
A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

'THANKWORTHY' GOODNESS.

READERS who thoughtfully compare the Matthaean and the Lukan versions of the Sermon on the Mount are inevitably impressed with the difficulty each evangelist seems to experience at the very culmination of the discourse in expressing its principal thought. All recognize that this culmination is reached in the paragraph Matthew v. 43–48 = Luke vi. 27–36, which contrasts the higher righteousness of the Kingdom of God with that of the scribes. The righteousness of the scribes is prescriptive, it aims only at equivalence, tit for tat, meeting the requirement. The righteousness of the heirs of the Kingdom is an imitation of God as beloved children.[1] God does not restrict His kindness to merit. He overcomes evil with good. He is kind even to the unthankful and evil. Such is the new law. It is 'free' and 'royal.' It is 'perfect' (τέλειος), because the limitation of human evil and the 'hardness of men's hearts' no longer limit it. The disciple of Jesus will prove himself a 'son of the Highest' by exhibiting the disposition of his Father. He will give 'hoping for nothing again' (μηδὲν ἀπελπίζων) as God gives to all *outright* (Jas. i. 5 ἁπλῶς, A.V. and R.V. "liberally"), not even reproaching the unworthy. The disciple of Jesus will meet evil with good, and so overcome it as God does. We will serve and bless, not as a matter of equivalence, and to meet obligations, but 'royally,' divinely, as one whose object is not gain but giving, one who truly finds it "more blessed to give than to receive."

There will be no dispute of the fact that this distinction between the limited goodness of human prescription, and

[1] Cf. Eph. iv. 25–v. 2, where St. Paul, contrasting Christian ethics with conduct unsanctified by the Spirit, winds up with the general principle: "So, then, be imitators of God as children beloved, and let your walk (= *halacha*) be in love."

the unlimited goodness of the divine action, a righteousness which "sons and daughters of the Highest" should make their standard, forms the real heart of the Sermon on the Mount in both versions. The method is that of contrast, and involves hyperbole. Allowance must be made for the statement of comparisons which are really relative as if they were absolute. The five antitheses which in Matthew precede the statement of the principle contrast the external requirement which "they of old time" had imposed with Jesus' inward requirement. They give illustrations of the contrast between "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" and "the righteousness of God." They lead up to the general principle which we appropriately designate the Law of love. In a general way, then, the sense is clear. Still it is quite apparent also that our two reporters are labouring with certain inadequacies of language to express precisely the thought in view. In all probability its original expression was Aramaic, and Matthew and Luke resort to different Greek terms to convey it. Luke in three successive examples of supposititious 'acts of righteousness' uses the expression: "What kind of 'grace' have ye?" (*ποία ὑμῖν χάρις ἐστίν*; vi. 32, 33, 34; R.V. "What 'thank' have ye?"), and follows it up "But love ye" (after God's way) . . . "and your 'reward' (*μισθός*) shall be great" (v. 35). Matthew for the first example (v. 46) has "What 'reward' (*μισθός*) have ye?" for the second (v. 47) "What do ye over and above?" (*περισσόν*, R.V. "more than others").[1] The conclusion is expressed by Matthew: "So, then, ye shall be 'complete' (*τέλειοι*) as your heavenly Father is complete," by Luke: "Be ye 'merciful' (*οἰκτείρμονες*) as your Father is merciful." Obviously neither Matthew's rendering nor Luke's succeeds in conveying the real point

[1] Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 19 f., of deserved suffering in contrast with undeserved, "What kind of glory is it?" (*ποῖον κλέος*;).

to the ordinary reader. The distinction made between human righteousness and the righteousness of God is not that the one is imperfect and the other "perfect," nor that the one is more "merciful" than the other; but that the one is *absolute* and disinterested, while the other is *relative* and self-seeking. To deserve the name 'children' of God says the Speaker in effect, you must evince a disposition corresponding to such paternity. Your goodness must be absolute and not relative. The scribes delight in the thought that the sons of Israel are children of God. The proof of it is the gift of the Law (Deut. xiv. 1 f. So Akiba, *Pirke Aboth*). To know the Law is to be potentially a son, to keep it is to ensure the inheritance as a heavenly reward. My disciples, too, says Jesus, are to be "sons and daughters of the Highest" but by a higher, a 'perfect,' 'free,' a 'royal' law—moral likeness to their Father.

We have here nothing less than a logical, consistent attempt to transcend Judaistic legalism by substituting for its bibliolatry something akin to the Stoic principle of obedience to Nature as the expression of God, not indeed in Stoic, pantheistic form, but as adapted in the Wisdom writings. The definition of the divine disposition, the appeal to the course of nature in support of it, and the erection of it into an absolute ethical standard are all elements of the 'diatribe,' or current Stoic preaching, and date back to Plato himself. The Father in heaven of the Sermon on the Mount, who does not limit His 'goodness' to the worthy, but sends rain and fruitful seasons upon all ungrudgingly, differs in no essential respect from the 'ungrudging' Creator whom Plato had described in the Timaeus, declaring that "He was 'good' (ἀγαθος), and in a 'good' being no 'grudge' (φθόνος) toward anything ever resides, and because He was free from this He willed that everything should become as like Himself as possible." With

this we should also compare the doctrine of James i. 5, 17 f., where God is described as the "Father of lights," of unwaning radiance, who gives "every good gift and every perfect boon" and gives it 'outright' and "without upbraiding."[1] Moreover, James, like Plato, ascribes to this 'Father of lights' a will to produce in His own moral likeness. "His will was to bring us to birth (*βουληθεὶς ἀπεκύησεν*) by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of the things created by Him"; and by this "implanted word of truth" men's souls are saved if they "receive it in meekness" (James i. 18, 21).

Here, then, in the 'wisdom' doctrine of the Sermon on the Mount and the Epistle of James, we have a kind of salvation by 'grace'; but how utterly different a conception of 'grace' from St. Paul's! It makes no reference to the cross, has no atonement theory, ignores imputed righteousness, denies justification apart from works. The saving 'grace' of these writers may be called in a true sense our own 'grace.' It is illustrated in Luke xvii. 5–10 by the parable of the obedient slave. "Does the master 'thank' the slave because he did what he was commanded? (*μὴ ἔχει χάριν τῷ δούλῳ ὅτι ἐποίησεν τὰ διαταχθέντα;*) So also ye, when ye have done all things commanded you, say, We are slaves that have no claim to reward (*ἀχρεῖοι*), we have done what it was our duty to do." Luke's attachment of this parable to the disciples' prayer "Increase our *faith*" after Jesus' assurance of its wonder-working power (xvii. 5 f.) is very significant. It conveys this evangelist's idea of the relation of faith and works. Faith saves; but 'thankworthy' goodness (*χάρις*) must go beyond the keeping of the commandment.

A further illustration which Luke shares with Matthew

[1] Cf. 1 John i. 5, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

is the parable of the talents (Matt. xxv. 14–30=Luke xix. 11–28), the point of which is by no means the nearness or remoteness of the *parousia* (Luke xix. 11), but simply the contrast between 'profitable' and 'unprofitable' servants. Only the former have claim to reward. They alone will "enter into the joy of their Lord." To merit reward something must be done *gratis*.

On the other hand this doctrine of 'grace' has also its Godward aspect. Matthew has a special parable peculiar to his Gospel (Matt. xx. 1–16), the specific point and purpose of which is to deny that the heavenly reward is limited to the equivalent of merit, and to assert the right of God to be 'good' without limit. To those who murmur because He gives undeterred by lack of merit the answer given is this: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own; or is thine eye evil because I am 'good' (*ἀγαθός*)?"

Moreover even the saving 'grace' exercised by man is also in a true sense God's from the standpoint of these writers. For God is the 'ungrudging' source of the disposition which produces 'thankworthy' goodness, and 'profitable' service. They are fruits of a "wisdom which cometh from above" and is "implanted in us" by "the word of truth." In response to prayer in singleness of mind God's supreme gift of His own wisdom-Spirit is bestowed as the crowning proof of His 'ungrudging,' 'unfaultfinding' goodness. Only the appropriation of it is our own. We look into the "mirror" of the divine goodness and turn not forgetfully away, but conform our lives to what we see in Him. Then 'grace' (*χάρις*), the really 'thankworthy' goodness, appears in us also. We work out our own salvation because He works in us, both willing and doing. We transcend the bare commandment, and doing our service "of goodwill, as unto the Lord," are no longer treated as slaves but as friends. Nay, we have the right to be called the children

of God; for such we are, begotten not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

It appears, then, that this non-Pauline conception of 'grace' (χάρις) as 'thankworthy' goodness has a twofold aspect, Godward and manward. God's 'grace' sets the standard. It is the "royal law." But it is man's 'grace,' man's conformity to the standard (itself due to divine help), which is the ground of his heavenly reward.

Since we are here obviously upon the track of a doctrine of salvation by 'grace' wholly independent of Paul, and indeed diverging from his conception of 'grace' and 'law' to an extraordinary degree, it will surely repay investigation if we trace to some extent its origin and ramifications.

1. It is worth while to note first of all that this non-Pauline conception of 'law' and 'grace' is not post-Pauline. It is true that the conception of Christianity as a *nova lex*, the "new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is free from the yoke of constraint" (ἄνευ ζυγοῦ ἀνάγκης)[1] comes prominently to the fore only in the post-Pauline period of James and Pseudo-Barnabas; but even a superficial study of Talmudic doctrine will show that its distinction between 'guiltlessness' and 'merit' is fundamental, and certainly pre-Christian; and this involves what we have designated the manward aspect of the conception. The whole doctrine of justification under the scribal system rests upon the principle of the preponderance of meritorious deeds. Something must be done *gratis*. While fulfilment of every commandment is theoretically possible, none but the patriarchs and great worthies of the past have ever attained to justification on this ground alone. There must in all ordinary cases be a surplus of meritorious acts, among which almsgiving, prayer, and fasting are typical. The reward of these meritorious acts constitutes a man's 'treasure in heaven,'

[1] Ps.-Barn. ii. 6.

but against this treasure must be reckoned not only transgressions requiring forgiveness, but deduction must also be made—lest fancied security relax men's patience in well-doing—for undeserved blessings experienced "now in this present time." Corresponding to these distinctions we find the Matthaean, or Jewish-Christian, form of the Sermon on the Mount placing the teaching on "acts of righteousness" (Matt. vi. 1–18) immediately after that on the divine requirement (v. 17–48); and this in turn is followed by the paragraph on "treasure in heaven" (vi. 19–34). The final exhortation begins, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (vii. 1 ff.), showing what in the evangelist's mind is the chief motive. His eye is upon the final judgment seat. Judgment will be without mercy to him that has shown no mercy. Acts of righteousness are again divided by the rabbis into two classes, 'almsgiving' (צדיקים) and 'works of mercy' or 'grace' (גמילות חסדים) which consist of kindness to the poor, the helpless, the needy, the deserving of all kinds and stations. Almsgiving is of greater merit than all sacrifice (based on Prov. xxi. 3; cf. Matt. v. 23); but works of 'grace' (חסד) surpass even almsgiving, and that in three respects. Almsgiving involves the gift of money alone; 'grace' involves personal service. Almsgiving affects the poor only; 'grace' rich and poor alike. Almsgiving is exercised only to the living; 'grace' extends even to the dead. The same passage here quoted (*Succa* 49b) further reminds us of St. Paul's great chapter on 'charity' by adding that almsgiving itself must be mingled with 'grace' (*ἀγάπη*), otherwise it 'profiteth' nothing. Unless it springs from a motive of heartfelt kindness it has no value in God's sight.[1]

[1] For the analysis of Talmudic doctrine and the passages cited see Weber, *Lehren des Talmud*, §§ 60–61. It is interesting to observe how even the rabbinic doctrine that the minutest acts are all weighed in the

The Godward aspect of the doctrine of 'grace,' the imitation of the divine 'goodness,' does not appear in the Talmudic distinction between 'guiltlessness' (זכיות) and 'grace' or thankworthy righteousness. Instead of the freshness and charm of the outdoor life, the winsome words of the representative Child of God in contact with God in nature and daily life, the synagogue presents only the wooden system of the casuist in his lecture-room. But, form apart, the distinction of 'thankworthy' goodness from mere obedience is as obviously present in synagogue doctrine as in the Sermon on the Mount. Even in outline and sequence the whole arrangement of Matthew conforms to the late Jewish idea of 'treasure in Heaven.'

2. The second distinctive element in this non-Pauline doctrine of 'grace' is also pre-Pauline. It naturally fails to appear in rabbinic casuistry. *Halacha* is not the home of mysticism. But in the Wisdom literature it is abundantly attested, and with increasing abundance as we come down from the Persian toward the Greek period and the beginning of the Christian era. Whether we admit or deny indebtedness to the Stoic diatribe, with its stereotyped appeal to the bounty of nature as evidence of the divine goodness, and its principle of the imitation of this pantheistic Nature, there can be no denying the coincidence of this fundamental factor of the Sermon on the Mount with the teaching of earlier Jewish Wisdom writers such as Pseudo-Aristeas, Ben-Sirach, and the author of the Wisdom of Solomon. The first ten questions of Pseudo-Aristeas are all based upon the principle of the imitation of the divine 'goodness.' In fact, the reply to each of the whole series of

balance of the divine judgment is reflected in Matt. xii. 36. A mere idle word may tip the scales against a man in the final measurement of his transgressions over against his 'acts of righteousness' and 'ornaments of grace.'

seventy-two is so framed that imitation of God forms the ever recurrent burden, much as the refrain "For his mercy endureth forever" recurs in Psalm cxxxvi. We select but a few examples. Stability of rule is ensured by imitation of the unvarying gentleness of God. To show forbearance and punish with less severity than is deserved will win men back from evil and lead them to repentance.[1] Friends are won by showing kindness "as God does to the race of men, by supplying health, food, and every useful thing."[2] Gratitude is to be won, even from those whose petitions must be denied, by observing how God fulfils the worthy prayer, but reveals through dreams or oracles to those who meet denial the injurious working of their requests, and does not punish according to men's sins, nor His own power, but shows kindness. Such are a few of the first group of questions and answers in Pseudo-Aristeas. The second group follows precisely the same method as the first ten, making the rule for each ideal the imitation of the royal, limitless 'goodness' of God. We can cite but the single example of question 16 (210), "What is the disposition of true piety?" to which the answer is: "To hold that God is active and known of all in all, and no worker of evil can be hid from Him. For just as God does good to the entire world, so thou also canst be perfect if thou become an imitator of Him."

For the sake of its close relation to another passage incorporated by Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount, though forming in Luke part of a discourse on True Wealth (Matt. vi. 31–34 = Luke xii. 29–31), it is worth while to make one more extract from Pseudo-Aristeas, taken from the discourse of Eleazar the High Priest in dispatching the envoys. It is

[1] *Ps. Arist.*, 187 f. Cf. *Sap.* xi. 23, "But thou hast mercy on all men because thou hast power to do all things, and thou overlookest the sins of men to the end they may repent," and Rom. ii. 4 and xii. 11.

[2] *Ps. Arist.* 190; cf. Acts xiv. 16 f.

a typical *kerygma*, or Jewish missionary sermon, on the lines of the diatribe. Beginning with (1) the doctrine of the one God, Creator and Ruler of the world, contrasting with this (2) the worship of idols of wood and stone, and (3) the supreme folly of the Egyptians and those like-minded who worship wild beasts and creeping things, Eleazar concludes with a reference to Moses' law, which keeps Israel "free from foolish superstitions, worshipping one Almighty God, superior to all created things. Therefore do the teachers of the Egyptians, their priests, who have insight into many things, call us 'men of God,' a name not given to others, but only to such as worship the true God: for the rest are rather men of food and drink and clothing. For all their thought is fixed on these things. But those who hold our faith care not for this, and their quest their whole life long is for the work of God" (*Ps. Arist.* 132–141; cf. Matt. vi. 32 f. = Luke xii. 30 f.).

Eduard Norden, in his recent admirable work on the speech of Paul in Athens, entitled *Agnostos Theos*, has supplied a mass of literary parallels showing the stereotyped character of the typical *kerygma*. In particular the close correspondence of Romans i. 18 ff. with *Sap.* xii. 27 ff. is brought forward in demonstration of the stereotyped character of this pre-Christian Hellenistic formula propagandæ fidei. Norden does not note, however, how *Sapientia* reproduces Ps.-Aristeas, nor does he take account of the striking agreement in the employment of the conception of the τρία γένη, the threefold religious division of the human race into (1) (Greek) worshippers of idols of wood and stone; (2) (Egyptian) worshippers of beasts and creeping things; (3) (Jewish) worshippers of the unseen Creator. In slightly varied adaptations the *kerygma* can be traced down through Romans i. 18–ii. 29, the *Kerygma Petri* (*ap.* Clem. Al. *Strom.* vi. 5), Josephus (*Ctr. Apion*, Niese ii. 190–

198), *Ap.* of Aristides (1 and 10), Hermas (*Mand.* i.), Tatian (*Orat.* iv.), Athenagoras (*Leg.* 13) and the *Epistle of Diognetus* (3). That which concerns us at present, however, is simply to prove that the New Testament "royal law" of divine sonship by imitation of the absolute 'goodness' of God has its roots in the Hellenistic Wisdom literature, a development of Judaism which already before the Christian era had drunk deep of Plato and the Stoics. We have but one New Testament writing which may be classified in its entirety as belonging to the Wisdom school. So completely is this the case in the Epistle of James that some critics specially familiar with the Wisdom literature have actually denied that its author could be a Christian. The relation of the Epistle of James to the Wisdom literature, especially Ben-Sirach and Ps.-Aristeas, is as close on the one side as its admitted kinship on the other with the Sermon on the Mount. It is no accident that so many of the phrases of which we avail ourselves to interpret the thought of Christian Wisdom are borrowed from it.

We have sought thus far to make it clear that both elements of the non-Pauline doctrine of 'grace' in the New Testament, (1) the conception of 'thankworthy goodness' as distinguished from mere blamelessness, and (2) the conception of the limitless 'goodness' of God as both mirror and source of human 'grace,' are also Pre-Pauline, having their roots in Jewish and Hellenistic soil, the former appearing in rabbinic doctrine, the latter chiefly in the 'Wisdom' literature. The Christian doctrine of the 'higher law,' if we may call it such, appears with special distinctness in the Epistle of James, and in certain discourses of Jesus common to Matthew and Luke, for which modern criticism has coined the designation Q. The fact that "the Wisdom of God" is quoted by Jesus in this source (Matt. xxiii. 34 ff. = Luke xi. 49 ff.), and that His followers in it are spoken

of as "the children of Wisdom" (Matt. xi. 19 = Luke vii. 35) will not have escaped the observant.

We have now to follow up the doctrine in other Christian writings, as a means of differentiating Pauline from non-Pauline influences, and thus helping to understand the development of the faith as it comes to us in the composite form of the post-apostolic age.

The doctrine of the 'higher law' is not foreign even to the Gospel of Mark, though here, as might be expected, there is closer approximation to the Stoic distinction between man-made law and the eternal principles of Nature. It is characteristic of our second gospel that its presentation of the Way of eternal life is not given, as in Matthew and Luke, as part of the teaching in Galilee, but only later, as Jesus, after the revelation of his martyr fate, takes up the Way of the Cross. In chapter x., however, the Roman evangelist gives a series of anecdotes, all of which revolve about this subject of requirement and reward. The scribes' requirement concerning divorce in Mark x. 1–12 serves first of all to bring into sharpest contrast the ordinance of "God" in creation itself which "joins together," and the law of "man" which "puts asunder." Mark had already emphasized this contrast in the section (vii. 1–23) denouncing the ceremonial distinctions of "the Pharisees and all the Jews" as "vain worship" and "precepts of men" which "make void the word of God." In chapter x. he continues after the single example of the man-made law of divorce with the story of the Blessing of Babes (x. 13–16). It serves to illustrate the principle of dependence on the divine grace, centring on the saying, "Whosoever doth not receive the kingdom of God as a little child (i.e. without merit, as a child receives from its father) shall never enter into it." The three anecdotes which follow are closely connected, and are all con-

cerned with Reward in Heaven.[1] The anecdote of the rich young man (x. 17–22) is especially close to the theme we are considering. First of all, as in the Sermon on the Mount, the absolute 'goodness' of God is made the sole standard. Even Jesus is not to be placed on a level with the μόνος ἀγαθὸς θεός (17 f.). Over against this the young man sets his observance of the written commandments (19 f.). His blamelessness evokes indeed Jesus' love, but only with the warning that this gives no claim to reward. "Treasure in heaven" belongs only to those who use earthly wealth on the plan of the boundless goodness of God. This is the way in which Jesus would be followed (21 f.).

The disciples' comment upon the "hardness" of this higher righteousness serves to bring out (23–27) that the very disposition itself is the gift of God. He Himself must grant what He commands (27). Finally there is warning (28–31) against a false security on the part even of the very "first." The disciples' renunciations have been in part rewarded "in this present time," and though forsaking all and following even to persecution and the cross will doubtless ensure "eternal life," yet "there are last that shall be first, and first last."

The special reward of martyrdom is treated of in a paragraph by itself, separated by a third and final announcement of the Passion (32–34) from the preceding. It serves, however, as the climax of the whole series on Heavenly Reward; for it denies all claims to seats of special honour,[2] even on the part of those who have "drunk the cup" of martyrdom with Christ, and concludes with the sublime saying, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered

[1] It is worth while to note that Matthew's parable in defence of the divine right to do good beyond man's desert (Matt. xx. 1–16) is inserted into this group.

[2] An intentional correction of the application of the saying Luke xxii. 28–30, which Matthew (xix. 28) reinserts into the context.

unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (35–45).

This tenth of Mark is therefore our second evangelist's exposition of the doctrine of 'law and grace,' and forms his counterpart to the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount. It is more Pauline—or at least more Gentile-Christian—than Matthew or Luke; and yet how manifestly dependent upon the older conception. Here again we have the same fundamental doctrine in both its factors. 'Thankworthy goodness' must be more than obedience to moral requirement. God Himself is the standard. He is the *μόνος ἀγαθός*. Absolute goodness is an imitation of Him. There is no 'treasure in heaven' save by complete renunciation of earthly wealth, no life eternal but through death, no heavenly crown but through the cross.

The First Epistle of Peter is saturated to an extraordinary degree with Pauline thought and phraseology. And yet even First Peter has its trace of the doctrine of 'thankworthy goodness.' It is in fact but the converse of the Sermon on the Mount and its query "What thank have ye?" when the writer of First Peter urges as his principal message submissive acceptance of undeserved suffering and persecution after the example of Christ on the ground that "This is thankworthy (*τοῦτο χάρις*) if a man for conscience toward God suffer griefs enduring wrongfully. For what glory is it (*ποῖον κλέος*) if when ye sin and are buffeted for it ye take it patiently? But if ye do well and suffer for it ye shall take it patiently, this is thankworthy (*τοῦτο χάρις*) in the sight of God" (1 Pet. ii. 19 f.).

Still more distinctively non-Pauline is the doctrine of 'grace' as 'thankworthy goodness' in the *Shepherd* of Hermas, if only because here so completely confined to the distinction between prescribed requirements and the service of goodwill, without the introduction of the divine

factor, whether as standard or source of 'goodness.' The 'Similitude' (*Sim.* V.), in which Hermas expounds his teaching of the relation of law and grace is given *à propos* (significantly) of his undertaking to keep a fast or 'station,' and follows one on "bearing fruit unto the world to come." The Angel of repentance shows Hermas a better than his "profitless" fast which "achieves nothing for righteousness," and proceeds to relate the Parable of the Slave and the Vineyard. The Master of the vineyard on departing abroad gave commandment to his slave to fence it, giving no other commandment, and promising the slave his freedom if obedient. "When, then, he had gone away the slave took and fenced the vineyard; and having finished the fencing of the vineyard he noticed that the vineyard was full of weeds. So he reasoned within himself saying, 'This command of my lord I have carried out. I will next dig this vineyard, and it shall be neater when it is digged; and when it hath no weeds it will yield more fruit, because not choked by the weeds.'" The result of this unprescribed service of pure goodwill is that the Master of the vineyard is greatly pleased on his return, calls in consultation "his beloved Son who was his heir, and the friends who were his advisers," and proposes as a reward to make the slave joint-heir with his Son. The interpretation which the Angel subsequently furnishes to his own 'parable' explains that the "slave" is "the (incarnate) Son of God" and the vines are His chosen people. "The Holy pre-existent Spirit" is the beloved Son and heir whom God the Master took into counsel along with the archangels. This Holy pre-existent Spirit He also "caused to dwell down in that flesh which He had chosen. This flesh, therefore, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, was subject unto the Spirit, walking honourably in holiness and purity, without in any way defiling the Spirit." The exaltation of "this flesh" (of

Jesus) into partnership with the Holy pre-existent Spirit in its own place of abode was "the reward of its service," primarily because it kept the Spirit undefiled and unspotted, but also "because it co-operated with it in everything, behaving itself boldly and bravely."

The crudity of the Christology leaves the affinity with the Jewish distinction between works of prescription and works of 'grace' (חסד) all the more apparent. In the conception of Hermas Jesus was exalted to His glorified state simply because while on earth He had kept Himself unspotted from the world, and in addition had done the works of mercy which comport with the nature of the Holy pre-existent Spirit. A similar 'reward' attends all who follow His example. As in the Epistle of James, which Hermas frequently employs, there is no doctrine of the cross whatever. The entire work, nearly one-fifth as long as the whole New Testament, has not one mention of the name of Jesus. And yet it is a devout Christian writing. And it comes from the great church of Rome, which only two generations before had had direct intercourse with Paul, both by letter and face to face. The phenomenon is extraordinary, but by no means unique. It is only the counterpart of what we see in Justin, writing but a few years later from the same church. The sub-apostolic age, confronted with Gnostic speculation, antinomian licence, and Docetic heresy, fell back, as we see Papias falling back, upon the tradition of those who had known the Lord in the flesh. "The wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus" (1 Tim. vi. 3) were its remedy for the ills of the time, as we see from the Pastoral Epistles. The succession of that tradition was largely independent of Paul. At Rome we can trace it back through Hermas to Clement, to the Epistle of James, to First Peter, to the source underlying not only Luke and Matthew, but employed in no small degree by Mark

also. Back of the Christian era we can trace the chief roots of the doctrine to the teaching of the synagogue. But this teaching is subordinated to elements which find fullest pre-Christian expression only in the Hellenistic 'Wisdom' literature. In fact we may even venture to question the assertion so confidently made in our time that of all types of Jewish literature which can be considered to have influenced the teaching of our Lord it is the apocalyptic which predominated. That may be true of His first followers, with whom the resurrection and second coming were the supreme elements of the faith; but of the teaching of Jesus, as transmitted in the earliest sources critical analysis can reconstruct, it certainly is not true. There the contrast is not so much between the present and the hereafter as between the outward and the inward. Jesus sets His own message of glad tidings over against the direful warnings of the Baptist, as the winning and gentle appeals of Wisdom in the Sapiential books contrast with the harsher notes of the denunciatory prophets and the writers of apocalypse. In short, Jesus expressly makes His disciples children of the Wisdom of God. There may, then, be value in a genetic study of some New Testament ideas whose roots appear to lead back, independently of St. Paul, to the Hellenistic teachers of Israel, who stood for humanity, inwardness, and spirituality in religion, over against the ceremonial of the Levitical system and the legalistic casuistry of the scribes and Pharisees.

B. W. Bacon.