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I.

ETERNAL RETRIBUTION.

THE question of the future and eternal destiny of man will not rest from discussion. One does not wonder at this. The thought that a single man, still more that multitudes of men, because of their deeds in this short life, should be lost eternally, is one which is so awful to contemplate, that it is not strange that not merely rationalistic expositors of Scripture, but also not a few truly devout and spiritual men, have ever protested that it is impossible that this should be the real teaching of Scripture. Accordingly, such have eagerly laid hold of every word here and there which might of itself seem to warrant a larger hope, and have earnestly sought to show that the passages which, to the ordinary reader, seem to declare the doctrine of the eternal doom of many are susceptible of a different interpretation.

By those who contend for the belief in the final universal restoration of all rational beings to holiness and happiness, it is assumed that this is a necessary logical corollary from our affirmation of the infinite perfection of God. For it is insisted that if we believe in a God who is infinite in knowledge and wisdom, power, love and righteousness, then we must logically admit that it is impossible that He should have allowed any creature to come into being, by whom He foreknew that the gift of life would be so abused as to issue in endless sin and misery. Whatever force there may be in this presumption considered in itself, it will be observed, in the first place, that it wholly overlooks the powerful counter-presumption which is furnished by the fact of the uniformly hardening power of habit. For character, to all appearance, tends to fixedness

II.

SIMON PETER IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST.

OF none of the apostles have we so much material out of which to reconstruct the story of his spiritual life as of Simon Peter. Paul drops a few expressions in the course of his epistles, by the aid of which it is possible to trace, with considerable clearness, the way along which his mind traveled from Pharisaic self-satisfaction to Christian faith and peace. Of John, too, we may learn both from the gospels and from his epistles. But Peter's mental and spiritual experience is presented to us with greater vividness and, for the earlier part of it, in greater detail. His name occurs in the gospels oftener than that of any other disciple, and in connection with incidents which graphically exhibit his personal character. Then the early chapters of the Acts bring him to the front during the first founding of the Church, and, though he afterwards nearly disappears from sight for more than fifteen years, he reappears in the epistles, which crown with matured but still characteristic teaching the testimony of his life. We can thus trace the progress of Peter's mind through a period of about forty years. We can study him first as he was trained by the Master's own hand. We can afterwards study him as through the Pentecostal Spirit the ascended Lord carried on his training for the benefit not only of Peter, but of the whole Church and of all time. The apostle's growing apprehension of the truth, the particular forms in which he apprehended it, the expansion of his mind, the purification of his character, and the use which grace made of his natural qualities are thus caused to appear most plainly, and form an ever fresh and fascinating theme of meditation.

I wish, in this article, to indicate certain features in the training of Simon Peter, and in the corresponding character of his mind and thought, which appear of particular interest. If we follow, as nearly as possible in chronological order, the incidents narrated of him in the gospels, we may perceive the progress of his mind under the Master's careful discipline; and then if we observe the relation of this training to what we know of the apostle through the Acts and the epistles, we may perceive the germs of his later thought in the events of his earlier discipleship. To cover this ground completely

would take us far beyond the limits of a single article. But some of the chief facts which such a study bring to light may be worthy of separate mention. The subject as a whole would provide material not only for practical edification, but for important critical results. For if it be possible to construct out of the incidental notices of the apostle in the four gospels, a self-consistent and natural spiritual biography, and if it be possible to discover in this preliminary period the natural foundation for the story given by the Acts and the epistles, it would be incredible that the narrative thus obtained is not historically true. The materials for it are too incidental to the objects of the sources from which they are taken, the arrangement of them was too far from the thought of the original writers, their connection depends upon too many minute details, for their consistency not to confirm the truthfulness of the books from which our information is derived, and on which we are also dependent for much more important matter. Besides this, we would obtain from such a study a fair estimate of the mental calibre of the apostle, of the things which most impressed him, and of the faults to which he was liable; and thus we would be enabled to pass a more intelligent judgment on the worth of his testimony to the origin of Christianity. In this way, Simon Peter would be made to speak as directly to this age as to the first century, and to repeat, with new force, his ancient declaration concerning the truth of those events, "whereof we are witnesses." It should, of course, be remembered that we cannot expect to obtain from the recorded incidents of Peter's life, or even from his speeches and epistles, all the effect which the teaching of Jesus had upon him. He doubtless received many lessons of which our sources of information preserve no trace. Teaching meant for others was of use to him. He passed through many experiences of which we know nothing. We must be content to use what materials we possess. They will be found sufficient, however, to exhibit the main lines along which his religious education proceeded in the school of Christ, and to show noteworthy points of connection between his early discipline and his later teaching.

1. The first and most obvious fact to be noted in the formation of Simon Peter's Christian character is the particular mode of his approach to Christianity. We know that this usually affects and often essentially determines the type of a man's religious belief. Examples can be cited from every age in the history of the Church in which the most representative believers have borne to the end the marks of the special experience in which they embraced the faith; and the apostles were no exception to this rule. Now, Simon Peter was a disciple of John the Baptist before he became a

disciple of Jesus Christ. This means that he had sincerely obeyed the great reformer's call to repentance and shared the expectation of Messiah's speedy coming, which the herald proclaimed. Of the earlier life of the Galilean fisherman we know nothing; but the religious experience through which he must have passed, under the influence of the Baptist, separated him from certain well-known types of Jewish thought and life, and gave his mind, if it did not already in part possess it, a particular religious cast. On the one hand, he was neither a Pharisee nor a Sadducee nor a mere patriot. Unlike the Pharisees, John's disciples believed in the necessity of personal and national reformation, and denied that the mere observance of the traditional law was a sufficient preparation for Messiah's coming. Possibly Simon already felt in the code that burdensomeness which he afterwards confessed (Acts xv. 10), even though he as yet assumed the law's universal authority. Unlike the Sadducees, he was a firm believer in the whole traditional religion of Israel, and, unlike the political patriots, he expected Messiah to restore the religious glory of the Church as well as to deliver the nation from a foreign yoke. He was, we may assume, an honest, earnest, enthusiastic, religious man; unversed in either Rabbinical subtleties or philosophic culture or doubtful politics, following sincerely the popular orthodox faith, and longing for a personal share in the religious and civil blessings of Messiah's reign. On the other hand, John's disciples were filled with faith in the Hebrew prophecies. In the words of Isaiah had John explained his person and his work, and the ardent hopes of the Hebrews, which, since the times of Roman conquest, had generally revived, found new fuel in his appearance and his message. It was, we may be sure, with the predictions of Messiah's kingdom burning in their minds that the little band of Galileans passed over from John's discipleship to become the first followers of Jesus (John i. 35-51), and we further believe, from the characteristics of Peter's thought as they will presently appear, that no one was more inflamed than he by the words of the ancient seers. To him then came the announcement of Andrew, based on the repeated testimony of John the Baptist, "We have found the Messiah." Simon's faith at the beginning was probably more faith in John than in Jesus, though it was soon confirmed by the evidence which Jesus furnished. But he passed over to his new master without any break from his previous religious ideas. He simply accepted Jesus as the one for whom he had been looking, and as the ideas and purposes of Jesus were not at once unfolded to His disciples, Simon's earlier faith melted easily into the new.

The contrast between this approach to Christianity and that of

Peter's fellow-apostle Paul, is obvious and suggestive. The break in the continuity of Paul's religious convictions was sudden and severe. He had distinctly to disown his former teachers and principles in becoming a Christian. He had to realize bitterly the tyranny and the insufficiency of the law (Rom. vii. 7-13) before finding the liberty and peace of the gospel. It is significant, therefore, that Paul was the apostle ordained to champion the independence of the gospel, and to bring out its contrast to the doctrine of salvation through law. But it was equally natural for Peter to be the one to lead the first disciples out of Judaism into Christianity and to exhibit the religion of Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's hopes. And it is clear that the mode of Peter's approach to Christianity did thus mould his later conception of it. To him it was supremely the fulfillment of prophecy. As such he looked upon the Church from the beginning (Acts i. 20). As such he proclaimed the gospel on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 16-36), in Solomon's porch (Acts iii. 18-26), before the Sanhedrim (Acts iv. 11), and to the centurion Cornelius (Acts x. 43). Such, indeed, was the natural and prevalent view of the early Jewish believers (Acts viii. 35, xiii. 27-37), though it was soon united with other and less welcome applications of Scripture (Acts vii., xiii. 38-41); but Peter's epistles show that it continued to be his favorite view to the end of his life. To him the Christians, Gentile as well as Jewish, are the true Israel (1 Ep. i. 1, ii. 9). Of their salvation the prophets had inquired and prophesied (1 Ep. i. 10), and had ministered unto them the gospel (1 Ep. i. 11, 12). Christ is the predicted stone, disallowed of men but chosen of God (1 Ep. ii. 4, 6; so Acts iv. 11). In the spiritual sacrifices of believers have the old services found their antitype (1 Ep. ii. 5). The sufferings and patience of Jesus are described in the words of Isaiah (1 Ep. ii. 22-24). The flood was a prophetic symbol of baptism (1 Ep. iii. 21). Prophecy, in fact, was a perpetual evidence of the truth of the gospel and the divine guide to it (2 Ep. i. 19-21). False teachers are but a repetition of the false prophets of old time (2 Ep. ii. 1, 15, 16). The prophets and the apostles are the two authorities to whose teaching Christians should especially give heed (2 Ep. iii. 2). Then, besides these express references to prophecy, the mental attitude of Peter in the epistles otherwise corresponds with them. He writes as one looking eagerly into the future, with exulting expectation of the coming revelation of Israel's glory and of Messiah's kingdom. His hope has indeed been purified from its carnal elements. The reason of the first advent has been understood. But the expectation of the visible, manifested kingdom still fills his mind. Of course, in this he was

not alone. Paul and John express similar sentiments. But in Paul the scheme of salvation by faith, and in John the incarnation of the divine Word occupy the foreground. Even the Apocalypse deals more with the forces and events which lead up to the glorious consummation than with the latter itself. But in Peter the promised end outshines all that precedes it. He gives thanks that we have been begotten again unto a living hope (1 Ep. i. 3). Our salvation he thinks of as "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Ep. i. 5). "Only a little while" must we suffer and wait for it (1 Ep. i. 6, v. 10). Girding up the loins of our minds, we should be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Ep. i. 13). Meanwhile we are but strangers and pilgrims (1 Ep. i. 17, ii. 11). The end of all things is at hand (1 Ep. iv. 17). "When the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Ep. v. 4). "Exceeding great and precious promises" have been given us, which converge upon "the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Ep. i. 4, 11). Revelation is but a light shining in a dark place *until the day dawn* (2 Ep. i. 19); and those who deny the Lord's return are utterly in error (2 Ep. iii. 4, 10). It is as those who "look for these things" that we are to be diligent that we "may be found of him in peace" (2 Ep. iii. 14).

When these expressions are viewed in their proportion to the brevity of Peter's epistles, it becomes clear that the mode of his approach to Christianity continued to control the form of his thought even to the end. His mind did not easily progress to new points of view. The old forms were simply purified and exalted by his Christian faith. The prophetic picture grew larger and was better understood, but it remained essentially the same picture still.

2. Turning now to Peter's positive apprehension of the gospel, we may note the particular form of his contact with it, and the way in which it made its impression upon his mind.

His Christian life began with the simple acceptance of Jesus as Messiah (John i. 41, 42). It was based partly on the testimony of Andrew, but chiefly, no doubt, on that of John the Baptist. We can well believe that it was not easy for the enthusiastic Simon to accept the lowly Nazarene stranger as the promised Christ. But the express testimony of the Baptist reassured him. We may infer also from the evangelist's brief record that from the first the hold of Jesus upon Simon was very strong. The latter was made to feel that Jesus knew him as no ordinary man did, and the effect of this mysterious knowledge was, as so often in the life of Jesus (John i. 48, ii. 24, iv. 29), to awaken a reverential sense of the Lord's super-

human personality. His hopes, also, were stimulated by the new name which Jesus gave him, with its implication of a special work awaiting him in the approaching kingdom. Simon Peter's faith began, therefore, with the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ. It thus laid hold of the central person and fact of Christianity. It took shape in the radical truth out of which Christian theology and duty were to grow. Of course, his faith did not consciously go beyond the most elementary form. What it involved, he did not at all understand. The point to be observed is simply that his faith attached itself to the *person* of Jesus, and that this was the speck of light which grew larger and larger until it filled with divine radiance the disciple's whole mind.

If we glance, in order, at the incidents related of Simon Peter in the gospels, we can perceive that his training mainly consisted in the growing revelation to him of the dignity and character of Jesus.

The second incident in which he appears is the call to service (Matt. iv. 18-22; Mark i. 16-20; Luke v. 1-11), in his account of which the third evangelist gives us a clear view into the mind of Peter. Nearly a year had elapsed since his first meeting with Jesus. Much had happened both to confirm and to try his faith. Miracles had been performed and converts made. On the other hand, Jesus had been rejected at Jerusalem and, after some months of comparative reserve and waiting, had returned to Galilee. Events had doubtless seemed to the disciples to move slowly, and that which held them to their new Master was only the deepening and ineffaceable impression which He himself by act and word had made upon them. And now the story of the miraculous draught of fish exhibits, so far as Simon Peter is concerned, the overwhelming sense of Jesus' hidden greatness, with which the fisherman heard and obeyed the call. Already he had learned that he was not fit to question the commands of Jesus: "Nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net." But when the miracle occurred, his homage could not be restrained. Its effect on him was overpowering. It appealed so directly to the sphere of his own knowledge, and revealed a power so plainly supernatural, that it was to Simon an irresistible proof of the Master's divine authority. It also made him feel his own unworthiness for fellowship with so sacred a person. Simon then passed, we judge, through a spiritual experience which had much to do with qualifying him for his life-work. In that moment the impressions which he had already received concerning Jesus culminated in an overmastering sense of the Lord's power and sacred dignity, and with this fuller revelation to him of Jesus, Peter's training entered on a new and higher stage. Accordingly, we can recognize in most of the subsequent incidents in

which Peter is introduced, the growing revelation of the Lord to the disciple. It is not possible or necessary to state here the various means by which Jesus was thus exalted in Peter's apprehension. Christ's deeds and words and character alike manifested Him to His followers. I desire merely to point out the effect of this on Simon Peter. His ardent nature threw itself with extraordinary devotion at the Master's feet, and he gazed with especial awe and joy at the growing splendors, as he saw them, of the Light of the World.

During the eastern Galilean ministry of Jesus, we hear little of Peter; but at its close he reappears and again testifies to the progress which, in the meanwhile, his mind had made. When he saw Jesus walking on the sea, his cry, "Lord, *if it be thou*, bid me come unto thee on the water," at least shows his exalted, if rash, confidence in Jesus' power. The next day, in Capernaum, his whole new life uttered itself in the words, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." These words show the constituent elements of Peter's faith as it has thus far advanced. It still centred in Christ's person. Amid much that he could not understand, the conviction of the Lord's authority, of His unlimited power, of His wise teaching, of His spotless character, had only grown stronger with the lapse of time, and held the disciple to Him in the face of opposition and in spite of his conscious ignorance. Soon after the confession at Cæsarea Philippi, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," expressed the same conviction; while the hasty rebuke of Jesus for speaking of his death, testifies, like the confession, to Peter's adoring reverence. The transfiguration, which soon followed, made finally the crowning impression on Peter's mind as a manifestation of the Lord's veiled glory (2 Pet. i. 16, 17). By this time little could have been wanting to complete his sense of the divine dignity of his Master. He looked upon Him as the embodiment of divine power, wisdom, goodness and majesty. He loved Him with intense affection. He revered Him with entire homage. How far or in what way he had adjusted his views of Jesus to his Hebrew monotheism, we do not know; but it is clear that his belief in the divine qualities of his Lord was fixed.

But there was more in Jesus than divine majesty to be revealed to Simon. The incidents narrated of him in the later part of the Lord's ministry were the means of teaching him the moral spirit of his Master, as in the earlier events he had learned His power and wisdom. Take, for example, the incident of the temple tax and the money in the fish's mouth (Matt. xvii. 24-27). Peter had assumed that Jesus would pay the temple tax, which every loyal Israelite was scrupulous to pay. But Jesus reminded him that, as

Lord of the temple, He ought to be free from such a tribute, and then, by miraculously providing the money, He further taught that He who was Lord, not only of the temple but of the universe, humbled Himself to meet for others the requirements of the law. Whether Peter learned at the time from the event the deeper lesson of redemption contained in it or not, he at least must have received a new impression of the amazing humility of one who, with such powers at command, condescended to so lowly a life. Later still, the lesson of forgiveness, in connection with the parable of the two debtors (Matt. xviii. 21-35), was riveted on Peter's mind—a lesson to which his own fall and restoration must have given the strongest emphasis. Finally, if he received assurance of reward for service (Matt. xix. 27-30; Mark x. 28-31; Luke xviii. 28-30), and if he listened on the Mount of Olives to those predictions of judgment and glory which must have harmonized so well with his Hebrew hopes (Matt. xxiv, xxv; Mark xiii; Luke xxi), at the Last Supper Peter was supremely taught his Lord's unutterable love. We remember his horror at the supposed indignity assumed by Jesus in washing the disciples' feet; his sudden revulsion of feeling when Jesus said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;" his eager desire to be wholly united with his Lord (John xiii. 1-11). Then Peter was taught the intensity of that divine love which stooped to the lowliest ministry that its unworthy objects might share its blessed life.

If now we look back to the first meeting of Simon Peter with Jesus, we can perceive into what his acceptance of Jesus as Messiah has grown. The love of Christ has become the absorbing sentiment of his mind, so that even after he had basely denied his Lord, he could still honestly say, "Thou knowest that I love thee." Confidence in the unlimited power of Jesus, a wondering sense of the hidden glory of his Lord, a progress from faith in His power to faith in His divine wisdom, and from this to faith in His divine dignity, and with it all a deepening appreciation of the moral beauty and sublimity of Christ's character may be traced in the language of Peter even as briefly reported in the gospels. The fullness of Christ's glory broke gradually upon Simon Peter. He beheld it as the unveiling before him of heavenly wonders. His experience was again unlike Paul's, on whom there burst at once the splendor of the omnipotent Redeemer. Nor does Peter appear to have grasped, as John did, the profound and broad significance of what he adored. It was the person and character of Christ on which his faith was supremely fixed. It was this glorious object whose hidden beauty dazzled and enthralled him. On Him he depended. In Him he trusted. Him he sought to follow in his life. When the resurrection and the ascension removed all possibility

of doubt, the dignity and power, the wisdom and loveliness of the Son of God had been so impressed upon Peter's mind that neither persecution, nor controversy, nor the progress of Christian thought ever diminished the effect which they had made upon him.

Observe, therefore, the evidence of this in Peter's discourses and epistles. In the former, he presents Jesus as the Christ in such language as would both commend Him to the Jews and express that sense of his glorious personality which had been the result of Peter's own intercourse with Him. He sets Him forth as "a man approved of God" (Acts ii. 22); "exalted to the right hand of God" (Acts ii. 33); "made both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). "The God of our fathers hath glorified his servant Jesus" (*ib.*, iii. 13: *τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ*, ver. 26), who is "the Holy One and the Just" (iii. 14), "the Prince of Life" (iii. 15) and "the Prophet" promised by Moses (iii. 22). Jesus is the cornerstone predicted by the psalmist (iv. 11) in whose name alone is salvation (iv. 12). "God hath exalted him with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins" (v. 31). He is "Lord of all" (x. 36); "was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power" (x. 38), and "it is he who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead" (x. 42). We find in these expressions no effort to penetrate into the mystery of Christ's person or to make theological distinctions, but we do find not only adoring reverence, but the full conviction that Jesus is Israel's Messiah, the source of all spiritual blessing, and man's rightful and supreme Lord. Such was the natural result of that perception of Christ's divine powers and graces which the gospels record. And in the epistles, though written at a much later date, there is a remarkably close resemblance to the ideas concerning Christ expressed in the Acts. The Christology of the epistles is fuller, but the same concrete, objective way of conceiving the Lord's glory remains; the same peculiarly ardent love, the same sense of His hidden majesty and grace, and of their coming revelation. It is characteristic of Peter to conceive of the Christian's inheritance as waiting to be revealed in and with the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Ep. i. 3-5, 7, 13, iv. 13, v. 1, 4; 2 Ep. i. 11, iii. 13). He describes the second advent as "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Ep. i. 7, 13) or "of his glory" (1 Ep. iv. 13, v. 1). This phrase (also used by Paul of the second advent in 1 Cor. i. 5; 2 Thess. i. 7) was meant to set forth not merely the fact of the coming advent, but the disclosure of Christ's majesty and beauty which the advent will bring. Christ will not only appear, He will be "revealed." What now only the eye of faith beholds, will be unveiled before the eyes of all. Of Christ's "glory" he speaks frequently (1 Ep. i. 11, 21, iv. 13, v. 1; 2 Ep. i. 17,

iii. 18) as now invisible but certain to be made manifest as he had seen it on the Transfiguration Mount. Peter thus thinks of the present state of things as like that through which he had passed during the years when the hidden glory of the lowly Nazarene was being revealed to him. Besides this, Christ was to Peter "the Redeeming Sacrifice" (1 Ep. i. 1, 19, iii. 18, iv. 1; 2 Ep. iii. 1), the Son of God (1 Ep. i. 2; 2 Ep. i. 16), and our Lord (1 Ep. i. 2; 2 Ep. i. 2, 11, 14, 16, ii. 1, 20, iii. 2, 18), the Object of Supreme Affection (1 Ep. i. 8, 19) and Faith (1 Ep. i. 8), the Inspirer of the Prophets (1 Ep. i. 11, iii. 19), the Mediator between Man and God (1 Ep. i. 4, ii. 5, iv. 11, v. 10), the Living Cornerstone of the Spiritual Temple (1 Ep. ii. 4), the Example of Suffering Patience (1 Ep. ii. 21, iv. 1, 13), the Head of the Church (1 Ep. ii. 25, iv. 4), the Supreme Power in the Universe (1 Ep. iii. 22), and Our Saviour (2 Ep. i. 1, 11, ii. 20, iii. 2, 18). We do not find in Peter's writings any of that profound, half-mystical language by which "the beloved disciple" set forth the Redeemer as life and light, the way and the truth, and which shows us a mind grasping the abstract, ethical principles of which Christ is the manifestation and source. Peter's conceptions were concrete, individual and objective. His theology never went far from the facts of Christ's life, as they had been historically presented to him. He had little of the speculative tendency. He was not even a system-maker. He was exceedingly practical and intensely loyal to what had been revealed. And that which mainly impressed him was the glorious person of his Lord. If his fellow-apostle John surpassed him in sympathetic grasp of the Redeemer's nature and teaching, if he opens to us the profound recesses of the thought of Jesus, and provides a more formal and complete statement of the Lord's divinity, he does not surpass Simon Peter in vivid, almost pictorial representation of the Saviour's grace and majesty. Such a life-like, concrete conception could only have sprung from Simon Peter's companionship with Jesus Christ. We see in it all the man who, having first accepted the unknown Nazarene as the Messiah, beheld the manifestation of His glory in deed and word, in character and power, in transfiguration and in resurrection, and whose whole soul bowed before the dazzling, beautiful revelation.

3. This vivid, concrete conception of the Redeemer's glory is in harmony with another fact in the training of Simon Peter which exhibits the manner in which his mind operated under Christ's instruction in forming its conclusions.

It is noticeable that many of the gospel incidents in which Peter figures, consist of or are connected with either miracles or some other outward act calculated strongly to impress him. His call to

service was preceded by the miraculous draught of fish, a miracle which, as already remarked, had the most profound effect upon him. How deeply other miracles, and particularly the feeding of the five thousand, had affected him, appears, we think, in his request to walk with Jesus on the water. He shared the enthusiasm over the power of Jesus which was then pervading even the populace. He would fain have himself entered upon the supernatural life of the Master, in which he thought he saw the power before which all foes would melt away. Then a little later the transfiguration made an indelible impression upon him. The lesson of the temple tax was likewise emphasized by a miracle. The act of Jesus in washing the disciples' feet was the dramatic means of teaching Peter humility and love. No one needs to be reminded of the imperishable influence which the arrest and sufferings of the Master had upon the disciple whose evil lot it was to add to his dear Lord's bitter cup; while the resurrection was the means of restoring faith and hope to all the disciples, but to none more than to Simon Peter. Thus Peter appears in the gospels in close connection with some of the most astonishing and impressive events of Jesus' life. By them his faith was informed and confirmed. It was through them that he grasped the unseen realities. Around them his religious life grew. On them his belief and his knowledge of duty seem to have ultimately rested. In them particularly did he see the glory of his Lord.

And now, true to his rather unprogressive mind, these outward facts appear in his later life to have still played the same important part in his thought that they did during his association with the Master. We find him, in his discourses recorded in the Acts, appealing to the miracles of Christ as proof of His Messiahship (Acts ii. 22, x. 38). If we may assume, with ancient tradition, that Mark's gospel reproduces the testimony of Peter, another indication of the same fact is provided. No gospel deals so predominantly with the acts of Jesus. No gospel so vividly portrays Christ's mighty power. It is descriptive, objective, graphic and awe-inspiring. "Its motto might well be," as Lange observes, "those words of Peter, 'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.'" But it is to the epistles that we must look for the most beautiful examples of the workings of Peter's mind under the influence of Christ's mighty deeds. To him the Christian's hope has been "begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Ep. i. 3), and it is impossible not to find the explanation of his language in the experience through which he had passed on

the resurrection morning. When he congratulates his readers that they love the Lord without having seen Him (1 Ep. i. 8), his own mind is evidently full of the remembrance of the Lord whom he had seen and whose image in his mind evoked the tenderest and mightiest affection. "By him," he says it is that "we believe the God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory" (1 Ep. i. 21). Brotherly love, which Christ had not only explicitly taught Peter but tenderly showed to him, is one of the duties to which he most frequently exhorts (1 Ep. i. 22, ii. 17, iii. 8). He cites the example of Christ's patience, and we may see in his quotation from Isaiah, to describe what his own eyes had witnessed, a delicate indication of the way in which the events of the Saviour's life had moulded the understanding of revealed truth. If also Peter writes that "we should follow His steps," we remember Christ's last words to Peter, "Follow thou me." If he exhorts his readers to "be clothed with humility," can we refrain from seeing in his language a reminiscence of that sublime scene where the Son of God girded Himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet? If he exhorts us to be "sober and vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour," we remember the rebuke at Cæsarea, and the warning at Supper, and Peter's lamentable fall in the high priest's house. So, too, the transfiguration is particularly cited by him as a proof of the truth of the apostolic testimony to the Son of God (2 Ep. i. 16, 17).

These peculiarities of Peter's life and writings harmonize too closely not to suggest the idea of the way in which his mind worked with the materials provided by his association with Jesus. Some minds are controlled by ideas; others by external facts. Some men grasp truth in the abstract, see its worth and meaning, and more or less logically follow to its consequences. Others grasp truth only in the concrete. They form the great majority, and hence, in fact, the worth and purpose of the recorded acts of Jesus which appeal so widely to the admiration and reason of mankind. Peter was a man of this sort. Paul, on the contrary, was one of the minority who are controlled by ideas. His epistles show that the truth, and in particular the truth concerning the way of salvation, was apprehended by him in its naked reality. Hence the logical progress of his arguments, and his clear and broad applications of them. He, too, believed in the facts of Christ's life and death and resurrection, and often appeals to them as proof. But he also apprehended clearly the truth in the facts, and was controlled by doctrinal ideas rather than by their historical embodiment. Peter was made more after the common mould. It was the actual revelation of truth in the life of Jesus, of which he had

been a witness, which led him into the beliefs and feelings of the Christian life, and he was not the man to dissociate the truth from the external facts through which he had learned it. Later in his life the same characteristic appears. It required a vision from the Lord to persuade him that the gospel was to be preached directly to the gentiles. When once, however, the vision had been given and still more when the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his company, Peter had a fact to go upon which he loyally followed to the end, save when at Antioch he temporarily yielded to his fears. For the development of Christian theology he leaned heavily upon Paul. His first epistle, as is well known, echoes again and again with Pauline ideas, and betrays particular familiarity with the Epistle to the Ephesians. He was not the man to lead in doctrinal statement. But he united cordially with the apostle to the Gentiles, on the ground of the certain facts which had been made known to him, and which he could not gainsay. It is obvious that Peter's testimony is of peculiar value for the very reason that he was so little controlled by ideas, and clung so tenaciously to facts. He was preëminently the man to lay the first foundation of that gospel which rests so heavily on historical facts.

4. It was very natural that, being such as we have found him, Peter's personal character should be disciplined by exceedingly plain and often mortifying lessons. If his faith clung to outward facts, only outward facts and stern experience could correct his faults. Affectionate and enthusiastic, often hasty and short-sighted, as we know him to have been, he required more direct and impressive rebukes than many others. His errors had to be removed by clear and explicit teaching. As his Christian life was developed by the external events of his Lord's life, so he required demonstrative proofs of what he should *not* think and do.

None of the disciples, therefore, were taught so much by failure as Simon Peter was. The permission given him to walk on the water is a notable instance of this. It seems as if the Master had thus to impress the truth on his zealous but narrow-minded pupil. By that experience, he was taught that displays of power were not the chief appointed means of his serving Christ; that trust and patience were the true disciple's duty; and that while his Lord could triumph over all the forces of nature, simple faith was the keynote of the Christian's life. Then the stern rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offense unto me" (Matt. xvi. 23), must have cut to the quick the affectionate disciple, and made him realize, as nothing else could have done, the awfulness of his attempted interference with the Saviour's obedience to the Father's will. Finally, his denial of his Lord completed his stern discipline.

We are, no doubt, to look upon his conduct on that fatal night as having originated in noble, though mistaken impulses. He was resolved to keep his word and not desert the Master. He was especially resolved not to be separated from Jesus. It is not incredible that Peter expected Jesus to deliver Himself from His captors, and in the face of a terrified Sanhedrim to display His majesty and assume His crown. Not even yet had the disciples understood the necessity for the Redeemer's suffering. Determined, therefore, not to be separated, but to see the end, Peter forgot, in the excitement of his adventure, that truth and holiness were always required of the disciples of the Son of Man, and on the impulse of the moment deemed it a less evil to lie and swear than to leave his Lord alone. How soon he saw his sin, how deeply he repented, is well known; and it is certain that out of that shameful fall he came with a purer love, a humbler spirit, a simpler faith than he had ever had before.

And it is not, we think, overstraining language to see reminiscences of his severe discipline in some of the expressions which occur in Peter's first epistle. When he then writes that Christians are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" he seems to speak as one who knew too well the liability to fall and rejoiced in dependence on redeeming faithfulness. His sympathy with others who "are in heaviness through manifold temptations" sprang, no doubt, from his own experience of temptation's power. The patient suffering of his Lord had been in such contrast to his own wicked reliance on sword and oath that he had learned to look upon the scene in the high priest's house as the sublime example in which he and others were especially to follow Christ. He appears in the epistle an humble, self-distrustful man; ready patiently and silently to endure whatever hardship might be appointed to him; content to suffer, to be lowly, to be as but one of the least in the kingdom: and as we contrast this spirit with the self-confident disciple of former days, it becomes manifest that grace had done its work well. Men like Simon Peter must be corrected with actual stripes. Intensely susceptible to impressions from without, it was necessary that he should be trained by failures and corrected by kind but stinging rebukes. No suffering is sharper than that thus incurred. But we can see that by it the convictions of Simon became pure as well as strong; his impetuosity became intelligent devotion; his love became simpler and even more intense than at the first; and a gentleness was given to the sturdy Galilean fisherman, a sympathy with the tempted and the struggling, a joyous confidence in the reward of endurance, which provides a notable instance of the truth that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." If Satan had desired to have him that he might sift him as wheat, Christ had prayed for

Simon Peter. Peter's faith had not failed, and being converted, he was enabled by his bitter experiences to strengthen his brethren.

These features of the training and mind of Simon Peter, while not pretending to furnish a complete account of his character or of his theology, are of value, as was remarked at the beginning of this article, for their apologetic bearing.

There is a manifest consistency between the facts concerning Peter which we have drawn from gospels, Acts and epistles. In all these sources of information we see essentially the same man. Yet these sources were quite independent in their origin. The consistency of their evidence cannot be the result of intention. It comes forward in too incidental and fragmentary a way. Yet the result of putting together the broken bits of biography is to present us with a definite and strongly marked personality which responds to all the tests of historical reality. This argument would appear to be of the most cogent kind. It is more forcible than that drawn from tradition or even from style. Mental habits are too subtle to be imitated. It is incredible that Simon Peter did not occupy the position to which the earliest tradition assigns him, and that he was not the author of the discourses and epistles which go by his name.

But, this being so, Simon Peter's testimony becomes exceedingly trustworthy because of those particular characteristics which we have noted in him. The tenacity with which he clung to facts, the absence of the speculative tendency, the impression made upon him by outward events, cause him to be a specially valuable witness to the historical origin of Christianity. A witness who does not theorize is usually the best. When, therefore, we meet the notion, in any form, that the ideas of the early disciples led them to fabricate, consciously or unconsciously, the evangelical history, we may produce Simon Peter as a competent witness to rebut the notion. When we cross-examine him, we find him a man not governed by ideas, but preëminently by what he believed himself to have seen and heard. So far as the facts influenced his mental conceptions it was in the direction of changing them, and only facts could have done this with such a man as he was. His very failure to advance far in Christian theology beyond the obvious meaning of the facts to which he bore witness make his testimony the more stubborn and unimpeachable. He is a perpetual and sufficient proof of the historical reality of the miracles and resurrection of his Lord, and clearly shows the profound impression produced by the life of Jesus. May we not see in this at least part of the reason why he of all the disciples was called "the rock?"

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