

## REVIEWS

## THREE BOOKS ON ST PAUL.

*The Religious Experience of Saint Paul.* By PERCY GARDNER.  
(Williams & Norgate, Crown Theological Library, 1911.)

*Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung.* Von ALBERT SCHWEITZER.  
(J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1911.)

*The Earlier Epistles of St Paul, their motive and origin.* By KIRSOPP LAKE. (Rivingtons, 1911.)

DURING the last year three most noteworthy books about St Paul and his writings have appeared. Two of them are of great importance, Dr Schweitzer's and Professor Lake's; while the third, less directly instructive for teachers, makes an admirable introduction to the modern study of St Paul for the non-professional English reader.

Professor Percy Gardner's *Religious Experience of Saint Paul* is a most charming book to read. It is just the book to put into the hands of those about to begin the serious study of Paulinism. And even in those parts where the present writer would most differ from Professor Gardner the difference is concerned with matters to which far too little attention has hitherto been paid in England. The book emphasizes the importance of the connexion between Pauline religion and the Greek Mysteries, and in the present state of New Testament study in this country it is more important to have mistaken views about this connexion than to have no views on the subject at all. Professor Gardner holds one view, Dr Schweitzer holds another, a view almost directly opposed to it, and yet I venture to think that the views taken of St Paul's teaching by these two scholars are really more akin than those of the ordinary English student of New Testament religion, to whom the Greek and Graeco-Oriental Mystery-religions mean nothing at all. English students know that Dr Frazer has written a book about Attis and Osiris, but that this really matters to his study of the New Testament they have not realized. Still less do they know of the direct application of the modern study of later Greek religion to New Testament problems by such men as Reitzenstein and Heitmüller, although the question at issue deals with the ideas which lie at the very basis of Christian doctrine and the Christian sacraments.

It is possible to cast this question in a quasi-historical form somewhat as follows. There is first the Religion of Jesus, the original Gospel.

What this was exactly is a highly controversial subject. Some, like Professor Gardner himself, put the emphasis upon the ethical teaching of our Lord, 'spiritual life full of the divine ideas' (p. 239). Dr Schweitzer, on the other hand, is the champion of 'thoroughgoing eschatology': to him the central point of the original Gospel is the expectation that the miraculous kingdom which God will bring in was just upon the point of arriving. In either case it was a Vision conceived with immense enthusiasm, a moment of white heat in human consciousness. On the other hand we see the ancient Catholic Church, a powerful society, knit together by common rules of life and common ceremonies, which were believed to have an almost magical efficiency in ensuring to the Christian who practised them a happy life after death. I do not say that this is an adequate description of Catholicism as it really is, but it is the impression which it may very well make upon an outsider. Between the religion of Jesus and the religion of the Catholic Church stands Paulinism, the doctrine of Paul the Christian missionary. A glance at Paulinism shews us that it is not quite what we might expect, a simple bridge between Galilee and Rome. The ideas which are most elaborated in the letters of St Paul find few echoes in Christian writers of the next two centuries, and much of what most modern thinkers admire in the Gospels finds few echoes in St Paul. There is more quoted of the Sermon on the Mount in Justin Martyr's *Apology*, addressed to a heathen emperor, than in all the Pauline Epistles put together.

So the question arises what sort of thing Paulinism is. Is it a genuine development of primitive Christianity? Or is the Pauline dogma, as it is so often superficially thought of at the present day, a first step away from the simplicity of the Gospel, the first stage in the paganization and Hellenization of the true Christian religion? And in particular, when we find in St Paul's letters many phrases and many ideas which find their obvious illustration not so much in the Synoptic Gospels as in the terminology of Greek Mysteries or private Rites, must we not admit that St Paul's doctrines are derived rather from these heathen sources than from the genuine teachings of our Lord?

Professor Gardner's book is a very good specimen of those which claim a large Greek element in St Paul's thought; Dr Schweitzer's book is largely a protest against this view; Professor Lake's book, while on the whole supporting Dr Schweitzer's conclusions, differs from both the others in this, that he is considering St Paul's converts and the effect of the Pauline teaching upon them rather than the point of view of St Paul himself. As we shall see, Dr Schweitzer's arguments affect some of Professor Gardner's positions rather seriously, while they hardly touch Professor Lake's. Moreover Professor Lake's book is very largely concerned with historical and literary questions connected

with the earlier Epistles of St Paul, into the discussion of which neither of the other books goes.

A word or two may here be said about these questions, all of which are important for our understanding of Paulinism generally, as well as for the exegesis of particular passages in the Acts and Epistles. On pp. 14-60 Lake discusses the Council at Jerusalem and the historicity of the famous Apostolic Decree in Acts xv. On pp. 253-316 he discusses the destination and date of the Epistle to the Galatians. Merely to say that he accepts the historicity of the Council and a very early date for the Epistle, and further that he is a partisan of Ramsay's 'South Galatian' theory, would no doubt leave the English reader unmoved. The special reason why I should commend these sections for careful study is that I believe it is only upon the lines championed in Professor Lake's book that the accuracy and good faith of St Luke and the accuracy and good faith of St Paul can be intelligibly and successfully maintained. Unless the 'South Galatian' theory be accepted, St Paul cannot have written the Epistle to the Galatians before the 'second Missionary Journey', which took place after the Council at Jerusalem; and if the Council at Jerusalem had already taken place it is impossible to explain how St Paul could pass it over in silence. If, on the other hand, Gal. ii be an account of this Council, it is impossible to harmonize St Paul and St Luke, and very difficult to understand St Paul's action with regard to Titus or St Peter's conduct at Antioch. Again, unless the Apostolic Decree (Acts xv 28, 29) enforces Christian Ethics and is *not* a Food Law, it was not a victory for St Paul, but only a compromise which he did not loyally keep.<sup>1</sup> Professor Lake has done a great deal towards proving that 'Galatians' was really written before the Council and that when the Council took place it was a moral and not a ceremonial rule that was enforced upon the Gentile converts by Apostolic authority.

Equally judicious, and more individually original, is Professor Lake's solution of the troublesome questions connected with the text and original destination of the Epistle to the Romans. There existed of this Epistle a longer and a shorter recension. The longer recension is the text familiar to us, the shorter recension omitted the two references to Rome in chap. i and consisted of Rom. i-xiv together with the concluding Doxology. The most popular explanation of the existence of this shorter recension is that it was due to Marcion: this explanation has been accepted by Sanday and Headlam, by P. Corssen and by von Soden, but Lake shews that the arguments which they have used are unsatisfactory: 'the evidence', he says (p. 361), 'points away from the Marcionite hypothesis and in favour of the primitive existence of

<sup>1</sup> See Col. ii 16.

a short recension, which originally belonged to a Catholic Corpus, closed by a doxology, in which it [i.e. "Romans"] was the last of the Epistles to Churches.' The reasons for this conclusion, like those alleged for alternative hypotheses, are minute and complicated, but they are very clearly set forth by Professor Lake, and any one who in the future expounds the Epistle to the Romans will need to master his argument before he earns the right to adopt a different conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

When the religion of a great religious leader is expressed, as St Paul's was, rather in occasional letters than in formal treatises, it is necessary to face accidental literary and historical problems of this kind, in order to clear the ground for an unfettered discussion of more fundamental questions. In the case of St Paul the fundamental problems are the two that we should naturally expect. Because St Paul was a member of the Catholic Church his doctrine is dominated by a doctrine of the Sacraments; because St Paul was a primitive Christian his doctrine is dominated by 'Eschatology'. And before leaving Professor Lake's book I shall venture to quote a page in which I believe he has pointed out the relative importance of these two problems. He says (p. 436):—

' . . . that the Parousia of the Messiah was imminent was one of the most fundamental parts of early Christianity. The critics who deny that this view was that of Jesus may possibly be right, but at all events the Synoptic Gospels were largely written to prove the opposite, and whether we trust the Evangelists or not as to their report of Jesus' teaching, they are absolutely contemporary evidence as to the view of the first Christians, and the indirect testimony of the Epistles supports them.

'It is quite certain that the first Christians expected the immediate coming of the Kingdom, and they believed that Jesus would be the anointed King, the representative of God, in that Kingdom. This is what was meant by saying that Jesus was the Messiah. So far there is probably no dispute among students of the New Testament. Nor is it disputed that this belief is found in the Pauline Epistles; the point which is seriously doubted is whether it is central or peripheral. That it was absolutely central to the average Gentile Christian in, for instance, Corinth, I do not believe; for the centre of Christianity for him was the Sacraments rather than the expectation of the Parousia, even though the latter was a very prominent part of his creed. On the other hand, for a Jewish Christian, the expectation of the Parousia was probably quite central. I believe that it was so for St Paul himself, and the reason why there is comparatively so little in the Epistles on the subject is because it was not a subject for controversy among Christians, but an undisputed hope, which all cherished.'

<sup>1</sup> The same must be said of Lake's explanation how Apollos could 'teach carefully the things concerning Jesus knowing only the baptism of John' (Acts xviii, 25, Lake, 108, 109). It is practically the explanation given by J. H. A. Hart in the *J.T.S.* for October 1905.

Professor Gardner's view of the beginnings of the Gospel is very different from this. For him, 'in the teaching of Jesus there is no doctrine' (p. 139), and 'the impending reign of the saints on earth took the place in imagination and belief of the overlying and underlying spiritual world which had been to Jesus the great reality of existence' (p. 291). A *spiritual* world—I am not quite sure that Professor Gardner means by 'spiritual' quite what I think the New Testament writers mean by that term. Professor Lake very pertinently asks what the New Testament Greek would be for 'such a man has the spirit of St Paul'.<sup>1</sup> Here I would recall the weighty words of Dr Hatch in his *Essays in Biblical Greek* p. 126, where he is saying that πνεῦμα is the underlying cause that gives to the several forms of ψυχή not their capacity but their energy. He then adds: 'The conception of πνεῦμα may be regarded as being closely analogous to the modern conception of "force", and especially to that form of the conception which makes no distinction of essence between "mind-force" and other kinds of force, such as light or electricity. It is analogous but not identical: for force is conceived to be immaterial, whereas πνεῦμα, however subtle, is still material.' To quote Lake once more: 'We are apt to use "spiritual" and "spirit" in the sense of a "frame of mind" (*Stimmung*) which pays no special attention to carnal or material objects, and is busy with ideals. That is not what πνευματικός meant in the first century; it meant a man who was obsessed by a πνεῦμα which was not his own, but had come into him from without.' The sky and the air are more material to us than they were to the ancients, for to us they are made of the same sort of stuff as the solid earth. But the spirit of man, if we believe in its existence at all, is less material to us than it was to them. Professor Gardner is too learned and too sympathetic towards the ancient world to treat it with overmuch of what Dr Schweitzer calls *psychologisieren*, but when he paraphrases Aristotle's dictum about those who partook of the Mysteries (οὐ μαθεῖν τι δεῖν ἀλλὰ παθεῖν) by saying they 'did not learn anything, but were put in a frame of mind' (p. 62), I cannot help thinking that he has 'psychologized' what was thought of as real sacramental grace.

Dr Schweitzer's history of the study of St Paul during the last hundred years follows the same general plan as his *Quest of the Historical Jesus* and, like that book, is most instructive to the English reader. We all know the immense influence that German theological works have had in England; Dr Schweitzer's books tell us plainly that English theological works have had very little influence in Germany. Till lately English New Testament investigation has been secondary, it has accepted or rejected the solutions to the problems which the

<sup>1</sup> Lake, p. 213, note.

Germans have disclosed. And to a great extent this is still the case; certainly it is so with regard to the question of the Greek Mystery-religions and their relation to the early Christian doctrine of the Sacraments.

English scholars have done their part in the new study of the Mystery-religions. I need only mention the names of Frazer and Miss Harrison, not to speak of Professor Gardner himself. But meanwhile in Germany there have been a series of writers who carry on the investigation from the point of view of those who are most interested not in Greek religion but in the Christian religion. Heathen mysteries and Christian rites present some striking similarities. This is no new discovery: it was a fact familiar to Justin Martyr, who could only suppose that the evil Demons had taught the worshippers of Mithra to imitate Christian ceremonies. Now the theory is held the other way. This and that in Christian rite and Pauline doctrine is claimed as an element imported into Christianity from the Mysteries. And in particular we are told that the idea of a Saviour-God who dies and rises again stands in the middle of the cult of 'many oriental religions'.<sup>1</sup> Further, the Christian sacramental meal and the grace thereby secured to the worshipper is said to be of Greek and pagan origin. As in the Mysteries, the Christian comes through Baptism to new birth, and through the Eucharist he is nourished with the 'drug of immortality'. Moreover, 'the Mysteries were a representation of what the Godhead had experienced, and set forth the idea that this representation somehow worked a corresponding reality in those who took part. It was a symbolism which had actual effects, a drama that became a reality'.<sup>2</sup>

It is not surprising that a number of persons have drawn out the analogies between pagan and Christian rituals. Nor again is it surprising that such analogies can be drawn. To a great extent the persons who joined the Mysteries and the persons who became Christians were the same sort of persons, persons belonging to the same culture and civilization and unsatisfied with it. But Christianity is a historical religion, a religion which began at a certain time and country and under certain historical conditions, and when we ask the much narrower question as to the relation between the Mysteries and Christianity as understood by St Paul, something more definite and precise than vague analogies is required.

To begin with, there are questions about dates. I understand that these questions are beginning to agitate the world of classical scholars also, and that it is being recognized that Comparative Religion regarded

<sup>1</sup> See the writers quoted by Schweitzer, p. 151, note.

<sup>2</sup> Schweitzer, p. 154.

as a branch of History may need to keep apart what Comparative Religion regarded as a branch of Anthropological Science legitimately puts together. Plutarch and Pausanias can tell us what was thought about ritual and religion in the second century A.D., but it may very well be that the theories then current are as different from those of classical times as modern Anglican theory differs from mediaeval theory. And when it comes to a question of St Paul's ideas it is quite necessary to scrutinize very closely the date and provenance of the alleged heathen parallel.

But there is more than this. There are differences of principle, as well as similarities. One of these is quite fundamental, and it is one of the great merits of Professor Gardner's book that he recognizes it as well as does Dr Schweitzer. He points out as a feature wholly wanting in the heathen festivals 'the apocalyptic element as given in the phrase "until he come". For the heathen did not expect a reappearance on earth of deceased ancestor or tribal deity'.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, 'salvation' to the heathen Mystic meant simply an individual blessedness after death: to the Christian it meant escape from the Wrath to come. 'It should be noted', says Schweitzer (p. 169), 'how the eschatological element in Paul's Sacraments everywhere makes its presence felt. These Sacraments effect not New Birth but Resurrection. Something, which in the immediate future will be obvious reality, they make invisibly real beforehand even now. The Greek Mysteries are independent of time. They profess to come from extreme antiquity and their efficacy belongs to all generations. With Paul valid sacraments belong to a particular age. The sacred Rites have only lately been in existence and their use belongs only to this last generation. Their power is derived from what has happened lately, in this last age of the world: they make the faithful like to the Lord in this, that they cause them to rise again like Him during this short interim, before the time, though the process is still invisible to the world.' Christianity may have become very like one of these Mystery-religions, but in so far as it has retained an expectation of Christ coming to judge the quick and the dead it is alien from them in spirit and in intention.

It is not that Greek religious thought was less or more 'ethical' than Christian thought. 'Ethics' and 'Eschatology' are not opposed to one another. Only they were not conjoined by Greek thought, while they were, as a matter of history, conjoined by late-Jewish and early-Christian thought. 'Greek piety (*Religiosität*) occupied itself with the future of the individual after death: it could not entertain the conception of a Coming World, such as dominated the Jews and early Christians,

<sup>1</sup> Gardner, p. 122.



because its 'Eschatology' had not been formed by the ethico-historical ideas and aspirations of a succession of Prophets.'<sup>1</sup>

Schweitzer's point, that St Paul's doctrine is not a doctrine of *Re-birth*,<sup>2</sup> is worthy of special attention. We read *καινή κτίσις*, he says, and we translate it by *παλιγγενεσία*. He means that 'transubstantiation' would be more appropriate. In other Christian writers (e.g. 1 Pet. i 23) the notion of being 'born again' is met with, but not in St Paul. The Sacraments to St Paul are wholly miraculous, not acts of natural magic, such as nearly all the heathen Mysteries were. This point is not only interesting and important in itself: it shews how little St Paul had to do with the institution of the Christian rites. He assumes them and enlarges upon the invisible realities which he understands them to confer, but he does nothing to make them 'rational' in themselves. To quote Aristotle (or Synesius) once again, *ἡ ἐπιτηδεύουτος ἄλογος*.<sup>3</sup> This was hardly true of the rites of Isis and Osiris.

Very different and much more akin to the heathen Mysteries is the doctrine set forth in the Fourth Gospel. I cannot close this review better than by quoting the remarkable paragraphs in which Dr Schweitzer expounds his reading of it. He says (p. 159):—

'The naïve and unhistorical view that Jesus had instituted the Sacraments is not part of the Gnosis of the Johannine theology. According to this theology He did not institute them, but He created them and prophesied them.

'Through His Incarnation came the possibility of the combination of human nature and spirit (*πνεῦμα*), the combination upon which the working of the Sacraments rests. By His actions with food and drink at the Feeding of the Five Thousand and by the words He used in connexion with those actions He indicated a Mystery which was to be manifested when the appropriate materials were ready: through Death, Resurrection and Apotheosis He exalted His earthly nature, and set the Spirit free for the new method of operation, by virtue of which it was able to prepare men for resurrection. So Jesus came into the world to inaugurate the era of Effectual Sacraments. In virtue of this He is the Saviour.

'The Johannine theology thus rests on the two dogmas (1) that the Spirit can only act on men in conjunction with matter, and (2) that this being the case it is only available on the ground of the Incarnation and even then not until the glorification of the Lord had taken place. Whoever has once recognized these presuppositions will never attempt to search the Fourth Gospel for primitive elements which are to be explained from natural religions. But on the other hand it is clear that from this point of view Christianity exhibits itself as the most perfect Greek Mystery-religion that it is possible to conceive.'

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<sup>1</sup> Schweitzer, p. 178, note.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 164.

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle quoted by Synesius (*Migne* lxi 1136 init.).