstasy under the influence of their vision of Christ, and the Master Himself was present in the breaking of bread. All this gave them a bent towards definite and stable thoughts; and as none of them counted anything his own, there came, insensibly but inevitably, to be held in common a nucleus of doctrinal beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pascal, "Pensées et Opuscules," p. 80, says that: "the whole succession of men during so many ages may be considered as a single individual, thinking always and making advance in knowledge." Royce, "Sources of Religious Insight," p. 112, exalts this common thought of men living together into something almost supernatural: "The common sense of mankind is for us all a sort of super-individual insight, to which we appeal without ourselves fully possessing it. This 'common' sense of mankind is just the sense which no man of us ever individually possesses. For us all it is, indeed, something superhuman. . . . Whatever else is real, some form of such a wider insight, some essentially super-individual and superhuman insight is real." Schleiermacher, "Glaubenslehre," Sect. 123: calls this in its operation within the Church, the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit is the union of the Divine Being with human nature in the form of the common spirit of the community, as animating the collective body of believers." "It is this stronger consciousness proceeding from Christ which, as the consciousness of the Christian community, is the Holy Spirit," says Pfeiderer, "Development of Theology," p. 117. Dr. Pusey was looking in the same direction when he said, "Dear John Keble and I never did lean on the Bishops but on the Church. We, or rather the

Something they took over from that Jewish Church in which their life began, and with which they had made no break—specially their notions of God and sin, and of the place which the Messiah was to take in the world history. But into the framework which these provided there was introduced a new Figure, and what had been doctrine merely, arid often and repellent, came now to be religion.<sup>1</sup>

That transformation deserves a few words of expansion. The Jews had called God Father, as the Greeks in Homer's time had done, and in the 103rd Psalm the name is infinitely tender and consoling. Yet on the lips of the common man amongst the Jews, it had little currency, or, at least, little personal intimacy of suggestion. But through Jesus it became a joyful possession of everybody; and in the Christian assemblies the gladness and the wonder of it found expression in the hybrid cry—Abba, Father! as if they were fain to make the Name ring both ways in their ears, trying in which tongue it sounded tenderer. And that was their common thought, every man's whole Church, have had plenty of scandals as to Bishops, and always shall have them." The Church also has its scandals; but Pusey was groping after some divine element—some common life or spirit which is incapable of error.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Loisy, "Choses Passées," p. 34: "As a timid child I trembled in conscience in presence of the question which, against my will, kept confronting me at every hour of the day, — Is there any reality corresponding to these constructions of the mind?"

thought of God; but what had made it so was nothing else than the introduction of Jesus into their world of thought. From tradition they had taken over a doctrine of sin, a sense of ill desert, and a system of sacrifices by which forgiveness might be secured. Some were perfectly content with these ritual provisions, but the men of deeper sense were troubled because "remembrance was made again of sins every year". They never seemed to escape from that chapter of offence, they never stood wholly clear; but now, sad and brooding thoughts were left behind, for Christ had died for their sins. The third point of traditional doctrine which I mentioned by way of example was the place which the Messiah was to fill in the world's history. As to this, the Jews had their daring and magnificent expectations; yet there was no calmness of certainty in them but something strained and fevered, as if with these glowing pictures of the future they were trying to cheat themselves into forgetting the present desolation.<sup>1</sup> But now amongst them there appeared a band of men who, with joy of heart, proclaimed that there was no farther need of waiting, for they had found the Messiah and the Kingdom was at the door. In that sombre age, joy and praise to God were the continual notes of the Christian assemblies, and what made them glad was the sense that the Power which

<sup>1</sup> Joh. Weiss, "Christus," p. 8.

was to transform all things was in their midst and was on their side. When they gave a reason for the hope that was in them, they told about Jesus; so that the early Christian doctrine was altogether a statement to men of the difference which Christ had made and would yet make.

This was the particular aspect of the faith as to which Paul was bound to make inquiry.<sup>1</sup> What had been simply taken over from Judaism he knew better than the others and understood it more deeply. But he had seen the Lord, and the impression of that first sight was so profound that he may sometimes have been afraid of himself. Not only had Jesus made every article of inherited doctrine to live, He had come to fill the whole sphere of divinity.<sup>2</sup> Every question as it arose was instinctively answered by Him in the way that gave most glory to the Son of God, and whatever limited His sphere or imposed conditions on His grace was rejected. Even the life which he lived in the flesh, he lived now by the faith of the Son of God. Paul was assured that he had good reason for making claims so enormous, yet he felt that he would like to find if

<sup>1</sup> Moffatt, "Paul and Paulinism," p. 31: "What stamped his Christianity as his own was his estimate of the person and work of Jesus as the Son of God".

<sup>2</sup> When Marcus Dods was witlessly accused of not believing in the deity of Jesus, he answered frankly that his real peril was of recognising no God but Jesus.

others gave the Lord the same place; and the Apostles, when put to it, dared not say less than he.

It is not easy, with certainty, to ascertain the mind of the Church at this time, for the writings which exist under the names of Peter and John are so largely coloured by the influence of Paul's teaching that they do not take us far; and, indeed, it is mainly by his assistance that we are able to travel back at all to the primitive conditions. He has preserved in his letters two or three rudimentary creeds, which are of interest as showing that the first doctrinal assertions of the Church were all assertions about Christ and His worth to His people. In I Cor. 15<sup>3</sup> Paul says, "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received" (so here we are taken to his instructions received from Ananias in Damascus, within five or six years of the Resurrection<sup>1</sup>), "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve". That is as elementary and objective as the central portion of the Apostles' Creed, a bare chronicle of facts; and it discovers to us the way in which these early believers' pored

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Ramsay dates Paul's conversion, 32 or 33; Prof. G. G. Findlay (Hastings, "Dict. Bible"—article "Paul") dates it 36.

over the Old Testament in search of something to justify their feeling that their faith was not an innovation but was closely linked to all that went before.

A creed of greater interest is given in Rom. 10<sup>9</sup>, which conducts us into the very heart of the faith of the oldest times: "If thou confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved". The two propositions involved in this form of words are both of profound Christian significance. Nothing is more universal or more characteristic in the Early Church than the attributing to Jesus of the title Lord (*Κύριος*). That marked so great a step that Paul declares (I Cor. 12<sup>3</sup>) that "no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit". It was the distinctively Christian confession, for which men were willing to die. "What harm is there in saying, Cæsar is Lord, and in sacrificing to him?" was the question thrust by the inquisitors upon Polycarp<sup>1</sup> and the company of the martyrs, and it was something nobler than obstinacy which sealed their lips. Johannes Weiss<sup>2</sup> says that "the formula—our Lord Jesus Christ—contains in germ the primitive Christian religion. Obedi-

<sup>1</sup> Mart. Polyc. 8<sup>a</sup>; see an admirable note by Lietzmann, "Handbuch zum N.T.," Rom. 10<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> "Christus," p. 24.

ent submission, reverence, a holy fear of wounding Him, the absolute feeling of dependence in everything, gratitude, love and trust,—in short, everything that man can feel in the presence of the Deity finds utterance in this Name." Nothing can better show how much was involved in the title than the fact that, without theory or reflection, the believers all began to pray to Christ as the Disposer of their lot. When Paul was tortured by his thorn in the flesh, he says, "For this thing I besought the *Lord* thrice that it might depart from me" (II Cor. 12<sup>8</sup>). "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" cried Stephen, when the darkness was closing in upon him (Acts 7<sup>60</sup>). "The same Lord is the lord of all men, rich toward all who call upon Him" (Rom. 10<sup>12</sup>). This, which gives Him His appropriate place in the universe of God, is "the name which is above every name". Since He is Lord, His people frankly acknowledge themselves His slaves, over whom He rules with unrestricted fullness of power; and in this point, though Paul had seen more clearly than the Eleven all that it implied, the others were not a whit behind him in their loyal and absolute submission to Jesus as their Lord. The other point in this short creed is *the resurrection of Jesus*, in which the disciples rejoiced, not as the vanquishing of death but as God's express recognition of His Son, the solemn reversing of a mistaken decision. "Ye slew the

Prince of life," says Peter (Acts 3<sup>16</sup>), "but God raised Him from the dead." "By the hands of outsiders (*ἀνόμων*—men who had nothing to do with the Law), ye crucified and slew Him, but God raised Him up" (Acts 2<sup>23-4</sup>). Even in the days of His flesh they had begun to divine His quality, but it was with an effort, and the brutal exposures of the Crucifixion left them staggering. And what established faith for ever, not in Jesus only but in God (I Peter 1<sup>21</sup>)—for it was God they were perplexed about—was this divine act of resurrection.

Another Pauline phrase (I Cor. 16<sup>22</sup>) takes us to the very beginnings of definite belief. "If any man love not the Lord, let him be as an outcast. Our Lord is coming! (*Maran Atha!*)" The fact that an Aramaic phrase should appear untranslated in a letter to a Greek Church, within five and twenty years of the Crucifixion, can only be accounted for in one way—that the phrase had established itself at the very beginning, in the usage of the Church, so firmly that it passed to daughter Churches as a necessary part of the liturgical furnishing which called for no interpretation. Just as we forget that we are talking Hebrew when we say Amen or Hallelujah, so these Corinthians heard without any sense of foreignness a phrase which seemed as old as the Gospel itself. But if the phrase is so utterly primitive and so inseparable from the early Christian worship, it must take

rank as being one of the original expressions of assured belief within the Church.<sup>1</sup>

In all these fragments of evidence, the one note appears that Christ holds the central place. Whatever in them can be called doctrine was a more or less naïve report of the impression which Jesus had made upon His friends, and of the authority which He had established in their lives.<sup>2</sup> It was experience through and through, whether in Paul or in the Eleven; and if in many points Paul's faith was clearer, it was because he was bolder than they in letting experience declare its own significance, unhindered by the traditions of the Synagogue. Jesus Christ had taken possession of his heart and of theirs, so that wherever they looked they saw Him—giving meaning to the long record of Temple sacrifices in the past, transfiguring the lives of men in the present, and, for the future, giving assurance of a triumphant reign of God. When they thought of their sin, they saw Him who had died for it according to the Scriptures; when they faced the

<sup>1</sup>The passage in Acts 8<sup>37</sup> (A.V.), "if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest be baptized. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," is not part of the original text; but it is probably an early baptismal formula, and its witness coincides with that of the undisputed passages.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. W. P. Paterson ("Rule of Faith," p. 201) goes greatly beyond his warrant when he says that "the Christian religion not only involves but lives by taking for granted a somewhat elaborate theology"; so p. 199.

perplexities of fortune, He offered Himself as guide and Providence. It was as to the place they gave to Christ that Paul had sought the help of conference with the leaders, and in this he discovered, as he supposed, an entire agreement. It is likely enough that he exaggerated the completeness of their concurrence, for he had the generous instinct of imputing his own heat of feeling to every one he met. What Shakespeare says in "Timon"<sup>1</sup> might fitly be applied to Paul, who acknowledged saints where many would have only reckoned up the flaws: "The middle of humanity thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends." He had better understanding of the great sinner and the great saint, than of the sober, pedestrian man, who is neither one thing nor the other. In Galatians 2<sup>14-21</sup>, he allows himself to pass unwittingly from his scorching rebuke of Peter into an inspired soliloquy, and it would be perilous to say that the conception of the mystical union to which he gives expression (2<sup>20-21</sup>) was matter of entire agreement. Paul was himself a religious genius, with all the swiftness of perception which that involves; and his too ready assumption is that all Christians live, as he did, "in the element Christ, as birds live in the air, and fishes in the sea, and the roots of plants in the earth".<sup>2</sup> That

<sup>1</sup> Act iv., Sc. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Deissmann, "Die N. Tliche Formel in Christo Jesu," p. 84.

he took for granted, about his fellow-believers,<sup>1</sup> but actually it is not realized as true by "the middle of humanity," the men of custom and sobriety who can, at best, assent to what goes beyond their measure. The same question may be raised with regard to Paul's view of the Law. Even as the record stands in the Book of Acts, with traces of Luke's desire for conciliation on

<sup>1</sup>This is not universally accepted. Dr. Percy Gardner, e.g. ("Relig. Exper. of St. Paul," p. 201) says: "Paul does not speak of personal intercourse with an exalted Saviour as the common property of believers. Such special inspiration, whether in actual visions and words, or in the form of inner experience, has been claimed in the Church mainly by the few. . . . A Christian need not be conscious of such special communications. *The life in Christ is primarily that of the community.*" Whatever justification may be offered for this assertion from the history of the Church, it certainly was not Paul's view. Ritschl ("Justification and Reconciliation," Eng. trans., p. 139) says: "Justification or reconciliation is related in the first instance to the whole of the community founded by Christ, and to individuals only as they attach themselves by faith in the Gospel thereto". Sanday and Headlam ("Romans," p. 123) speak of "Justification as normally mediated through the Church. St. Paul often drops the intervening link, especially in the earlier Epistles. . . . The Christian sacrifice with its effects, like the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement by which it is typified, reach the individual through the community." Why should Paul be said to "drop a link" before it had been formed? The more accurate expression would be that sometimes in the later and doubtful Epistles a link is *inserted*. Paul was an individualist who recognised the power and the utility of a society; but he did not change his ultimate view.

every page, it is evident that there was no entire concurrence. It has been suggested<sup>1</sup> that we must look to the Thessalonian Letters for "the form in which St. Paul judged it fitting to present the Christian Gospel to nascent Christian communities," for when he was "free from the constraint of false and mischievous opinions, he taught the common faith of Christians in simple, untechnical language"; in a word, he was "a Paulinist, so to speak, against his will," and gave no place to the controversy about the Law in his mission preaching. But the evidence in favour of such a view is by no means strong. Before the emissaries had reached Galatia, it appears that Paul had warned his converts against a tendency which was not confined to Judaism, but showed itself wherever men endeavoured to be religious without owing everything to God. In Galatians he refers again and again to lessons he had given them before the danger had become acute. "As we said before so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any Gospel other than that which ye received, let him be an out-cast (1<sup>o</sup>)."<sup>1</sup> "I testify *again* to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he becomes bound to do the whole law (5<sup>o</sup>)."<sup>2</sup> These point to a kind of preaching in which the Eleven could not, with full intelligence, have concurred. The

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, "St. Paul's Conception of Christianity," p. 14.

sermon at Pisidian Antioch<sup>1</sup> (Acts 13<sup>30</sup>), and the turning to the Gentiles there (13<sup>46</sup>) may be taken as strong confirmatory evidence that even in his mission preaching Paul could not refrain from raising this vital issue. The agreement between Paul and the Eleven was really confined to the place which Jesus holds in the world of history and in the life of His people; and even in that, Paul too sweepingly assumed that all the straightforward inferences must be accepted by them as by him.

Such a limitation has a serious practical interest, as it suggests where men of most diverse training and temper may come together. The agreement of the Apostles cannot possibly be extended to cover all the detail of the Catholic, or of any other creeds, in which there is always a bulk of theological accretion, with which the witness of the heart has little to do. It does not, as we have seen, cover all the ground of Paulinism, or of that "sort of average combination of Biblical ways of thinking," which is sometimes offered as the theology of the New Testament. "Such an average combination of thoughts, so arranged, has never existed organically in any man," says

<sup>1</sup> McGiffert ("Apostolic Age," p. 186) treats the sermon as at least infra-Pauline if not non-Pauline. Ramsay ("Cities of St. Paul," p. 307) regards it as "a characteristic sketch preparatory to the evangelising of an audience which knew nothing but the Law".

Herrmann ;<sup>1</sup> and certainly it has no considerable promise for the reuniting of the divided elements of Christendom. Something simpler, deeper and more catholic than any of these is requisite. Of John Howe it is recorded<sup>2</sup> that when, in his student days, he was pressed by Thomas Goodwin to join the Independent Church in Cambridge, he answered that he could not, because "he understood that they laid a great stress upon some peculiarities for which he had no fondness, though he could give others their liberty without any unkind thoughts of them ; but if they would admit him into their society *upon catholic terms*, he would readily become one of them". Where Paul and the Eleven actually came together was in a sort of *theologia viatoris*, the theology of a wayfaring man, the faith, largely inarticulate, by which Christian men live and are sustained in their daily affairs. If, at any moment, one pressed questions home as to what this, in its detail, implies, he would probably be rewarded by answers which are not strictly true. The heart has its own reserves, and the deepest things do not readily find utterance in words ; so that a man pushed for an answer, is likely to set forward some creed or form of words which is like the faith he holds, but really is both more than it and less. There is an irritating element of truth

<sup>1</sup> "Communion with God," p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Calamy, "Nonconformist's Memorial," I. 186.

in Schopenhauer's saying,<sup>1</sup> though, of course, there is exaggeration also: "As soon as a thought has found words it no longer exists in us, or is serious in its deepest sense. When it begins to exist for others it ceases to live in us, just as a child frees itself from its mother when it comes into existence. The poet has also said<sup>2</sup> :—

Ihr müsst mich nicht durch Widerspruch verwirren !  
So bald man spricht, beginnt man schon zu irren."

The best of human love is not profuse in amorous expressions, for it is not thinking of itself but of its object. The honesty, on which one leans without reserve, is utterly unconscious of itself; it offers no justification for itself nor gives reasons, for nothing else than honesty seems possible. And in religion also words are few, because feeling is profound and directed towards its object. In the true *Theologia Viatoris* there is no deliberate exclusion of particular dogmas, and yet vast tracts of doctrine are silently ignored as adding nothing that is of practical use. It may be these are true, and to certain minds they may be enormously important; but to others, being such as they are, they present no points of interest. "What really unites Christians with each other and with the witness of the New Testament," says Herrmann,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Essay on Authorship and Style."

<sup>2</sup> "You must not bewilder me by contradiction! As soon as a man speaks, he begins to go wrong."

<sup>3</sup> "Communion with God," p. 10.

“is not the complete identity of our thoughts but the entire likeness of our ways of thinking, and the unity of the revelation by which that likeness is caused. . . . There are, on the one hand, the same Jesus, and the conception of God as His Father which is inseparable from Him; and on the other, the same personal life redeemed by God as He is made manifest in Jesus, or, in other words, the same faith. Every Christian who reads the New Testament for his edification will lay hold of these two things in it, and gain thence the proper nourishment for his soul.” This common religion of the Christian man is affected, in form and colour, by the life of the community in which he finds himself; and inwardly also it may be enriched. As they sing and pray and worship together, bearing burdens, and ministering consolations, and holding the general fears of men at bay by certain strong assurances, their inner wealth should steadily be increased. Most men do not know all that is contained in the treasure-house of life, for our best possessions lie out of sight; and thus it comes that the sober, inarticulate religion of duty and reverence so often proves to be nobler than it seemed, and shy depths of feeling are discovered in it, as it were, by chance. Dr. Harnack<sup>1</sup> speaks of the few recorded instances in the story of the Early Church, where, in dying confessions, the wonder of a plain man's feeling

<sup>1</sup> “Expansion of Christianity” (Eng. trans., 1st ed.), I. 120.

for Jesus Christ breaks forth, and actually brings Christ before his eyes. Mr. Campbell Moody<sup>1</sup> bears the same witness of the Church in Formosa that, sometimes in dying, men who have seemed dry and unimpressionable in religion reveal an inner flame. "Jesus is coming with a white flag to take me to heaven," said such a man; "do you not see Him coming?" "These good Fathers *said* nothing decisive about justification by grace, yet at their death they believed in it. They lived better than they wrote." That witness of Luther's might be applied to others than the Church Fathers. Many are better Christians and nearer to their fellows than on the surface they appear to be, for in the depths their hearts have been gained and are held by Jesus Christ.

Thus from men of widely different training and constitution and experience, Paul got the comfort he desired. In following his own heart, and in letting himself be tutored by his individual experience, he had not surrendered to error. "The same Lord is Lord of all." His are the keys to open the doors of the royal treasure house, and His is the authority to break the seals. By diverse ways He leads His friends to the one goal in the knowledge of Himself, in which are both the beginning and the end of a Christian theology; and thus He justifies their trust in the voice they heard within.

<sup>1</sup> "Heathen Heart," p. 128; cf. Warneck's "Living Forces of the Gospel," p. 300,