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ARTICLE I.

PAUL'S PREACHING AT ATHENS.

The first public conflict, as Milman properly remarks,[*] betwixt Christianity and Paganism, took place at Athens. The champion on the one side was Paul, the distinguished Apostle of the Gentiles, who had himself been a relentless persecutor of the Gospel, and who had been graciously honoured with supernatural evidence of its truth. He was prepared to speak what he knew, and to testify what he had seen. On the other side were certain philosophers of the Epicureans and the Stoicks, impelled partly by curiosity and partly by vanity of contest, to encounter one whom their philosophic pride prompted them to stigmatize as a babbler; and their settled indifference to truth, to receive as a setter forth of strange Gods.

The loss of Athenian independence had removed the checks, which, in ancient times, political considerations had arbitrarily imposed upon freedom of debate and liberty of discussion in regard to the popular religion, and though this renowned city was still the head-quarters of the reigning superstitions of the world, no philosopher was likely, for the sake of his opinions, however apparently licentious or heretical, to be exposed to the fate of Socrates, Stilpo or Diagoras. In the Schools of Athens, no subjects were too sacred for discussion — too profound for inquiry — or too sublime and mysterious to awe the efforts of vain curiosity. The stubborn doctrines of the Stoicks — the polite, accommodating principles of the Epicureans —

* History of Christianity, Book II., Chap. III., p, 178. Amer. Ed.

its white berries, to the imminent peril of all the pretty maids that ventured beneath it." He faintly intimates the propriety of decorating churches with ever-greens on Christmas day : the origin of which custom his allusion to the mistletoe, might have led him to think of as Druidical.

We are not informed whether the personal character of Mr. Sawyer lends any weight to his opinions. We do not question the purity of his motives and the honesty of his aims in presenting this plea to the public. We give him credit for a full persuasion, that, by its publication, he is advancing the interests of religion as well as the general welfare of society : and we acknowledge that, in the discussion of his subject, he has presented much that is worthy to be admired and approved. But besides disapproving of many of the particular amusements that he has chosen to recommend, we regard the general spirit of his book as opposed to vital piety and and even common morality, and as having as little harmony with evangelical doctrines, as many of the amusements, that he advocates, have agreement with the habits and character of the Puritans.

ARTICLE V.

.ROMANS, 9th CHAP. I—V. VERSES.

1. *I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost. 2. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*

Some have made the expression, "I speak the truth in Christ," an oath, thus : I speak the truth by Christ. This

is rather an unusual translation of ἐν Χριστῷ, and as this is a very common expression in New Testament usage to denote union with Christ, it is better to understand it to mean, I speak as a Christian man. To testify in the Lord, is to testify as one united to the Lord. (2 Cor. 12 : 19.) ".We in Christ," "Of whom ye are in Christ." It is hardly necessary, therefore, to consider these words as Koppe, Rosenmüller, and others have done as an oath. They simply contain a solemn asseveration.

"My conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost," some connect with οὐ ψεύδομαι. I do not lie, by the Holy Ghost, so as to make it an oath to correspond with ἐν Χριστῷ. Others connect them with συνειδήσεως, my conscience enlightened by the Holy Ghost. Others connect these words with συμμαρτυρούσης my conscience testifies with the Holy Ghost, both are witnesses. The first is harsh and unnatural. The second would require the article τῆς to be repeated before εν πνυεματι, to make it evident that such is the meaning. The third opinion is therefore most reasonable. The sense is also good.

V. 3. This wish of Paul has been interpreted, 1st. to refer to the past time, I did wish ηυχόμην being certainly in the imperfect indicative. 2nd. Some think that the wish is real and unconditional : that Paul was really willing to be damned for the glory of God, as some of the extreme Hopkinsians in this country have held. 3rd. Others make the wish conditional, I could if it were lawful, or possible. 4th. Others again interpret it to mean temporal calamities, connected with spiritual darkness.

1st. As to the use of the imperfect ηὐχόμην in a conditional sense. There can be no doubt of such an usage in Greek, as Mark 14 : 21. καλὸν ἦν, It would have been well, if he had never been born. ἐβουλομην Acts 25 : 22, means, I also could wish to hear the man; * this is the doctrine of all the grammars. Some say the imperfect, because it does not signify a completed action, and is used to signify an effort or endeavor, is adapted to convey the idea that a thing is conditional ; as Bernhardy. ἀν added to the verb would make the wish impossible.† This, there-

* See also 2 Peter 2: 21. Acts 22: 22. 2 Cor. 12: 11.

† See Kühner on αν, and Winer, page 222.

fore, may be regarded as a settled point.   Beyond all question Paul would have used the aorist ἡυξἀμην, if he had referred to his wish when an enemy of Christ, because the action would have been a completed one in the past time.

The first thing to be done is to settle the meaning of the word ἀνάθεμα; for on this every thing depends.   From its etymology it might mean any thing separated or set aside, for any purpose whatever.   But it is not so used.   As things devoted to God were separated it meant a gift hung up in a temple; and then among the heathen, one devoted to the infernal gods.*   But its meaning will better appear by considering its usage.

In the Septuagint this word is used fourteen times, and is generally the translation of hherem, which in its ground form means "to cut off;" and then to devote to destruction.   It is used to denote the cities devoted to destruction when Canaan was conquered by the Israelites.   It came to mean in the Rabbinical Hebrew, "excommunication," and generally the greater excommunication.   The word ἀναθεμα is used to denote a town, or city, or thing, which was to be destroyed, as for example, Jericho is called anathema, Joshua 6 : 17; the two hundred shekels of silver, the golden wedge, and the Babylonish garment, are called anathema five times in the seventh chapter of Joshua; and yet the gold and silver was, by an express law, required to be consecrated to God, and not to be destroyed.   The cities of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, &c., are called anathema, in which nothing that breathed was left alive.   Deut. 20 : 17.†   In this case, however, men are included, but temporal death is probably the extent of the idea attached to the word.   In Deut. 13; 17, the spoil of the Canaanites is called anathema.   The prophet Zechariah uses this word, 14 : 11, to denote the destruction of Jerusalem.   Of a city enticing Israel to idolatry, Moses says, it shall be destroyed utterly : the Septuagint has it, shall be anathematised with an anathema.   In Deut. 6 : 7, it is unquestionably applied to men, and not to things.   Thou

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* It is the testimony of some Greek writers that ἀναθημα is an Attic form of the word, and ἀναθεμα a Hellenistic form.   Whatever the true theory may be, it is certain that ἀναθημα is used in the New Testament for gifts in the temple, and ἀναθεμα in a bad sense.

† See Fritzsche.

shalt not bring an abominable thing into thy house, lest
thou be an anathema like it. These are all the cases in
which the word is used in the Old Testament. In only one
case is it used in reference to men alone, though they are
included in one or two other cases. I know that it may
be inferred that eternal destruction took place in the cases
in which men are mentioned, but it is only an inference ;
for nothing is plainer than that in a passage where house-
hold furniture is declared to be destroyed, and the lives of
irrational animals, temporal death is all we can certainly
affirm of men, who are in the same category. We have
then no clear case in the Old Testament in which this
word means eternal death. As to its use by the church
fathers, little need be said. Early in the fourth century,
(324,) it began to be in the canons as the form of excom-
munication.*   Hesychius, a grammarian of the City of
Alexandria, of high authority, who lived in the third or
fourth century, gives as one definition of this word, "*ex-
communicated.*" It came then early to mean excommuni-
cation. It also retained the meaning, "everlasting des-
truction," and was used for profane and impure things.

We must now consider the New Testament usage of
this word. It is found in Acts 23: 14, when more than
forty Jews bound themselves by a curse, anathema,† nei-
ther to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. This vow
or oath was taken by Jews, and not by Christians, or per-
sons under Christian influence, and is therefore to be inter-
preted according to Jewish notions on the subject of vows
or oaths. I have carefully examined Lightfoot,‡ and other
authorities, on Jewish vows. I find no place in which any
imprecation as to the loss of happiness in another world
accompanied a vow or oath. I have found examples in
which the person swearing or vowing calls down on his
head temporal calamities, but in most cases there is no im-
precation of any sort whatever. If such imprecations ex-
ist, they are merely implied in the nature of an oath or
vow.

* The Apostolic fathers do not use this word; nor does Justin Martyr.

† This word is rendered in both the Syriac Versions by the word
hherem.

‡ Page 200 and 201, Vol. 1.

If these views are correct, then, so far as there is any presumption on the subject, it is decidedly against the idea of eternal death, being connected with the word anathema.

The next places in which the word occurs are 1 Cor. 12: 3, and 16: 22, in the first of which it is said simply that no man can call Christ anathema by the Holy Ghost; and in the second "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema maranatha. The first simply states a negative proposition which settles nothing as to the meaning of the word, except that it is the opposite of faith and love to Christ. The second simply states the fact that the enemies of Christ shall be accursed when he comes, which we are ready to admit implies eternal destruction if the coming is to execute final judgment.

The last instance of the use of this word in the New Testament, is in Gal. 1: 8, 9. "If we or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel, let him be anathema." The idea here surely cannot be eternal death, because the man who thus preaches might repent and be saved. To preach another Gospel was very common then, as it has been since; and its effect has been to procure the exclusion of the person preaching it from the society of the faithful.

We are now prepared to enquire into the meaning of Paul's wish in the passage under consideration. That it cannot be, that he was willing to be forever lost, for the glory of God, seems to be evident, without much reasoning ; for man's salvation more glorifies God than his ruin, according to the Scriptures, and to be willing to be lost is to be willing to blaspheme God forever. It is also contrary to one of the strongest and most unconquerable instincts of our nature, the desire of happiness and self-preservation.

As to the third opinion, it is encumbered with many difficulties. If the wish is conditional, what is the condition? I could wish myself accursed *if it were lawful,* or *if it were possible?* Both have their advocates. If the first is adopted, then the meaning of the passage is, I could wish to be eternally lost, but it is not lawful. Then the unlawfulness of the wish is the only reason why it is not carried out. If it were lawful, it would be a real *bona fide* wish. There is then no impossibility in the wish. Its unlawfulness, however, is an addition which we are not warranted in making.

The conditional particles in Greek are not of this character, nor are the conditional modes to be thus interpreted. As to the second, it destroys all sense in the passage. I could wish *if it were possible,* means that it is impossible to wish it and therefore I have no wish on the subject. The true interpretation of the condition here implied is, that the wish would have been fulfilled if in so doing Paul could have saved his Jewish brethren.

The fourth interpretation, which we are disposed to adopt, is surrounded with scarcely less difficulty than the rest. It makes Paul willing to be banished from the church and to die a temporal death, to become a *piaculum,** as Bretschneider has it, an expiation for the Jews, if that would save them. The difficulty in this interpretation arises from the phrase απο χριστω. To translate it, by Christ, as some have done, or to make it mean *the church* as others have done, though there is usage for both translations, seems to be rather forced, especially as the idea of separation is certainly in the word anathema itself.

Ver. 5. Who is God over all blessed for ever.

The Socinian interpretation of this passage is, either that the connexion with what goes before is broken at the word σαρχα, or after the word παντων, so as to read " *God is over all blessed for ever,*" or Christ being over all the fathers, *God be blessed for ever.* The Arian interpretation lets the passage stand as it is and gives the word θεος such a meaning as suits his views. The Trinitarian view is that Christ has true and proper divinity ascribed to him here. The words κατα σαρχα, as they state the origin of Christ's human nature, make it reasonable to suppose that some other nature is expressed or understood, which is contrasted with it and which he did not derive from his Hebrew fathers. This is very naturally supplied by the part of the verse now under consideration. If Christ has only one nature it would seem to be absurd to say, *according to the flesh* he descended from the fathers.

* Bretschneider is of opinion that anathema means piaculum, and he is ridiculed for it by Fritzsche. But if a man devoted to the infernal gods is denoted by this word, he is in a heathen sense a piaculum. And if it means destruction in a Christian sense, then the idea that it is done to satisfy divine justice is in the word, and this is not very different from a piaculum. Bretschneider then is not far wrong. See Bretschneider on the word, and Fritzsche, in loc.

ὁ ὢν stands here for ὅς εστι as in John 1: 18. ὁ ὢν who is in the bosom of the Father, and John 12: 17. 3: 13, and 2, Cor. 11: 31.

The position of εὐλογητὸς is not as it is in all cases where there is a doxology. It is in such cases before and not after θεὸς. In thirty-four cases in the Septuagint in which there is a doxology *God be blessed*, εὐλογητος is found before θεος, and in three cases in which it is simply asserted that God is blessed εὐλογητος is found after θεος or κυριος. The same order is observed in the New Testament. In four cases in which there is a doxology εὐλογητος is placed before θεος, and in two cases in which it is simply asserted that he is blessed, it is put after it.*

It would also seem to be proper, as on the Socinian supposition a new subject is introduced, that there should be something to indicate the change, such as δὲ. The relative ought to agree with an antecedent, but in this case the rule is violated, and *who is* does not refer to Christ according to Socinians. The break in the sentence is so harsh and abrupt on the Socinian hypothesis that it is difficult to see how a candid man can maintain it. No parallel case can be found in the New Testament, ἐπὶ πάντων is equivalent to saying Christ is the supreme God.

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* Luke 1: 68. 2 Cor. 1: 3. Ephes. 1: 3. 1 Peter 1: 3. For other usage Rom. 1: 25. 2 Cor. 11: 31. ευλογημενος the participle is used eighteen times in the Septuagint, on precisely the same principle, so we have at least forty-eight cases clearly establishing this usage.