

CHAPTER V

THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT OF THE EPISTLE.—II. THE OBLATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

PRIEST IN THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY (viii. 1-6)

A NEW section of the Epistle opens at this point, and runs from viii. 1 to x. 18. Melchizedek disappears. Three new elements enter into the representation. These are (1) the self-offering of Christ or, to speak more exactly, the sacrificial offering of the 'body' of Christ, (2) the heavenly 'sanctuary' in which the Redeemer makes His offering, together with the sustained counterpoint of earthly shadow and heavenly reality which now becomes a feature of the exposition, (3) the new 'covenant', to which Christ's action in the heavenly sphere is relative, and under which the old liturgical order is done away.

So new is the trend and character of the argument that it might at first sight appear that this section was composed in complete independence of the previous train of thought which has centred in Melchizedek and the 110th Psalm. On a closer view, however, the section reveals itself as the natural and indispensable complement of the preceding chapters, presenting as it does the consummation of the ministry of Jesus.

Dr. Moffatt translates the opening words of the section in the form: 'The point of all this is, We do

have such a high-priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens, etc.' I do not feel that this rendering does justice at this point to the writer's train of thought, nor to the heightened elevation of the stage to which the argument ascends. While the opening Greek word (*kephalaion*) may mean 'sum' or 'gist' or 'point', to render it here in the form, 'the point of all this is', throws us too much back on the past course of the argument, and fails to bring out the transcendent character of the vista which here opens to our eyes. I would prefer, therefore, to take the word in another of its senses, and to translate:

And now to crown the argument, the High-Priest whom we have is one who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in heaven, a minister in the Sanctuary or true Tabernacle which the Lord, not man, has fixed (viii. 1-2).

Everything turns at this point on our eyes being directed upwards to the supernal world where at the heavenly altar our Lord is seen presenting His eternal offering. The days of His flesh with their prayers and tears and perfection wrought out in the school of suffering (v. 7-8) are over, and Jesus puts into effect the eternal salvation of which He has become the source (v. 9). Here there comes into view a vision of life on two levels, terrestrial shadow and heavenly substance. It is introduced by the writer's reference to the 'true' sanctuary established not by human hands but by God. Some attention must now, therefore, be given to this 'Alexandrianism' of the Epistle to the Hebrews, a feature which has not seldom been mis-appraised.

The idea of a heavenly sanctuary, with a ritual or worship to correspond, took its start, as we have

noticed, from the Biblical passages, Numbers viii. 4 and Exodus xxv. 9, 40, which speak of the 'pattern' revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. But it could call to its support rich and suggestive material from the prophets and the Psalms, as where, for example, the angels or host of heaven are summoned to worship their Creator and Lord. Dr. R. H. Charles gives it as his considered judgment that the idea of a sacrificial worship in heaven had long been familiar in Judaism, and he cites by way of evidence the passage Testament of Levi iii. 5, where, in the sixth heaven, archangels or angels of the Presence are said to 'minister and make propitiation to the Lord for all the ignorance-sins of the righteous'.¹ This parallelism of the earthly and the heavenly levels of existence was capable of indefinite extension, and at Alexandria, where especially the Old Testament theology was brought into contact with the Platonism and Stoicism of the eclectic philosophy of the Hellenistic world, the idea of the heavenly originals or counterparts of terrestrial things supplied a new language for the expression of the Biblical doctrine of the divine creation of the world. Plato's doctrine of ideas, especially in the form and setting given to it in the *Timaeus*, was combined with Jewish midrashic traditions to produce a philosophical and highly edifying exegesis of the books of Moses, especially Genesis. We find imposing examples in Philo's treatises *De Opificio Mundi*, the *Legum Allegoriae*, and indeed *passim*.² But while it is right to see in the Alexandrian Jewish theology the background against which the conception of the Two Worlds in the Epistle to the Hebrews is elaborated, it has to be carefully observed

¹ See above, pp. 51 and 116.

² For a short statement see *De Opif. Mund.*, 16.

that the interests of the writer to the Hebrews are not in cosmology but in redemption, and that his exposition of the heavenly sanctuary is put into entire subservience to his exposition of the sacrifice and atoning work of Jesus within the Veil. The element of Alexandrianism does not enter into the Epistle until this point is reached, and it is not continued after this point is passed.

Not the nature of reality, but the advent of the End is the dominating concern of the writer. For him the eternal world stands essentially in front of us, *impending* on us as immediate apocalyptic event, and if he brings in the idea of its present heavenly circumstance, it is because Jesus has already gone into the world of light as our 'Forerunner'. He has placed the 'anchor' of our souls there on the other side of the 'veil'. He atones and intercedes for us there, and our souls are summoned to rise to the full height of their eschatological calling.

The fact that the symbolism of the writer is wrought out only in the sphere of 'ritual institutions' is rightly pointed out by Dr. E. F. Scott, who also recognises that for him the earthly shadows of the heavenly things are not deceptive or misleading in their nature, but only imperfect and incomplete. They are not contradicted by their heavenly counterparts, but fulfilled or consummated. Hence the centrality in Hebrews of the notion of 'perfection' (*teleiosis*), the completion or realisation of things which have been here begun.¹ On the other hand, it is plain from the whole character of the Epistle that the writer's interest in the symbolism springs, not from the constitution of his mind, as Dr. Scott considers, nor from any philosophical bias, but from the intensity of his futurist expectation, and

¹ *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 83 f.

here he is with the Apostles rather than with the idealists.

And because every high-priest is appointed to bring gifts and sacrifices, He must necessarily have some offering to make. Now, if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all. There are priests there to offer the gifts which the Law requires, (priests) who serve what is only the sketch or shadow-shape of the things in heaven. This accords with the instruction given to Moses when he was about to carry out the building of the tabernacle: 'Look', God says, 'that you make everything after the pattern which was displayed to you on the mountain.' But, as it is, the ministry which Jesus has received is a more excellent one, and He is proportionately the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on the basis of better promises (viii. 3-6).

It is here stated by the writer, in a manner which places the point beyond ambiguity, that the priesthood of the Messiah, declared in Psalm cx., is not an earthly priesthood, but a priesthood in the heavenly realm. The qualification of Jesus for the office, the perfecting of His person as priest, had to be made on earth, but His actual 'liturgy', His ministry of sacrifice, is a transcendent one, and belongs to the New Covenant, of which it is the mark. In the fundamental Biblical pronouncement on the subject the New Covenant is declared to be not as the Old. Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant enacted on a foundation of better promises. In the Epistle the words 'better' and 'eternal' go together in their application to the Christian realities. The latter are better than the former because they have the nature of eternity in them. The eternal world has become actual in them.

THE NEW COVENANT
(viii. 7-13)

The word Covenant has not hitherto appeared in the Epistle except in one anticipatory allusion towards the close of the first half of the work (vii. 22). From this point onwards the term occurs no fewer than sixteen times.

The charter-passage for the New Covenant (Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34) is quoted in full by the writer,¹ and serves as the frontispiece to the second half of the Epistle. The New Covenant itself belongs to, and marks the New Age inaugurated by the entrance of the Redeemer into the heavenly sanctuary, and it forms the framework and setting, as well as the pre-supposition, of all that now follows. The idea of a renovation of the covenant-relation with God was part of that projection of the divine salvation into the future which came about in Israel through the deepening consciousness, produced by the prophets, of the holiness of God. The shadow of national sin had descended heavily on conscience.² Righteousness was no longer felt to exist under the existing order. A question-mark had affixed itself to all the institutions, political and sacral, of the nation's life. Not even the charter on which Israel's relation with God was based seemed immune from criticism. Under this general lowering of the lights the vision of a time when God's presence with His people and God's salvation of His people would be unequivocally manifested, inwardly and outwardly, glowed and burned

¹ From the Septuagint, and in substantial agreement with the A text.

² Cf. especially Isaiah vi. 1-5.

on the prophetic horizon. The Old Covenant stood indicted, but this itself was through the very pressure of the divine word within the prophetic soul. So the writer to the Hebrews understands the prophet Jeremiah.

For had the first covenant been faultless, no place would have been sought for a second. But (it was not so, for) God does find fault with the people, and says: 'See, the days are coming when I will conclude a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah' (viii. 7-8).

The Old Covenant dated from the Exodus, and signalised the redemption of Israel out of Egypt. If the New Covenant is to be different, it is because it will follow upon a new Exodus. But the stress of the prophetic teaching and the reason which it gives for the replacement of the former Covenant by another rests on the past failure of Israel to observe the conditions of the relation formerly entered into with God. Under the new order God's people will be different. They will be inwardly established in the Law and knowledge of God. Above all, God will be merciful to their iniquities and will remember their sins no more. This, for the writer to the Hebrews, represents the climactic element of interest in the new order of grace, for, as Dr. Moffatt observes, it is this divine amnesty, this promise of full and free forgiveness, that is singled out as the high point of the New Covenant when the writer returns to the theme in chapter x. 16-18. Did the writer feel that the supreme defect of the old order was the inefficacy of its means of grace to remove the guilt of sin? Very possibly, but let there be no misunderstanding as to his attitude. *The inadequacy of the cultus was not due*

to its being a sacrificial system. It was due to its sacrificial system being imperfect. If the old order is replaced, if, as the writer says,

God has made the first covenant obsolete, and what is obsolete and senescent is on the point of disappearing (viii. 13),

it is not because something of another kind is now being substituted for the sacrifices, but because the latter are to be fully and for ever fulfilled in one transcendent Oblation.

This is a point at which a palpable difference may be observed between the Epistle to the Hebrews and the teaching of St. Paul. For the latter the distinction between the new spiritual Israel and the old Israel is as real as that between the spirit and the flesh. There is not this difference of principle between the respective systems of religion in Hebrews. The author's counterpoint of earthly and heavenly reality does not run out into an opposition of spirit and not-spirit, and it works not a paradox of the orders but an ultimate harmony. Christ transcends, but He also fulfils the religion of Israel. May we not say that St. Paul was led to his particular formulation of the relationship of the two orders by his crucial experience of the Law? He looks at the two in the light of this experience. And for this reason there is a constant sense in him of the crisis and transformation created for all human thought and action by Christ which does not come to expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹

¹ For St. Paul's sense of the antithesis of the new and the old orders at this point cf. Galatians iv. 21-31, 2 Corinthians iii. 15-18, etc.

THE OLD AND THE NEW SANCTUARIES AND
THEIR ATONEMENT-PROVISIONS (ix. 1-10)

It is interesting that the writer tests the Old Covenant purely and exclusively by reference to its cultus-provisions. The old order had its means of grace which were designed and offered for the enablement of man's approach to God.

The first covenant had indeed its ordinances of worship and its own material shrine (ix. 1).

'Cosmic' the writer calls the shrine because it belonged to the visible world, which in the language of Alexandria was contrasted with the immaterial or heavenly world. Into the archaeology of his description of the earthly shrine—the outer tent with its furniture, the veil, the inner tent of the most holy place with its sacred objects including the *Hilasterion* or Mercy-Seat (ix. 2-5)—we need not here enter, the less so as the writer declares his account to be at best a summary one (ix. 5). The questions which arise with regard to the correctness of this or that detail in the representation do not specially concern us for the purposes of our argument,¹ but there is one general question which may not be dismissed. That is the overhead question whether the writer would at this point have entered into a discussion of such details if he were not writing to a circle with a definitely Jewish background and with not only a knowledge of, but a sentimental leaning towards the ancient cultus. His main interest, indeed, is concentrated on the one point of the high-priest's office on the Day of Atone-

¹ On these questions see Dr. Moffatt's *Commentary ad locum*, and the rich collection of Rabbinical material in Strack-Billerbeck, III. pp. 704-733.

ment, but this itself raises the question: Was a specific interest in the Jewish Day of Atonement a central element in the appeal which the older means of grace were still making to those Christians at Rome to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews was written? And is the writer's answer this, that the whole of the Christian life is an observance of a Day of Atonement, the eternal Day of Atonement which Christ as our High-Priest has instituted?

It is not at all impossible that this was the case, and one is the more encouraged to make the suggestion because there is the analogy of a passage in St. Paul's writings. In 1 Corinthians v. 7-8 the Apostle writes: 'Christ, our Passover-Lamb, has been sacrificed, so that we should observe our festival not with the old leaven, but with the unleavened bread of pure-mindedness and truth.' St. Paul means that the whole Christian life should be a Passover observance free from the infecting evil of tolerated sin. The writer to the Hebrews may well have had in his mind an analogous Christian use to which to put the rite of Atonement-Day.

The furniture of the Sanctuary being as has been said, the priests go constantly into the first tent in the performance of their ritual functions. Into the second tent, however, goes only the high-priest once in the year, and then never without blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of ignorance committed by the people. Thereby the Holy Spirit makes it evident that the way into the Sanctuary was never fully disclosed so long as the first tent was standing: and this has a symbolic meaning for the present time, as showing that the gifts and sacrifices offered cannot, in the matter of conscience, perfect the worshipper (qualify him for access to God).

They are only material regulations, concerned with food and drink and various ablutions, and they apply only up to the time of the Re-ordering (ix. 6-10).

Accentuating the special character of the Day of Atonement ritual, the writer points out to his readers, (1) that only the high-priest had access to the Presence within the veil, (2) that even his approach was never unaccompanied by a sacrificial blood-offering for himself as well as for Israel, and (3) that the atonement which was effected related only to Israel's 'sins of ignorance', only to guilt and pollution unwittingly contracted. While the latter sins were real sins, involving guilt which had to be atoned for, they did not extend to cover moral offences of a deliberate nature, sins 'with respect to conscience'. As a matter of fact, in order to cover the whole area of guilt before God, Judaism had to supplement the provisions of the ritual system by piecing on to it the pardon-upon-repentance gospel preached by the prophets. The lesson which the writer to the Hebrews draws from the whole facts is the self-attested insufficiency of the old order of grace. The Holy Spirit—by which the writer here means not the principle of the new insight at work in Christianity, but the same Spirit speaking in the Old Testament through the prophets—has made it plain that, so long as the first sanctuary stood, the way into the Holy of Holies was barred, and this, says the writer pointedly, is 'a parable bearing on the present crisis'. It shows, in other words, that the gifts and sacrifices which were still being offered in Judaism had no power to qualify the worshippers in respect of conscience for access to God. Here another question of immediate critical interest comes to the front.

The insufficiency of the Jewish 'gifts and sacrifices',

says the writer, is that they are external or material ordinances, 'bearing only upon food and drink and various ablutions'. Strictly speaking, however, we cannot regard any of these regulations about food, drink, and washings as being of the substance of the sacrificial system. They belonged to it only by association, but the writer takes advantage of this association to depreciate the character of the sacrifices.

This is a point at which the main problem with which this book is concerned once again leaps to the light. Were the readers a Jewish-Christian group who, for one reason or another, were opposing the ritual freedom of the larger Church? If so, *it would be possible to find in these regulations about food and drink the real point at which, and the genuine reason for which they were holding on sentimentally to the Jewish rites and means of grace.* This in itself is not improbable, and we may compare Romans xiv. where, as has been noted, scruples with regard to food on the part of a minority in the Roman Church constitute the only error on which St. Paul takes that Church specifically to task.¹

However that may be, these regulations cease, the writer insists, with the great 'Re-ordering' which belongs to the New Covenant, and which comes into effect with the Sacrifice made by Christ.

PRIEST THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT

(ix. 11-14)

But Christ, when He came as the High-Priest of the coming salvation, passed through the greater, more perfect tent not fashioned by hands, not part, that is, of the present creation, and taking with Him not the blood

¹ See above, p. 13.

of goats and calves but His own blood, He went in once and for all into the Holy Place, thus procuring an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on the defiled sanctifies these persons in point of external purity, how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself as an unblemished sacrifice to God, purify your consciences from dead works to serve the living God! (ix. 11-14).

The contrast between the atonement wrought by Christ and the old atonement is brought out by reference successively,

- (a) to the heavenly shrine at which Christ's offering is presented—a shrine which is not a part or an appurtenance of this transitory world;
- (b) to the character of the medium employed for the offering—the blood not of animal victims, but of Christ Himself;
- (c) to the once-for-allness of Christ's entrance into the sanctuary;
- (d) to the fact that the very nature of eternity is in the redemption He procures.

No explanation at all is offered why the sanctification of the worshipper, the removal of his guilt, the expiation of his sin, the atonement of his soul to God should be made dependent on the blood of sacrifice. That necessity is assumed. It is something given. It is a thing inseparable from the age-long history of grace in Israel, and the writer of this Epistle who, like a multitude of others, had found his own approach to God so prescribed and who had come along this path to the foot of the Cross, does not feel it incumbent upon him to argue its

sufficiency. But while he will not enter into metaphysical questions, he will reason with us on a basis of religious experience and, within the area so indicated, he will argue from the less real to the more.

If, he argues, the ritual blood-atonement prescribed by the Jewish religion effected the 'sanctification' or cleansing of the worshipper for access to God in the matter of external purity—the writer will not claim more than this for the Jewish rites—who shall measure the effect of the blood of 'the Christ', who through 'the Eternal Spirit' offered Himself as 'an unblemished sacrifice' to God? Will it not purify the 'conscience' from dead works to serve 'a living God'? The words enclosed within inverted commas indicate the range and nature of that *plus* of grace which the writer sees provided for by the sacrifice of Jesus, and they mark the truths which he wishes to drive home upon the minds of his readers.

And what are these truths? First, the offering is the blood of the *Messiah*! The primary article of the creed of the world-mission Church was that Christ died on account of our sins (1 Corinthians xv. 3). Secondly, the offering reveals the operation of *Eternal Spirit*. The death of Jesus was no mere historical contingency but expresses the very nature of the eternal Mind and World. And because eternity is in the act, time cannot impair or devalue its significance. Thirdly, the perfection, the *fullness* of all sacrifice is in that utter, completely moral and personal, self-devotion of Jesus to death for our sins. Fourthly, if the death of Jesus was for our sins, then, in the light of all that Jesus was and is, the atoning virtue and redemption which are in it cannot be limited in their application to ritual guilt and ignorance but extend as far as *conscience*,

the moral consciousness extends: dead works, as Dr. Moffatt says, imply 'far more serious flaws and stains' than could be covered by the ritual sacrifices of the past. Fifthly, the blood of Christ brings the worshipper to *the living God*. Though this writer may not say in so many words that through Christ's action or mediation God now lives in the Christian, and the Christian in God, nothing less than this is implied in his thought of the Eternal Spirit's operation in and through the sacrifice of Jesus.

It has been pointed out by expositors that the writer to the Hebrews is silent about the love of God and the love of Christ as factors of the Atonement, and that there is nothing in his teaching about that present personal faith-union with Christ which is so vivid a part of the appropriation of grace in the Pauline theology.¹ This criticism is true, but it has been observed above² and will be shown more fully later, that the explanation lies essentially in the whole religious orientation of the writer's mind and particularly in the eschatological tension by which his mind is fixed continuously on the things yet to be hoped for, rather than on present conditions of inward attainment and rest. On the other hand, we should not forget those significant passages in which the author in momentary flashes lets the light in upon the present transforming reality of the Christian experience of salvation. One of these is the already discussed 'Hero-Christology' passage, ii. 14, where Christ's complete identification of Himself with us is said to have been for the purpose of overthrowing the devil's

¹ For a discriminating exposition of these and similar points see Dr. Vincent Taylor's *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, pp. 147-190.

² See pp. 52 f., 57 f., 65.

sovereignty in death, and releasing those who throughout their lives were prostrated under 'the fear of death'. Emancipation from what St. Paul calls the principalities and powers, and conquest over the last enemy were certainly a very real part of the Christian experience of grace for the man who penned these words. Even more impressive in the same connection is the present passage in which the deliverance of the conscience from the guilt and power of mortal sin is posited as a direct consequence of the atonement wrought through Jesus. For the writer of the Epistle this discharge had the reality of a fact, and it was a supreme verification of God to his spirit.

It has at the same time to be conceded that the Epistle says nothing about 'the destruction of the sinful flesh, and the satisfaction rendered to the claims of the Law', by which the Pauline interpretation of the Atonement is characterised. The argument of Hebrews, says Dr. Scott, 'has no firmer basis than the assumptions of ancient ritual'.¹ On the other hand, to depreciate these assumptions is to part company with the author of the Epistle at the nodal point of his great argument, because for him all Christianity—including all that St. Paul can read into it—is implicitly given in his formula of sanctification by the blood of Christ and in his conception of the ever-progressive access of the soul to God in Him. To regard it as a weakness in the author that, 'while he shows the inadequacy of the old ritual conceptions, he never definitely escapes from them',² reveals a bias in religious thinking and an application to Hebrews of categories of religious value which have their origin not in the Bible nor in New Testament Christianity but in a dualistic philosophy

¹ *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 131 f.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 137 f.

of the relation of matter and spirit. In this connection no finer ultimate vindication of Hebrews from its own standpoint could be desired than is offered by Dr. Scott himself within the pages of his treatise.¹

MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT
(ix. 15-22)

The writer returns again to the inseparable nexus between the New Covenant and the redemptive sacrifice of Christ. One sentence which he writes here is specially interesting for its close parallelism with St. Paul's exposition of the 'Righteousness' of God in Romans iii. 21-26. The sentence in Hebrews runs:

He is the Mediator of the New Covenant for this reason that, now that a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions (committed) under the first covenant, those who are called may enter on the eternal inheritance promised to them (ix. 15).

Both St. Paul and the writer to the Hebrews bring the death of Christ under the rubric of 'redemption' (*apolytroxis*), and both give this redemption a double relation—to the past, and to the present. In Romans the Righteousness of God which comes into operation through the death of Christ bears (1) on the forgiveness of sins committed in the past, (2) on the new status in grace of the forgiven. In Hebrews, similarly, the death of Christ (1) effects deliverance from the guilt of transgressions committed under the first covenant, (2) makes permanent provision for the access of the elect to God by which they are instituted into assured possession of the promised eternal inheritance.

¹ *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 138-141.

Like St. Paul, the writer to the Hebrews takes advantage of the connection existing in the Greek language between *diatheke* in the ordinary sense of 'testamentary disposition' and *diatheke* as used in the Septuagint to render the Hebrew term *berith*, 'covenant'. In this way he establishes the formal relation between the death of Christ and the coming into force of the New Covenant. Peculiar to himself, however, is his interest in showing that under the law of Moses the 'blood of the covenant' was sprinkled on the book, the tent, and the whole paraphernalia of Hebrew worship, as well as on the people: practically everything under the Law had this ritual blood-sanctification applied to it, for 'apart from the shedding of blood', he writes, 'there is no remission of sins' (ix. 16-22).

It should be noticed that the blood-sprinkling here declared to be required by the Law extends in its range beyond the actual prescriptions for Moses' action in Exodus xxiv. 4-8, which is the basic passage on the subject. That passage, for example, does not mention the sprinkling of the book of the covenant which Moses took into his hands and read. In later usage, however, the sanctification of the book may have been included in the rite. In the commentaries attention is drawn to other slight deviations of our author from the Exodus and Leviticus texts. We may pass over these details, but shall return to the general significance of the passage presently.

Of necessity, then, since what were merely the copies of the things in heaven were purified by such means, the heavenly things themselves must be purified by better sacrifices than these. Christ has entered not a sanctuary made by hands, a mere antitype of the true,

but into heaven itself, to appear now in the presence of God on our behalf: and not to offer Himself again and again, as the high-priest enters the holy place year by year, taking with him blood that is not his own. In that case, Christ would have had to suffer over and over again since the world's foundation. As it is, He has been manifested once for all, at the climax of history, to end sin by His sacrifice. And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that the Judgment, so also Christ, once offered in sacrifice to bear the sins of many, will appear the second time—no more to deal with sin—for the salvation of those who are awaiting Him (ix. 23-28).

The writer's conception that the things in heaven—like the book, the sanctuary, and the ritual furnishings of the Jewish worship under the Old Covenant—need to be purified by the blood of Christ surprises us at first sight, and seems to Dr. Moffatt to push the analogy of earth and heaven to fantastic lengths. But if we conceive our author to be writing to Jewish Christians who perhaps missed in the spiritual worship of Christianity the *many* holy sanctions and consecratory rites of the old religion, we shall not think it strange that he should, in effect, say to them that Christianity has its own sublime, though invisible, sanctions imparted by a greater Sacrifice. Following out this conception, we can well imagine him saying that the book of the New Covenant (the eternal gospel written in heaven, for the New Testament was not yet in being), the Christian sanctuary (the heavenly Zion, cf. xii. 18-24), and the New Israel (the Christian Church, including the company of the redeemed in heaven) have all been consecrated by the blood of Christ. The stamp of the Cross is on all of them. After all, the things in heaven

represent realities which have a present existence for Christians through Christ.

The writer's point is that the sacramental element is as all-pervasive in Christianity as it is in Judaism, and its sanctions in the blood of Christ are incontestably and immeasurably greater, though they are not material. He contrasts the sacrifice of Jesus with the limited, local, impersonal, external and for ever repeated rites of the Jewish religious system (ix. 24-25). Had the Saviour's sacrifice been impersonal and merely prophetic like the latter, it would have had to be re-enacted again and again in the time-series. But just as the provisional and purely symbolic character of the Jewish rites comes out in the over-and-over-againness which cleaves as a necessity to their observance, so the perfection of the offering of Christ is expressed in the historical once-for-allness which belongs to it. It is not denied that the Saviour's Passion is eternal, but its eternity reveals itself in a single act which by the universality of its scope and the utter completeness of its intrinsic quality covers, represents, and supersedes for ever all the shadow-sacrifices which have been offered since time began.

Having said this, the writer comes to his final point. As this act of Jesus 'through the Eternal Spirit' has been effected 'at the end of the world', at the climactic moment of history, there is nothing now that can intervene between it and its sequel in the second Coming of Christ—this time not to deal with sin, since that need has been satisfied, but to complete the salvation of those who await Him.

The return of the writer to his eschatology in the words 'He will appear the second time', etc. (ix. 28), shows that *his great elaboration of the Alexandrian*

contrast of earthly and heavenly reality has been but an interlude in the development of his central theme. The apocalyptic distinction of the Two Ages of time, though crossed by the idealistic antithesis of the Two Worlds of reality, has not been absorbed into or lost in the latter. The original current of the writer's thought resumes its strong flow the moment it has passed through the broad reaches of the Alexandrian section in chapters viii.-ix. Nor does he, like the Fourth Evangelist, resolve the Parousia into terms which include or involve the eternal mystical presence of the Saviour with His Church. He does not break with the apocalyptic hope even in an unconscious way. The eternal world, in breaking into time in the Incarnation of the Saviour, does not cease to be the eternal world. The curve of its intersection with the world of time is—to use a mathematical illustration—like the parabola or hyperbola which, coming from infinity, recedes again into infinity. One focus, represented by the Incarnation and Atonement-sacrifice of Jesus, has appeared in time. The other, represented by the Second Advent, lies wholly beyond. But the writer's eyes are fixed in its direction. 'He will appear the second time—no more to deal with sin—for the salvation of those who await Him.' 'In ever so short a time now the Coming One will arrive, He will linger no more' (x. 37). That the writer can relate eternity and time in the way he does gives us the measure of his faith, but he does so relate them.

Before returning to his eschatology in the last chapters of the book, the writer will gather up the various aspects of Christ into one supreme presentation.

THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST
(x. 1-18)

We are reminded that the repetition year by year of the same sacrifices in Judaism cannot perfect the approach of the worshippers to God, and that for a definite reason.

The Law has in it only a shadow of the future order of salvation. It does not present the actual image of the facts. . . . For in that case would not the sacrifices have ceased to be offered, since the worshippers once purified would no longer retain any consciousness of sins? On the contrary, what the sacrifices bring with them, year by year, is the remembrance of our sins, for it is an impossible thing for the blood of bulls and goats to take our sins away (x. 1-4).

It is interesting that the writer here, taking his stand now on the facts of experience, limits the efficacy of the Jewish rites to the negative function of bringing home to the conscience the fact and the guilt of sin. Because this consciousness is for ever renewed at the altar, it is impossible for the sacrifices to 'take away' our sins. With this declaration of the 'impossibility' attaching to the cultus we may compare St. Paul's analogous affirmation of the disability cleaving to the Law as a system of moral demand (Romans viii. 3). St. Paul is indicting the failure of the Law to conquer the power of sin in our nature, the writer to the Hebrews is impeaching the cultus for its failure to remove the sense of the uncleanness of our souls before God. Both theologians are writing from the standpoint of a higher revelation than Judaism had received, as the writer to the Hebrews will presently make perfectly clear.

Meantime, let there be no undervaluing of the real, though negative, function assigned to the cultus in bringing home to the soul the 'remembrance' of sin. The sacrificial worship kept alive the sense of the Holiness of God and, like the Law in the Pauline theology, it prepared the way for the higher revelation of grace in the gospel. If anyone should doubt this, let him read Isaiah's account of the fundamental experience which made him a prophet. It was in the Temple, amid the elevated associations of the place and the worship, that the transforming vision of the Lord 'high and lifted up' appeared to Isaiah, and it was with fire from off the altar that his consecration came (Isaiah vi. 1-5).

Hence, when He comes into the world, it is with the word: 'Thou hast not willed sacrifice and offering, but Thou hast prepared a body for Me; Thou hast not approved whole-burnt offerings and sin-offerings. Thereupon I said, See, I come—it is so written in the roll of the book concerning Me—to do Thy will, O God' (x. 5-7).

It is by a daring thought that the writer takes the prophetic passage, Psalm xl. 6-8, and gives it a direct relation to the Incarnation of the Saviour. He is not citing the psalmist's words as an interesting illustration or anticipation of the spirit in which the Redeemer acted, but as a factual prediction of the Incarnation by the pre-existent Son of God speaking overhead of the psalmist. The words are quoted from the Septuagint version which, in place of the 'My ears Thou hast opened' of the Hebrew text of the sixth verse of the Psalm, has the reading 'Thou hast prepared a body for Me'. According to this rendering the Christ of the Psalm is not rejecting sacrifice and offering

in favour of something else, but rejecting animal sacrifice in favour of that personal sacrifice which God has willed from Him, and for which He has prepared by appointing for Him the body of His Incarnation.

Here then, according to the writer, is the *modus operandi* of the divine grace in Christianity. *It does not abolish the principle of sacrifice, but by its own consummate provision it abolishes the guilt of sin.* Under the Jewish cultus this guilt of sin was only confirmed and renewed by the sacrifices. Now it is 'taken away'. In the divine Will, accepted by the Christ of God, there is made possible, through the complete personal and spiritual self-identification of the Christ with men, that *actual* assumption of human guilt which was only formally represented in the Jewish rites. For this theologian the taking of our guilt upon Himself by the Redeemer in the body of His Incarnation is so real and absolute a fact for faith that there comes with it a clearance of conscience and a sense of atonement with God such as under the first covenant, though signified in shadow, remained actually unachieved.

The passage brings out very clearly the continuity of the pre-existent life of Jesus with His Incarnate life, and the continuity in turn of the Incarnation with His heavenly life. He assumed manhood to fulfil a purpose declared in eternity, offering Himself to God 'through the eternal Spirit', and now in eternity He presents the result of that finished work. It may be through this strong insistence on the continuity of the Christ-manifestation that, as Dr. E. F. Scott points out, the Resurrection of Christ as a separate moment in the manifestation has not the place or critical significance

in Hebrews which it possesses in the Christology of the New Testament in general.¹

He clears away the first (order) in order to establish the second. And it is by this will of His that we have been consecrated—through the offering, once for all, of the Body of Jesus Christ. . . . He by the offering of one sacrifice for sins has seated Himself 'for ever' at the right hand of God, to await the time when His enemies are made a footstool for His feet. By one offering He has perfected the sanctified for ever (x. 9-10, 12-14).

So, after his rich development of the conception of Christ's oblation, the writer focusses the minds of his readers on the eschatological end of God's purpose in Christ. But before concluding the section, and in order to bring out the reality of the status of the Christian in grace, he reverts to the promise which forms the climax of Jeremiah's prediction of the New Covenant of God.

Putting My laws in their hearts, I will inscribe them also on their minds. And their sins and their transgressions I will never remember again (x. 16-17).

We see here that the writer's Christianity is not entirely that of a futurist hope, however enthralling and engrossing, but starts from an experience of actualised grace which has already in it the essence of what the forward-looking religion of the past descried only in vision.

And where there is this forgiveness, offering for sin no longer has any place (x. 18).

It is surely relevant to observe that, if the writer of the Epistle was merely seeking to establish the grandeur,

¹ *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 153 f.

the finality, the absoluteness of Christianity compared with other religions, as the exponents of the modern interpretation of Hebrews assert, he could have dispensed with the so-often repeated reminder to his readers that the order, the rites and the sacrifices of Judaism were *ended*. It would have been enough to show that Christianity transcended Judaism, the noblest religion of the past, without insisting *pari passu* and all the time that it abrogated and superseded it. But the latter insistence would be of the very essence of the matter if he were writing to Jewish Christians on whom the hand of the past still lay very heavily.

It remains to consider two sections of the Epistle which bear on the same thematic subject.

THE NEW CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO GOD (xii. 18-24)

It is not to a tangible world that you have drawn near, a blaze of fire, a mist, a gloom, a tempest, a trumpet blast, a voice speaking things such that those who heard them prayed that not another word should be added; for they could not endure the injunction that 'If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned'. So dreadful indeed was the manifestation that Moses said, 'I am terrified and shudder'. No! You have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the myriads of angels, to the assembly and Church of the first-born whose names are enrolled in heaven, to the God of all as judge, to the spirits of the just made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks a better message than Abel (xii. 18-24).

Access to God, the admission of the purified soul to the divine Presence, remains for the writer to the

Hebrews the dominant and final norm of the Christian life.¹ But this approach is circumstanced by the character of the world revealed to the worshipper in the Christian theophany, and here the writer in magnificent words contrasts the numinous environment of Israel at Mount Sinai with the greater glory that opens on Christian eyes in the approach to the heavenly Zion, the city of the God of life. Both environments are numinous; both are charged with the presence of the *mysterium tremendum* which is God; but they are not *in pari materia*. It is not to a new Sinai with a repetition of its storm-phenomena that the Christian now goes forward, nor to the dread commandments of a new prohibitory Law—for the numinous element at Sinai was not constituted by signs and portents alone but by the words of terror spoken in the decalogue and in the regulations for the cultus. The Christian approach is circumstanced by grace, grace expressed in the city of God and in the myriads of worshipping angels—ministering spirits all of them—who in festal assembly with the redeemed, the spirits of the just now at last in perfect fellowship with God, constitute the holy, supernatural environment of the Church on earth. Above all, the approach is to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to a sprinkled blood which speaks more eloquently and in more blessed terms than Abel (cf. xi. 4). For while Abel's blood cries from the ground for vengeance, denouncing Cain and excluding him from God, the blood of Jesus invites the sinner's repentance and return. The writer does not forget that the God of all is still the judge of all, and that the voice which once shook the earth is soon to shake both heaven and earth (xii. 26), but between the sinner

¹ See above, pp. 66 f.

and the holy God there has stepped the Mediator of the New Covenant, the great atoning High-Priest of our confession, our Advocate with God.

The writer to the Hebrews, then, will remind his readers that it is not a case—as perhaps in their contemporary mood they sadly thought—of Jerusalem being no more, of the angels of the Law and the holy prerogatives of Israel, the firstborn of God, being ignored, of the covenant with God being rescinded and the sacramental cultus and all its sanctions being abandoned. In the new approach to God through Jesus the people of Jesus will find all these things again, not indeed in the old form in which they were at best only shadow-shapes or simulacra of the things in heaven, but sublimated, spiritualised, eternalised, and perfected. But let the readers beware that they do not at this last critical hour turn away from Him who, greater than Moses, now speaks to them from *heaven!*

THE CHRISTIAN ALTAR

(xiii. 10-14)

We have an altar which confers no authorisation to eat from it on those who minister (or worship) in the tent. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought by the high-priest into the sanctuary 'as an offering for sin', are consumed by fire 'outside the camp'. For this reason Jesus also, to sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go out to Him, outside the camp, bearing the shame He bore, for we have no permanent city here, but seek the one to come (xiii. 10-14).

The Christian group at Rome to which our author

writes was, by his own showing (xiii. 9), in danger of being 'led astray' or swept from the course by doctrines of a kind alien to Christianity, which turned apparently on 'foods'. His reply is that it is a right thing to have the 'heart', that is the mind or will, fortified or re-assured, but this can only come by 'grace'. It will not come by the observance of food-laws which have never in the past helped those who submitted themselves to their discipline. There can be little doubt here that the writer's allusion is to Jewish regulations which were being commended at Rome as an aid to faith, and that the propaganda owed the strength of its appeal, in the last resort, to the association of these ritual regulations with the cultus of the past. It was from this cultus, from the altar of Judaism, that the sanctions for the ordinances were derived.¹ Was there to be no altar in the religion of the Messiah as the source of holy aids to living?

The writer's reply is that there is an altar in Christianity, but it is of a very different character from the altar as conceived in these Judaising doctrines. No analogy of any kind exists between the Oblation of Christ and those Jewish sacrifices from which food was carried away for the use of the ministrants or worshippers at the shrine. The only analogy which the offering of Christ has with the sacrifices of the past is limited to the whole-burnt 'offering for sin' in which, after the blood of the victims was carried by the high-priest into the Holy of Holies, their bodies were totally consumed by fire outside the camp of Israel. So it was that Jesus made His self-offering. He who came to sanctify Israel by His blood suffered death 'outside the gate'. What, then, is the Christian altar? Is it

¹ See above, pp. 132 f.

Golgotha? It lies certainly beyond the bounds of the terrestrial Jerusalem, and it is the altar of the Saviour's martyrdom. We must therefore 'go out' to Jesus, to where He was crucified 'outside the camp', and must take our share of the shame He bore. This last appeal indicates with sufficient clearness the nature of the influences which were retarding the group from the open profession of Christianity and inclining it to draw in various ways within the protection of the *religio licita* of Judaism. And here the writer is given a supreme chance to assert once again the eschatological character of the Christian calling.

'Let us go out to Him, outside the camp . . . for we have here no permanent city, but we seek the one to come.'

This going out—the putting into practice of the great watch-word of Stephen and of the world-mission—is the true Christian approach to the altar; the sharing of the reproach of Christ is the true Christian communion of the altar; and it is in this going out and in this communion that the 'grace' is to be experienced, by which, and not by archaistic observance of food-regulations, the spirit is to be fortified.

Much has been written on this difficult passage by exegetes of different schools in the effort to discover its relation to the Christian Eucharist.¹ There are those who, unable to find themselves in the thought that the writer could at this point omit all reference to the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, have by

¹ On the whole question see, besides the *Commentaries* of Westcott and Moffatt, Dr. Vincent Taylor's *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, pp. 153-161.

dexterities of exegesis identified the altar with the table of the Lord. On this view we might interpret the passage thus: 'We Christians have our altar, but it is not one at which those who minister or worship in the (Jewish) tabernacle have authority to eat.' In other words, we Christians have our sacramental food, but this food has nothing whatsoever to do with the ritual food-laws of Judaism. So Bishop Westcott in his *Commentary*: he understands the writer to mean that 'our great sin-offering, consumed in one sense outside the gate, is given to us as our food. The Christian, therefore, who can partake of Christ offered for his sins, is admitted to a privilege unknown under the Old Covenant'. But this understanding, which in any case reads more into the text than is really there, fails altogether to do justice to the thought of the *holocaust* sacrifice which the writer declares to be the only admissible analogy to the offering of Jesus to be found in the Jewish cultus. For at the holocaust altar nothing of any kind was eaten. It can hardly be maintained then that the writer has in his mind at this point the relation of Christ's sacrifice to the sacrament of the Holy Communion. But it is equally gratuitous, and just as tendentious, to fasten attention on the writer's words here and on his omission at an earlier point to make any reference to the 'bread and wine' offering which Melchizedek brought to Abraham, and to take these as evidences of a declared disapproval of some supposed materialistic interpretation of the sacrament in some quarter of the contemporary Hellenistic Church, as if the writer were purposely denying all connection between the death of Christ outside the gate and that communion with the Lord which St. Paul describes in 1 Corinthians x. 16-22 and xi. 23-29. So Dr. Peake

in the Century Bible volume on Hebrews, and so Dr. Moffatt in his *Commentary*. In actual fact the passage gives us no positive indication that the writer has the Christian sacrament of communion in mind in this context.

But if nothing is said in Hebrews about the Lord's Supper, is that any stranger than the total omission of all reference to the same sacrament in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans? In the case of Hebrews the special explanation exists that the writer is so swept onwards throughout the whole Epistle by the tide of his eschatological passion that he is carried past all intermediate stages of communion with the Lord on the way.¹ The absence of the Holy Supper from his itinerary of the way goes with the omission of all that mysticism of present faith-union with Christ which lies so near to the heart of St. Paul. He writes to brace his readers for the eschatological journey which is for him the very essence of the Christian calling. We have here no continuing city. We have not even resting-places by the way. Even St. Paul, who rejoices that life to him is Christ, can, when speaking of himself as a prisoner at Rome undergoing trials not very different from those of some of the Roman Christians to whom Hebrews is addressed, confess himself inwardly divided and embarrassed: 'I long', he writes (Philippians i. 23), 'to depart and to be with Christ, for that is very much better.'

It remains, however, that between the writer to the Hebrews and St. Paul there is a wide difference in the manner in which the central mystery of the Christian religion, the Atonement wrought by Christ, is ap-

¹ See also above, p. 136, and the Note which concludes the present section.

proached. With St. Paul it is instinctive to relate the event on Calvary immediately to the inward and personal experience of the Christian. It is not enough to contemplate the drama of redemption in its cosmic and objective character: to receive and believe that Christ entered into history, lived as man, suffered in the flesh, died on the Cross, revealed God's righteousness with relation to sin, was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father and was exalted to the right hand of God. All this must have its reflex for St. Paul in the inner domain of the Christian spirit. Christ lives in the Christian (Galatians ii. 20), is incarnated or 'formed' in the Christian (Galatians iv. 20). As Christ died, so the Christian dies to sin, and as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so the Christian rises to a resurrection life (Romans vi. 1-14). So also he ascends with the exalted Christ, and is glorified with Him in the heavenly places (Colossians iii. 1-3). All acts and episodes in the cosmic manifestation of Christ have their instant counterpart in the human experience of redemption. On the other hand, in the writer to the Hebrews there is not this point-with-point correspondence.

For the writer to the Hebrews salvation depends indeed, and depends absolutely, on the act of Christ's supreme sacrifice. But it is not considered 'how that self-offering becomes a vital reality in the experience of believers'.¹ There is no reference to justification, to reconciliation, to peace with God, to the death or destruction of sin in the flesh, or to resurrection to newness of life as present and inward realities. But this is primarily because in Hebrews the eyes are on Christ and on the consummation of His work in *heaven*. The

¹ Vincent Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 161 f.

whole response of the Christian soul to God is comprehended in the soul's absorption in its heavenly calling (xii. 1-2). For the writer the whole revelation of God in Christ and all the blessings of grace are centred in the Priesthood of Christ and in the effects of His priestly work as we draw near to God through Him. But it is made quite clear that in this approach to God we experience much. We experience absolution from guilt (i. 3, etc.), the expiation of our sins (ii. 17, etc.), the cleansing of our consciences (ix. 14), the 'sanctification' of our persons (x. 10), the removal of the barriers between our souls and God (x. 19-23) and the impartation of the Holy Spirit and the powers of the World to Come (vi. 4-5). By His one offering Christ, says the writer, 'has perfected the sanctified for ever'; He has put them, that is, into unhindered communion with God.

NOTE.—The difficulty of bringing the sacrament of the Holy Communion in the Church into relation with the writer's insistence on the holocaust nature of the Saviour's oblation is not insuperable. While the problem is not to be solved either by exegetics of the type of Dr. Westcott's or by critical negations of the type of Dr. Peake's or Dr. Moffatt's, it does admit of possible solution along other lines of approach. At the institution of the Supper the Body and Blood of Christ were present in His living person and as such they were sacramentally offered. The Body was that which *was to be* broken on the Cross. The Blood was that which *was to be* shed. In this sense all of the terms used of the elements in the accounts of Mark, Paul, Matthew, and Luke admit of being understood. Jesus was associating His followers with His *impending*

sacrifice, and was thus consecrating them for the Kingdom of God. In receiving the bread and the cup these followers were sacramentally receiving the Lord's Body and Blood as devoted by Him *beforehand* to death. What they hereafter commemorate before God is the supreme self-oblation of the *living* Lord. The altar from which the gifts are given is the Upper Room, not Golgotha, which was not yet present except in anticipation. In this way it can be held that the strictures of the writer to the Hebrews, his insistence on the difference between the sacrifice offered by Christ and the ordinary sacrifices offered on Jewish altars, do not exclude the reality of the meaning which the Church attaches to the observance of the Eucharist service.

CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTERS IV AND V

The evidence furnished by the theological material of the Epistle to the Hebrews agrees very closely in form and substance with the conclusions drawn from the admonitory sections as summarised at the end of Chapter III.

I. The emphasis of the writer on the supernal and heavenly character of the Christian revelation and on the transcendence of the Person and Work of Christ over the Old Testament religion of the Law and the Cultus is strongly and evenly maintained from the first page of the Epistle (i. 2) to the last (xiii. 13-14). The Alexandrianism of the middle section of the Epistle (vii.-x.) is but an interlude designed to explicate and enforce the central eschatological appeal.

II. The Epistle is directed to a minority group in the Church which is failing to grasp the significance of

the Church's faith in the heavenly Priesthood and Oblation of Christ, and is intended to promote their fuller understanding of this mystery. But there is nothing which *explicitly* designates the group as Jewish-Christian or otherwise.

III. On the other hand, the consistent theological teaching of the Epistle is *compatible* with the hypothesis that the persons addressed were Jewish-Christian in origin, background, and sympathy. And throughout the work (*a*) the author's selection of topics for didactic exposition, (*b*) the form and direction of his argument, and (*c*) the character of his particular emphases, all gain in intelligibility and point if we suppose the group to be conservatively Jewish-Christian in sentiment and tendency. The like does not at all hold true if we assume for the group a Gentile-Christian background.

Thus in a passage of pivotal importance (ii. 10-18),¹ where the writer had before him *other* possibilities of developing his great Christological theme, it is remarkable that he turns at once and irreversibly for all the rest of the Epistle to what can only be described as a hieratical and ritual interpretation of Christ as our High-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Why does he base his whole Christological argument from the Old Testament on the fulfilment of the priesthood and the cultus in Jesus? And why, in another passage (vii. 11-19),² and yet another (x. 9-10),³ is he so emphatic in his insistence that in Christ the Levitical priesthood, the ordinances, and the sacrifices have been not only transcended but *abolished*?

So again why does he, in speaking of the inability of the gifts and sacrifices offered in Judaism to qualify

¹ See above, pp. 101-105.

² Above, pp. 114-116.

³ Above, pp. 146-147.

the worshipper in the matter of conscience for approach to God (ix. 6-10),¹ say so surprising a thing as that these gifts and sacrifices were only material regulations concerned with food and drink, etc.? The only plausible explanation is that doctrines of a Jewish kind regarding food and drink constituted a danger to the community (xiii. 9),² and were being propagated on the ground of their sanction in the Jewish cultus.

Similar questions are raised for us, as we have seen, by the predilection of the writer for details like the furnishings of the tabernacle (ix. 1-5),³ his emphasis on the purification of the things in heaven (ix. 23-28),⁴ his sublimation of the ancient sanctities in his glowing picture of the glories of the heavenly world (xii. 18-24),⁵ and his delineation of the Christian life as a going forth to Jesus 'without the camp' (xiii. 10-14).⁶ All of these features, as we have seen, acquire a real explanation and point the moment it is assumed that the group had sentimental leanings towards the old religion of Judaism with its worship, sanctions, sacraments, holy prerogatives and means of grace. None of them has equal point and intelligibility if we place the group against an Ethnic-Christian background.

IV. Once again, we have found no trace of the Gnostic or pagan aberrations to which Gentile Christians would be ordinarily exposed.

¹ See above, pp. 132-133.

³ Above, pp. 130 f.

⁵ Above, pp. 147-149.

² Above, pp. 149-150.

⁴ Above, pp. 140 f.

⁶ Above, pp. 149-151.