

The Princeton Theological Review

JANUARY, 1918

THE TERMINOLOGY OF LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

I

Considered as a monument of the Greek language at a particular stage of its development, the New Testament is a very interesting document; and not least so in the terminology which it employs to express the emotion of love. The end-terms of this development, so far as it is open to our observation, are found—we are speaking in broad categories—in the literature which we know as “classical” on the one side, and in the speech of the modern Greek world on the other. In passing from one of these end-terms to the other, a complete revolution has been wrought in the terminology of love; a revolution so radical that the ordinary verb for “to love” in classical Greek has lost that sense altogether in modern Greek, its place being taken by a verb in comparatively infrequent use in the classics; while the ordinary substantive for “love” in modern Greek, formed from this latter verb, does not occur even once in the whole range of classical Greek literature. Coming in somewhere between these two end-terms, the New Testament, flanked on the one side by the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and its accompanying Apocrypha, and on the other by the Apostolic Fathers, forms a compact body of literature in which alone we can observe the revolution in progress; or, we should better say, in which this revolution suddenly appears to sight already nearly completed. Without any heralding in the secular literature, all at once in this religious literature the change presents itself to our view as in principle already an accomplished fact.

ATHEISTIC CHRISTIANITY

The study of Church History has made us familiar with varying types of religious thought and life all laying claim to the Christian name. There has even arisen in late years the strange phenomenon of a "Christless" Christianity, but it remained for a distinguished American psychologist and educator to become sponsor for an anomaly even more startling—atheistic Christianity.

It is refreshing to turn aside from the dry bones of theology with its scholastic and verbal discussions and to be invited by President G. Stanley Hall in his two-volume work, *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology* (1917), into the more fruitful fields of a psychological study of Jesus. We soon discover, however, that Dr. Hall has erected a vocabulary of his own, and even in the Introduction we meet with such terms as "mythopheme," "erethic," "ambivalent," "dysphoria," "thumic," "hebamic," etc. Under these terms, it is true, a wealth of insight may lie, and we await with eagerness the unveiling of mysteries in the life and consciousness of Jesus hidden from ages and generations; but it is soon apparent that Dr. Hall permits himself to use even the ordinary language of religious expression in strange and unusual meanings. While rejecting the Virgin Birth and broadly hinting that we may have to accept its natural alternative, he is ready to say, "with a fulness of conviction that criticism can never give, and that the old faith never knew, that Jesus was veritably 'conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary'" (I, 259). While contending that "the post-mortem Jesus" has no vestige of historicity, and that there is no personal life beyond the grave, since "the only valid immortality is of two kinds, influential and eugenic" (I, xv), he declares that the subject of his analysis is "the true and living Christ," "the spiritual Christ of the Resurrection" (I, vii). While claiming by a sort of inverted pragmatism that the

less true the Gospels are the more useful they may be, he insists that he ought to be called an orthodox Christian (I, 34).

The difficulties of the reader increase when he tries to discover just what Jesus it is whose life Dr. Hall is studying by the psychological method. It is not the historical Jesus, for Dr. Hall's proudest boast is that he has emancipated the figure of Jesus from the crass realism of history. The Jesus of Dr. Hall is a psychological product, the product of the folk-soul, made of soul-stuff, made out of the warp and woof of human wishes. He is in fact the Freudian Jesus, for Dr. Hall is an enthusiastic disciple of Freud, and uses to the limit the Freudian method of psychoanalysis.

The Freudian method, as we all now understand, consists in drawing large inferences from seemingly insignificant hints such as gestures, slips of the tongue, or the details of a dream. The Freudian finds the controlling forces of life in the repressed wishes which lie below the threshold of consciousness. The problem of psychoanalysis is "to get beneath the consciousness of Jesus to the deeper strata of his unconscious soul" (II, 361). It is clear that the obligations of the historian may sit but lightly upon the psychoanalyst, and that the Freudian psychologist unless restrained by his historic sense or his common sense can manipulate the Gospel material with extraordinary freedom. As a matter of fact our interest in Dr. Hall's study of the psychology of Jesus soon is lost in our interest in the study of the mental processes of Dr. Hall himself.

But what new insights does psychoanalysis supply in its interpretation of the consciousness of Jesus? It is a relief to be told that Jesus' aversion to his putative father was "not because of any envious Freudian wish to take his place in his mother's affection" (I, 252). Dr. Hall finds in the parables a psychoanalytic key to Jesus' idea of the Kingdom. The largest group of parables deals with the rela-

tions of masters and servants, and Jesus, he surmises, dreamed in youth of being the lord of a manor and commanding a retinue of servants. When this dream seemed unattainable, the result on the one hand was hatred of the sordid rich, and on the other an aggrandizement of the dream of being a country lord into being the head of a far greater Kingdom extending over Israel, and even taking the features ultimately "of a terrestrial if not a cosmic and heavenly Kingdom, partly realized on earth under his leadership" (II, 589).

Adopting Schweitzer's eschatology, Dr. Hall seeks to make it more intelligible with the aid of the Freudian method. Why was Jesus so quickly disappointed, between the first and second periods in his career which Schweitzer postulates, in his expectation of the sudden and miraculous coming of the kingdom during his lifetime? To fill the gap and explain the resolution of Jesus to go to his death in Jerusalem, Dr. Hall suggests that somehow at this period Jesus came to know of the pagan doctrine of a dying and rising god. But in going to Jerusalem Jesus enacted a far deeper tragedy than he anticipated. At the end he felt himself deserted not merely by man but by God. "His ideals of his Messianity, Sonship, and of the Kingdom must have been abandoned as delusions of a megalomaniac," and he must die feeling that his place was with Satan in the lowest hell (I, xi). Dr. Hall's work here seems crude and reckless to an extreme. It is insisted that Jesus was not insane and he is repeatedly called the world's greatest psychologist, but in the two periods of his career he was the victim first of megalomania and then of melancholia. Knowledge of the pagan doctrine of a dying and rising god is given as the key to make the life of Jesus intelligible, but this led him on to believe that he died the death of a criminal, "as bad as he had thought himself good," and with no hope of resurrection.

The final despair of Jesus, feeling that he was the worst

of lost souls, becomes, singularly enough in Dr. Hall's construction, the cause in some mysterious way of the triumphant faith of the disciples that he had risen from the dead. This despair of Jesus, we are told, was necessary "to generate and release all the energy of reaction" (I, xiii). "Reaction" is here the magical word, the psychological miracle which takes the place of the historical miracle. Katabasis, we are told, was followed by anabasis, and the extreme depression of the disciples "had to react toward the opposite extreme of euthymia" (II, 450). This reaction which, it is acknowledged, revolutionized not only the lives of the disciples but their view of the life of Jesus, and became "the pivot of history for Christendom," is baldly asserted rather than explained. Men with disappointed hopes or broken hearts do not always "react" toward a triumphant optimism or a world-conquering faith. The natural end of these things is drink, or suicide, or to use Dr. Hall's expression "miserablism." All that Dr. Hall can do is to reiterate that "the folk-soul being what it is, he had to rise" (II, 732, 733). Psychological dogmatism takes the place of the traditional faith.

Superior to history as Dr. Hall is, will he allow his humble fellow Christians to go on accepting so much of the Gospel story as they can believe? By no means. It makes no difference to Dr. Hall whether or not Jesus lived in Judea or was an antique reality of two thousand years ago, but it makes all the difference in the world whether he was born of a virgin, or performed real miracles, or rose from the dead. Upon those who would still believe these things, Dr. Hall pours out the vials of his wrath. He anathematizes them with an *odium anti-theologicum* and in a vocabulary peculiarly modern. Suppose that in my innocence I venture to believe that Jesus opened the eyes of the blind. Dr. Hall would take my breath away with a sentence of excommunication. Such a miracle is "preposterous" to anyone who has studied the eye. "True miracles

are things which are absolutely false. They never happen." In fact—this is the finishing touch—"it is the literal believer who is blind and in need of this cure" (II, 608-610). Or suppose again that I confess to a lingering belief that Jesus healed the lepers. Dr. Hall's indignation again flashes forth, and I find that I am banished from respectable society. "To credit the complete, literal, instant, and wholesale cure of this dread disease is impossible save for those whose minds are leprous with ignorance and superstition" (II, 626). After this I should be afraid to mention the raising of Lazarus, for fear of being struck dead by Dr. Hall's thunderbolts. But here he is unusually mild, contenting himself with saying in Scriptural language that this miracle "has become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense and should be sloughed off as a *caput mortuum* or death's head at every symposium of Christian experience" (II, 637, 638). To believe in the Resurrection is a "suicidal materialization of religious faith," and shows that one scarcely knows "what intellectual honesty means" (II, 704, 706).

Why this wrath, we naturally ask, in a mind usually so catholic in its sympathies? Dr. Hall can endure Nietzsche, and admit "some degree of truth in about all of Nietzsche's charges" against Christianity (I, 180). He can hail with joy the coming of the mythicists, Drews and W. B. Smith, as perhaps the "morning stars of a new dispensation of Christian faith" (I, 214). With open arms he would welcome pagan elements into his syncretic "new Christianity." Why then is he so intolerant of belief in miracle and the Resurrection? We reach here a deeper stratum of Dr. Hall's thought. He is more positivist than pragmatist; he is, in his fundamental and controlling convictions, more Comtist than Freudian. Than man spiritualized, "there is no other God." "The antithesis between God and man is then really that between the individual and the genus homo, Comte's '*Le grand être*,' Hobbes' 'Leviathan' at its best, purified,

sublimated, made free and invested with all the worthy attributes of the race. His goodness, justice, love, etc., are really man's and valid only to and in man. He is the truth, virtue, beauty of man. The real atheist is only he who denies these attributes to man" (I, 285, 286). It is Dr. Hall's positivism, we discover, which really sets limitations and gives direction to his psychoanalysis, his pragmatism, his genetic psychology and his application of all of these to the interpretation of Christianity. It is his positivism which determines the Jesus who shall be analyzed, whether ideal, historical or mythical, and prescribes in advance the outcome of the analysis.

It is edifying to watch Dr. Hall interpret the Gospels in the interest of his humanistic creed. You can give him any passage in the New Testament, and he can preach from it with unction the gospel of positivism. God is the creation of man, or is Humanity itself. The commands of the Bible are "exhortations from out of the depths of the soul of the race to the individual to better himself and his estate" (I, 235). The Incarnation is the incarnation of the race in the individual. The "Messiah" is the soul of the Hebrew or of the human race. Jesus is the Son of Man in a literal sense, as the product of human wishes or of Mansoul. He is the Son of God because in the story of his birth "the folk-soul completed the apotheosis of man" (I, 282). The Kingdom of God is the kingdom of man. Prayer is communion with the "deeper racial self within us" (II, 504). Miracles teach the lesson of a "more evolved superman state" (II, 610). Jesus' death was the "death of the Ur-Father," for Yahveh was near his "ethical dotage" (II, 731, 732); it was Mansoul that raised Jesus from the dead (II, 733); salvation is an "autosoteriological process," and Calvary a "symbolization of an inner process of self-katharsis which Mansoul has achieved" (II, 727); the hope of immortality is only hope in the future of humanity, for "man's future on this earth is the only real,

glorious, and sufficient fulfilment of this hope in the prolonged and rich life of posterity here" (II, 692). The parable of the Prodigal Son, one might think, would not lend itself readily to the requirements of Dr. Hall's positivistic creed, but here again he is equal to the emergency. The Nativity might be called "the return of the not so much prodigal as ostracized God to his father, man. He had wandered into a far country and lived there long in splendor, but the lure of the fairest of earth's daughters only typifies his home-sickness for his fatherland, Mansoul, etc." (I, 286, 287).

All this is "going some," but the peculiar thing about it is that it is going in a crab-like fashion. The farther Dr. Hall goes away from Christianity, the more earnest are his professions of orthodoxy. When denying the Virgin Birth and not obscurely suggesting the natural alternative, we hear him repeating in a tone of pious conviction, "Conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary." When discarding miracles as "baby-talk," "infantilism," and belief in them as even a grievous sin against the true spirit of Jesus, he is shocked at the lack of insight of those who would rationalize them away. When denying not only the Resurrection of Jesus but apparently all personal life beyond the grave, he uses the language of mystical piety and protests his faith in the "living" and "risen" Christ. When declaring that man created God in his own image, that there is no incarnation but that of racial life-forces in the individual and that there is no proper worship but the dependence of the individual on the race, and when excoriating and excommunicating all believers in supernatural Christianity, he folds his hands in pious complacency and declares, "I believe I can now repeat almost every clause of the Apostles' Creed with a fervent sentiment of conviction" (I, xviii). When most eloquent in preaching the negations of positivism, he is loudest in his assertion that he is an orthodox Christian.

All this, of course, is the height of absurdity, if not an outrage on common sense. As well might Dr. Hall claim to be an orthodox Mohammedan because his creed could be reduced to the formula, "There is no God but Humanity, and Dr. Hall is its prophet." What we are now interested in is the reason for this peculiar lack of coherence in Dr. Hall's thought and speech, this approach to the nonsensical and the maudlin in an eminent scholar and educator who should be perfectly able to express himself clearly when he wants to. To the psychoanalyst, we venture to think, the explanation is not far to seek. It lies in the repressed consciousness of Dr. Hall himself. The cure for Freud is more Freud.

When, for example, Dr. Hall's pages fairly bristle with invective against believers in miracle, this to the Freudian is an indubitable evidence of a repressed fear that they may be true after all, and that the fabric of positivism, so flimsily erected in these volumes, will crumble in ruins. Dr. Hall, it is plain, is whistling to keep his courage up. When in spite of his sweeping denials he repeats the old formulas, recites the creed and protests that he is an orthodox Christian, if not *the* orthodox Christian, this is not due to deliberate deception, nor even to that respect for the opinion of one's forebears which Dr. Hall sees in the ritual of the Church. No; psychoanalysis finds the key to the anomaly in repressed desire, in the unconscious longing for the "old-time religion" in which he was reared, suppressed by the "censor," which in this case is the naturalistic metaphysics to which he stands committed. The desire thus repressed can only find expression through indirect channels. When Dr. Hall, finally, merging all departments of theology into anthropology, sings his most inspired strains to the glory of man and raises his loudest hallelujahs to the glory of Humanity, the Freudian sees that this very over-emphasis and iteration is symptomatic of a deep though repressed consciousness that a "eugenic," "influential" or "plasmal"

immortality is after all a pitiable substitute for the immortal hope which can say with Browning,

“My sun sets to rise again,”

or with Paul, “As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

It will occur to many readers that this glorification of man is a little ill-timed while the shadows of the Great War are deepening over the world. While the best blood of the nations is being shed in Europe, Dr. Hall's message, “Believe in the gospel of eugenics and euthenics, for the kingdom of Man is at hand,” will scarcely carry conviction. We remember that Mr. Edison declared several years ago that “invention will abolish poverty”; but invention applied for destructive purposes has stripped multitudes of all that they had, brought Europe to the verge of starvation and saddled the world with a crushing load of debt. For once Dr. Hall parts company with Freud, who is quoted as insisting that “the present war has stripped from man all the thin disguises of religion and morality, so that he now stands revealed as what he is, a beast whose chief passion is to kill and take all he can” (I, 180).

It is interesting to note that two books, both appearing within the year and both written by educators and psychologists, have reached the same results. Professor J. H. Leuba, in his *Belief in God and Immortality*, attempts to show that such belief has a weakening hold upon college students, scientists and psychologists. He boldly proclaims the downfall of Christianity, because Christianity in his judgment has been discredited in its two most fundamental dogmas. Dr. Hall reaches results which are precisely the same. Both hold the positivistic creed (with hints of a vague pantheism behind it), but Dr. Hall prefers to clothe his naturalistic negations in the drapery of a pious rhetoric.

The advantage in the way of intellectual candor may be thought to lie with Professor Leuba, but the significant thing for every educator and every patriot is that there is

a strong current of influence in our educational institutions which is not only anti-Christian but anti-theistic. As go the colleges so will go the country.

All heresies are said to be the outcome of defective views of sin. Dr. Hall admires Jesus. Jesus is for him "the world's master pragmatic psychologist," "the master craftsman in psychodynamics," the greatest of moral teachers, although he failed to heed the maxim, "Know thyself," and was deceived in his central teaching about God and the future life. Jesus is one who can beat him at his own trade; and yet Dr. Hall does not, like Peter in similar circumstances, say "Depart, I am a sinful man, O Lord." "If in some respects," he admits, "we seem abreast of Jesus in our insights, here in the psychology of sin we have a vast deal yet to learn, and the best of us can only dimly feel that in this direction Jesus far transcends us" (II, 584). If Dr. Hall could attain to this insight, we venture to believe, he would see in Jesus more than the perfect totemic man, more than the most precious product of Mansoul, and more even than the master psychologist and educator of the race.

WILLIAM HALLOCK JOHNSON.

Lincoln University, Pa.