

VOLUME XXV.

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
NUMBER 4.
MAY 12 1914

...THE... HARVARD
DIVINITY SCHOOL
**UNION SEMINARY
REVIEW**

A PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY

APRIL—MAY, 1914.

CONTENTS

- THE ORIENTAL MYSTERY RELIGIONS AND THE CHRISTIANITY OF PAUL.....*Harris E. Kirk, D. D.*...253
- THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF STONEWALL JACKSON.....*James Power Smith, D. D.*...271
- BRINGING LITTLE CHILDREN TO THE SAVIOUR.....*G. B. Strickler, D. D.*...280
- INFANT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.. *William R. Henderson, D. D.*...291
- THE CHURCH AND HER CHILDREN—SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCES...*D. K. Walthall, Ph. D.*...301
- THE HOUSE OF GOD IN THE HISTORY OF REDEMPTION.....*Theron H. Rice, D. D.*...305

MISSIONARY

- THE SUCCESS AND TASK OF CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN.....*A. K. Reischauer, D. D.*...313

EDITORIAL

BOOK REVIEWS

RICHMOND, VA.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

T. W. SIMPSON, *Business Manager*

\$1.00 a year.
25c. a copy.

Published October, January, April and July.

RICHMOND PRESS, INC., PRINTERS

Entered at the Post Office at Richmond, Va., as second class matter.

THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

VOL. XXV.

APRIL-MAY, 1914.

No. 4.

THE ORIENTAL MYSTERY RELIGIONS AND THE CHRISTIANITY OF PAUL.

THE REV. HARRIS E. KIRK, D. D.,

Pastor of Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Md.

Two ambitious attempts to explain Paul's conception of Christianity, apart from the view that he was but completing the revelation of his Master, have characterized biblical investigation in recent years.* One from the point of view of philosophy; the other from the point of view of history and a study of the monuments. The former is more familiar; the latter just now is more popular.

This view of Paul's teaching, a favorite with the "Religio-historical school" in Germany, is to the effect that we have in Paul's Christianity a supreme example of religious syncretism. Paul is said to have taken the original revelation of Jesus, and worked it up according to ideas then prevailing in the Roman Empire. His ruling ideas were borrowed from the popular mystery cults, which for the most part came from the Orient.

This view is now being urged upon us as the most satisfactory explanation of Paulinism by such writers as Percy Gardner, Kirsopp Lake, and Father Loisy. These writers agree, apart from minor differences, that Christianity was and is to this day a mystery religion. Of course the sources of this view are to be found in the Germans; in the writings of such scholars as Reitzenstein, Bousset, Dieterich and Wendland.

This conception of Christian origins is going to be widely

*Denney: *Jesus and the Gospel*, pages 9-12.

BRINGING LITTLE CHILDREN TO THE SAVIOUR.

REV. GIVENS BROWN STRICKLER, D. D.

Mark 10:13-16—And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. 14. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 16. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them; and blessed them.

A peculiarity of the religion of these pages as compared with all other religions is that it makes full provision for the spiritual wants of all classes of the human race; for the poor as well as for the rich; for the learned as well as for the unlearned; for those of low degree as well as for those of high degree; for the young as well as for the old; for the infant of a day as well as for him who has past three score years and ten; and that the provision for any one class is as complete as for any other. Observe how complete is the provision made for little children: they need salvation; they need the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit as is evident from the evil tempers and passions they manifest; but because of infancy they cannot themselves go to Christ. Therefore it is provided that their parents shall take them to him. They cannot believe on Christ, therefore it is provided that the faith of their parents shall answer instead of their own. They cannot enter into covenant with Christ and consecrate themselves to him, therefore it is provided that their parents shall act for them and perform in their behalf those great acts for which they have no competency, and that these acts of their parents, if sincerely and intelligently performed, shall avail for their spiritual interests as their own acts would do if they were capable of acting for themselves. Such is the provision the religion of these pages makes for the salvation of little children. If it were not so we would certainly have presented in this connection a very singular and surprising fact: we should have a religion designed professedly for the redemption of the human race, and yet having no adaptation whatever for little

children; that is, no adaptation for about half of the human race, since about one-half of the race is made up of little children. Not only so, but we should have a religion designed professedly for the race and yet not only having no adaptation for one-half of the race, but no adaptation for that very half of the race which having committed no overt acts of sin appeals much more strongly to the divine compassion than does the half for which provision is made. Or presenting the point in a different way: Since little children because of the impotency of their faculties, cannot themselves go to Christ and believe on him and enter into covenant with him and consecrate themselves to his service, unless their parents can do these things for them, there is no possibility, as far as use of means goes, of their securing the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit while still children; that is, there is no possibility of their securing these renewing and sanctifying influences at that period in life just when it is most important that they should secure them—that is, before the evil principles of their natures are developed and before evil habits are formed and fixed. Surely it would be a singular thing if a remedy were here provided for sin and yet that remedy should be of such a sort that it could not be applied at all to the mildest cases, but could be made use of only after the great malady had gone so far that all attempts to apply would be in great danger of being defeated by the stubborn malignancy the malady had already attained! Let it be noted then that the religion of these pages makes full provision for all classes of our race, for the little children as well as for the adults.

All this, these parents, who it is here said brought their little children to Christ, seem to have understood; and well they might, for it is a truth taught all through the Old Testament. God in all His dealings with His people under that dispensation, in every respect made parents the representatives of their children and empowered them to act for them. In all His covenants under that dispensation children were included with the parents and under these covenants the acts of parents availed not only for themselves, but for their children as well. This was true of all the covenants into which God entered with His people under that dispensation. In the very first covenant God ever

made with man, the covenant of works made in the Garden of Eden, his children were included with him to the latest generation, and his acts were made to affect them precisely as their own acts of the same kind would have done. If he had stood all his children would have stood with him. As, however he fell, all his children fell with him. So it was in the next covenant that God made with man—the covenant with Noah, of which the rainbow was made the sign and in which God pledged Himself never again to destroy the earth with a flood, the children were included with their parents and Noah's acts were made to avail for them as effectually as any acts of their own could have done. God said expressly: "I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you." In the next covenant God made with man, the covenant made with Abraham, of which circumcision was the sign and seal, children were included with their parents. God said: "I establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." In that covenant parents not only were given the privilege of acting for their children, but were required to do it; they were required to present their children before God and in their behalf enter into a covenant with God and to apply to them the sign and seal of that covenant. And so all through the Old Testament dispensation. You cannot find a single covenant in which children and parents were not embraced together in respect to both blessings and judgments, and in which parents did not represent their children and have the right, and power and duty to act for them during that tender age when they could not act for themselves. It is not surprising then that these parents took their children to their Saviour; it is not surprising that in the great matters of their spiritual interests they should have thought that they could act for them, that they could have secured for them the very same blessings they could have secured for themselves if they had been old enough to go of their own accord. They were doing just what the Old Testament Scriptures taught and required them to do—they were doing for their children the greatest thing they could do and with express divine warrant.

But if all this be true, why was it that the disciples rebuked

them for what they did? "And they brought young children unto him that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them." It may be supposed that this act of the disciples discredits the views just advanced. Were not these disciples the followers of Christ? Were they not his apostles? Were they not informed as to the teachings of their scriptures on this subject? Had they not for some time enjoyed his instruction? If, then, parents could thus act for their children, could bring them to Christ in that helpless period when they could not act for themselves and secure his blessing for them, would not these disciples have known it, and have been glad as good men to see them coming? It may be thought then that this rebuke of the disciples indicates that these parents were doing something that they had no right to do.

It is not difficult to see, however, that they may have rebuked them for far different reasons.

1. Crowds were assembled to hear him; crowds that it was very important for him to address; crowds that might never hear him again; they may have rebuked them for interrupting him in what they considered the more important labors in which he was at the time engaged.

2. It is probable that they rebuked them also because, while admitting the importance of the spiritual interests of children, they did not consider them so important as the spiritual interests of adults. Christ was now busily engaged in instructing the great crowd of adults that had assembled to hear him and the disciples did not think that he ought to be interrupted in the more important to engage in the less important work of ministering to the spiritual wants of mere infants.

3. But it seems still more probable that the disciples rebuked these parents that brought their children to Christ, because they did not wish him to be interrupted at that particular juncture at which the event occurred. His enemies were now very busy: they were ever seeking to do him injury; to entangle him in his talk; to betray him into some utterance that would alienate the people or expose him to the condemnation of civil or ecclesiastical law. For this purpose they were continually asking him questions—questions which, however he might

answer them, they hoped would involve him in serious consequences. They asked him, for instance, whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar. They could not see how it was possible for him to answer that question without involving himself in serious peril. If he answered that it was lawful, they knew that he would provoke the hatred of all the Jews, for they were even fanatically opposed to paying that tribute. If he should answer that it was not lawful to pay that tribute, they knew he would render himself liable to be arrested by the authorities of Caesar for teaching the people to refuse to support his government. Christ, however, escaped out of the snare in which they expected to entrap him. And thus on other occasions they sought to entrap him without success. But perhaps his enemies had never asked him a question that placed him in more peril than that to which he was replying when this interruption took place. He was now in the domain of Herod Antipas, who was unlawfully married to his brother Phillip's wife. Already had John the Baptist lost his life by expressing his opinion about that marriage; and the Pharisees, knowing this, asked Christ a question which they knew involved the same point, and which they knew if he dared to answer at all he must answer as John had done, or else repudiate the teachings of his own forerunner. They had raised the question of divorce—on what grounds divorce could lawfully take place. There can be little doubt that the moment the question was propounded the disciples saw in what peril it placed their Master and that they were anxious and alarmed; deeply concerned for him for themselves. Now it seems to have been just at this moment—at this serious crisis—that these mothers came with their children to Christ, interrupting him, as the disciples supposed, and making it less possible for him to meet the issue that had been forced upon him, and naturally we say they were worried and sought to drive them away.

Such seem to have been some of the reasons why the disciples rebuked those who here brought their children to Christ. But whether these were the real reasons or not, it is certain that they did not rebuke them for coming, because they supposed they had no right to come or that it was useless to come. If they did they were certainly mistaken, for Christ was indignant at their con-

duct and said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them." If then, in any way, his disciples had got the idea that parents had no right to bring their children to him, or that it was useless thus to do, Christ here corrects their erroneous view and in the strongest possible terms approves of what these parents were doing. Let us now observe what he does teach on this subject by what he here did and said:

1. He teaches that children—even infants—may receive saving spiritual blessings. Luke expressly says that these children were infants—infants borne in the arms of their parents; infants taken up into the arms of Christ; too young therefore to receive religious instruction; too young to understand who Christ was; too young to believe on him; too young to have any conception of what was going on; and yet Christ blessed them; as it is in the original, he greatly blessed them. How did he bless them? Did he merely lay his hands upon them and express the pious hope that they might be blessed, as any good man might have done? Did he merely pray that they might be blessed? That however, the text does not say. It says not that he hoped they might be blessed, but that he blessed them; that he actually bestowed blessings upon them; as it is in the original, that he greatly blessed them. Now how does Christ bless when he thus blesses? How is it possible to understand it in any other way than that he bestowed on these children his saving grace? Little children then—even infants—may receive saving spiritual blessings from Christ. It is of the utmost importance that we should note this truth. How apt are we because little children cannot understand the truth—even its simplest lessons; because they cannot even understand who Christ is, much less believe on him—to conclude that they are too young to receive the great blessing of salvation and to defer the great matter until some time in the future? How many parents are doing this? How many Sabbath school teachers are doing this? Yet the fact as here shown is that they may just as certainly receive the blessing of

the Lord in infancy as in any other time in their history. How great a wrong we do them then when we defer their salvation to all the perils of the future! How are we guilty of the very sin of which his disciples were here guilty, when we thus practically prevent their salvation at any earlier period! And how must Christ be indignant with us just as he was with them!

2. Christ here plainly teaches not only that little children may receive saving spiritual blessing from the Lord, but that this blessing may be obtained for them through the agency of their parents. So it was in this case. These children could not go to Christ themselves; their parents went for them. They could not exercise faith in Christ; their parents exercised faith for them. They could not ask Christ's blessing; their parents asked it for them. They could not perform any religious act; their parents performed for them every religious act that was necessary, and thus obtained Christ's saving blessing for them—obtained it as certainly and as speedily as these children would have obtained it for themselves, if they had been old enough to do all these things for themselves. So it was then; and since Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, so it is now. As certain as it is that these parents in any way described obtained Christ's blessing for their children, so certain is it that parents may now in the same way obtain the same blessing for their children. It is certain that Christ makes it the duty of parents to take their children to him and to consecrate them to him. But does he ask for a consecration he does not accept? Will you not seek this blessing for your children? If you could obtain knowledge for them, would you not do that? If you could obtain wealth for them you would do that. If you could obtain honor and earthly happiness for them you would do that. You would be glad to do it. You are now actually trying to do all these things for them. Well, now, it is here plainly taught that you may much more easily obtain salvation for them—the greatest of all blessings—and that you may obtain it at once by simply asking Christ for it; may obtain it by doing just what these parents did, which was certainly very little. Will you not, then, do that? Will you do everything else for your children and not do that for them which they most need? Great oppor-

tunity! Will you do everything else for your children and not do that for them without which everything else will soon be in vain and worse than in vain? Great responsibility! Will you do so much for them for years to secure for them temporal blessings and not do so much as these parents did to secure the salvation of their souls? Dear friends, a wonderful privilege is here afforded you in behalf of your children. Will you not avail yourselves of it? Will you do it at once? This very day? Will you not go to Christ just as these parents did and say: "Here, Lord, are the children thou hast given me. I pray thee bestow upon them thy blessing?" If all these parents would do this, how different soon would be the state of this congregation and of our families. Now our children are growing up in sin. We are not expecting them to become Christians while they are still in childhood and so hardly any of them are becoming Christians. But if we would all do as these parents did, Christ would deal with us as he did with them, and so from earliest childhood our children would be the Lord's, and there would not be those delays and those wanderings which fill some of us with so much fear and anxiety.

3. Christ here not only teaches that little children may receive saving blessings from himself and receive them through the agency of their parents, but he gives a strong reason why they may receive these blessings and a strong encouragement to parents to seek these blessings for them. "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Let us understand the expression. By kingdom of heaven is clearly meant—as in so many other passages in these pages—the visible church; the church here on earth. This is its meaning as it is so often used by John the Baptist, and in the earlier discourses of Christ, when they called on the Jews to repent, for "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." They meant that the church under the new dispensation was about to be established. It is called the kingdom of heaven because it is from heaven and it is intended to lead to heaven. Now this kingdom, says Christ, this church, belongs to such little children as these; it is for their benefit; it is intended to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and so make them meet for

the kingdom above. He said it belonged to them because their parents were members of it as all Jews were; and because they had been circumcised and so had been received into it or acknowledged as entitled to membership in it. He was indignant then at his disciples for seeking to prevent children from coming to him because they were cutting off members of that kingdom from the privileges it was intended to bestow upon them; were defeating one of the prime purposes for which it was organized; and so far at least were bringing that kingdom to naught. Thus Christ not only teaches that children may obtain his saving blessing and that they may do this through the agency of their parents, but he gives as the great reason why they may obtain this blessing that they are members of his kingdom, and as members may of course receive all the blessings it is intended to confer. But the children of almost all of you stand in the very same relation to his kingdom that these children did. You are members of this kingdom and your children have been received into it by its great initiatory ordinance of baptism and therefore you have precisely the same encouragement to bring your children to Christ that these parents had. If you bring them sincerely and Christ were to refuse to bless them he would not only thus refuse to bless members of his own kingdom, but he would refuse to bless members of his own kingdom who, having not yet arrived at the age of responsibility, have never done anything to forfeit their covenant right to his blessing. How certain it is that he will not refuse his blessing under such circumstances!

I am aware that it is thought by some that when Christ here says, "Of such are the kingdom of heaven," his meaning is not that children belong to that kingdom, but only those who are like children. But if we make Christ say that observe that we make Christ say that if we become members of his kingdom we become like those who are not members of it and also are unfit to become members of it. Would not that be singular teaching? We would naturally expect him to say that if we would become members of his kingdom we must become like those who are members of it. But if the meaning be what some would make it, we represent Christ as saying, if we become members of his

kingdom we must become like those who not only are not members, but are wholly unfit to be members. Surely Christ would not talk in that way. The meaning then must be that these children are members and that you must be like them.

4. And this suggests the last point to which I call your attention. Christ here not only teaches that children may receive saving blessings from himself and that they may receive them through the faith of their parents, he not only gives a strong reason why they may receive these blessings and a strong encouragement to parents to seek these blessings for them, but he goes much further. He teaches that so far from their being any special difficulty in the way of children—members of the kingdom—receiving his blessing, as we are apt to imagine, as we are constantly taking for granted, and so waiting for them to become Christians hereafter when they will know more, there is less difficulty in the way than in the way of anyone else; that by so much as they are children are their difficulties less than those of others; that so far from its being necessary for them to go on to the age of others in order to become Christians, that others must, as it were, come back to their age before they can become Christians. Observe: "Verily I say unto you, except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." So far then from there being any difficulty in the way of children the difficulties lie further on in youth and adult age and those at those periods must, as it were, come back to childhood in order to get rid of the difficulties; certainly must come back to the traits of childhood.

Christian friends I beg you to observe these truths. Almost all of us are completely reversing the divine plan for the salvation of our children. God puts it first in life; we are putting it far on in after years. God puts it first in life when in a sense there are no difficulties in the way; we are putting it far on in life when the difficulties are almost insurmountable and often are insurmountable. God puts it first when the faith of parents may obtain the blessing and the children are incapable of making opposition to its reception; we are putting it far on in life when every effort we make to bring about their salvation will be resisted, and, it may be, violently and successfully resisted.

God puts it first that all their days may be spent in His service; we are putting it far on in life and thus giving up a large part of their life to sin. God puts it first that we may make sure of it; we are putting it far on in life when there is the utmost danger that we will be disappointed. Thus we are completely reversing the divine plan; we are turning it right around and of course the consequences are disastrous. Our children are growing up in sin. How many pious little children in this church? How sad that there are so few! But it all comes from turning around the divine plan. Let us learn the lessons of this text and at once go with our children to the Saviour, as these parents did, that they may at once, as these children did, receive his blessing, and then instead of a pious child being so rare; instead of a pious child being a sort of curiosity at which people will turn, we will have numbers of them to display to the grace and goodness of God.