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PAULINE AND OTHER
STUDIES

IN EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY

BY

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LONDON MCMVI

III

THE STATESMANSHIP OF PAUL



THE
PAULINE WORLD

A.D. 44-60.
(Syria and Palestine as in Jan. 44.)

Scale - 1:5,000,000

- REFERENCE.
- Provinces of the Roman Empire
 - Dependent Kingdoms and Principalities
 - St. Paul's Routes
 - Other Roads

III

THE STATESMANSHIP OF PAUL

To the scholars of the "Tübingen School" belongs the credit of inaugurating, as a practical reality, the free, unbiased study of early Christian history, with the single aim of reaching the truth, instead of assuming it. But from this splendid merit much must be detracted, when we observe how they carried out their attempt. In a task which demanded intimate familiarity with the life and spirit of the Roman Empire, they showed a singular absence of special knowledge (combined with unhesitating confidence in the perfection of their knowledge), and an extraordinary incapacity to gauge the proper meaning of a Greek or Latin paragraph. Thus they evolved a history of early Christian times which was in contradiction to many of the authorities whom they quoted and misunderstood.

It was a great thing to substitute freedom of spirit for blind following of authority; but we shall do away with all the value of their teaching if we allow the glamour of a modern to be substituted for the sacredness of an ancient authority. If we remain true to the spirit which impelled them, disregarding authority and seeking only for truth, we must set them aside and start anew. And, above all, we shall rebel against the tyrannous spirit of their pupils, who in the name of freedom would stifle investigation, and limit

by *a priori* rules the conclusions which a scholar may express as the result of his studies.

Especially in the case of the Apostle Paul, subsequent scholars have been too much under the spell of that school, and even those who recognised that the Tübingen opinions were incorrect, too readily admitted that the mistake lay only in pressing too far a correct method, whereas, in reality, the premises were erroneous and fictitious. We believe that a seriously incorrect picture of that great man has been commonly set before the world by modern scholars; and we would venture to plead for a reconsideration of the case.

We shall treat our subject as an episode in Roman history. It is, of course, impossible to ignore the religious aspect of any Pauline question, but so far as possible we concentrate attention on the work of Paul as a social influence on the Roman world.

I

In the first century of our era the Mediterranean world was full of the mixing and clashing of nations—not simply in the way of war, which belongs to all centuries and is specially characteristic of none, but far more in the way of peace and conscious effort at amalgamation. The attempt was being made on a great scale to forge the nations into an articulated organism of provinces, looking to a single Imperial central heart and brain for order and unity. The ruling power was Rome. The motive force to set in motion all that seething mass of materials, so that they might coalesce in new unions, as provinces of one fatherland, was the Imperial policy—that marvellously wise and far-sighted creation of the genius of Julius Cæsar, shaped further by

the skill and prudence of Augustus and his great minister Agrippa. Maecenas, whom the historians add as a third to make the pair a trio, or even mention to the exclusion of Agrippa, is an overrated person: the supposed contrast between his great but hidden importance and his apparent indolence and luxury and self-effacement tempted the old historians to attribute to him much to which he has no real claim. He was simply a very clever manipulator of the party machine in the city, an able political wire-puller, who was exceedingly important in the earlier stages of Augustus's struggle for power, but who lost all his importance and sank into insignificance and oblivion in B.C. 23, when the era of constructive Imperial statesmanship began.

The attempt was, at first, too far-reaching. It was sought to obliterate the old national lines of separation. The provincial boundaries were so drawn as sometimes to break up single nations between several provinces, and sometimes to include several nations in one province. Each province was treated as a unity, and the Greek rendering of the Roman term "*province*" was actually *nation*: "the province Asia" is expressed in the political Greek of the time as "Asia the nation". But to belong to a nation in the old sense was non-Roman and anti-Roman, and was reckoned as the mark either of slave origin or of disloyalty. The loyal subject of the Empire was reckoned and designated by his province and city, not by his nation; though the real nature of the designation has often been concealed from modern scholars by the fact that a provincial name was in many cases identical with some national name. Especially the New Testament scholars have rarely showed any knowledge of this principle; and have often contemned, with the licence of ignorance, those English scholars who wrote from a higher and truer point of

view.¹ Like most of the fruitful principles in Roman Imperial history, this was first observed and worked into the study of the subject by Mommsen. When Paul called himself "a Tarsian of Cilicia," he was not speaking of the country Cilicia, great part of which was under the rule of kings. He was describing himself by his city and his province; and he was so understood by the Roman officer to whom he spoke.

For a time the attempt to destroy the old national lines of separation seemed likely to prove successful. The Roman Imperial policy was aided and supported both by the enthusiastic loyalty of the subject peoples and by the almost universal fashion of regarding as vulgar and contemptible everything that differed from the Greek or the Roman standard. But nature was too strong. National character could not be ejected either by fashion or by loyalty. In the second century Hadrian recognised frankly that the former policy had been pressed too far, and inaugurated a new policy of respecting national ideas and enlisting them in the service of the Empire.

In the first century, however, that earlier policy was strong and popular, and the history of the time must be studied according to it. We must remember that the loyal population thought and classified according to provinces, that national designations were used only as a necessity to express geographical facts, and not political relations, that a horse or a slave or a foreigner was called "Phrygian" or "Lycaonian"; but a citizen of a Phrygian city was called by his province (either Asia or Galatia), except that the national designation was applied to him sometimes in jest

¹I may quote, as one of the best examples of the true spirit in treating early Christian history, the Rev. F. Rendall's article in the *Expositor*, Nov., 1893, p. 321 ff., on "The Pauline Collection for the Saints".

and raillery as a nickname, or in contempt, or from geographical necessity to define more precisely his locality.

Of all the men of the first century, incomparably the most influential was the Apostle Paul. No other man exercised anything like so much power as he did in moulding the future of the Empire. Among the Imperial ministers of the period there appeared none that had any claim to the name of statesman except Seneca; and Seneca fell as far short of Paul in practical influence and intellectual insight as he did in moral character.

We cannot suppose that Paul was entirely unconscious of the social and political side of his schemes and ideals, or that he was simply pushed forward as a blind, unthinking agent, an impotent piece in the game that God was playing "upon this chequer-board of nights and days". That is not the theory of the Christian thinker. We propose to examine what evidence there is of any definite idea and principle—purely on the external and non-religious side—in the action and the teaching of Paul. What creative and guiding idea—if any—did he throw into the melting-pot, in which Roman policy was stirring and mixing the nations?

If there was no idea guiding his action, he would have to be ranked as a religious enthusiast of marvellous energy and vigour, but not as a religious statesman—as a rousing and stimulative force, but not an organising and creative force. But it seems beyond question that his creative and organising power was immense, that the forms and methods of the Christian Church were originated mainly by him, and that almost every fruitful idea in the early history of the Church must be traced back to his suggestive and formative impulse. He was a maker and a statesman, not a religious enthusiast. He must therefore have had in

his mind some ideal, some guiding conception, which he worked to realise.

Bearing in mind the limits we have imposed on our investigation, we look to see what was his attitude towards the political ideas and divisions and classification amid which he lived. We shall not stop, except for a moment, to allude to the familiar principle which he expresses, in the writings preserved to us, regarding the facts of Imperial organisation. He always acts upon the principle, and impresses it on his own churches, that existing authorities and government should be respected, not as right, but as indifferent.

Such are the sentiments and advice in his later and Christian stage. But his ideas as a Christian were developed out of his pre-Christian ideas and experiences. What did he think before he was a Christian? We go back to his early years. We ask what had been his attitude towards the Roman world in his earlier stage? What was the tone and character impressed on him by his surroundings as a child? Let us try to estimate in a practical way the conditions amid which his family and himself were placed in Tarsus, and the necessary effect of them.

II

In his own writings or speeches, Paul gives some important evidence bearing on the question as to his sentiments in childhood and youth.

In the first place, we note what he writes to the Galatians: "It pleased God, who separated me even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the nations". Even before his birth, God had chosen him and set him apart to be the man that should preach Christ to

the nations ; but a special revelation of Christ was needed before he awakened to full consciousness of the purpose.

That statement is couched in the simple, concrete form in which ancient thought uttered itself ; and it expresses what we should put in more abstract and scientific terms—that heredity and environment had determined his bent of mind, that his family and his early surroundings had been so arranged by an overruling power that he was made to be the person that should preach to the Gentiles ; but that the truth which ultimately he should preach had to be awakened to consciousness in him at the proper time.

Secondly, he writes to the Romans, strangers to him personally, and explains his deep interest in them : “ I am debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the educated and the uneducated classes ”. He had got something from them all, and he was bound to repay. He had learned good from them all, and he must teach them all good in return. He fully recognised that, in his position as a Tarsian and a Roman citizen, he owed certain duties to Tarsus and to Rome ; and he was a man that never ignored or neglected any duty.

Looking at the situation broadly, we see that the greatest fact in the worldly position of the Jews at this time was their relation to the Roman rule. It was difficult even for a Jew who lived in Palestine to restrict himself so completely to Jewish surroundings that he was not frequently brought into contact with the Roman world. The soldiers, the officers, the tax-gatherers, the traders of Rome were around him. The justice, the laws, the organisation of Rome were constantly pressing upon him.

If it was difficult for the Jew to isolate himself in Palestine, it was impossible for the many thousands of Jews who

lived in the great cities of Asia Minor and in Rome to do so. Still more was it impossible for the Jew who had acquired the rights of Roman citizenship to remain blind to the question, what was the relationship between his position as a Jew and his position as a Roman? This was the situation in which Paul spent his early years: son of a Jew, who was also a citizen of the great Greek-speaking city of Tarsus, and who possessed the honours and rights—very important honours and rights—of a Roman. Every day of his life Paul's father was necessarily brought face to face with the world of Tarsus. As a Roman, he was a person of rank and consequence. Few people can be blind (none ought to be blind) to what gives them rank and influence in their city; few can be blind to the claims of their own city, in which they possess rank and influence. It was not necessary for the Jew to forget or ignore his Jewish birth and religion and people, while he recognised his position and opportunities as a Tarsian and a Roman. There was no opposition between them. Both Tarsian and Roman law fully admitted that Jews were never to be compelled to do anything contrary to their religious principles; they had full liberty to observe every religious duty, to go and come freely to Jerusalem, and any interference with their privileges was punished by the law. These privileges really gave the Jews superior advantages over their fellow-citizens; and the consequent jealousy of the Greeks in the Asiatic cities often broke out into quarrel, complaint, and even riot.

Such had been the favoured position of the Jews in those great cities of Asia Minor like Tarsus from the third or second century before Christ. Their advantages were increased after the Roman Empire became the ruling power. The peace, the order, the security of property, the ease and regularity

and certainty of intercourse by ship and by land between the different provinces of the Empire, the absence of vexatious restrictions and oppressive dues on articles of commerce,¹ the abundance of money, the almost perfect "Free Trade within the Empire," resulted in a development of commerce and finance on a vast scale. This was eminently favourable to the Jews with their financial genius; and there was opened up before them a dazzling prospect of wealth and power. They had merely to accommodate themselves to their situation, and the world was at their feet. To utilise those splendid prospects it was not required that they should do any violence to their religion. All that was needed was that they should cease to hold aloof from the surrounding world, that they should, to a certain degree, mix with it, speak its language, learn its ways, profit by the education it could offer, use its resources, and conquer it with its own weapons.

And it was not only in respect of wealth and material success that this glorious prospect was open to the Jews in the Roman Empire. It was equally the case in religion. The Jewish faith, so strange and mysterious and incomprehensible to pagan society, with its proud isolation, its lofty morality, its absolute superiority to pagan ideas of life, its unhesitating confidence in its superiority—that religion exercised an extraordinary fascination on the Roman world, not so much on the purely Greek cities, but more on Rome and on Central Asia Minor. Every synagogue had a surrounding of persons interested in this religion, affected in varying degrees by it, desirous to hear more of it—persons who were called "the devout" or "the God-fearing," and are often

¹The customs dues were not heavy, but only a quite fair return for the advantages which the Imperial peace afforded to trade.

mentioned by Luke under those names. That large circle of persons added to the importance, the dignity, the weight of the Jews in the pagan world. The "devout" pagans formed, as it were, an intermediate stage or step between the Jews and the common pagan—which brought home all the more vividly to both Jew and pagan the interval between them. It is even highly probable that "the devout" added to the wealth of the Jewish communities, both by payment of formal dues and by voluntary gifts (as was the case with the centurion—Luke vii. 5—who built a synagogue at Capernaum). One great reason why the Jews so bitterly resented the attraction which Paul exercised on "the devout" was that he drew them and their gifts away from the synagogues: hence the frequent declarations made by Paul that he has accepted no money from his converts, declarations which imply and reply to frequent accusations.¹

There was, therefore, opened to the Jews as dazzling a prospect of religious and spiritual influence in the Roman world as of material wealth and prosperity. There have never been wholly wanting Jews whose vision was concentrated on the spiritual prospects of their race, whose imagination was filled with visions of religious progress. These have been the great prophets and leaders and elevators of the people, preventing the mass of Jews from losing hold on the spiritual side of life, from becoming absorbed entirely in the pursuit of wealth, and from sinking amid that pursuit down to the level of pagan society. Such a prophet and leader of his people was Saul of Tarsus destined to be, according to our view.

¹ Mr. Baring Gould, in his *Study of St. Paul*, has the merit of properly emphasising this fact. I am the more bound to say this, as I think that he takes far too low a view of Paul's character and action. See Art.

Now consider what are the possibilities of the situation in which Paul was nurtured at Tarsus. It might be possible for a dull and narrow, but intense and fanatical nature to grow up in Tarsus in a reaction and revolt against pagan surroundings, to revert by a sort of atavism to the type of his ancestors before they were settled as part of the Jewish colony there, to reject and despise and abhor all contact and participation with the Tarsian world. But Paul was not such a hard and narrow nature: he could not grow up as a citizen of Rome and of Tarsus, and yet remain blind to the power and the spiritual opportunities of Jews and Judaism in the Empire; for Paul was as absolutely free from mere blind bigotry as he was from all sordid and vulgar motives. As he grew up, he felt himself to be a strict law-abiding Pharisee; yet he was also a Roman, speaking Latin in order to assert his Roman rights; he was also a Tarsian, *i.e.* a Hellene, and he had to speak Greek in ordinary life.

Clear evidence of Paul's feeling for his Tarsian home may be seen in the account which Luke gives of one of the most terrible scenes in his life, when, bruised and at the point of death, he was rescued from the clutches of a fanatical and exasperated Jewish crowd by the Roman soldiers. If we imagine what his condition must have been—sore from the blows and the pulling asunder of his rescuers and of the mob, probably bleeding, certainly excited and breathless, the shouts of the crowd still dinning his ears, "Away with him," as they strove to get hold of him again, his life hanging on the steadfast discipline of the soldiers and the goodwill of their commander—we must feel that he would not waste his words at that supreme moment, when the Roman tribune hurriedly questioned him as to his race and

language, in stating mere picturesque details: anything that rose to his lips in that moment must have been something that lay near his heart, or something that was calculated to determine his rescuer's conduct. He said: "I am a Jew, Tarsian of Cilicia, citizen of no mean city". This was not his strict legal designation in the Roman Empire, for he was a Roman citizen, and that proud description superseded all humbler characteristics. Nor was the Tarsian designation the one best calculated to move the Roman tribune to grant the request which Paul was about to make: that officer was far more likely to grant the request of a Roman than of a Tarsian Jew. Nor had Paul any objection to claiming his Roman rights, for he shortly afterwards claimed them at the tribune's hand.

A critical friend questions my opinion that Paul was excited on that occasion, and argues that he was cool, pointing out that his first request was to be allowed to speak to the mob. I cannot see reason to change. That Paul was marvellously cool and collected and courageous in a most perilous scene has always been one of the reasons why I admire him so much; but I do not think that he was in the same state of mind as if he had been walking through quiet streets quietly with a sympathetic friend. In such a scene of hairbreadth escape from being torn to pieces by his own countrymen, Paul's mind was inevitably affected in a certain way and degree. Any one who has ever been in a position of serious danger knows that, however cool and self-possessed one may be, there is a certain affection of the mind, which for want of a better name I have called excitement. The thoroughly brave man is never so collected, so capable and so dangerous to his enemies as in the moment of danger; but I do not think he is free from excitement;

he is strung up to exert all the best powers of mind and body to their highest degree.

My friend also points out that the Roman officer had mistaken Paul for an Egyptian outlaw, whom he was rescuing from the mob in order to deliver over to justice; and that Paul replied: "I am (not an Egyptian, but) a Jew of Tarsus". That is quite true; but it is not the whole truth. If Paul had merely sought to impress the officer with his respectability, the best way obviously was to tell that he was a Roman. A Roman centurion would have shown far more respect to a Roman than to a Tarsian citizen.

It seems impossible to explain Paul's reply on this occasion except on the supposition that "Tarsian" was the description of himself which lay closest to his heart. And, especially, the praise of Tarsus as a famous city is hardly capable of any other interpretation than that, in his deeply stirred emotional condition, he gave expression to the patriotic love which he really felt for his fatherland and the home of his early years.

It is not impossible now, and there is no reason to think it was impossible then, for a Jew of the Diaspora to entertain a distinct and strong feeling of loyalty towards the city where he was born and in which he possessed the rights of citizenship. It must be remembered that the feeling of an ancient citizen to his own city was much stronger than that which is in modern times entertained usually toward one's native town. All the feeling of patriotism which now binds us to our country, irrespective of the town to which we belong, was in ancient times directed toward one's city. "Fatherland" denoted one's city, and not one's country. Both *Patria* in Latin, and *Patris* in Greek, were applied to

the city of one's home.¹ It was only to a small degree, and among the most educated Greeks, that Hellas, as a country, was an idea of power. The educated native of a Cilician city like Tarsus regarded the country Cilicia as implying rudeness and barbarism, and prided himself on being a Hellene rather than a Cilician; but Hellas to him meant a certain standard and ideal of culture and municipal freedom. He was a "Tarsian," but Tarsus was, and had long been, a Hellenic city; and the Greek-speaking Tarsians were either Hellenes or Jews, but not "Cilicians" in the sense of nationality, only "Cilicians" as members of the province.

Moreover, citizenship implied much more in ancient times than it means now. We can now migrate to a new city, and almost immediately acquire citizenship there, losing it in our former home. But in ancient days the Tarsian who migrated to another city continued to rank as a Tarsian, and Tarsus was still his Fatherland, while in his new home he was merely a resident alien. His descendants, too, continued to be mere resident aliens. Occasionally, and as a special compliment, a resident alien was granted the citizenship with his descendants; but a special enactment was needed in each individual case and family.

The city that was his Fatherland and his home mattered much to Paul. It had a place in his heart.

III

And how perfectly natural is it that this should be so! How unnecessary it seems to prove so laboriously that Paul had a warm feeling for the home of his childhood! He

¹To a certain degree the Roman Imperial régime succeeded in widening the scope of the term *patria*. That is one of the many advances which it enabled the world to make. It gave to men the power to feel that their Fatherland was their country and not their narrow township.

was a man, a natural, warm-hearted man, not the emotionless ideal philosophic prig whom his contemporary, Seneca, described as the perfect hero. That alone ought to be proof enough. And it would be proof enough were it not for two obstinate and most mischievous prejudices.

The first is that deep-rooted idea among many scholars that the "early Christians" could never be natural human beings, but were perverted into some unnatural frame of mind in which ordinary human ties and affections ceased to have much force for them, and the world and its fashions and relations appeared to them as their enemy, while they hesitated at no outrage upon established social conventions, and recked so little of truth in their efforts to glorify and propagate their religion that no statement which they make can be trusted, unless it is corroborated by non-Christian evidence. That there were such Christians, is doubtless quite true. There are many individuals who are capable of seizing a great idea only in a one-sided and narrow, but intense, way. They have their use; and their limitations give them in some directions increased strength. But these did not give the tone to the Church in the first or second century. Read the Letter of the Smyrnæans about Polycarp: and observe how the writer contrasts his gentle dignity and undisturbed calm with the nervous and hysterical conduct of some Christian martyrs—those, for example, who went to extremes in showing their contempt and hatred for their judges, rousing the indignation even of the humane and law-abiding Pliny, while they returned evasive answers to simple questions, lectured Roman dignitaries as if the latter were the criminals and they themselves the judges, and even used offensive and insulting gestures in their eagerness to gain the crown of martyrdom. But to the writer of

that letter, it is the conduct of Polycarp that seems to be on the same plane of feeling as the action of Jesus, while he distrusts the abiding strength of the violent and outrageous.

The second prejudice is that Paul was a narrow, one-sided, bigoted, Pharisaic Jew, ignorant of, and hostile to, all higher Hellenic education, literature and philosophy, brought up by his father according to the principle "Cursed be he that shall teach Greek science to his son".

In contrast to these poor and barren opinions, we see that Paul was far more than a Jew. His Jewish inheritance in religious and moral conceptions was, of course, by far the most important part of his equipment for the work that lay before him. But his experience as a Tarsian and as a Roman was also indispensable to him; and, as we have seen, he was himself quite aware of the debt he had incurred to the Gentile world. "Tarsian," to him, expressed a thought that lay very deep in his heart; whereas the name "Roman" expressed an idea more intellectual than emotional, more a matter of practical value than of kindly sentiment. But the Roman idea was a very important part of his qualification as a statesman, and a moulder of the future of the Empire. There had passed into his nature something of the Roman constructiveness, the practical sense for economic facts, the power of seeing the means to reach an end in the world of reality and humanity, the quickness to catch and use and mould the ideas and ideals of the citizens of the Empire.

The two scholars who have best perceived the Greek side of Paul's thought are the only two, so far as I know, who have studied him in the light of real familiarity with the life of the Greek cities—Professor Ernst Curtius in Germany and Canon Hicks in England. Some have dipped into Greek

life in search of illustrations of Christian history; and some have studied it deeply for that purpose. Those two scholars have studied the Greek life of that period for its own sake, with professional thoroughness; and then studied Paul in the light of full knowledge. The Roman side has never, so far as I know, been sufficiently estimated.

There is much in a name; and it is peculiarly unfortunate—it has blinded and narrowed the modern view of that extraordinary man—that no one ever thinks of Paul by his Roman name. But it is as certain that he had a Roman name and spoke the Latin language, as it is that he was a Roman citizen. If, for example's sake, we could think of him sometimes as Gaius Julius Paulus—to give him a possible and even not improbable name—how completely would our view of him be transformed. Much of what has been written about him would never have been written if Luke had mentioned his full name. But Luke was a Greek; and the Greeks had never any interest in, or any comprehension of, the Roman name, with all that it implied. Just as, true Greek that he was, he never liked or understood the Jews, so he could, indeed, respect, but never appreciate and comprehend, the Roman talent and method in administration. Fortunately, it was not essential for the historian of the early Church to fully understand the old Roman nature. But still there are places where we feel his limitations.

Thus Paul grew up at once a Roman and a Tarsian and a Jew. The constant presence of those opposite facts before his eyes, the constant pressure of those opposing duties upon his attention, would set almost any boy a-thinking; and out of Paul's thinking grew his ideals and plans of life.

Before his mind, as he grew up, there lay always outspread that double prospect—the lofty, stern purity of the

true Judaism among the pagan world, and the danger that the Jews might slip back towards the pagan level. This last was a real danger in the Jewish colonies of Asia Minor. Many Jews had become strongly affected by pagan surroundings; they had formed eclectic systems, a syncretism of Jewish and pagan elements, sometimes in the way of philosophic religion, sometimes in mere vulgar magical arts for practising on the superstition and emptying the pockets of pagan devotees in the outer fringe of "the devout," as we see at Colossæ, Ephesus, Thyatira; they intermarried with the pagans, and the children of the mixed race, sometimes at least, were not subject to the Jewish law, as at Lystra; in the words of the Talmud, "the baths and wines of Phrygia had divided the Ten Tribes from their brethren".¹

In view of that danger, ever present before his eyes in Tarsus, a danger which he had clearly comprehended—as we see in his emphatic warnings to the congregations in Galatia, Corinth, etc., who were exposed to it as much, and in the same way, as the Jews—what was Paul to do? How should he act? What was the remedy which he must press upon the minds of his own people, as the great prophets of old had done in the face of the dangers in their time? There was but one remedy. Judaism in the midst of Roman society must assimilate that society and raise it to a higher level, or it must perish. Had Judaism been persecuted, it might have preserved its purity by remaining separate. But it was not persecuted; it was treated fairly; it was even favoured in some considerable degree by the Imperial policy. The temptations for Jews to assimilate themselves to the society of the cities in which they lived

¹M. Isidore Levi rejects Neubauer's translation as given in the text. The fact remains, whether or not the Talmud states it.

were irresistible to mere human nature, for the most brilliant prospects were open to them if they did so. There were, therefore, only two alternatives open to Judaism in the Empire: either it must conquer the Empire or be conquered by it; either it must be a power to raise Græco-Roman society to its own level, or it must sink to the level of that society.

We can see that clearly now. But did Paul see it at the time? The truth is that at that time it was far clearer to the thinking mind than it is now. It was the great fact of the time: it must have been obvious to any Jew with insight to pierce below the surface of things. To the prophet's eye the situation was clear. The time for the Messiah was arrived. It was impossible that God should suffer His worship to perish. That worship must conquer the Roman world, or it must perish; but victory with the Messiah was at hand.

IV

At a certain point in his early life Paul went up to Jerusalem to begin the proper course of study of the law, under the charge of one of the greatest and most famous Jewish teachers, Gamaliel. Such was the natural, almost the necessary, course for a Jew who felt strongly the religious needs and prospects of his nation.

It does not, however, appear that he went to Jerusalem very young. His life had been spent at Jerusalem from his youth up; but the word "youth," in the strictest Greek usage, begins about twenty and ends with the approach of old age (Acts xxvi. 4); and though we cannot assert that Paul used the term in this strict sense, yet we ought not to assume that he meant it to indicate a much earlier age than

twenty, inasmuch as he does not use the word "childhood". He distinctly implies that his conduct, as it was shown at Jerusalem, was that of a young man, not of a child; and the fair interpretation is that he came to Jerusalem after, not before, he was of age to assume the *toga virilis*, which was usually in the fifteenth year. But then he chose the religious life, and came to Jerusalem over, not under, the age of fifteen. He made his choice at a comparatively mature age; and it is a perfectly legitimate and practically certain inference that he was previously brought up in the house of a Roman citizen, to be ready to take his place in the world. We know that he could use the Latin language, for he could claim his rights as a citizen, and he could appeal to the Emperor; and it is certain that his appeal was allowed on the ground that he was a Roman whose life was endangered by Jews.

Another consideration points to the same conclusion. Paul was never married; and in the *Apologia pro vita sua*, which he wrote to the Corinthians, when they suggested, as a cure for the immorality of contemporary society, that all Christians ought to be ordered or advised to marry,¹ he makes it quite clear what his view was. There were some who chose the Divine life, some few who were capable of it: these would probably not marry, and they were right. A universal rule, such as the Corinthian philosophers advocated, was an outrage on the freedom to which man was heir.

One cannot read that passage, I Corinthians vii. 9, without feeling that Paul is defending himself by stating the reasons which impelled him when young to violate the

¹ *Expositor*, October, 1900.

almost universal Jewish custom and remain unmarried.¹ He had chosen the Divine life; and his resolution was that expressed afterwards by Rabbi Asai, who took no wife: "My soul cleaves to the Law: let others see to the up-building of the world".

This choice points to an age beyond mere childhood. It is the settled resolution of a man, not the hasty, immature choice of a boy. Even in the early maturity of a southern race, we must suppose that Paul made his choice over, not under, his fifteenth year. On the other hand, his choice could not be long postponed after that age. A Jew was expected to marry between fourteen and twenty. Paul chose the Divine life; and forthwith he went to Jerusalem where alone the proper course of study could be found.

The change of scene, when Paul went to be educated in Jerusalem, produced no essential change in his relation to the Roman world, and is unlikely to have caused any change in his aims. He had chosen the religious life in preference to the worldly life; and many years of study in Jerusalem were needed to fit him for his career. During those years Jesus appeared, and died.

To a Jew who saw vividly and keenly either the material or the spiritual position which was open to the Jews in the Empire, the coming of the Messiah meant the realisation of that commanding position in the Roman world, of which they dreamed and to which they looked forward. The Messiah was to make them the lords over their conquerors.² To all such Jews the death of Jesus was peculiarly offensive.

¹ I may be permitted to refer to the *Expositor*, October, 1900, p. 298 ff., where (and in the preceding sections) the passage in question is very fully treated.

² On Paul's interpretation of this idea, see the end of § VI.

That death turned His career into a hateful parody of their Messianic hopes : a life of humility and poverty extinguished in ridicule and shame was set before them, and that impostor they were to worship as the King of the Jews. The more eagerly Paul had thought about the glory that lay before triumphant Judaism in the Empire, the more intensely must he have detested the impostor who had, as he thought, degraded before the Romans the Messiah and the nation.

The intense bitterness with which Paul pursued the Christians was, therefore, the necessary consequence of his anticipated conquest by the Jewish religion of the Roman Empire. They were the enemy : they degraded his ideal, they made a mockery and a farce of it : they must be destroyed, if Judaism was to reach its destined glory in the world.

In the midst of his persecuting career came the event which suddenly transformed his whole life. It did not alter his ideal and his anticipation. He was as true and as enthusiastic a Jew after as before. He still longed for, and looked forward to, Judaism taking its true position in the Roman world. But the way in which Judaism was to reach that position was now changed in his thought.

On our conception of that epoch-making event depends our whole view of Paul's life. As we understand that transforming event, so do we understand, or fail to understand, the man and his work. A fashionable misconception of that event in modern writers is to minimise its suddenness, to represent it as the culmination of a change that had been gradually working itself out in his mind. On that view his old ideas had been slowly loosening and dissolving, and suddenly they assumed, under a slight impulse, a new form.

But he himself has no mercy on that theory. Nothing can exceed the emphasis with which he declares that there was no antecedent change in his views: he was, in the madness of his career, carrying the war into foreign cities, eager to force the Christians to rail against and mock the impostor. But Paul had a clear and philosophic mind. He saw clearly his own position. His whole mind and conduct was based on the certainty that the impostor was dead. If that were not so, the foundation crumbled beneath his feet.

Then suddenly he saw Jesus before him, not dead but living. He could not disbelieve; he saw; he heard; he knew. He says to the Corinthians, "Have I not seen Jesus?"

To examine the circumstances of that wonderful event in a satisfactory way would need a long special article. But fortunately, we need not here, for our present purpose, enter on the somewhat pedantic discussion of the more scholastic critics, who prize words above realities, whether Paul's vision was real or imagined. It is sufficient for our purpose that to Paul himself it was the most real event of his whole life. All else was, in comparison, shadow and semblance. There he had enjoyed a brief vision of the truth, the Divine reality. He had seen God, and spoken with Him. His earthly self had been permitted for a brief space to become aware of the omnipresent God, who is everywhere around us, and who sometimes permits certain mortals of finer mould and more sentient nature, His chosen prophets, to hear His voice, like Samuel and Elijah, or to see Him, like Moses: only by the inadequate and imperfect way of the senses can their human nature become cognisant of the Divine nature.¹

¹ See the first article in this volume.

What is certain and fundamental is this. On that vision Paul's future life and work were built. He could not disbelieve, for he had seen and known. To think of disbelieving was to deny his own self, his mind, his existence. He had no room in his nature for even the thought of disbelieving or questioning. He had seen the Jesus that he had fancied to be a dead impostor: he had recognised that He was living: he knew that He was God. There was no more to be said; what remained was—to act.

Further, through that vision the civilised world was conquered, and the whole history of the world was changed. Those who think that the world's course can be altered by the figment of a diseased brain may engage in the purely academic discussion as to the reality of Paul's vision. Those who were with him could not hear or see what he heard and saw. That only proved to him how much favoured he was, and how little able they were to see into the realities of the world.

An infinitely more important question is, how far that vision changed Paul's ideal and his nature? Our view, which is set forth later on in this paper, is that the ultimate result on Paul's mind was to make him more clearly conscious of the true nature of his own ideal. The vision and the revelation removed, as it were, an obstruction from the channel of his life, and in his later career we see the full powers of his heart and mind sweeping down in free, harmonious, mighty, irresistible course. He was not, in his later life, treading laboriously in a path marked out by an overruling power, contrary to his own instincts. He was enabled to use, with perfect mastery and absolute concentration of mind, the marvellous faculties and ideals with which nature had provided him. He was set free from clogging and hampering

associations, which would have made his success impossible, and with which he must inevitably have come into collision as soon as he really began to work. He was a Pharisee; but he had so much clearer and wider an outlook than the Palestinian Pharisees that he could never have acted in agreement with them except in the destructive effort against the Christians.

V

For many years after that crisis, it would almost appear as if Paul had lost hold of his old idea and really turned away from it. This was, for several reasons, a necessary step in his development. For the moment he had lost all confidence in his own aspirations. He would not confer with flesh and blood, if we may turn his phrase to our purposes. He desired only to do what was set before him. It seemed to him that his experience qualified him peculiarly well to appeal to the Jews: he had been so fanatical an opponent of Jesus that his witness must convince them. This work seemed to be given him to do; and to that he devoted himself, abandoning his old dreams and plans.

When in later years he looked back on that epoch-making crisis, he recognised that the Divine, foreordained purpose was then manifestly revealed—that he should go to the Nations. But at the time he did not clearly recognise it. It was not so explicit as to compel intelligence. He was commissioned to both Jews and Greeks, and he went to the Jews of Damascus, of Jerusalem, of Cilicia. At last—after twelve years—in Antioch, under the guidance of Barnabas, and following the previous trend of events there, he began to address the Greeks, but as yet only through the door of the synagogue.

In fact, Paul at first was not ready to go direct to the Nations. He had not yet fully understood his position. He could not speak until he had completely assimilated and formulated his ideas. He must know what was the Kingdom of God as a Christian ideal before he could make it conceivable to the Nations. He had seen with his own eyes that Jesus was living; and that truth he had preached to the Jews. To them that was sufficient for a message of conversion. They denied that He was living, and the denial was necessary for their position. If He was living, then the whole fabric of their religious platform fell into ruins. But much more was needed to make a message intelligible to the Nations. They had not denied that Jesus was living. They were merely indifferent. Jesus had not crossed their horizon. Whether He were living or dead mattered nought to them. In order to appeal to them, Paul must know how to set before the Nations, in a form intelligible to them, the whole truth, of which part was learned by all Jews at the feet of their fathers, in the family life, in the family celebration of the Passover.

Then, fourteen years after the first revelation of the Divine purpose, Paul became aware of a new message, in a more precise and definite form, when he was in Jerusalem for the second time since his conversion: "Depart! for I will send thee far hence to the Nations". Doubt and disobedience were alike impossible, and the work of Paul's life now at last began.

VI

In the first missionary journey, A.D. 47-49, there is no clear proof that Paul had already consciously in his mind a purpose affecting the Roman world. It is not possible to

say more than that he went in that direction, and, after some wavering preliminary steps, occupied the frontier province of Galatia, and thus seized on the first great step in the road that led from Syria to the West. But the bare narrative in Acts does not reveal any consciousness of the nature of that step; and Paul's own words seem to imply that it was without any distinct plan in his own mind that he planted his chief work in Galatia. In truth, the sea route along the coasts of Cyprus, Pamphylia and Lycia seems at first to have been before the mind of himself and Barnabas; and they were led out of it and set on the land route through Southern Galatia by unforeseen and incalculable events. Still, that sea-road also led to the West and to the centre of the Empire; and the fact that Paul at first chose the sea-road would be quite consistent with an ultimate Roman purpose. The ordinary way by which travellers went from Syria to Rome was by sea; and the voyages of that period were coasting voyages. Hence, if Paul had already a purpose towards Rome vaguely present in his mind, he would think first of the coasts along which such a voyage lay.

It seems, in truth, rather strange at first sight, that the Lycian and Pamphylian coasts were Christianised only slowly and late. Many Christians travelled back and forwards between Syria and Rome in the first two centuries; and as the prevalence of westerly breezes in the Levant made the voyage very slow along the south coast of Asia Minor, one might have expected that the new religion would have spread rapidly in the coast-lands. But in those coasting voyages the travellers were kept close to the ship by the very uncertainty of the wind. It was never possible to say at what moment the land breeze might arise by whose help the ship

might work its way westwards; and the favourable chance must not be lost. Those who were not on the ship when the wind veered lost their passage. Such was once my own experience in a voyage along the Æolic coast. After waiting for hours in the harbour of Phocæa, hoping for a favourable change in the breeze, as the universal opinion was that the wind was settled for the day, I went, after midday, to take a hasty survey of a reported monument about half an hour distant. When I returned, after two hours or less, the small sailing vessel in which I had been offered a passage had gone. The wind had suddenly changed enough to let it get round the promontory; and thus I missed an opportunity which never again fell to my lot. But it was not a valueless experience. It brought vividly home to one the reason why the land roads rather than the coast roads were the lines by which, in ancient days, new thoughts and new religions won their way. Rome was Christianised by sea-travellers, but the intermediate harbours were not affected so early as Rome and Puteoli (where the Roman voyage ended).

The one exception confirms the rule: Crete was early Christianised, and, if we had any information, we should doubtless find that the new religion spread first on the south coast, along which Rome-bound vessels were constantly working their slow course. Crete was a great wintering place for those vessels. They could work their way from point to point thus far along the coast, taking advantage of favourable opportunities. When they reached the harbour of Phœnix, however, near the western end of Crete, they had before them the long sea course over the Ionian waters (or, as sailors called it, *Adria*) to the Italian or the Sicilian coast; and, if it were late in the season, they must lay up there for

the winter. Thus passengers bound for Rome might have four months sure before them in Phœnix, while they never had an hour sure in any other harbour before Puteoli.

In the second missionary journey Paul's purpose and his method are clear. The first stage on the land road had been previously gained. Paul now fixed his eye on Ephesus. That great scholar, Dr. Hort, has said all that need be said on this point in his *Lectures on Ephesians and Colossians*, p. 82: "On his second journey he was apparently making his way to the province Asia, doubtless specially meaning to preach in its great capital, Ephesus, when he received a Divine warning," which diverted him temporarily from his Ephesian purpose, and led him to the provinces Macedonia and Achaia. But "on his return to the East, though he had little time to spare, it would seem that he could not be satisfied without at least setting foot in Ephesus and making some small beginning of preaching in person there". And then "he said farewell, with a promise to return again, if God will". Then, in the third journey from Syria, once more "he followed his old course through Southern Asia Minor, and this time was allowed to follow it right on to its natural goal, Ephesus. . . . The whole story gains in point and clearness, if we suppose that it is essentially a record of the steps by which St. Paul was enabled to carry out a cherished desire, to be himself the founder of a Christian Church in that great metropolis in which the East looked out upon the West."

Now, Ephesus was not a greater city than Alexandria, nor a city so full of intellectual and commercial life as the rich and busy Egyptian metropolis, seat of one of the greatest universities of the world. What, then, did Dr. Hort conceive to be the reason why Paul was so eager to occupy

Ephesus at this early stage of his work? He does not expressly state any reason—he was not at the moment in search of a reason—but it lies in his words ready to our hand. Ephesus was the next step in the conquest of the Roman Empire, for it was the door by “which the East looked out upon the West” in the Roman system of communication. With Galatia already occupied, Asia and Ephesus formed the next stage. We have a right to quote Dr. Hort as a witness, whether consciously or unconsciously, that already in the plan of his second journey Paul was looking forward to the conquest of the Empire.

In the rest of Paul’s career, both in the organisation and articulation of his scattered congregations into the great unity of the Church, and in the indications given of his future plans, the same purpose is clear and (one might almost say) unmistakable. He thinks, as it were, in Roman provinces: he uses names for the provinces which were purely Latin and never employed by Greek writers of his time, though later Greek writers of Roman history occasionally used them. As the Roman fashion of naming a province changes, he too changes; and whereas in his earlier writing he speaks of Illyricum (which a Greek would call Illyris), in a later letter he mentions Dalmatia. He classifies his newly founded churches according to the Imperial provinces. He estimates his progress according to provinces—Syria and Cilicia, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Illyricum—and as he goes forward he plants his steps and his institutions in their capitals. This is the language, these are the thoughts, of a man whose aim is co-extensive with the Empire, “the creation of a unity within the Church as extensive as the Imperial organisation” (to quote Mr. Rendall’s words in the article already mentioned).

So, too, he lays his plans for the future. He will go over into Macedonia. He "purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying: After I have been there, I must also see Rome". But Rome was already occupied by other founders, and Paul shrank from building upon another man's foundation, "wherefore also," as he writes to the Romans, "I was hindered these many times from coming to you"; but at last, having established the Churches of the East, he resolves to occupy Spain, the extreme limit of the West, the remotest province of the Empire; and on the way thither he will visit Rome, "for I hope to see you Romans in my journey, and to be brought thitherward by you". He was eager to visit the capital of the Empire, and to achieve something there, yet his unwillingness to interpose on the work of others made him always shrink from his longed-for goal, until the opportunity offered itself to "see Rome" on his way to Spain. It is strange that this careful and courteous apology for intruding on a field already occupied (by an Apostle) should have been misunderstood by so many modern scholars, who have actually quoted this apology as a proof that the Roman field was unoccupied when Paul went there.

The eagerness to see Rome, the design of going to the West after conquering and organising the East, admit of no other interpretation except through the fully formed plan of conquering the Roman world.

Tradition even stretches his plans into Britain, the northern limit of the Empire; but it is too uncertain to be used as evidence. He was, however, sending his subordinates at least as far as Gaul in his later years (if Tischendorf is right in accepting the reading of the Sinaitic Manuscript, "Gallia," in 2 Timothy iv, 10).

To follow out this idea in detail would overstep the permissible limits. These indications, however, may be enough to show that there lay in Paul's mind from infancy, implanted in him by inheritance from his Tarsian Jewish parents, nourished by the surroundings of his childhood, modified and redirected by the marvellous circumstances of his conversion, the central and guiding and impelling thought that the religion revealed to the Hebrew race must conquer and must govern the Roman world (which, ultimately, would mean the whole world), and that the realisation of this idea was the Kingdom of God.

This was a very different idea from the idle dream of the Palestinian Pharisees and Zealots, a barren fancy, born of ignorance and narrow-mindedness, that the Messiah would plant their foot on the necks of their enemies and make them to rule over their Roman conquerors. Such a thought was fruitless and useless. The man who could give it space in his mind was never chosen by the Divine overruling will to go to the Nations. We see in Paul a totally different conception of the Messiah. After his Christian days began, that is, of course, obvious. But even from his childhood it was a rich and great idea—and therefore an idea of justice and freedom, bringing with it equality of rights, equality of citizenship, free participation in the one conquering religion. To prevent the Jews from sinking to the level of the Nations, among whom their lot was cast, the Nations must be raised to the level of the Jews.

Such an idea naturally developed into Christianity. The man who entertained it was really quite out of harmony with the narrow Jewish party, and after a time he must discover this in the ruin of all his earlier plans. But Nature and the Divine purpose were inevitably driving him towards

his true party and his true allies, as the ox is driven by the pricks of its driver's goad; and though Paul, for a time, resisted with blind fury, the power of Nature was too strong, and the truth was presented to him on a sudden in an irresistible and compelling way, which seized him in its grasp and dominated his entire mind and being ever afterwards.

The Pauline idea of the Kingdom of God, from the religious point of view, is admirably treated by Professor Sanday in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, i., 481 ff. To speak in Pauline words, "the Kingdom of God," contemplated in its absolute reality, apart from the fetters of space and time, "is righteousness and peace and joy"; "it is not in word but in power". But here, at present, we look only at the external side, as the idea develops itself in existing society and political circumstances, constrained by the conditions of the world in which man lives. The Kingdom of God had to unfold itself in the Roman world, province by province, in the cities of men, in parts and small groups of persons, far separated from one another by sea and land, by language and manners. While Paul never loses sight of the eternal and absolute idea, he is generally engrossed with the task immediately and practically before him, the life of the Church scattered over the provinces of the Empire, "the elect who are sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, etc.," the Church of the Diaspora.

VII

It may be objected to the interpretation of Paul's aims which was stated in the former part of this article, that some more explicit expression of his intention might have been expected in his writings, in addition to the obscure indica-

tions of which some instances have been quoted in our pages. But this objection has no force in view of the character of his writings.

In all his letters which have been preserved to us, Paul is absorbed in the needs of the moment, eager to save his readers from some mistake into which they are liable to fall, or have actually fallen—anxious to strengthen them and to move their minds—compelled to answer accusations against himself and misrepresentations of his actions which had endangered his hold on the hearts of his correspondents. He is always, as it were, with his back against a wall, fighting for life against principalities and powers, men and sin. So it must always be with a man who is not an opportunist, but aims at an ideal. His life must be one long fight, which will not end till he dies, or till he gives up his ideal and falls back into despairing acquiescence in the existing order. But for Paul only one thing was possible. He could not rest: he could not abandon his ideal: he must fight on to the end. Accordingly, when we are on the outlook for some expression on the external side, as distinguished from the purely religious expression, of the ideals which underlie and give unity to the storm and stress and constant fighting of his life, the letters, controlled as they are by consideration for the immediate needs of others, are not well calculated to help us in our search, though, as a whole, they become far more luminous and consistent when read on our view.

If we had a defence pronounced by Paul before a great tribunal, where sat a judge of the type of Seneca at his best, we might expect to find in it a survey of his life and work rising above a mere reply to criticism, and expressing his ideals in a form that could be comprehended by the judge. Before a judge like Felix it was useless to pitch his defence

on a higher level than a statement showing that he had not done the particular act which he was accused of. A judge of the higher type, such as Rome produced in unusual numbers, would have sought to understand the deep-lying motives which had brought about the collision between Paul and the chiefs of his people; and Paul, with his unerring instinct, would have given the judge what he desired. What would we not give to have an account of his defence before the supreme tribunal of the Empire in Rome, or even that in Corinth before Gallio, the brother of Seneca?

There is only one case in which Paul's appearance before a tribunal of a higher class has been described to us, *viz.*, the Council in Jerusalem. Bitterly prejudiced as the Jewish Sanhedrin was, still it was composed of the leading men of the nation, men of experience and standing, men with a certain reputation which they must maintain, even though they were already convinced before the trial began that the defendant was guilty, men who were accustomed and trained to look a little below the surface, and who were not ready to accept a mere superficial defence. It was not a tribunal of the highest kind, but it was the great Council of the Jewish nation; and a real defence of his life might have been made before it; but the speech was interrupted at the outset. Paul saw that he ought to begin his defence with a brief and pithy sentence, and "he cried out in the Council: I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question". That was the beginning and the enforced end of his defence in the great crisis of his life. What can we make of it?

That is one of the greatest scenes of Paul's life. On our interpretation of his aims, those few words addressed to the Sanhedrin stand forth as the sharpest and most com-

prehensive statement that has come down to us from him about his work and his plans. But before describing the meaning which we gather from those words, it is necessary to state briefly the meaning which is, and must be, taken from them on the ordinarily accepted view of Paul's ideals—according to which the scene sets him in an unfortunate and disappointing light.

According to that generally accepted view, Paul was snatching a momentary victory by a clever stroke of policy, playing on the passions of his hearers and judges, leading them away from the real point at issue and directing their attention to a different question on which they were sure to quarrel with one another and forget the prisoner. On that view he had been a Jew and a law-abiding Pharisee of the strictest type, brought up strictly within the narrow Jewish circle of thought and custom, ignorant of the teaching of the western schools, who, however, had become a Christian and was being tried for calumniating and bringing contempt on his original faith: in claiming to be a Pharisee he was rather unfairly laying claim to his pre-Christian character, and in saying that the accusation against him turned on his belief in the resurrection of the dead he was raising an unreal issue, with barely enough of justification to save him from falsehood.

A writer to whom we can always turn for a clear and sharp presentation of accepted views in their most reasonable form, Canon Farrar, in his *Life of St. Paul*, finds that "we cannot defend his conduct at that meeting," and explains his action on the ground that "he was a little unhinged, both morally and spiritually, by the wild and awful trials of the day before": "the words suggest a false issue": they show that Paul failed in that "scrupulously inflexible

straightforwardness" which the Canon finds to be characteristic of "the English in particular". "Yet," he proceeds, "after all these qualifications," after making "every possible deduction and allowance for a venial infirmity," "we cannot in this matter wholly see how St. Paul could say without qualification in such an assembly, 'I am a Pharisee'". That conduct "was hardly worthy of St. Paul". "Moreover, the device, besides being questionable, was not even politic. It added violence to a yet more infuriated reaction in men who felt that they had been the victims of a successful stratagem."

On our part, while we acknowledge that the last sentence which we have quoted describes what must inevitably have been the result, if Paul's action had been a mere crafty trick, we fail to see any proof that that result actually occurred, and that the sympathy which his words created in a portion of the Sanhedrin turned immediately or at all into redoubled fury. The Council, certainly, continued to be bitterly hostile, and even became more bitter, but it was dominated by the Sadducee priests, who were all the more infuriated because of the check which Paul's bold words inflicted on them at the meeting.

We are, in truth, very imperfectly informed as to the attitude of the Jews towards Paul. Luke, as we shall see, was strongly prejudiced against the Jews; and yet we gather from him that there was generally an appreciable minority of Jews in the cities of the East who were favourable to Paul, that in Beroea a majority of them were on his side, and that in Rome the leading Jews adopted a guarded and non-committal attitude, which has been a riddle to modern scholars, but which seems very significant. The Roman Jews were well aware how strong was the opposition

to Paul among many of their nation. They must have been well aware of the long prosecution to which he had been subjected in Palestine ; but they were not determined against him ; and this must certainly be due to the fact that a minority of the Jews regarded his policy as being not entirely wrong.

Yet it seems impossible to avoid that unfavourable interpretation of the Council scene on the commonly accepted view of Paul's early life. If he had been only the narrow, hard, bigoted and ignorant Jew whom some modern writers describe, he undoubtedly had completely changed after he became a Christian, and had swung round to the opposite extreme. Beginning, as they say, in early life by opposing and hating everything that was not pure Jewish, he afterwards was all for breaking down and destroying the bar of separation between the Jews and "the Nations". The man whose maturer views are the absolute antithesis of his youthful ideas has no right, when he is challenged in the Council of his people, to pretend and solemnly assert that he still holds his earlier ideas.

But when Paul declared in that great crisis, before the elders and rulers of his nation, that he was "a Pharisee, son of Pharisees," he was obviously claiming to be still what he had been born and bred : he was asserting the continuity of his mental development from first to last. Nor does that assertion stand alone. Paul has left us many other statements to the same effect. Sometimes indeed he seems to say almost the opposite : he speaks in the strongest terms of the complete revolution in his life that was made by his conversion : everything was changed for him : he passed from death to life. Nothing can be more emphatic than his expressions in some places. But in other places he

sums up his whole life as a continuous and unbroken process, describable in its entirety by the same words; and he studiously avoids anything which could suggest that any revolution or serious change had occurred in its character. Thus, for example, the first words he uttered in the Council, as he began his defence, before the High-priest interrupted him by ordering an attendant to strike him on the mouth, were these: "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day". The description is not restricted to one half of his life. Before and after his conversion alike he had been equally zealous to serve the God of Israel. That is pretty nearly equivalent to his statement, made a few moments later, that he was still a Pharisee. So again, he claimed in his defence before Felix, a few days later, that as a Christian he was "serving the God of our fathers, believing all things that are according to the Law . . . always exercising myself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and men". His defence was always the same, and therefore had been carefully planned: that his life had been consistently directed from the beginning towards one end, the glorification of the God of Israel by admitting the Nations to be his servants, and that this was true Judaism and true Phariseism.

Those two groups of statements are in the strongest contrast with one another. But, in our interpretation, there is no contradiction between them. Both assertions are equally true. His life, before and after, was the same, and yet utterly different. The difference was infinite, yet the difference was slight. The whole of the present paper is an attempt to state and make evident the meaning of this apparent contradiction; but to carry out the idea properly requires an entire study of Paul's life. Every incident in

his career is affected by this view ; some are seen in a totally different aspect.

In the Council scene, then, a plain issue is presented. On the one hand, we find that his claim to be still what he had been from the beginning is simply a brief statement of the view which we have been stating of his life as a whole. On the other hand, those who take the common view are bound to hold that his statement before the Sanhedrin came perilously near being false ; and Canon Farrar, in his clear, narrow, logical way, accepts the inevitable inference ; but others try to palliate Paul's conduct, and go to far greater extremes than Canon Farrar would permit in making excuses for it.

It may be, and has been, urged that, when a prisoner is, or considers that he is, subjected to undeserved trial on a trumped-up charge, he may justifiably go to considerable lengths in evading the main issue, and in stirring up latent disagreement among his judges. But that question of casuistry does not concern us here. Paul had come up to Jerusalem well aware that he would be seized and accused by the Jews. He elected to take this risk, because his scheme of work pointed the way to him ; and he went straight on in the line indicated. In his trial the highest interests were involved ; the right of free speech and of liberty to preach hung on the issue. It was not necessary to come to face the trial ; but he who chooses to face a trial, who comes voluntarily forward to speak on behalf of his religion and his co-religionists, falls far short of his own beginnings, if, in the crisis, he tries to outwit his opponents and to save himself by a clever trick. Such a victory is not a real victory. It would not strengthen the cause which Paul had at heart ; and it would only be a temporary and evanescent advantage. On this

occasion Paul was bound to be true to himself, to claim the freedom that he considered was his right, and to have recourse to no subterfuge. He was, however, fully justified in putting his defence in the form which would be most effective with his judges. If one party among his judges was more capable of being brought to a favourable view of his claims than the other, he would naturally and justifiably aim at affecting the minds of the more hopeful party. But he must not stoop to mere trickery, and he must be unwaveringly loyal to his cause.

Moreover, it cannot reasonably be maintained that Paul's trial was undeserved, and that the charge against him was trumped up. It was quite fair that he should be tried—provided the trial was justly conducted. It was the best thing for him that he should have the opportunity of stating his own defence before the rulers of his people. Considering what Jewish views and principles were, we do not see that the Council can be blamed for bringing him to trial—provided always that they gave him a fair trial. He had, undoubtedly, done harm to the Judaism which they represented. He had spoken sharply and severely against it. He had drawn away from it many of its admirers and benefactors in many cities of the Empire; and his influence was calculated to lower the prestige of the existing Jewish institutions among "the Nations". He, on his side, claimed to represent the true line of development in which Judaism ought to advance. He held that Judaism was sinking below its true self and becoming dead, because it resisted the forces within itself that were impelling it to advance. It was right for the Council to bring him to trial, and to hear his defence. It was right for him to plead his cause with absolute truth, to refuse to sink below his own highest level, to condescend to

no tricks or stratagems. On the one side there must be a charge stated against him : on the other side, there must be a denial of the charge, and an argument in support of the denial. Paul's denial is couched in the form of a statement that he is a Pharisee. The right criticism of the proceedings is, not that there ought to have been no trial, but that, as it was conducted, it came perilously near making the prosecutors the judges.

VIII

Now, according to our view, Paul's career as a Christian was not the negation, but the completion, of his early ideals ; it turned his youthful dreams into realities. He was not less of a Jew after he became a Christian : he only came to know better what Judaism really was. He began, at his conversion, to obey the law of his own character, inherent in him from his birth, and developed by his education. Henceforth, he recognised and obeyed the guidance of Nature, or, as he would say, of God, which previously he had stupidly, blindly, ignorantly resisted. But he lived in all good conscience before the God of Israel, afterwards as before, as he had just a moment before stated to the Council. If he was a Pharisee before, he still remained a Pharisee ; and so he now declared to the Council. In the words of Goethe's motto, *What he wished in youth, he had in age*, but in a way he had not dreamed of.

But what are we to understand when he calls himself a Pharisee ? What meaning did this carry to him ? In estimating this, we must remember what was the circle of ideas within which the trial necessarily moved. It turned on questions of the world and of life, not on philosophical theories.

The difference between Pharisee and Sadducee may be looked at from several different points of view, religious, philosophic, moral ; but in the practical facts of politics and society, within which the trial moved, the relation to Rome was the critical question. The Sadducees were in favour of compromise and agreement ; the Pharisees were the national party, who stubbornly resisted Roman encroachment, both in politics and in life. The Sadducees would sacrifice all those facts and elements in their religion and national life that tended to prevent the agreement with Rome and to impede their career in the Roman Empire, whose sway they accepted. The Pharisees would not sacrifice one jot or one tittle of the law.

Considering Paul's attitude towards the Empire, it was inevitable that he should seem to the Pharisees to be as much a Sadducee as a Christian. He accepted, as Jesus accepted, the practical fact of Roman rule. The common Pharisee could not see that both Jesus and Paul accepted the Roman government because, spiritually, it had no reality and no importance. Paul would concentrate the mind upon spiritual facts, and accept the merely outward and evanescent facts of the world, of politics, of society. The Sadducees saw nothing more real than the Roman government ; Paul saw that among the realities of life the outward form of conquering rule had no place. The present form of government was an unreal and passing phenomenon, which never touched the truth and reality of life. Both the Sadducees and Paul recognised that they should accommodate themselves in the circumstances of life to the Roman rule. But the Sadducees would make their existence in the Roman Empire : they knew no higher life : they recognised nothing but the facts of worldly and

material prosperity. Paul would live a life above the level of the Roman Empire.

So it was with everything that was distinctive in Judaism. The Sadducees would level down to the Roman standard. Paul would level up to the Jewish standard. The Sadducees would sacrifice everything that was inconvenient for the Roman career. Paul would not sacrifice one jot of the truth of the Law, or of its spiritual value. The Sadducees recognised no spiritual value in anything.

But these differences, infinitely great as they are, were not visible to the multitude; and to the multitude Paul necessarily seemed a mere Sadducee, and worse than a Sadducee, for he was said to despise and abolish even the externals of Judaic ritual, which the Sadducees regarded.

Our contention then is that, amid the reports and the inaccurate ideas current in Jerusalem about Paul's conduct and opinions, the statement which he made in that great scene was the best way of placing before a Jewish audience in a single introductory sentence his position and views of life. It is, of course, impossible to put one's entire philosophy and ideal of life into a score of words, or explain in a short sentence the whole of a complex problem; but Paul took the best way to destroy a most critical and fundamental misconception among his hearers. If the Sadducees condemned him as a Christian, the Pharisees condemned him quite as much for being a Sadducee.

The crux of the situation lay in this. Paul stood before the more patriotic members of the Council as the worst of Sadducees, the denier of principles dear to the Pharisees, the corrupter of the purity of the Law, the breaker-down of the proud Jewish isolation from the hateful world. His action had that character in his enemies' eyes. He denies

that accusation in a word by declaring himself a Pharisee. The accusation is nowhere recorded in that precise form, for we are very inadequately instructed about the form which popular indignation and accusation against him took. But the assertion here sufficiently proves the form of a common and specially dangerous accusation. So also he assured Agrippa that he had lived a Pharisee, and in a passage addressed to the Philippians (which has most obviously the form of a reply to stinging accusations) he declares that he was "as touching the Law, a Pharisee". When we see in his writings such a repeated assertion, we recognise in it the answer to an accusation.

But, it is urged, "the Pharisaic spirit was in its very essence the antithesis of the Christian," and Paul was "in reality at variance with the Pharisees in every fundamental particular of their system".

Those statements are, to a certain degree, true. But it was rather the faults of the Pharisees, than the essence of the Pharisaic ideals, that were the antithesis of the Christian spirit. It is too easy to see only the faults of the Pharisees, and to forget that they were the patriotic, the earnest, the puritan party among the Jews. Much divided the Christian Paul from the ordinary Pharisees. But from another point of view it is true that he was still a Pharisee. In certain great questions, he could not better define in brief his position than by denying that he was a Sadducee and asserting that he was a Pharisee. Like the Pharisees he would not concede anything of Jewish truth to the Gentiles; he would keep the entire Law. But, unlike the Pharisees, he would impose on the Gentiles only the spiritual facts and not the outward and unessential ceremonies of the Law. So, too, much divided the Christian Paul from the ordinary

Jews. But Paul claimed to be the true Jew and the true Pharisee.

Again, the Sadducees recognised no spiritual side to the Law, no spiritual and eternal side to human life. Here Paul was entirely the Pharisee. Belief in the resurrection of the dead was the briefest declaration of his position in this question.

Nor did his declaration before the Council draw attention away from the real fact that Paul was on trial as a Christian. To Paul the fact that Jesus was living was the guarantee of the resurrection of the dead, and to him, as to all Jews, the recognition that Jesus was living implied that Jesus was the Christ.¹

Thus Paul's declaration to the Sanhedrin is found to be the briefest possible way of bringing home to the patriotic party among his judges that, though his acts had been directed towards establishing an agreement between the Jews and the Roman State and breaking down the isolation of the Jews, still he was resolute not to sacrifice one jot of the spiritual law, or sink in the smallest degree below the loftiest level of Judaism. What further explanations would have been made in the course of his speech we know not, for the speech was interrupted at that point.

IX

It is true that Luke's account of the scene is so expressed as to lend itself readily to the commonly accepted view. It may be allowed that possibly he interpreted the scene in that way; but that is far from certain. It is quite in accordance with the spirit of our theory to say, in the words

¹ On this see §§ IV., V.

of Luke, that "when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the Council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee," etc. Let us conceive clearly how the action proceeded.

Paul opened his defence before the Council by declaring that he had lived in all good conscience before God until that day: he began by maintaining that his life had been spent in one continuous uninterrupted strain of zealous obedience to the God of Israel. That, as we have seen, is really the same essential truth which he afterwards expressed in another way.

The beginning was unfortunate. It offended his audience, instead of conciliating it—a serious fault in a speech for the defence, and one that Paul was seldom guilty of. The high-priest rebuked him brutally, and roused a very sharp and bitter retort. Paul had not known the high-priest, who was not presiding at the meeting, but was merely one of the general body of the Council. The Roman tribune had summoned the meeting, and necessarily was its president. As president, he brought Paul before the meeting (as Luke mentions), which was one of the recognised forms in the Roman theory of the chairmanship: Paul could not speak at such a meeting, unless the president introduced him.¹ In such circumstances, the high-priest would appear to have avoided wearing his official dress; he was present, as it were, only unofficially. Probably, it was a matter of usage that the high-priest should not officially occupy a subordinate place in the assembly: when a Roman presided, the high-priest appeared without his official dress, and sat as an ordinary member. His action in interrupting Paul's defence was, therefore, all the more out of order; and Paul,

¹ *Producere* was the technical term for this action of the chairman.

who did not recognise him, retorted sharply on his conduct as a juror, but apologised as soon as he learned that it was the high-priest who had spoken.

The meeting, however, was evidently disturbed through the violent feelings aroused by this unfortunate incident. Some discussion took place before Paul was again allowed to speak ; and in the course of the discussion Paul observed, as Luke says, "that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees". The differences between the two parties were so strongly accentuated that a very little debate would reveal the facts to him. He immediately recognised that he might gain the sympathy of the Pharisees, if he put the plea, which he had previously pitched in a different tone, in a way that would appeal to them. In all probability we should find, if any information had come down to us on the subject, that the minority favourable to Paul among the Jews, which (as we have seen) existed in most of their towns and colonies, usually consisted of Pharisees ; and thus he knew at once where lay his chance of making an impression. But he did not alter his predetermined line of defence ; he merely changed the expression.

Luke's narrative suits this interpretation perfectly ; and in Paul's next defence—before Felix—Luke represents him as skilfully introducing the same plea in a double form : first, declaring that his life had been one of continuous conscientious obedience to the God of Israel, in conformity with the Law, from the beginning onwards, and afterwards actually quoting part of the controverted expression which he had given to the same fundamental truth.

But we are not concerned to maintain that Luke fully understood Paul's intention in giving this turn to his defence. Luke disliked the Jews, and gives us a prejudiced picture of

them, though his description is so true that we can always see the real facts shining through his account, even where we find it prejudiced. Much as we must admire his historical genius, we must also recognise the limitations imposed on him by his birth and training. He was a Greek, and could not always comprehend, or wish to comprehend, Jewish nature. The racial dislike between Greek and Jew has always been, and still is, deep and ineradicable.

It is clear in Luke's account of the scene in the Council that he was filled with contempt for the clamour and dissension that arose in the court as the result of Paul's brief defence. He evidently regards the members of the court as a set of howling fanatics, and mentally contrasts the scene with the superior order and propriety that would prevail in the Senate of a Greek or Roman city. Perhaps he was not able to be quite fair or sympathetic in his estimate of the Jewish Council.

We are here tempted to draw a comparison between Luke and Renan in this respect. No one has been more sympathetic in the interpretation of Luke than the great French scholar. No one has been more generously appreciative of the charm of Luke's work. His sympathy has led Renan first to the right conclusion as to several of the incidents in which Luke was concerned. The sympathy is founded on real similarity of nature. Nowhere is the similarity more conspicuous than in the inability of both to understand the nature of the Jews. We take as an example the impression which Jerusalem and its surroundings left on their minds.

Luke could not forget his first view of Cyprus rising out of the sea; but the first view of Jerusalem, the most marvellously interesting of scenes to one who has true

sympathy for Jewish history and Jewish religion, has left no impression on his book. Again, he describes vividly how he came to Rome, crossing first the distant bounds of the Roman land, the boundary of Rome as a State, far in the south of Latium, then traversing the parts of this great Rome by the Appian Road, then entering the limits of the city Rome in a narrower sense. But, though he tells how he made the journey with horses from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, and stayed a night by the way in the house of Mnason, one of the earliest Christians, he has nothing to say more than that, "when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly."

And now see what sort of impression the view of Jerusalem made on Renan.

"The parched appearance of nature in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem must have added to the dislike Jesus had for the place. The valleys are without water; the soil arid and stony. Looking into the valley of the Dead Sea, the view is somewhat striking; elsewhere it is monotonous. The hill of Mizpeh, around which cluster the most ancient historical remembrances of Israel, alone relieves the eye."

The allusion to the Dead Sea shows that Renan is describing the view from the Mount of Olives, the most entrancing in the world to the student of history. But the most dull and ignorant of tourists could not have seen less in it than the great French scholar saw. His words are a perfect proof of his essential lack of sympathy with the Hebrew mind. The man who could feel and speak thus about that wonderful scene had not the soul—with all his genius—to understand Judaism.

X

History is the supreme judge of all ideas. What verdict has it pronounced on Paul's idea? We do not ask what verdict it has pronounced on his religion—the question is impertinent, or premature—but on the new idea that he threw into the political movements of his time. Has history declared that his idea was vital and real? The reply to that question the writer has already attempted to give in a study of *The Church in the Roman Empire*; and here we may sum it up in a sentence and a paragraph. The age was ripe for Paul's idea: the fulness of time was come.

In the mind of the ancients no union of men, small or great, good or bad, humble or honourable, was conceivable without a religious bond to hold it together. The Roman Empire, if it was to become an organic unity, must derive its vitality and its hold on men's minds from some religious bond. Patriotism, to the ancients, was adherence to a common religion, just as the family tie was, not common blood, but communion in the family religion (for the adopted son was as real a member as the son by nature). Accordingly, when Augustus essayed the great task of consolidating the loosely aggregated parts of the vast Empire, he had to find a religion to consecrate the unity by a common idea and sentiment. The existing religions were all national, while the Empire (as we saw) was striving to extirpate the national divisions and create a supra-national unity. A new religion was needed. Partly with conscious intention, partly borne unconsciously on the tide of events, the young Empire created the Imperial religion, the worship of an idea—the cult of the Majesty of Rome as represented

by the incarnate deity present on earth in the person of the reigning Emperor, and by the dead gods, his deified predecessors on the throne. Except for the slavish adulation of the living Emperor, the idea was not devoid of nobility; but it was incapable of life, for it degraded human nature, and was founded on a lie. But Paul gave the Empire a more serviceable idea. He made possible that unity at which the Imperial policy was aiming. The true path of development for the Empire lay in allowing free play to the idea which Paul offered, and strengthening itself through this unifying religion. That principle of perfect religious freedom (which we regard as Seneca's) directed for a time the Imperial policy, and caused the acquittal of Paul on his first trial in Rome. But freedom was soon exchanged for the policy of fire and sword. The Imperial gods would not give place to a more real religion, and fought for two and a half centuries to maintain their sham worship against it. When at last the idea of Paul was, even reluctantly and imperfectly, accepted by the Emperors, no longer claiming to be gods, it gave new life to the rapidly perishing organisation of the Empire, and conquered the triumphant barbarian enemy. Had it not been for Paul—if one may guess at what might have been—no man would now remember Roman and Greek civilisation. Barbarism proved too powerful for the Græco-Roman civilisation unaided by the new religious bond; and every channel through which that civilisation was preserved, or interest in it maintained, either is now or has been in some essential part of its course Christian after the Pauline form.