

## V

# “MISERABLE-SINNER CHRISTIANITY” IN THE HANDS OF THE RATIONALISTS

## ARTICLE III

### WINDISCH AND THE END<sup>1</sup>

THE assault on the Reformation conception of the Christian life could not end on so ambiguous a note as that struck by Pfleiderer. On the contrary, what may very properly be spoken of as the last word said in furtherance of it, was the most direct that had been said since Wernle's own, and in many respects the most forceful and telling of all. We are referring, of course, to Hans Windisch's at once brilliant and ponderous volume on "Baptism and Sin in the Oldest Christianity up to Origen,"<sup>2</sup> which was published in 1908. We have already pointed out the relation of the book to Wernle's published twelve years before. It came into the controversy which Wernle had provoked, very distinctly at the end, when the debate was languishing, and indeed, from the point of view of Wernle's contentions, when the battle was lost. It had much the appearance accordingly of a last vigorous attack, seeking to wring a victory out of defeat. And assuredly little was left unsaid by Windisch that could be said to rescue and save a lost cause.

What Windisch undertakes to do, to speak now of the formal contents of his volume, is to take up Wernle's proposition that to Paul Christians are in their actual nature sinless men, to justify it by a really thorough exegetical survey of the Pauline material, and then to place it in its historical connections both narrow and broad. For this purpose he traces the related conceptions with the same thoroughness through the rest of the New Testament books, and then extends the view backwards to Ezekiel and forward to Origen. He discovers preparations for the theory of the sinlessness of Christians, attributed to Paul, in the prophets' demand for repentance, in the Jewish dogma of the sinless man of the end-time, and in the sacramental rite of cleansing baptism. He follows what he thinks of as survivals of the Pauline conception through the early Patristic writings, pausing at Origen only because he discovers in him the complete dissolution of the theory of

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<sup>1</sup> From *The Princeton Theological Review*, xviii. 1920, pp. 545–610; cf. Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Perfectionism, Part One*, vol. 7, 237–301. <http://faithsaves.net>.

<sup>2</sup> "Taufe und Sünde im ältesten Christentum bis auf Origenes. Ein Beitrag zur altchristlichen Dogmengeschichte," 1908. The book, published when he was twenty-seven years old, was Windisch's first book; at least it was preceded only by his Doctor's dissertation on "The Theodicy of ... Justin," 1906.

baptismal cleansing and the recognition of the natural necessity of sin, even for Christians. It is naturally, however, upon the New Testament text itself that he expends his chief effort, and he discusses this with a minuteness of detail, a fulness of exegetical comment, and a richness of illustrative remark which make the volume in effect a commentary on the entire New Testament from the point of view of its witness to the relation of the Christian life to sin. This detailed discussion of the New Testament text is of course the strength of the book; but, since its task is approached from a point of view really alien to the New Testament, it is also its weakness. Many concessions require to be made, many acts of exegetical violence are committed, much special pleading is indulged in, and it still remains necessary to declare the New Testament writers constantly inconsistent with themselves. Under whatever form it may be put forward, it is very clear that this is not really exposition. It rapidly becomes obvious to the reader that the New Testament passages which are discussed cannot be strung on the thread with which they are approached, and the most thorough of all attempts to show that to the New Testament writings the Christian is a sinless man becomes, by the very attempt to be thorough, its most thorough refutation. It becomes ever more and more plain that the text is intractable to this theory of its meaning.

We are not surprised, therefore, to observe that Wernle, reviewing the book under the spur of a wholesome sense of his own partial responsibility for its vagaries, throws into primary emphasis the notable lack of plain, human common sense which, despite all its diligence and acuteness, deforms its exegesis; and the general deficiency in it of a feeling for reality. "During the reading of great parts of the book," he says, "we live in the labyrinth of a bewitched world, while the simple reality of life lies without."<sup>3</sup> In other words, Windisch has not shown us the plain three-dimensioned world which the New Testament reflects; he has attempted to work out a new two-dimensioned or four-dimensioned world, and to impose that on the New Testament writers as their own. Naturally everything in their world, under this treatment, takes on an artificial aspect. "What kind of a Paul is this that is depicted," cries Wernle,<sup>4</sup> "a Paul for whom in the Epistles to the Corinthians the occurrence of sin in Christianity 'obviously' and 'again' 'makes theoretical difficulties,' who over against the same Corinthians 'artificially creates the problem of the sinful Christian,' who at 1 Cor. 10:1 ff. 'deals plainly with the problem of sin after baptism,' who gives to his Galatians as sinful Christians an injunction to the sinless life and sets before them the essence of the Christian as sinlessness, whose whole point of view is dominated by an ideal portrait of the Christian according to which the disappearance of sin characteristically accompanies becoming a Christian? I find this Paul, despite all the pre-Christian elucidations which Windisch adduces, a total psychological enigma; and not only he but all the primitive Christians in the mass must have been visionaries and dreamers if the author's closing result be right—that Christians are in their real nature sinless men. No day perhaps passed for them in which intelligence of faults, failings, aberrations, did not smite their eyes or ears from near and far; and yet, for example, it was so difficult for the preacher of Second Clement, because of his rigoristic theory of baptism, to make a demand for repentance, that he must writhe about sadly before he can give to Christians the exhortation to penitence

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<sup>3</sup> *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, xxxiv. 1909, col. 589.

<sup>4</sup> Coll. 587–588.

demanded by the actual state of things. And why so? Because first of all for all those Christians a theory of sinfulness was firmly established, and it was only with the presupposition of this theory that they could approach empirical reality.”

In summing up at the end of his volume the results of his investigations, Windisch formulates them crisply in the words which we have just seen Wernle quoting from him. They all are comprehended, he says, in this, that he has established it as the doctrine of the primitive Church, that “Christians are in their real nature sinless men.”<sup>5</sup> He then proceeds to develop a rationale of this doctrine, founded on the circumstance that Christianity is a historically grounded redemptive religion, in which the two matters of the first interest are the nature of the Redeemer and the nature of the redeemed. As the Redeemer is by nature without sin, so must His redeemed become sinless men. It is the burden of prophecy that all sin must be put away in order that the salvation of the Lord may come. It is the expectation which informs all apocalypses, that God will make His people sinless. Christianity comes as the fulfilment of prophecy and the realization of all the hopes founded on it, whether given expression in apocalypses or elsewhere. In it the longed for Messiah actually comes, and He brings with Him all that God’s people had been taught to look for in Him; and that very especially in the special form of those expectations which sees just in sin the enemy He is to overcome. As the Messiah must be Himself without sin, so must He, in every sense of the word, save His people from their sins.

Of course all this is in substance true. But it does not follow that from this point of view Christians must be sinless; that, as Windisch expresses it, “sinless men have been on the earth ever since the sinless Messiah was sent by God”—because “the fulfilment of the hope and the realization of the requirement in the circles of the Christians have their historical starting point in the person of the Messiah Jesus.”<sup>6</sup> The essence of the matter is contained in the simple remark that all that is here adduced leaves it still an open question how and when Christ’s salvation of His people from their sins is to be supposed to reach its completion. He came into the world, let us say, to save sinners; to save them from their sins; from the guilt of their sins, from the pollution of them, from their power, from the commission of them—from all that they are, and from all that they bring with them in the way of effects or consequences. But it does not follow that this whole body of results must be supposed—or will naturally be supposed—to be brought about at once—“on faith.” There is death, for instance; it is a consequence of sin (Rom. 5:12). There may have been some in Paul’s churches who fancied that they were to be relieved from the necessity of dying (1 Thess. 4:13 ff.). Paul does not encourage the notion. He points rather to the resurrection, and to the coming of Christ, events which were to take place in the future—how far in the future he says he does not know, but quite obviously well in the future. It is impossible to imagine that this Paul, nevertheless, supposed that the whole process of salvation was instantaneously completed when the act of faith was exercised. Rather, he constantly refers its completion, and that very especially in its ethical aspects, to this same coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 5:23). It is that future event—perhaps far future event—then, which forms the term of the salvation of Christians; and as their salvation is precisely salvation from sin it is only at the arrival of

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<sup>5</sup> P. 507.

<sup>6</sup> P. 509.

that event that they realize to the full the “salvation from sin” which they receive from Christ Jesus.

This fundamental historical fact enables us to place our finger on Windisch’s central error in his interpretation of the New Testament writers with reference to the nature of the Christian life. He misses the significance of the inter-adventual period. Paul calls it “the day of salvation,” which means not merely the day in which salvation is freely offered to men, but also, in the light of a passage like 1 Cor. 15:25 f., the day during which the saving work is perfected in men and in the world. Windisch necessarily misses this constitutive fact in Paul’s teaching because he ascribes to the New Testament writers, Paul included, an expectation of the coming of the Lord as immediately impending. That is not, however, their view. Paul, for example, teaches with great fervor and consistency a doctrine of a prolonged period of development under the government of the exalted Jesus, through which the world advances to a glorious consummation. It is in this period of world-development that he sees his Christians living. They form its core and leaven, and he of course attributes to them individually a similar development, reaching its completion in the same great consummation. Not when He was on earth merely, but now also while He is in heaven, according to Paul’s view, Jesus is actively our Savior. He is still while in heaven “saving His people from their sins”; and that not in the mass merely, but also with reference to the individual. His work of saving the individual therefore as truly as that of saving the world is given the character of a process; and the end of this process for the one as for the other is to be reached only at the Parousia. That the sanctification of the Christian is a process, belongs thus to the very substance of Paul’s doctrine of salvation, and his repeated allusions to it in his writings cannot be explained away.

It is not, however, on the progressive character of the Christian’s salvation from sin, itself, that this new interpretation of Paul impinges with most deadly effect, but on—what is implicated in it—the continuous dependence of the progressively saved sinner on the living activities of the saving Christ. We are made to feel this very sharply when Windisch comes to tell us how the teaching of the Reformation differs from that of his new Paul.<sup>7</sup> The difference, as stated, turns, of course, on a difference in their views of the application of justification. According to Paul, we are told, we receive in justification forgiveness of our past sins only, while with Luther the forgiveness received in it is extended to all the sins we may commit through life. This mode of statement, however, only touches the surface of the matter. Underneath it lies a conception which throws the Christian back on his own resources and withdraws from him all recourse to, as it denies of him all need of, the continued saving activities of Christ our Mediator. The real dividing question comes, therefore, to be seen to be whether the Christian is always dependent on Christ and always looks to Him as His one complete Savior. According to the new interpretation of Paul, Christ earns for us only the first grace; after that we must earn eternal life for ourselves by our own work and merit. This means of course that his own works are a Christian’s sole dependence. It is only, we are told, those out of Christ who have no works on which to depend, and who therefore are exhorted not to depend on their own works. Paul “in his rejection of our own works is thinking apparently only of the works of our earlier life”; while the Reformation expressly excludes present and

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<sup>7</sup> Pp. 524 ff.

future works also. All that we receive in Christ is thus for Paul exhausted in that “first grace”; after that we are left to our own resources. This is as much as to say that all that Christ has done for us is to start us on our way; we have to walk in the way for ourselves. We must not forget that, according to this new reading of Paul, he represents Christ as giving us a magnificent start. He not only in that “first grace” gives us forgiveness of sins but takes them away; so that all we have to do is to keep ourselves as He leaves us. It is not, to be sure, overly clear precisely what is meant by His taking away our sins; in the passage at present before us, Windisch apparently assumes that it means the cleansing of our corrupt nature—which is also what from the logical point of view it should mean. At all events it is here that the difference between this new reading of Paul and the Reformation teaching comes to its head. Windisch fixes on a phrase in the “Formula Concordiae” to give it pointed expression. We are told there that “we are and remain sinners” because of our corrupted nature, and therefore depend entirely on Christ. “This ‘and remain sinners,’ ” says Windisch, “admirably indicates the application of the doctrine of justification which goes beyond Paul.” According to Paul, we do not “remain” sinners, and accordingly do not any longer need Christ. We have got all that Christ can give us; henceforth it is our own concern. Clearly we have two different religions contrasted here. We gain by the new interpretation of Paul a more immediate perfection in our lives. We lose by it Christ out of our lives.

It would be wrong not to pause to observe that this new interpretation of Paul is really a modernization of Paul, in the theological sense of that word. One may suspect that it has its real source largely in the imputation to Paul by its authors, in more or less fulness, of their own conceptions of what the Christian life actually is. It is at all events a great step towards the modernization of Paul to relieve him of all implication in the ascription of a present saving activity to Christ. Really “modern” men do not think, of course, of allowing to even the acts of the historical Jesus any expiatory character, any “forgiveness-procuring” value. But it is a wide step toward their mode of thinking to eliminate all activities of Christ except those of the historical Jesus. When it is said that Paul knows nothing of continued saving activities by Christ after His death—that what He did while on earth serves, according to Paul, to bring about that repentance and faith which secures forgiveness and delivers from sin, and after that, it is our own concern—the exalted Christ is made as much “hidden” to Paul as He is to Ritschl, and all communion with Him is as completely eliminated from Paul’s thought as it is from Herrmann’s. The resultant conception of the Christian life itself, therefore, attributed to Paul is also thoroughly “modern.” Man is thrown back on his own ethical activities, which are made the decisive thing in his standing or falling. All that he really obtains from Christ is a new start; the slate is washed clean for him. No doubt it is in the inspiration of this new start that he goes forward. But in the end all depends on what he has himself written on the cleansed slate. Paul is in other words thought of as teaching a “moralistic” doctrine of salvation of quite modern aspect. He is made a very respectable follower of Ritschl—or something worse.

It is this understanding of the teaching of Paul, and with him of John,<sup>8</sup> and indeed *mutatis mutandis*, of the whole New Testament, and of early Christianity in general, that

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. p. 508: “Paul and John are the typical and irrefutable witnesses for the dogma that the Christian is freed from sin (*entsündigt*).”

Windisch sets before us at the end of his volume as the result of his investigations. It is questionable, however, whether the detailed report of these investigations, very richly set out in the volume itself, sustains this result. Windisch is himself very prompt to admit that we cannot speak with any propriety of it as the only Biblical doctrine. Indeed, from his point of view there is no such thing as “a Biblical doctrine”; many different notions concerning the Christian life may be found in the Bible. To give point to this assertion, he adds illustratively:<sup>9</sup> “Yes, even ‘miserable-sinnerism’ is represented in the Bible. Jesus, for example, along with the Methodistic notion of repentance which He employs, along with His strict requirement of cleansing, recognises the continuance of sinning, and assures His disciples like any Lutheran Christian of the abiding favor of God.” It may tend to console “miserable-sinner Christians” to know that it is admitted that Jesus is on their side. And this is not all. For Windisch is compelled to admit also that Paul himself is not able to preserve unbrokenly an attitude toward Christians which sees in them those sinless men whom he is said to proclaim them. In point of fact, it is explained,<sup>10</sup> the relations of Christians to sin are spoken of by Paul from three different points of view. “The *Messiah-man, cleansed by God*, is delivered from all sin and temptation. The *normal and ideal Christian* has separated himself from sin, is conscious of no new sin, and yet must, under the faithful guidance of God, be on his guard against sinful temptation. Finally the *unestablished, imperfect Christian* still occasionally commits sin, and even is still entangled in serious faults; he is still unconverted, has not yet yielded himself to the control of the Spirit, has lost the feeling of being with Christ and with His Spirit; if he is not to be destroyed he must at length repent and let the Spirit come into action, he must repent afresh and yield to Christ and to the Spirit.” Needless to say the Apostle gives no hint of the existence of any such three classes of Christians. These are only three different ways in which, according to Windisch, Paul is found actually dealing from time to time with Christians. If so, we can only say that he dealt with them very inconsistently—implying sometimes that Christians are glorified saints, sinless and sin-proof; sometimes that they are indeed without sin but only through their own strenuous efforts and always liable to sin; and sometimes that they are sin-stained creatures who must bestir themselves lest they perish. Windisch, however, very remarkably as it seems to us, draws the conclusion from the situation thus depicted that Christians are, according to Paul, sinless beings. “In every case,” he says, “all—what has happened and what ought to happen—tends to this: that the Christian is a sinless man.” “By this ideal,” he now continues, “all the Apostle’s expectations are permeated. Only in two passages (1 Cor. 4 and 5) does Paul give expression to the view that God will pardon also the Christian who has remained a sinner; these, however, deal with disgraceful exceptions.” He says two passages, apparently, only by a slip of the pen. There is nothing in the fourth chapter of First Corinthians to satisfy the allusion, and it is clear that his mind is on merely the opening verses of the fifth chapter. Therefore he continues: “In this single passage Paul gives expression to a conception which presents an individual Christian as a ‘miserable sinner’ who is not able to fulfil his life-task. We may add to this, no doubt, certain oft-recurring exhortations, which at least indirectly ‘reckon with the sin of the Christian’—exhortations to return no more evil for evil (1 Thess. 5:15; Rom. 12:17), to forgive one

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<sup>9</sup> P. 534.

<sup>10</sup> P. 219.

another as God has forgiven us (Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32).” This is a most inadequate adduction of the relevant material; but even so, it is enough to show that Paul does not prevailingly deal with Christians as if they were sinless, but assumes on the contrary that sin ever lies at their door. Windisch, however, comments as follows: “Our expositions have shown that in none of these declarations can the proposition find support for itself that Paul sees in sin the constant attendant of the Christian.” It is doubtless true that exhortations not to sin imply immediately only a constant liability to sin, not a constant sinning. The distinction is, however, a rather narrow one; and one wonders whether a constant liability to sin which was never illustrated by actual sinning would naturally call out such constant exhortations against sinning.

And one wonders also whether Windisch wishes to convey the impression that in his exhortations to growth in the Christian life Paul invariably confines himself to the positive side of this growth, or the putting on of graces, and never exhorts Christians to the negative aspect of it, or the putting off of vices—always, in other words, urges the putting on of the new man, never the putting off of the old man. Obviously the implication of exhortations to put away vices may be not merely that we are liable to these vices, but that we are afflicted with them. Paul’s epistles fairly swarm with such exhortations. The fact is too patent to require illustration, and it is not denied by Windisch. He founds on it indeed his representation that Paul has two inconsistent theories of cleansing from sin, the mystic and the parenetic; and in expounding this representation he actually allows that the parenetic theory implies the continuance of sinfulness in Christians.<sup>11</sup> “The parenesis of conversion,” he says, “goes back to the phrases, ‘that ye may walk in newness in life,’ and ‘that ye may no longer serve sin’; only, according to its intrinsic peculiarity, it presupposes subsistent sinfulness or temptability”; it is only this second theory, he says again, which “reckons with the temptability of the Christian, and in it there is even to be assumed as we have seen, an actual sin of the Christian.” This admission falls short, no doubt, of allowing that Paul presupposes “continual sinning” in Christians, although that too is the real implication of Paul’s continual parenesis. It must be allowed also that in dealing with the several parenetic passages Windisch does his best to transform the imperatives into indicatives. It is in its failure to enter into what may be called the prevailing parenetic tone of Paul’s epistles, indeed, that Wernle finds the fundamental fault of Windisch’s book. It would be truer to the real state of the case, he intimates,<sup>12</sup> if instead of turning the imperatives into indicatives, the indicatives were read as nothing but strengthened imperatives. “The inability to sin in Rom. 6,” he adds illustratively, “is the strongest imperative which Paul has at his disposal, and very properly passes therefore in the end into the *impropriety* of sinning.... In 1 Cor. 6:11, Gal. 5:24, this imperative in the form of retrospect is very evident.” The idea meant to be conveyed is that Paul always writes with moral impression in view and has as his end the ethical advancement of his readers. Even his indicative statements have this as their end, and to that extent have an imperative concealed in their affirmations.

The fundamental parenesis which Windisch has to face in his endeavor to turn the exhortations rather into declarations, is of course that of the sixth chapter of Romans. He

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<sup>11</sup> Pp. 180–182.

<sup>12</sup> *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, xxxiv. 1909, col. 588.

opens his exposition of this passage<sup>13</sup> with the remark that Paul repels the suggestion that Christians are to continue in sin—and that is the same as asserting that they are no longer to sin—and supports it by declaring that sin has become an impossibility to the pardoned man. This representation can be allowed only provided that the “impossibility” asserted be understood as a logical one. That is to say, what Paul asserts is that it is grossly inconsistent for the converted man to sin; he ought not to sin with an oughtness which should be compulsory for his whole conduct. If, however, it were a sheer impossibility in the strict sense of that word for Christians to sin Paul should have spared himself his useless argument. That he has not thus spared himself proves that sinning was not only not impossible for the converted man, but was not unexampled among converted men, or even unusual. Paul is laboring here to deter his readers from sinning; and that is the way we deal with men who still sin, not with those who have ceased sinning altogether. Windisch allows that the life, the new life, is presented in some sense as a task; but he insists with reference to the newness of life itself, that it is a sheer gift, and that the power that it brings is not an “ought” but a “can.” This is of course so far true: but the point at issue is not the newness of life itself but the walk in this newness of life; and that is, as he is himself ready to allow, a task. He dismisses the idea, it is true, that this task includes the overcoming of hindrances; there is no conflict, no effort, no advance in the walk to which Christians are exhorted. “As little as in the case of Christ is the new walk conceived as a conflict or advance.” “It is a walk on an open and level road.” What is true in such statements is only that these things are not expressly notified in the words themselves, but are left to the general implication. But they are very expressly included in the general implication. The future tenses, as it is natural they should, greatly disturb Windisch. But his troubles come to their climax only when he reaches the “believe” of verse 8 and the “reckon” of verse 11. “The determination of the sense of the ‘reckon,’ ” he says,<sup>14</sup> “is not easy and not certain.” “I might say,” he adds, “that it is the subjective conception of an objective fact, arising from the ‘apprehension of Christ’ and of mystical connection with Him. To gather from it an element of pure subjectivity and of uncertainty of the objective, seems to me illegitimate. Paul would no doubt have applied ‘reckon’ to the possibility of mysteriously worked circumstances.” Very possibly. But he could not easily apply it to objective conditions directly known in an experience already in full enjoyment. The thing that cannot be balked is that Paul’s readers had to *consider* themselves dead to sin and living to God. It was *not* to them a matter of complete present enjoyment but of faith. And then, at this point of the discussion, Windisch has to brace himself to meet as best he may the full force of the parenthesis.

The memory of his struggle with the sixth chapter of Romans Windisch carries over with him to Col. 3:5, another parenthesis which gives him some trouble. Paul is dealing in the opening verses of this chapter, he tells us,<sup>15</sup> with the positive side of the Christians’ transformation. They have been raised with Christ; and, having been raised, says Paul, their life is now hidden with Christ in God. “The glorified nature,” Windisch explains, “is already present but invisible, hidden still in God’s protection. It is only the revelation, not the new-creation of the ‘life’ that still holds back.” The influence of the Jewish hopes of

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<sup>13</sup> Pp. 167 f.

<sup>14</sup> P. 174.

<sup>15</sup> P. 199.

cleansing and glorification on Paul's thought, Windisch suggests, is visible here. "Like the apocalyptic Baruch, Paul sees cleansing and glorification together as one process." He certainly sees them together—and one result of that is that he postpones the accomplishment of the one as of the other to the manifestation of Christ our life; in the meantime it is true of both these things that they are "not yet manifest." This means naturally that as we are not free from weakness in this transition period, so we are not free from sin. Windisch, however, says: "A reference to the sinful *habitus* of the Christian is altogether lacking"; it is only asceticism that is in question, and that is spoken of with contempt. Why, however, we need to ask, does Paul throw such contempt on this asceticism? Precisely because it is useless for the purposes of moral cleansing! These practices, says he (2:23), "are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." That is the reason why he pronounces them useless to his Christians. What he conceives Christians to be in need of, therefore, is something that will aid them in their battle against "the indulgence of the flesh." Is not that to relate the matter to "the sinful *habitus*"? And is it not to say that the Christian life on earth is a process of conquering sin in its manifestations in that life—"the *indulgence* of the flesh"? Positively, no doubt, this process may find expression in seeking the things that are above, in contrast with the things of earth (3:1, 2). But it has a negative side too. Precisely because we have died with Christ and our life is hidden with Him in God, to be manifested in all its fulness in due season, we must bestir ourselves in the meanwhile to be prepared for its revelation. "Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth," says the Apostle (3:5 ff.). "Therefore!" That is a very significant "therefore," and one very unaccountable to Windisch. "The very first word 'mortify,' " he says, "shows clearly that a completely new train of thought is begun." But Paul says "therefore." "What we have to inquire," Windisch says, "is whether possibly there is not attempted here a connection between heterogeneous conceptions." But Paul says "therefore"; and "therefore" does not connect "heterogeneous conceptions." Well, says Windisch,<sup>16</sup> it is at least not a *process* of cleansing which is intimated here: look at the aorists—"mortify," "put away," verses 5, 8. It is an abrupt passage from sin to holiness which the Apostle has in mind. But neither will this plea serve him. The "aorist of the strong imperative" is too familiar a usage to be overlooked.<sup>17</sup> Of course Paul wished decisive acts of moral amendment from his Christians, and that is the reason he uses these strong aorists. But there is no implication that the end in view could be accomplished at once. And the main point is that such an exhortation was not superfluous for Christians. Windisch seeks to meet this, desperately we should suppose, by suggesting that Paul was so accustomed to the use of a catechism for neophytes that he writes down mechanically from it these exhortations, though, of course, he had no knowledge of his readers being guilty of any such sins. In other words, his exhortations here are purely conventional. If so, we need to ask why it was that he

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<sup>16</sup> P. 200.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Winer's "Grammar of New Testament Greek," Thayer's translation, 1872, p. 314. In John 14:15, *Keep* my commandments does not mean keep them once for all; neither does, John 15:4, *Abide* in me, refer to a single act; nor, 1 John 5:21, *Keep* yourselves from idols, refer to a single separation of ourselves from idols; nor, Mark 16:15, *Go and preach*, refer to the delivery of a single sermon. The verb in every petition of the Lord's Prayer is an aorist, the suitable tense, as Gildersleeve says, for "instant prayer."

was led to transcribe just such and such sections of the catechism for neophytes when writing to Christians. Must we not suppose that he used the sections of the catechism which in general were suitable to the case in hand? We do not seem by this road to escape the implication that precisely these exhortations were appropriate for Christians as Christians.

A similar means of escape to that which he makes use of here Windisch essays again, when commenting on Rom. 13:1, where Paul requires Christians to be good citizens and warns them that rulers are of divine appointment and that we must subject ourselves to them for conscience's sake and not merely from fear of punishment. It certainly seems to be implied here that it was conceivable that Christians, if they did not take heed to themselves, might transgress the law of the State and in doing so sin against God. This appearance Windisch does not deny. "Here," says he,<sup>18</sup> "the Apostle seems clearly to say that now and again sin may bring even Christians into conflict with the State." "But," he adds, "this is not so. It is not Paul the counselor of the community of believers in the Messiah who is speaking here, but the Hellenistic instructor of mankind. The Thou is man, not the Christian. The possibility that a 'Christian' should need to be punished by the State for an offence, he did not seriously entertain; he did not intend to apply the civil law to the sin of the 'Christian.' What he wishes to make obvious to the Roman Christians is the humanitarian conception of the State, in and of itself. They are to observe in the ordinances of the State the same divine discipline to which they have subjected themselves." As Paul here forgot he was a Christian leader addressing Christians and spoke as a heathen philosopher preaching good citizenship, so, only a few verses further on he forgets himself again and speaks to his Christian readers in the forms in which he was accustomed to address his heathen audiences in his missionary preaching. The passage is Rom. 13:11–14, and Windisch finds it impossible to deny that Paul speaks in it to his readers as if they were still living in sin.<sup>19</sup> He speaks to them, he says, as if they were still unconverted people. He exhorts them in terms—"make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof"—which imply that they were still capable of sinning, or, rather we should say, were still constantly sinning: "*continue not* to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." The Christians are simply required to put away their vices, and the vices that are enumerated are real vices. This, precisely on the ground that they are Christians, that they had long been Christians, and that it was high time for them "to show up better" as Christians. This certainly does not look as if Christians were to Paul as such sinless men. No, as Windisch complains, he treats them as if they had always up to the moment of his addressing them, lived like heathen. But Windisch grasps at the straw, that he requires of them an immediate and final break with their old sin: "Not a realizing now to be begun and gradually to be accomplished is required, but an immediate passage from sin to sinlessness." Even that straw, however, does not sustain him. He is at his wits' end. "The words," says he, "strike on us as very surprising. That a totally changed conception of the Christian State lies here, is felt by everybody. We have found the ideal carriage of the community strongly emphasized, never actual sin, but only the possibility of sin, brought into consideration, a process of renewal already brought in substantiated. Now the Christians are suddenly required to discontinue their vicious life,

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<sup>18</sup> P. 190.

<sup>19</sup> Pp. 191–192.

and yet such vices are alluded to as could confidently be supposed to have been overcome. How is this change in conception to be explained?" Windisch sees but one way. Paul was a missionary, and had acquired certain modes of speech in his missionary addresses. And here, as he was writing to the Roman Christians—"the spirit of the missionary came over him, and instead of the Christians who needed only further helpful instruction, he sees a body of lost sinners before him whom he now has to snatch with one grasp out of their sinfulness."

There is another characteristic of the passage which gives Windisch some trouble. That is the interchange of the first and second persons in it. Windisch is unwilling to allow any significance to this interchange. "Because it is the missionary that is speaking," he says,<sup>20</sup> "I do not think that the 'we' is to be referred to his self-consciousness. It is a pure style-form. It gives place at once to 'you.' Since he abandons the first person precisely with 'put ye on,' it is clear that he cannot have included himself in the 'we.' " For support in this somewhat remarkable opinion he apparently appeals to A. Jülicher's comment on the passage. At least, to the sentence which expresses his opinion that the "we" is not to be referred to Paul's self-consciousness, he appends a note which says, "compare Jülicher," with a reference to Jülicher's comment. We do not find anything in that comment, however, which can lend support to Windisch's representation.<sup>21</sup> What we find, on the contrary, is a remark to the effect that Paul does include himself in the exhortations of verses 12b and 13, and that that fact precludes our using verses 11, 14 to prove that there was no trace of spiritual life in the Roman church at all. This would be in any case an overstrained use of these verses; but the fact that Paul includes himself in verses 12b and 13 and does not in 11, 14, does at least show that he did not feel it possible to associate himself with the Roman Christians in what he has to say of them in verses 11 and 14, or at least in verse 14—for the "you" in verse 11 may be only the direct address appropriate to the opening of the exhortation. The strength of the language employed is, no doubt, throughout, as Jülicher suggests, due to a desire to move the consciences of the Roman Christians strongly. The particular items in the enumeration of vices in verse 13 are chosen accordingly to meet their case, actual or possible. In associating himself with his readers in these middle clauses of the passage the Apostle—

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<sup>20</sup> P. 192.

<sup>21</sup> Jülicher's Commentary on Romans is published in J. Weiss, "Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments." The section on Rom. 13:11–14 is identically the same in the first and second editions (1907, 1908). The failure of Jülicher to support Windisch at this point is the more significant because they occupy common ground in the contention that Paul holds that Christians are sinless. Commenting on Rom. 4:15, for example, Jülicher represents Paul as meaning that "where the law is not—in the blessed present (3:21, 26)—there is also no transgression and accordingly no excitation of the divine wrath." And then he adds: "An extremely characteristic declaration of the ideal glory in which Paul saw the condition of humanity—no more punishment because no sin." E. Kühl (*in loco*) very sharply, from his own point of view, corrects Jülicher for this certainly very unjustified exposition and inference. It is probably enough to say that the meaning of the declaration that "where law is not there is no transgression either"—which is no doubt a general proposition—is *here* that the promised inheritance was in no sense conditioned on law; it was a promise of pure grace and rested on the righteousness of faith.

the more forcibly that it is purely without calculation—intimates that it is not true of bad Christians alone, but it is a universal Christian characteristic, that they must be constantly turning away from sin and reaching upwards. As Jülicher puts it: “That the awakening from sleep and the putting on of Christ must be daily repeated, with ever greater result, was to him no mystery.” It is impossible therefore to escape from the implications of the passage that Christians are not sinless but sinful men, in process of making their way through the night to that day which is presented as the goal of their endeavour.

A similar instance of Paul’s associating himself with his readers in an exhortation to moral improvement is found in 2 Cor. 7:1b: “Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Windisch deals with this passage very much as he deals with Rom. 13:11 ff. It is clearly a piece of missionary preaching which Paul more or less inadvertently delivers to his Christians. He is not thinking of any “gradual amendment,” but is calling on sinful Christians to lay aside once for all, in one comprehensive act, all sin, and “to let the ideal of a truly holy walk become reality in their empirical life.”<sup>22</sup> It is only misplaced exegetical ingenuity which would “infer from the use of the first person that the Apostle includes himself in the exhortation.” “The ‘we’ is a friendly style form.” Meanwhile, it remains inexplicable that if Christians are as such sinless men Paul could address these Christians in this fashion. The Christians whom he addresses he distinguishes at length and in the most pungent way, in the immediately preceding context, from the heathen; and exhorts them to hold themselves aloof from heathen modes of thinking and standards of conduct. He cannot possibly be reverting here to a “missionary” mode of speech more suitable to heathen than to Christians. There is no reason whatever for representing the cleansing to which Paul exhorts here as a thing which is expected to be, or that can be, accomplished suddenly, in a single stroke. The employment of “the strong aorist”—“let us cleanse ourselves”—only shows that the Apostle is exhorting his readers to undertake the task he is urging them to at once, vigorously and with decisive effect; while the present participle which follows it—“while we are bringing holiness to perfection”—shows that the task is accomplished only through a process,—is, as H. A. W. Meyer expresses it, “the continual moral endeavour and work of the Christian purifying himself.” And finally it is beyond question that the Apostle includes himself in what thus is marked out as the common task of all Christians. No one forms an exception, at any stage of his Christian life, to the need of purifying himself from defilement of one sort or another, affecting the flesh or the spirit, and so continuing the perfecting of his holiness in the fear of God. And therefore, when exhorting the Corinthians to this activity of, not keeping ourselves pure, but of making ourselves pure, the Apostle, as Meyer puts it, with true moral feeling of the universality of this need, places himself, the mature Christian, on an equality with them, the immature. The Christian life is conceived here as a continuous process of active advancement in, negatively, purification and, positively, sanctification.

A very striking passage of the same general order meets us in 1 Cor. 11:17 ff. In the midst of Paul’s rebuke of the Corinthians for irreverent conduct in connection with the Lord’s Supper, two verses (vss. 31, 32) suddenly occur in which the second person gives way to the first: “But if we discerned ourselves we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”

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<sup>22</sup> P. 150.

The effect of this change of persons is, of course, to give the assertion contained in these verses a greater generality. “You,” “you,” “you,” the Apostle had been saying, and after these verses returns to saying: here he says “we”—not setting the two pronouns in contrast with one another (which would require that they be expressed) but broadening the one into the other. But why should he broaden his statement in just these two verses? H. A. W. Meyer (and Heinrici after him) says: “The use of the first person gives to the sentence the gentler form of a general statement, not referring merely to the state of things at Corinth, but of universal application.” That is true of course; but it does not fully answer the question. There is no obvious reason why just this remark should be singled out for gentler statement. It is not intrinsically the severest remark in the context, which therefore called particularly for softening. The plain fact is that, in his rebuke to the Corinthians, the Apostle introduces this general mode of speech here because what he has to say here no longer applies to the Corinthians only, but is true of all Christians, himself included. Only the Corinthians had been guilty of the specific faults mentioned in the surrounding context. But all Christians are sinners; they all require to “discern themselves”; they all fail, more or less, in that wholesome duty; thus failing, they are all chastened by the Lord, in order that they may escape condemnation for their sins. This is the picture which Paul draws for us here of the Christian life. A. Titius is quite right, then, when he says<sup>23</sup> that Paul “in 1 Cor. 11:31 f. expressly reckons himself in the number of those who are judged and disciplined by the Lord, because they have foreborne their own proving—” although he is at once contradicted by C. Clemen<sup>24</sup> and subsequently by Windisch.<sup>25</sup> Windisch does not say here, however, as in former cases which we have noted, that Paul’s “we” is simply a trick of style and means nothing. He endeavours to discover how Paul may be supposed to associate himself with the Corinthians, without the implication that he too needed to be brought to give proper attention to his sinning by chastening from the Lord. The theory which he broaches is in brief this—sufferings were sent to others to bring them to a recognition of their sins and to separation of themselves from them; they were sent to Paul to suppress temptation to sin in him. In associating himself with the Corinthians by his “we,” “Paul therefore did not intend to recognize that he too was punished by God because of his sins; he has nevertheless used a ‘we,’ because he too in another sense reckoned himself among the ‘disciplined.’ ”<sup>26</sup> This is rather a weird theory—which has no ground in the text, and indeed has nothing to recommend it except that it avoids recognizing that Paul confesses himself a sinner, who is dealt with by God as a sinner. It labors meanwhile under the disadvantage that in its effort to relieve Paul from the sins which he confesses, it involves him in a sin which he does not confess; and indeed scarcely avoids involving God Himself in sin. For is it not a sin to profess to be at one with others in a matter in which you are really radically different from them? And is it not a sin to inflict punishment where punishment is in no way deserved?

It is quite clear that Paul conceives of Christians as not yet freed from sinning. Windisch struggles hard not to admit it, although of course he struggles in vain. How hard he struggles may be revealed to us by his comment on 2 Cor. 12:21. There is

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<sup>23</sup> “Die Neutestamentliche Lehre von der Seligkeit,” ii. 1900, p. 83.

<sup>24</sup> “Paulus, sein Leben und Wirken,” ii. 1904, p. 102.

<sup>25</sup> P. 139.

<sup>26</sup> P. 140.

probably no passage in the New Testament which throws into a more lurid light the sins of which Christians may possibly be guilty. Paul, speaking to his readers with affection and addressing them as “beloved,” expresses a fear lest, when he comes to them, he may find the evils which he has rebuked among them still existing, and many of the sinners whom he has reprovved still unrepentant. He describes those whom he has in mind as “those who have formerly sinned,” meaning those whose sinning had fallen under his rebuke on a previous occasion—as it seems without effect. Windisch<sup>27</sup> adopts the notion, however, that by “those who have formerly sinned” Paul means those who have sinned before their conversion (as if Paul could have imagined that there were any who had *not* sinned before their conversion), and seizes upon the words to ground a representation that Paul means to say that these sinning Christians were not Christians at all. “I may paraphrase the words,” he says, “thus—they continue their heathenish sins steadily, and have not even yet repented.” Paul, it seems, “looked upon such Christians as have still after baptism committed whether serious or lighter sins, as if they had not yet been converted at all: sinning Christians are to him unconverted people.” The fact that they sin proves that they have not yet been converted—because Christians do not sin. It is part of Windisch’s theory, however, to emphasize the “not yet.” They are not quite the same as heathen after all: they have been baptized, and by their baptism they have both been made capable of repentance and been obligated to repent. But they have not done so; and until they have done so, they are not Christians; and that is the reason they can still sin. That is the theory, he says, that Paul went upon. But experience compelled Paul to modify it. It was only too plain that Christians did sin. He could not think otherwise, however, than that if a real Christian sinned he would be hopelessly lost: there remained no place of repentance for him. And so Paul, out of the gentleness of his heart, represents the Christians who sin as not yet having completed the process of becoming Christians by repentance, and so as still capable of salvation. This reasoning is so incredible that we transcribe the very words in which it is presented: “The ‘not yet,’ however, is to be emphasized. It is precisely because of it that baptized people also are *able* to repent. When Paul describes sin as a Christian’s sin, it sounds as if he were giving the sinner up for lost: the fornicator severs himself from Christ. If he intends to maintain the salvation of the sinning Christian, he changes his point of view; then the Christian has not yet entered into relation with Christ. Radically framed conceptions dominate his thought; but because within the limits of these radically framed forms a change of point of view is possible, he is able to do justice to reality. There is nothing problematical to him about the repentance of one long baptized.” This certainly is beautifully simple. Paul describes Christians as sinning and repenting. Windisch says that in Paul’s view Christians do not sin, or if they manage to sin, cannot repent. Hence, says he, when Paul speaks of a Christian sinning, and calls on him to repent, he really means he is no Christian. And thus, he says, Paul keeps in touch with reality. We observe meanwhile simply in passing that it is precisely the “spiritual” Christians whom in Gal. 6:1 Paul speaks of as liable to fall into sin; and perhaps we may be allowed to add that in 1 Tim. 5:20 not only Christians as such but even the elders among Christians are contemplated as able to sin.

It is only Paul, not Windisch, who is deceived by this mental legerdemain. And thus, as we have already seen, Windisch is compelled, after all is said, to pronounce Paul self-

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<sup>27</sup> P. 151.

contradictory in his modes of thinking of Christians in their relation to sin. He does not pretend to think this contradiction a merely surface one. "Paul," he tells us,<sup>28</sup> "following different influences arising from experience and observation, brings together really incompatible things. From the mysteriously wrought cleansing, from the mystical life with Christ, which has made men insusceptible and apathetic to the allurements of sin, there exists no passable road for logical and psychological thinking to the obligation to refuse obedience to sinful lusts. No doubt even the theory of cleansing and renewal permits an outlook on the further life of man. But the way in which the walk of the cleansed person is described shows that no subsequent conversion can be added. The new walk is not given the task to overcome old oppositions; the new man has only to tread the road which God has opened for him and in which God leads him. Thus Paul, in Romans, sets the theory of baptism and the requirements of conversion immediately together, and when he, in the later letters, unites them, an insoluble contradiction arises, because he is trying to think incongruities together." And yet he suggests that Paul's entertainment of two such contradictory conceptions together is psychologically explicable from the circumstance that in the rite of baptism a place was found for exhortation to the neophyte to carry out in life his character as a baptized person. "This element of human activity suggested by the theory of baptism may offer a certain mediation between the two disparate modes of conception. It means that the instruction and exhortation may be tendered also to the cleansed man. Presenting himself to empirical man, Paul falls involuntarily into the tone of the preacher of repentance."<sup>29</sup> Windisch does not remark on the equal inconsistency of the conjunction of the two conceptions in question in the baptismal ritual or even on the extreme inadvertence of Paul in forming his fundamental teachings.

In another passage<sup>30</sup> he discusses somewhat more seriously the possibility of conciliating the two theories—the mystic and the parenetic, as he calls them. The prevailing exegesis, he points out, maintains their organic unity. The God-wrought change is spoken of as a transference of the life-center, or, more frequently and more weakeningly, as a change in principle. And there is attached to it the task which is set for man. This is actually to realize in the empirical being, gradually pushing on to the outermost periphery, what God has effected in principle and in the center; or actually and really to become what we already are in principle. This conception, now, Windisch pronounces not un-Pauline if only the notion that the empirical cleansing proceeds gradually be eliminated. It becomes in this form in fact, he says, one of the theories of cleansing which he has himself brought to view as Paul's, consisting in an organic combination of the doctrine of justification and the requirement of conversion: "faith signifies an inner transformation of the spirit of man, which capacitates and impels him to put away sin by a radical break in his empirical life too." On the other hand, he continues, the mystical theory of cleansing can find no place in this mode of conceiving things. In it, deliverance from sin and the establishment of life appear as embraced in one particular definitive total process—that is to say, as effected in their completeness all at once. "The notions of dying and death are characteristic of this conception: they designate for the

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<sup>28</sup> P. 217.

<sup>29</sup> P. 218.

<sup>30</sup> Pp. 180–182.

Christian experiences of the past and declare the impossibility of sinning in his new nature.” The rejection here of the current understanding of the entire body of Paul’s teaching as to the application of salvation, as forming an organic unity, declaring a salvation with the creative activity of God at its basis and human activities working out into manifestation what God works at the center, is, it will be observed, solely in the interest of the theory that what Windisch calls the mystical conception involves the complete transformation of human nature instantaneously. That is, however, by no means the case. Paul’s insistence on the radicalness of the change wrought by God’s saving power in sinners, by no means carries with it the implication that the whole change is completed in the twinkling of an eye. On the contrary, the implication is always that it consumes time in its completion and engages in its processes the activities of men. It turns out that Windisch is not altogether unwilling to allow this. At the end of the paragraph he says that after all a certain conjunction between the two theories is possible, a line of connection may be laid down. And this line of connection proves to be precisely this: that “the mystical theory of cleansing too can speak of an activity of the man, of the man awakened to new life.” “Only,” he adds, reaching now the center of his contention, “this activity is exempted from the task of overcoming sin.” Apparently then the concession amounts only to this: that in re-creating man God does not destroy him; he is still living and acting; but living and acting now as a sinless man, whereas before he lived and acted as a sinful man. He has no battle to fight, no struggle to undergo; as we are elsewhere told, the path opened up before him is a straight and smooth one.

That Paul does not so represent the Christian life, Windisch knows just as well as anybody. That is precisely the inconsistency of Paul which he is at the moment engaged in asserting. For side by side with the mystical theory of cleansing stands Paul’s parenetic theory, and this presupposes “the continuous sinfulness or temptability” of Christians. “Thus there are two mutually exclusive theories which Paul opposes to the misuse of his gospel of grace; the one explains that the Christian by God’s power has obtained a sinless nature—the other that through the reception of grace he is obligated and capacitated to a sinless walk. Paul sums up what he has to say as to the relations of the Christians to sin thus—they are broken off through God’s power or through the energy of the man’s conversion. The first mode of conception describes the Christian throughout as a man suffused with heavenly powers, detached from the natural conditions of life. Only the second theory reckons with the temptability of the Christian; in it, as we have seen, even actual sin is assumed in the Christian.”<sup>31</sup> In this contradiction he is forced to leave Paul. He does indeed add, most unexpectedly: “Our statements would require a decisive correction, if the exposition of the seventh chapter of Romans—no longer it is true the prevailing one—which finds set forth in the conflicts portrayed in it experiences of the renewed Paul, of the renewed ego, had to be recognized as right. Then it would be convincingly proved that the Apostle ‘is even inherently sinful,’ yes, that he recognizes himself as a ‘poor, miserable sinner.’”<sup>32</sup> It is not in the seventh chapter of Romans alone, however, as we have already had occasion abundantly to observe, that Paul recognizes himself as well as all other Christians as sinful. Windisch has been telling us indeed that one of the two theories of cleansing which Paul employs in his teaching on the subject

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<sup>31</sup> P. 181.

<sup>32</sup> P. 182.

implies not only the temptability but the continued sinning of Christians. If, however, the matter is to be hung on the seventh chapter of Romans we are content: it seems to us quite certain that we have in these pungent verses a revelation of the inner life of the Christian striving against sin.<sup>33</sup>

We certainly are conscious of no revulsion when Windisch lays stress on the greatness of the change which Paul felt himself to have experienced when he became a Christian. Neither is the language in which he describes it in itself altogether intolerable.<sup>34</sup> We can put a benevolent sense on such phrases as that Paul was “filled with Messianic enthusiasm,” or even that he conceived himself “already a man of the Messianic era, transformed by the Messiah by means of a personal revelation, a new creature, with his selfish body dead, his sinful-lusting flesh suppressed, his sin removed.” “Christ is here, the new age has come, the man of the new age is here”—that not unfairly expresses Paul’s conviction. He did suppose that a supernaturally wrought transformation had taken place in him, and in all Christians. And this transformation was expressed in his life by (among other things) a sense of cleansing, purification. He, his Christians, were no longer of the earth earthy; their citizenship was in heaven; and they were sharers in the heavenly character—which is without sin. We cannot emphasize too strongly this experience. It is the strength of Windisch’s presentation that he emphasizes it—although he emphasizes it as an “experience” rather than a fact. He tells us what Paul thought of himself in his “enthusiasm,” rather than what Christ had done for Paul in His almighty grace. That is the weakness of his presentation, and beyond that this further weakness—which perhaps is, in part at least, a result of the former—that he allows no time for the accomplishment of the great change, no process for its perfecting, no beginning and middle and end to it; but insists that because it means a radical breach with sin, therefore from its very inception no trace of sin can be admitted to exist. As a result he is compelled to admit that this high conception could not be sustained by Paul; that contact with life brought him disillusionment, or we must rather say, failure—for it was a matter which concerned not abstract opinion with him but a self-judgment which in the face of experience he could not maintain. Immediately after describing in glowing language how Paul in his enthusiasm felt himself without sin, Windisch is forced to add:<sup>35</sup> “It is true that, cast into the old course of things, he was not able to maintain literally his enthusiastic conception. He had to say of himself, that sin in him was not slain but put to flight. He could represent his life to his enemies and to those whom he wished to win for Christ as a blameless walk according to God’s working. But to his friends he revealed the secret that the maintenance of it on its high plane cost him uninterrupted struggle.” Is not this a little seventh chapter of Romans of Windisch’s own? Surely this is not the Paul who knows himself a man of the new age with his selfish body dead, his sin-tempting flesh suppressed, his sin taken away. But Windisch still has some fragments to save. The

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<sup>33</sup> Windisch cites for this interpretation M. R. Engel, “Der Kampf um Römer, Kapitel 7,” 1902, to which he adds F. Mühlau and L. Ihmels. This does not, however, exhaust the important names even in the “miserable-sinner” controversy. Add Max Meyer, E. Cremer, J. Haussleiter, Paul Feine, and even C. Clemen, O. Pfleiderer, A. Deissmann. Juncker leaves the matter undecided.

<sup>34</sup> Pp. 220 ff.

<sup>35</sup> P. 222.

sin in him is not dead as he fondly thought; he needs steadily to fight it to keep it down—(that is the seventh chapter of Romans): but he keeps it down. “But that he has failed, that he fails and sins, incidentally and daily, he has never conceded.” He had, says Windisch, plenty of occasions to confess his sins if he had any to confess; and other teachers—Philo, James, Clement, Clement of Alexandria, Origen—confess that they are “miserable sinners.” Why not Paul? It might be enough to answer that Paul was not writing a confession but letters—letters dealing not with his own conduct but with that of his readers; and that he constantly includes himself with them when speaking of their liability to sin. It may be better to say simply, There is the seventh chapter of Romans—and Windisch’s own little seventh chapter of Romans which we have just had occasion to observe. It seems to be very much a matter of standard. Probably no one thinks Paul was a “common sinner,” or supposes that he means to represent all Christians as “common sinners.” But if “sin is not dead in him,” then he was still a sinner; and sin, being alive in him, affected all his activities, none of which was what it would have been had there been no sin in him—and so he was not only “an incidental and daily sinner” but a perpetual sinner; and we are not surprised to hear on his lips the “miserable sinner’s” cry—O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?

According to Paul, says Windisch,<sup>36</sup> Christianity rests on two foundation-stones: “justified by faith, and led by the Spirit; or without guilt because believing, and without sin because pneumatic.” His purpose is to emphasize the latter of the two, because, in his view, the Reformation has thrust it aside and elevated justification into a position of such dominance that it may be thought of as the whole of Christianity.<sup>37</sup> And in emphasizing the latter of the two he wishes it to be taken strictly as he has expressed it, and justice to be done to its coördination with justification. Christianity consists in these two things, not in one without the other. At an earlier point<sup>38</sup> he had, therefore, very properly repelled an idea advanced by Wernle and Munzinger to the effect that Paul’s missionary preaching was of a purely religious character and took no account of ethics. We may learn the contrary, he says, even from his use of the single word “sanctification.” For “‘sanctification’ is the process by which the sinful man becomes a pure personal being, perfect according to the divine model,”—citing 1 Thess. 4:7, 2 Thess. 2:13 in illustration. Men, he continues, having received in faith the salvation to which God called them, were “by a divine act at the same time separated from the impurity which had formed their nature hitherto; there was given to them in the Holy Spirit the power to pursue a holy life removed from all immorality.” “This moral transformation,” he now goes on to say,<sup>39</sup> “is accordingly conceived as an act of God and as a task which is appointed to the believer, as the total task of his life.” This statement, which is not far from Paul’s actual teaching as to the Christian’s sanctification, and which seems quite simple in itself, Windisch finds to contain a whole nest of antinomies. These he undertakes to “explain,” not in the sense of resolving them, but of seeking an origin for each separately in Paul’s inheritance—as if Paul’s mind were a mere receptacle into which things were dropped to remain related to one another only by mechanical contiguity. The main matter on which we wish to lay

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<sup>36</sup> P. 158.

<sup>37</sup> Pp. 524, 529–531.

<sup>38</sup> P. 101.

<sup>39</sup> P. 102.

stress now, however, is the strength of the assertion that Christianity consists no less in sanctification than in justification—a statement quite true in itself—and the use to which it is put in order to discredit the Reformation doctrine of justification.

In the section in which the teaching of Paul as a whole is summed up, his doctrine of justification is presented in the first instance in its relation to the sins of Christians.<sup>40</sup> “The doctrine of the gracious justification of the sinful man”—the discussion begins in purely general terms, but with Paul in view—“seems to push aside the question of the sin of the Christian as a matter of course, as raising no problem. The sinful man stands here on earth exposed on account of his sin to condemnation in the rapidly approaching judgment, but over against him stands the gracious God who does not impute to him his enormous guilt. This judgment is assured and sealed to him. Past and present are taken together; the view goes into the future which will bring salvation and glory because God forgives sin. In principle there lies at the bottom of this doctrinal conception the idea that the sin of the Christian will be forgiven as a matter of course.” Then the discussion turns pointedly to Paul: “Paul also has so formulated it that the sinning Christian could draw from it daily comfort and assurance; we have forgiveness in Christ and stand under grace; Christ appears for us against every accusation.” “But,” it goes on to say, adducing the contrary part—“but only once has Paul made the general assertion that Christ’s intercession and God’s justifying judgment cover every sin.” We interrupt the quotation to note in passing that it is admitted, then, that Paul has made the assertion once. And now Windisch continues: “Never does he in an individual instance point the sinning Christian to the forgiveness that will never be denied him. For the most part he presents the doctrine of justification in the form in which it describes the condition of entrance into the Christian community, in which it grounds the forgiveness of the enormous guilt that has accumulated in the past.” “Accordingly,” he continues, “Paul attaches directly to it the two other theories which have for their object the passing away of sin out of the empirical life of the Christian, the real sinlessness of the normal Christian.” “Paul never says, Be of good comfort despite your sins, because they will be forgiven you. Because they are forgiven he demands now conversion too. And now there arises a schism of thought from the necessary orienting of the requirement of conversion to the expectation of judgment. Alongside the proclamation of grace, that believers will be saved from the judgment, there enters this requirement to leave off sinning because they will be judged. It is, now, the motivating of this requirement of cleansing which makes the sin of Christians a problem. Paul plainly declares that sin compromises salvation—the individual sin which is committed after conversion, after baptism.” There are four ways, Windisch now tells us, in which Paul knows how to adjust to one another the two ideas that all a Christian’s sins are forgiven and that sin is something abnormal, unsuitable in his life, which must disappear. What he looked upon as normal was that the Christian should commit no sins; then he would have nothing to answer for at the judgment. If he did commit sins he might renew his repentance and so wipe them off his slate; or he might expiate them in suffering. In either case he could still stand in the judgment. “Only one mode of conception reckons with the idea that a Christian remains a ‘sinner,’ or that his act of repentance has failed: the condemning judgment is not spared the sinful

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<sup>40</sup> Pp. 213 f.

Christian. It is grace that nevertheless saves him.”<sup>41</sup> “Thus,” Windisch now adds, “the theory of conversion adjoined to the doctrine of grace is able to maintain the sinless character of the normal Christian, and nevertheless at the same time to reckon with the sin of the Christian.”

Surely the two propositions that Christians are as such sinless men and that only that one of four classes of Christians which manages to maintain sinlessness may be called normal Christians—are not identical. So soon as we allow, as must be allowed, that the Christian proclamation includes provision for sins committed after justification, whatever that provision is, we allow that the Christian man is not as such sinless. To say that at least the “normal” Christian is sinless, is a distinct misuse of the word “normal.” Not only are Christians not presented in the Pauline epistles as, as a rule, sinless, but they are presented as never sinless. The sinless Christian does not meet us on Paul’s pages: there, all Christians live not by works, but by grace. What is true is that Paul presents Christians as in principle sinless: that is their fundamental character as Christians—although it is not yet realized by them in fact; they are all “in the making, not made.” They are not seeking to obtain salvation by being good, but striving to work their salvation received by faith out into the goodness which constitutes its substance. It will scarcely have escaped notice that, after all has been said, Windisch is not able to avoid admitting that, according to Paul, justification covers the sins of Christians also. When he attempts to set over against each other the justifying decree on the one hand and Christians’ liability for their sins at the judgment day on the other, he is not able to keep them from fitting into each other as parts of one unitary conception. It is very striking to observe him, on coming to describe his fourth class of Christians—those who come up to the judgment day still burdened with their sins—compelled to say that they bear their punishment, it is true, but still are “saved by grace.” When commenting on Rom. 8:33—“who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” and the rest—Windisch admits that it is implied that occasion for laying a charge against God’s elect could be found, and that in, not their pre-Christian, but their Christian life. Their safety depends, not on the falseness of the charge supposed to be made against them, but on God’s decree of justification and the saving work of Christ, which was not confined to a single past act but embraced in it also a continued intercession. “Here then,” he says,<sup>42</sup> “for once the relation to the whole life of the Christian which is intrinsic in the doctrine of justification is brought to expression.” Why he should say “for once” is not easily discerned. It is just as clearly implied in Rom. 8:1: “There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus,” as we have had occasion to point out at an earlier point. It is just as clearly implied also in Rom. 5:9 ff. and Phil. 3:9, although Windisch labors to escape the implication in both instances. Undoubtedly in Rom. 5:9 ff. Paul grounds the future “salvation” of Christians as exclusively on Christ as their past justification; and argues from the one to the other *a fortiori*—their justification carries with it their “salvation” by necessary implication. Similarly in Phil. 3:9 Paul represents himself as trusting utterly at the last day in the righteousness of God received by faith, in sharp contrast with any righteousness of his own whatever. Passages like these leave no room for attributing to Paul a conception of justification which confined its effect to sins committed before it had taken place; and as

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<sup>41</sup> P. 215.

<sup>42</sup> P. 188.

little a conception of the final judgment which supposed it to proceed solely on the basis of works done after justification.<sup>43</sup> After all said, it is the fact of justification which according to Paul is the ruling fact in the Christian life and the Christian destiny.

It will scarcely have escaped observation that Windisch is apt to give expression to the difference between Paul's doctrine of justification and that of the Reformers in sharp negative propositions. In a passage which we have only recently had before us,<sup>44</sup> he says for instance: "*Only once* has Paul made the general assertion that Christ's intercession and God's forgiving judgment cover every sin." And again: "*Never* does he in an individual instance point the sinning Christian to the forgiveness which will never be denied him." Similarly we read elsewhere:<sup>45</sup> "Paul himself *never* unambiguously *declared* that the forgiveness which the Christians experience passes over also to their new sins; he only acted on this principle." And again:<sup>46</sup> The attempt "to comfort the aroused *conscience* of the sinning Christians meets us *only once* in Paul." It will no doubt have been noticed that each of these statements is carefully qualified, and that nevertheless they are scarcely perfectly consistent with one another. The two pairs in which we have arranged them are so related indeed that the universal statement in each is provided with an exception in the other. The net result of the four declarations is thus that it is allowed that Paul does all the things which seem to be denied of him—even though he has done them each but once. We have here, then, not even an argument from silence, but only an argument from relative silence: which at the most might suggest that Paul and Luther threw the emphasis somewhat differently in applying their common doctrine of justification. The real import of the matter is that Windisch is aiming all the time at the one thing he most dislikes in Luther's teaching—that Christians sin daily and daily need and receive forgiveness. At this, accordingly, he directly launches his most sharply framed negative assertions. "The daily forgiving of his sins to the daily sinner," he says,<sup>47</sup> is "a gracious benefit which is never mentioned in Paul, and which, when it is mentioned is never related to the fundamental religious position of the Christian"—a sentence which is so prudently guarded that it seems not to wait for a companion sentence to contradict it. Again:<sup>48</sup> "Confessions of sins—" like Luther's when he says "we sin much every day"—"do not meet us in Paul and John (in this generality)." Should however, all that is said in these and similar assertions be granted, what do they amount to? Nothing beyond the very natural fact that in the few and brief occasional letters which have come down to us

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<sup>43</sup> On the rather vexed question of the relation of "judgment according to works" to "justification" see the excellent lecture by E. Kühl, "Rechtfertigung auf Grund Glaubens und Gericht nach den Werken bei Paulus," 1904, and also the page or two (including a quotation from Chalmers) in J. Buchanan, "The Doctrine of Justification," 1867, pp. 237 ff. Compare further Paul Feine's discussion, "Theologie des Neuen Testaments," 1910, pp. 308 ff., where the literature is given, to which add James Moffat, in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Apostolic Church," ii. 1918, pp. 391 f., and G. P. Wetter, "Der Vergeltungsgedanke bei Paulus," 1912.

<sup>44</sup> P. 213.

<sup>45</sup> P. 518.

<sup>46</sup> P. 526.

<sup>47</sup> Pp. 525–526.

<sup>48</sup> P. 525.

from Paul, much is left unsaid, or is only briefly and perhaps only allusively said, that nevertheless belongs to the essence of his doctrine, and in other circumstances and on the call of other needs among his readers would have been said with the same fulness and vigor that he has used in developing the aspects of his doctrine which he was called to emphasize. Paul has given us no systematic treatise; what he wrote he wrote in reference to the needs of the situations he required to face. It is enough that he has given us the doctrine of justification. We should not demand that he shall have developed systematically every element in it and given a place in his epistles to each of its possible applications in precise proportion to its systematic importance.

The difference between Paul's position as apostle to the Gentiles and Luther's as reformer of the Western Church, carried with it necessarily a difference in the particular application of their common doctrine on which each necessarily dwells. In the very nature of the case it was the "former sins" of his readers which most concerned Paul—as they most concerned them; equally in the very nature of the case it was the present sins of their constituents that most concerned the Reformers—as they did their constituents. To erect this inevitable difference of interest in the varied aspects of the application of the doctrine, into a fundamental doctrinal difference is preposterous. It is as absurd to suppose that because Paul was absorbed in the forgiveness of past sins, he was ignorant of the forgiveness of present sins in God's justifying grace—or even ready to deny it—as it would be to suppose that because Luther was eager to comfort Christians, agonizing over their sins, by assuring them that they were forgiven them in Christ, he was careless as to the forgiveness of sins which say, a converted Jew might have committed before conversion, or ready even to deny that they were capable of forgiveness. It is Wernle, however, who in a few remarkable—and very extreme—sentences, written for another purpose, teaches us how Luther's situation in the midst of the long established Christian community, of necessity affected the particular direction which his interest took as he dealt with the great topics of sin and salvation. "We have never been sinners, entering only now by a conversion into the condition of regeneration," says he;<sup>49</sup> "we know absolutely nothing of sin outside the Church. The problem of the Christian life, as the Reformation framed it, and as Ritschl has stated it afresh, is this: how can the Christian be in spite of his sin, a joyful child of God?" Something like this was, we say, necessarily the form in which the problem of the Christian life presented itself more pointedly to the Reformers. As necessarily it presented itself to Paul most pointedly in the form of how the Christian could be a joyful child of God in spite of his past. In meeting the needs of their differing situations Paul and Luther inevitably dwelt most constantly on different aspects of their common doctrine. That is the whole story.

Along with Paul it is John to whom Windisch makes his principal appeal to prove that to the New Testament writers Christians are men who do not sin. "Paul and John," says he,<sup>50</sup> "are the typical and irrefutable witnesses for the dogma that the Christian is cleansed." And he is eager to have it understood that they are independent witnesses. That they are united in testifying "that the Christian and sin are forever separated from each other,"<sup>51</sup> shows how firmly the idea was grounded in reality; and also, no doubt,

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<sup>49</sup> "Der Christ und die Sünde bei Paulus," 1897, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> P. 508.

<sup>51</sup> P. 277.

how completely the pre-Christian conceptions on the subject were taken over into Christianity and made a part of its teaching and its life. We have seen how he has fared in his attempts to interpret Paul in this sense. His success is no greater with John, by which is meant in this connection mainly the First Epistle of John. He already finds himself in great trouble with 1 John 1:5 to 2:3. Contradictory statements seem to him to be set here side by side. John represents Christians as enjoying, as such, complete actual sinlessness. And he represents them as still sinning. Windisch deals with this embarrassing situation in the following fashion. Even those declarations which assert that Christians still sin, he says,<sup>52</sup> “do not presuppose that we sin on and on, and consider ourselves only to be in a gradual process of suppression of our sinful nature (*Art*). They rather have in view a chief act, in which we confess the sins which we *have* committed (perfect tense) and receive now the forgiveness of sins and at the same time cleansing from every wickedness.” This, however, is not at all what John says. He has not a “chief act” of confession in mind, but continuous acts of confession as sin after sin emerges,<sup>53</sup> and this confession is not brought into immediate connection with the perfect “we *have* sinned,” as Windisch’s representation seems to imply, so much as with the continuous present, “if we say we have no sin,” where “sin” must mean “act of sin,” standing as it does between two connected plurals. Nor can the perfect “we have sinned” in this context bear the sense which Windisch seeks to put upon it. When he continues: “ ‘Cleanses us from all iniquity’ must, like the preceding analogous phrase, be expounded as an *actual cleansing* of the man, which gives his life a new character,” he is assuming the least likely sense of the word “cleansing.”<sup>54</sup> Even on this view of its meaning, however, John is speaking not of a cleansing wrought all at once, but of an energy of cleansing resident in the blood of Christ and applied progressively up to the completion of the process. John in this passage is assuring his readers that their sinning cannot separate them from Christ—provided that their sinning be dealt with as it should be dealt with, fought against and brought to Christ, and not covered up with lying denials. He says his whole mind in the first verse of the second chapter: “I am writing these things to you that ye sin not, and if any man sin”—not “has sinned,” as Windisch tendentially renders<sup>55</sup>—“we have an advocate with the Father.” John obviously understood himself therefore to be writing parenetically, and to have it as his end to deter his readers from sinning, and to give them comfort when nevertheless they fell into sin. He is, in other words, just a “miserable-sinner Christian.” And this Windisch himself is constrained by the next clause—“for our sins, but not for ours only”—to admit. “The declaration that Christ makes propitiation for our sins,” he says,<sup>56</sup> “generally formulated as in Col. 1:14 and Eph. 1:7, is now here for the first time expressly applied to the sins of the Christian. The general formula might include this application; that it was not unknown to Paul might be inferred from the eighth chapter of

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<sup>52</sup> P. 258.

<sup>53</sup> See Huther here: on 1 John 1:9, in H. A. W. Meyer’s “Commentary on the New Testament.”

<sup>54</sup> See R. Law, “The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John,” 1909, pp. 130, 165 ff.

<sup>55</sup> Consult Winer-Thayer, “Grammar of the ... New Testament,” 1872, p. 293, and H. A. W. Meyer, “Commentary,” on 1 Cor. 7:11.

<sup>56</sup> Pp. 259 f.

Romans. But he never spoke it out clearly and it cannot have been current with him. It is John the Pastor who first makes use of it.” Having formulated this comprehensive admission, however, Windisch endeavors to save some fragments. “But even he,” that is, John, he adds,<sup>57</sup> “does not entertain the idea of a continuous operation of the propitiatory death of Jesus, which has for its presupposition consciousness of many daily sins. He is thinking only of the occasional sinning of one and another. The fundamental characteristic of the empirical Christian life lies in the ‘that ye sin not.’ Sin is an exceptional occurrence in the Christian life.” This is certainly to make an illegitimate use of the aorist, “that ye sin not.” Of course it means that John’s purpose is to deter his readers from committing acts of sin. To infer that he means at the same time that there were long intervals between these acts of sin is desperate reasoning. John says, “If we say we have no sin”—and we have seen this means acts of sin—“we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” Are we to suppose that he spoke these words with the reservation—“except of course during those very long intervals between sins which make our life itself a sinless one?” Or when he said, “If we say we have not sinned we make Him a liar and His word is not in us,” are we to suppose that it was with the reservation—“this of course has no reference to the general tenor of our lives and refers only to the very rare slips of which we may have been guilty”? The tone of the passage as a whole is not that Christians are sinless men who may possibly, however, be overtaken in a rare fault; but that Christians are sinful men, seeking and obtaining in Christ purification from their sins and striving day by day to be more and more delivered from them. This, of course, does not mean that sinning is according to John the characteristic mark of the Christian. Not sinning is his characteristic mark. It was as not sinning that the Christian stood out in contrast with other men. It means only that “not sinning,” when understood in its height and depth, is a great achievement and—we shall quote Luther’s words again—“Christians are not made but in the making.”

That Christians can sin and do sin, as John understood the matter, is made abundantly clear again from 1 John 5:16–18, where intercessory prayer in his behalf is made the duty of every Christian who “sees his brother sinning....” The passage closes, it is true, with the declaration that “everyone who has been begotten of God sins not,” and the easiest thing to say of the two statements is that they contradict each other. This is what Windisch does say. The ideal and the ideal-contradicting reality stand here side by side. John believed Christians could not sin; John saw Christians sinning. So, at the end of his letter we find him “giving an injunction for the treatment of sinning Christians which passes into a conspicuous confession of the sinlessness of the God-begotten.”<sup>58</sup> That John is misunderstood when he is made thus flatly to contradict himself, not only within the limits of three verses, but in the general drift of his whole letter, is certain. And the present tense in the declaration, “No one that is begotten of God sins,” appears to open the way to understanding it of the general life-manifestation rather than of a particular act. What John means in that case is not that he who has been begotten of God never commits a sin, but that not sinning is the characteristic of his life. We may say, if we choose, that ideally, in principle, he that has been begotten of God does not sin. It is probably best to say simply that this is what it is to be one who has been begotten of God—not to sin; and

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<sup>57</sup> P. 260.

<sup>58</sup> P. 270.

Christians who have been begotten of God are therefore in process of becoming sinless. That they are not yet sinless does not prove that they have not been begotten of God, but that they have not yet reached their goal.

It is naturally to 1 John 3:9, however, that Windisch makes his chief appeal: “No one that has been begotten of God doeth sin; because His seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin because it is of God that he has been begotten.” “The most categorical assertion of the Christian conception of sinlessness in the whole New Testament,” we read,<sup>59</sup> “is found in this passage. Like the wise man of the Stoa, like the miraculously blessed man of the Apocalypses, the Christian *cannot* sin. It is also clear that the *individual* sin is dismissed to the region of impossibility.” That this is an overstatement is plain at once from the circumstances that here too as in v. 18 the verbs are in the present tense, and may not here any more than there be made to express individual acts rather than general characteristics of life. Windisch, however, appeals to the idea of “begotten of God.” This must express, he rightly says, a creative act of God. “The inability to sin is therefore more than a moral, psychological, intelligible impossibility. That in the God-begotten the ethical energy could relax or occasionally intermit; that there should remain in him another nature which could come occasionally to fresh outbreak; that godly motives could mix with human-sinful impulses; that sinful acts could always be done by a Christian, without affecting the nature of his personality—all this is simply incapable of being harmonized with the conception of the begetting by God which is presented here. So also is the distinction between principial, ideal, incompatibility and empirical coexistence inadmissible. What is begotten of God is the whole man; of him it is said that he does not commit a sin, that he cannot sin. He possesses ‘actual sinlessness’ not alone in his ‘groundwork and basis.’ It is with the God-begotten which John describes here precisely as with the Messianic man of the Apocalypse of Enoch.” The whole force of this very effective statement is dependent on the thoroughly unjustified assumption that it must be at once in all their fulness that all the characteristics which belong to a God-begotten man are manifested in one who is begotten of God. On this mode of reasoning we should have to contend that every man must be born an adult. The grounds on which development is denied to the child of God and the element of time is eliminated from his perfecting, are not stated. Once allow, however, that he that is begotten of God requires time for the realization of all that is included in that great designation, and that not merely in his empirical life but also in his very being—and the overpressure of the conception of which Windisch is guilty becomes apparent. “Of principial cleansing,” he writes,<sup>60</sup> “of a gradual execution of the task of cleansing, there is no question with John. All the ingenious distinctions which have been made in order to apply John’s words to the present experience of the Christian, are without justification. John sums up the whole essence of the matter and all his several declarations when he declares that he that is begotten of God does not commit sin and cannot sin.” It would seem only fair to John to remember that these phrases “does not commit sin,” “cannot sin” do not perfectly convey the implications of his present tenses, and that he wrote 1 John 1:5–2:2 as well as 3:9 and 5:18.

Windisch having himself indicated Paul and John as the two sources of his theory of the New Testament doctrine of the Christian life, we need not follow him in his

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<sup>59</sup> Pp. 266 f.

<sup>60</sup> P. 279.

discussion of the remaining books. We note only one or two points of special interest in passing. The Epistle of James has a certain importance as supplying what is in his view “the first Christian confession of sin”—meaning by that the first declaration of the constant sinning of Christians. His reference is to James 3:2, “for in many things we all stumble,” or “for we all stumble much,” as Windisch appears to prefer to render it.<sup>61</sup> The commentators seem inclined to take the “all” comprehensively, as including all Christians. That is Windisch’s view also; and he comments on the statement thus:<sup>62</sup> “What is most important is the open, comprehensive confession of sin, in which the teacher includes himself. He had already called attention to the ease with which a man could fall into sin because of the multitude of the commandments. Now he substantiates the fact that all of us without exception are great sinners.” And not only does James thus declare all Christians great sinners—just like the “miserable-sinner” teachers of the Reformation—but he currently treats and addresses them as such. “Cleanse your hearts, ye sinners” (4:8), is the way he exhorts his fellow Christians. “He declares,” comments Windisch,<sup>63</sup> “that the Christians must cleanse themselves, because they are ‘sinners.’ This express designation has not been met with by us hitherto; it appears for the first time in the teacher who also is the first to give expression to his own consciousness of sin.” There would seem to be little left in James’ “miserable-sinnerdom” to be desired, especially when we observe that he actually did what Windisch forbade us to conceive possible in the case of John. “Of his own will begat He us,” says James (1:18), and Windisch comments thus:<sup>64</sup> “He knows how to extol an act of God, by which the Christian has become a new perfect creature. The perception that this begetting has not yet with those addressed penetrated into their external life, determines him to adopt the promotion of cleansing.” It might be supposed that I Peter would be given a place alongside of James as testifying to the universal sinfulness of Christians. It appears to assume throughout that its readers constitute a body of “sinning saints” who require continual spurring on to moral effort; and at 4:8 it seems to imply that they, one and all, commit a “multitude of sins” which it would be well to “cover” with love. Windisch<sup>65</sup> does not doubt that it is the Christian body who are expected to “have fervent love to one another,” or who are reminded, in order to give force to this exhortation, that “love covers a multitude of sins.” But he has a way of escape here. He says that “the multitude of sins” were all accumulated before their conversion—which seems inadequate in the presence of the present tenses.

The novelty which Windisch finds in the Epistle to the Hebrews (6:4–8; 10:26–31) and with it, in the Second Epistle of Peter (2:20 ff.), is the denial of the possibility of a “second repentance”; or, to express it in language of later origin, of the pardonableness of post-baptismal sins. Paul, says he,<sup>66</sup> never put the possibility of a new repentance in doubt; James expressly exhorts sinning Christians to come to repentance. In Hebrews on the other hand, “he who after baptism commits a serious sin or falls wholly away cannot

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<sup>61</sup> P. 292: “The Christians who all sin much.”

<sup>62</sup> P. 288.

<sup>63</sup> P. 290: cf. v. 20.

<sup>64</sup> P. 286.

<sup>65</sup> P. 240.

<sup>66</sup> P. 294.

repent afresh and receive forgiveness.”<sup>67</sup> With II Peter, “sinning Christians are worse than never converted sinners,” and “baptism is unrepeatable.”<sup>68</sup> There are passages in both epistles which make this interpretation of their teaching difficult, or let us rather say frankly, impossible. In Hebrews there is the all-prevailing sacrifice of Christ which atones for all sins (9:7 ff.). In II Peter there is the express declaration that the Parousia is postponed, in longsuffering specifically towards Christians, because the Lord wishes to bring all of them to repentance (3:9). Windisch has his way of eluding both obstacles; but we need not pause to discuss the matter here. The point of chief interest to us at the moment is that it is only in Hebrews and II Peter that he discovers such an estimate of sin in Christians that it de-Christianizes them, once and for all. In all other writers of the New Testament he himself perceives that the way is at least open for recognizing sinning Christians as still Christians. In point of fact there is no single one of them—not even the authors of Hebrews and II Peter—who does not on every page recognize sinning Christians as Christians; or rather who does not, in fact, so speak as to make it very clear that they know no other kind. That Christians have broken radically with sin; that they ought to cease from sinning absolutely; that they must give account of their sins; this they all teach. That Christians are without sin—there is none of them who teaches.

We have treated the publication of Windisch’s book as bringing the “miserable-sinner Christianity” controversy to a close. But this, of course, does not mean that the general points of view urged by the protagonists of the assault on “miserable-sinner Christianity,” and especially their reading of Paul’s doctrine of the relation of the Christian to sin, ceased to be held and advocated. These things had come, however, by this time, to be recognized as merely the particular opinions of a special school of critical students and had lost their interest for the general religious public, except so far as that public was interested in the history of contemporary criticism. We need further, therefore, merely cursorily illustrate the continued expression of these opinions in the later years of the first and early years of the second decade of this century, with a view only to realizing the extent and significance of their persistence.

When Wernle in 1897 published his book on “The Christian and Sin in Paul,” he expressed in its preface his indebtedness for his understanding of the Pauline theology to two of his Göttingen teachers. The terms in which he did this seem to imply that he felt no great divergence between the views he was about to publish and theirs. In point of fact, at any rate, both of the Professors in question—Johannes Weiss<sup>69</sup> and Wilhelm Bousset—have expressed in their own writings views very similar to his. This is particularly true of Bousset, who is found in the end chiding Wernle for playing the part of a deserter from the party.<sup>70</sup> “Really,” he tells us in this connection,<sup>71</sup> “it is seriously Paul’s opinion that the Christian can no longer sin. All the passages to the contrary which have been adduced have little weight”—referring especially to Rom. 8:31 ff., Gal. 2:20, Phil. 3:12. Salvation is a supernatural fact to Paul: the “newness of life” in which Christians walk is nothing of

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<sup>67</sup> P. 312.

<sup>68</sup> P. 254.

<sup>69</sup> “Die Christliche Freiheit nach der Verkündigung des Apostels Paulus,” 1902, pp. 21 f.; also “Paul and Jesus,” 1909, p. 124.

<sup>70</sup> “Jesus der Herr,” 1916, pp. 47 ff.

<sup>71</sup> P. 48.

their own manufacture—it is like the sunshine and the spring breezes to them; and walking in it is just basking in it. In an earlier book—“Kyrios Christos”—of which that from which we have been quoting is a defence, we are told with rather more prudence that “Paul had a sense of sin in his life as an exceptional condition”—although it must be admitted that the general description of Paul and his teaching which is given hardly prepares us for the prudence of this statement.<sup>72</sup> Essentially the same representations occur also in the article on “Paul” in Schiele and Zscharnack’s encyclopædia. “Occasionally,” we there read,<sup>73</sup> “Paul incidentally recalls that even in the life of the regenerated man, sin is still present; but he looks at that, at the least, as an exception, a little shadow in the strong light (Gal. 2:19 f.).... The conception of the Christian life as an eternal conflict in which man scarcely advances at all, or as daily renewed conviction of the corruption of our nature and reception of the comfort of forgiveness of sins, was alien to him. The Christianity of Paul can be understood only as the Christianity of conversion. He knows himself to have been converted in a particular hour: his life now, the present in its contrast with the past, appears to him in clear, brilliant light. And he gave himself to the new life with all the heroism of which he was capable, body and soul. He could actually say of himself that he was conscious of no fault (1 Cor. 4:4). It is more difficult to understand how he could maintain this mood also with reference to his churches, whose shadows he saw only too clearly, and strongly rebuked. This mood with him rests, however, not only on experience, but more on an audacious dogma—the destruction of the old and the new birth of the new world must accompany the death and resurrection of Christ.”

Somewhat similarly to Bousset, G. P. Wetter, a Swedish author, having the sixth chapter of Romans particularly in mind, writes as follows:<sup>74</sup> “If we are delivered from the sphere of sin, if we are dead to it—then we have nothing more to do with it. Instead of sin, ‘grace,’ ‘righteousness,’ ‘life,’ are now the life-element in which we move, whose air we breathe. The Apostle sees everything absolutely; the one contradicts the other. The Christian cannot sin. The fact that in the actual life of the Christian sin obviously occurs, cannot destroy this, his faith (cf. Rom. 6:14). Paul can believe so firmly in this new reality, because it is to him not man who produces the new thing, but God. So often as we direct our glance to men, nothing is as it should be. Paul, however, looks to God, and therefore he never doubts.” A. Deissmann would apparently like to say much the same, but cannot quite do it. He too has the sixth chapter of Romans in mind. “As a new creature,” says he,<sup>75</sup> “Paul the Christian is also free from sin (Rom. 6:1–14). He has been loosed from sin, but is he also sinless, incapable of sinning? In theory certainly St. Paul might subscribe to the statement that the Christian does not sin (cf. Rom. 6:2, 6, 11). But the awful experiences of practice would give him cause to doubt. Paul the shepherd of souls retained a sober judgment; freedom from sin is not conceived of as something mechanical and magical. Side by side with all his moral exhortations to Christians to battle against sin there are confessions of Paul the Christian himself, especially in his letter to the Romans (particularly Rom. 7), witnessing that even the new-created feels at

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<sup>72</sup> “Kyrios Christos,” 1913, pp. 155 f.

<sup>73</sup> “Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart,” iv. 1913, coll. 1295 f.

<sup>74</sup> “Charis,” 1913, p. 46.

<sup>75</sup> “St. Paul,” 1911, E. T. 1912, p. 156.

times the old deep sense of sin. But in Christ the grace of God is daily vouchsafed to him anew, and daily he experiences anew the renovating creative power of that grace." It is essentially the same note that is struck by W. Wrede. Paul, says he,<sup>76</sup> says we are dead, are dead to sin, and the like, and yet every one of his exhortations implies that we are not at all dead to sin. Is there a contradiction here? Or does Paul's language merely anticipate what is to come? Perhaps it is best to say that what he says is true at bottom, but the external realization of this inner truth as yet lags. This much is certainly true: "the whole Pauline conception of salvation is characterized by suspense." This too is only a half-truth. But there is this valuable half of the truth expressed in it, that is much too frequently forgotten: Paul's religion was a next-world religion, and he never dreamed that he was experiencing here and now all that had been prepared by Christ for him. He had the Holy Spirit already: but he himself says that what he had already in Him was only the first fruits.

Perhaps we may look upon the statements in Weinel's "Biblical Theology of the New Testament"<sup>77</sup> as representing as fairly as possible the present state of opinion in the school which he represents, on the attitude of the New Testament writers to the sins of Christians. And if so, we may place by its side two other works on the theology of the New Testament,<sup>78</sup> published at about the same time and representing other points of view. From the three together we may cherish a good hope of deriving a well-rounded conception of the condition in which the question at issue has been left on the dying away of the active controversy.

It is of no significance that Weinel agrees<sup>79</sup> that our Lord did not expect His disciples to be without sin but taught them to pray, Forgive us our trespasses. That is allowed on all hands. It is more notable that his representations of Paul's teaching<sup>80</sup> also seem to yield the case, although not without reserve. "We have seen," he says,<sup>81</sup> "that according to our view of Paul too, a man's morality is the fruit of the Spirit. Nevertheless, Paul did not hold Christians to be sinless; reality was too great a contradiction to that. He knew of the conflict of the flesh with the Holy Spirit even in Christians (Gal. 5:17 ff.), although these very words of his show that he holds precisely this conflict to be surmounted: 'Ye are not under the law.' Neither did he give repentance a place merely at the beginning of the Christian life, but thought of it as the sole and indeed the divinely appointed sorrow which should continue in it, 2 Cor. 7:9 f. It was, however, certainly his opinion that sin has no rôle to play in the Christian life; and he built on that, that the good grows in it like the fruit on the tree." This seems to be as much as to say that Paul recognized perfectly that Christians remained sinners, but that the Spirit was supreme in them and would bring all things right in the end. For Paul was of "the fixed conviction" that no Christian can be lost. Indeed, he sometimes spoke as a universalist (Rom. 11:32). For Christians he is,

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<sup>76</sup> "Paul," 1905, E. T. 1907, pp. 102 ff.

<sup>77</sup> "Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments: Die Religion Jesu und des Urchristentums," ed. 2, 1913.

<sup>78</sup> H. J. Holtzmann, "Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie," ed. 2, 1911; Paul Feine, "Theologie des Neuen Testaments," 1910.

<sup>79</sup> P. 189.

<sup>80</sup> Pp. 374 ff.

<sup>81</sup> P. 374.

however, absolutely sure. When, at the end of the volume, Weinel comes to speak of the teaching of the latter portions of the New Testament,<sup>82</sup> he strikes a different note. The high attitude of Paul was no doubt long maintained—and here this is described as if it included a conviction that Christians “commit no sin, or if they commit sin, they are punished, but still are saved, though ‘as by fire.’” But by and by a change came, which brought a problem with it. Apparently this was because sins increased, and that, serious sins. Peccadilloes might be passed by; they were forgiven by God and man. But what must be said of apostasy, for instance? The Epistle to the Hebrews declares that no repentance will avail. In many writings, no doubt, the problem is not raised—as in Ephesians, Colossians, I Peter. In others the strictness is relaxed somewhat—as in the Apocalypse, where one more repentance is allowed. But the problem was now raised, and passed on into the later Church to give much trouble as the problem of post-baptismal sins.

When Holtzmann published the first edition of his “Textbook of New Testament Theology” (1897) he already knew W. A. Karl’s “Contributions,” and cites approvingly its representation of Paul’s theory of non-sinning Christians. It does not follow, of course, that he derived his idea from Karl. He appears to have been prepared to welcome it, when announced; and although he does not seem to have worked out the idea in detail prior to the publication of Karl’s book, he is to be credited with independent invention of it. He speaks at any rate here in his own voice, and expounds<sup>83</sup> Paul as teaching “with heaven-storming idealism” that “with the passage out of the sphere of the law into the sphere of grace the dominion of sin has reached its end (Rom. 6:14). The believer actually ceases to sin. But here too the bad reality does not correspond to the goodness of the theory. Sin works as a latent power so long as man lives at once in the Spirit (Rom. 8:9) and in the flesh (Gal. 2:20)... Care is therefore always to be taken that the flesh does not rise and make itself felt (Gal. 5:16). Believers have, it is true, crucified the flesh once for all (Gal. 5:24): they must, however, always slay its members afresh (Col. 3:5) and through the Spirit destroy the works of the flesh (Rom. 8:13).” The scope of this statement, it will be seen, is that according to Paul, while Christians, being under the control of the Spirit, are infallibly saved and from the first are freed from sinning, yet, having still the flesh, they are continually impelled to sin and are forced to fight their way onward in ethical effort. In the second edition of his book, published in 1911, Holtzmann has retained this passage substantially unchanged.<sup>84</sup> A good many alterations in its language are made, and that for the purpose not merely of qualifying but also of strengthening the expression; many illustrations and supporting notes are added; but the statement remains in its contents the same. For Holtzmann at least, therefore, the state of the case in this controversy was not so different after the battle had been fought from what it was before. Paul is still thought of as defying reality—the reality about him and the reality in his own breast—and teaching that Christians are sinless; and the evidence which Holtzmann presents for his views does not differ in character from that which we have already seen in other like-minded writers. His judgments on the teaching of other New Testament writers than Paul follow also closely those prevalent in his school. For example, James knows nothing of

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<sup>82</sup> Pp. 628 ff.

<sup>83</sup> Ed. 1, ii. pp. 151 ff.

<sup>84</sup> Ed. 2, ii. pp. 166 f.

Pauline sinlessness: Hebrews teaches that only sins of weakness and ignorance are pardonable in the baptized. It is Holtzmann's testimony, therefore, that the contentions of his school have suffered nothing through the controversy, but have come out of it unaffected.

Paul Feine views the matter from a very different angle, but, although far removed in both method and judgment from Weinel and Holtzmann, is yet in his own way not untouched by the modern spirit. He looks upon the contentions of Wernle and Windisch with their congeners as being definitely wrong.<sup>85</sup> He is very emphatic that, in Paul's view, the Christian, though a renewed man and animated by an active principle of righteousness and life, is nevertheless still a sinner. "For Paul as for Luther," he says,<sup>86</sup> "this righteousness of the Christian is neither a complete nor a meritorious one, but the effect of new divine powers in the man.... So long as man is 'in the flesh,' he is for Paul not yet freed from sin." "Even though Paul conceived the righteousness of life in the Christian, in communion with Christ, and in the power of the Spirit, as one that is already beginning and in part also being realized," he says again,<sup>87</sup> yet he is "far too sober-minded to look on Christians to whom the 'flesh' remains, as freed from sin. Therefore the justified also need forgiveness of sins." There was indeed a tendency "in the old Church" to hold that free and full forgiveness was provided by Christ for pre-Christian sins, but not for conscious and serious sins after our reception into the Christian community. We may possibly see a trace of this in James (5:20); it appears clearly in Hebrews (6:4 ff., 10:26 f.); and something analogous to it in 1 John 5:16. There is no trace of such a notion in Paul. He does not formally treat the question, it is true, but there is no difficulty in perceiving how he thought. To him justification is not merely an initiatory act, exhausting its effects on the sins that are past. He relates it to the eternal counsel of God and the efficiency of Christ's work of reconciliation. In it is given therefore God's definitive judgment on man. Even sin in Christians cannot compromise it; it remains in force despite all vacillations of the life, for God's faithfulness does not fail and He does not repent Him of His judgments. "Though Paul does not assert that justification includes also daily forgiveness of sins, yet at bottom that is his meaning."<sup>88</sup> The passages which are adduced in proof are the Epistle to the Galatians at large (especially 3 and 5:4 f.), and Rom. 8:33 f., Col. 1:14, Eph. 1:7 with an emphasis on the present tenses. In Rom. 8:33 f., for example, Feine remarks that the present participles "who justifieth," "who condemneth," as is shown also by the concluding clause "who now intercedeth for us," deal with the Christian present. "The Christian feels that he is continually subject to condemnation, that he is surrounded by inimical powers, which seek to snatch him out of the hands of God and Christ. But God's decree of justification is always valid for him and Christ equally continually appears for him when he needs help."<sup>89</sup> If this conception, however, is thus left only as an indispensable presupposition of Paul's it is clearly spoken out by John, who tells us plainly (1 John 2:1 f.) that when the Christian sins he has Jesus

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<sup>85</sup> P. 420; cf. note.

<sup>86</sup> P. 417, note.

<sup>87</sup> P. 420.

<sup>88</sup> P. 421.

<sup>89</sup> P. 422.

Christ the righteous as his advocate with the Father.<sup>90</sup> The Christian here is conceived as still sinning, and living still under the continually applied atoning power of the propitiating blood of Christ. “The walk in full Christian knowledge postulated therefore for John as truly as for Paul the confession of our sinfulness and the necessity of purification through Christ’s blood.”<sup>91</sup> Passages like 3:6, 9, 5:18 present an ideal. “The complete ideal is shown by the Apostle—the Christian as he ought to be already here, as he will be when his abiding in God experiences no longer any intermission, and we have become God’s children in the full sense. But the Christians who maintain that already here they are freed from sin, are pointed by the Apostle to still fuller moral knowledge than they possess, and to the redemption from continued sin also which is given us in this life.... We have no new Pentecost to expect. There is only one Pentecost. But the Holy Spirit who was then given to the Christian community as the power of Christ and the power of God, will abide forever in the community of Jesus (John 14:16), as earnest of the power of the heavenly life. He points us to a future perfecting even in the conditions of our moral life.”<sup>92</sup>

The very slight effect which all this long-continued and vigorously conducted discussion of the New Testament, and especially the Pauline, conception of the relation of Christians to sin, has had on English-speaking writers is very noticeable and perhaps significant. There have been echoes of course, but little more than echoes. Orello Cone entered the discussion at its very beginning, quite in the sense of Wernle, and with verbal allusions to Holtzmann which may indicate one of the sources of his inspiration. “For his own part,” he says,<sup>93</sup> Paul “expresses no consciousness of sin from the time of his conversion, and no sense of the daily need of a petition for the divine forgiveness implied in the Lord’s prayer. With the ‘old things’ that are passed, the old sinful life, he has broken forever, and leaves them behind....” What he thus held of himself, he held of others. “He regarded his fellow-believers from the point of view of his own consciousness of ‘life’ in the Spirit, so far at least as his theory of their religious state was concerned....” “Such expressions,” Cone now goes on to comment, “lend support to the supposition that Paul’s missionary preaching was religious rather than ethical, that its emphasis was placed on the mystic effects of baptism, ‘on sanctification,’ and on ‘justification’ (1 Cor. 6:11). His expectation of the immediate coming of Christ to receive the ‘justified’ believers into the kingdom may have disturbed his perspective of the course of moral struggle which actually lay before his churches. Hence the ethical-religious paradoxes.” “The fact that doctrinally Paul made no provision for the sins of believers shows that he took little account of sin as a condition from which those could need to be delivered who had once been ‘justified.’ The atonement is not applied to them. Faith saves once only, and he who through it has become a ‘new creation’ is not conceived as again needing this salvation. Paul can hardly have thought that any one of his believers would be finally rejected when Christ should come.” “This ‘heaven-storming idealism’ was not shaken by the apostle’s experience of the moral delinquencies of his converts, which he did not fail to reprove with due energy.” It is a defective

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<sup>90</sup> P. 684.

<sup>91</sup> Pp. 697 f.

<sup>92</sup> P. 698.

<sup>93</sup> “Paul: The Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher,” 1898, pp. 366 f., note.

apprehension of Paul's doctrine of the Spirit as the Spirit of holiness, and of the Christian's progressive sanctification by Him, which has led Cone into so bizarre a representation of Paul's conception of the relation of the Christian to sin.

Kirsopp Lake, entering the discussion, with his essay on "The Early Christian Treatment of Sin after Baptism," late enough to have Windisch behind him, takes up the most extreme ground possible as if it were a mere matter of course.<sup>94</sup> According to him, the whole body of the first teachers of the Church were agreed that sinning after baptism—which is the same as after believing—is unpardonable, and it was only later, when hard experience had taught them that Christians did sin after baptism, that remedies for such sins came to be suggested. The essay opens with a fundamental assertion. "The most primitive form of Christian doctrine," we read, "held that Christians, as such, were free from sin. They had been born again into a state of sinlessness, and it was their duty to see that they never relapsed again into the dangerous state which they had left; if they should fail in this duty, it was questionable whether they had any further chance of salvation." According to Hebrews, we are told, wilfully sinning Christians are hopelessly lost. We are also told that "the same point of view was that of St. Paul, but in his Epistles the question is not a matter of controversy, and it is only implied or mentioned in passing." The evidence adduced, however, concerns only the sinlessness of Christians, not the hopeless state of Christians who sin—which is the point which was raised. And the same is true of I John which is next appealed to. The latter part of the essay is concerned with the remedies proposed for sinning Christians. First rebaptism was proposed; it is polemically alluded to in Hebrews and Ephesians. Next came prayer for venial sins (1 John 5:16 f.) and recourse to the advocacy of Christ (2:1). Then Hermas suggests penance. And possibly we may add from John 13:1–20, footwashing.

The most extraordinary excursion of an English-speaking writer into this circle of ideas, which has met our eye, however, is contained in the remarkable Kerr Lectures for 1914–1915 by W. Morgan.<sup>95</sup> These lectures are written distinctly from the viewpoint of the history-of-religion school, and the material which concerns us is practically a transcript of the representations of the German writers. The question of Paul's attitude towards the sins of Christians is raised in the form of, What provision does he make for post-baptismal sins? The answer is to the effect that he makes no provision for them. "The message of forgiveness in Paul's gospel stands at the beginning, and has no reference to lapses in the Christian life. For post-baptismal sins no provision is made. The believer, if he would obtain salvation, must cleanse himself from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1)."<sup>96</sup> Paul does not shut his eyes to the fact of sin in Christians. "What we do miss, however, is a clear recognition of forgiveness as a daily need of the Christian life."<sup>97</sup> It is everywhere assumed "that the standing given by the justifying verdict is something permanent," but Paul "has no

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<sup>94</sup> *The Expositor*, Seventh Series, x. 1910, pp. 63–80. The essay had previously appeared in Dutch—"Zonde en Doop," in the *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, xliii. 1909, pp. 538–554. The same material is presented by H. Weinel, "Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments," ed. 2, 1913, pp. 628, 629.

<sup>95</sup> "The Religion and Theology of Paul," 1917, pp. 151 ff.

<sup>96</sup> Pp. 152–153.

<sup>97</sup> P. 152.

thought of connecting it with post-baptismal sins.” Morgan finds the account of this in two circumstances—the radicalness of the change wrought by renewal, and the small place taken in Paul’s consciousness by guilt. “The sense of guilt and of pardon were not the dominant notes in Paul’s conversion,” and “they can hardly be said to be heard at all in his life as a Christian.”<sup>98</sup> He never confesses wrong-doing; he shows no sense of need of daily forgiveness; he never prays or teaches others to pray, Forgive us our trespasses. Precisely what Paul teaches is this:<sup>99</sup> “From the death and resurrection with Christ the believer comes forth a new creature. So radical is the change as described by the Apostle that one might infer that the very possibility of sin has been removed. But such an issue he certainly does not contemplate. What, however, he does teach is that the old compulsion to sin has passed and the way been opened for a sinless development.... His expectation is that in normal cases the Christian will advance day by day in the knowledge of Christ, practice keeping step with knowledge, until at last he apprehends that for which also he was apprehended and Christ is formed within him. That a Christian should deliberately sin appears to him not merely as an anomaly but as an enigma.... The contrast presented by the grey reality to this optimistic expectation cost the Apostle many a sad hour. That Christians could sin and sin badly was all too palpable a fact. The fact does not lead him to modify his view of regeneration, but it forces him to descend from the high plane of the supernatural to the humbler region of the categorical imperative. Your flesh has been crucified with Christ, he again and again insists, therefore mortify its lusts; ye have received the Spirit, walk in it. By the stress of facts he is compelled to supplement his ethic of miracle with an ethic of will. The two stand side by side unrelated.” They certainly stand side by side, but why say “unrelated”? Paul certainly relates them, as, for example, in Phil. 2:12, 13. And why, in the interest of that spurious geneticism which is the bane of much recent criticism, represent the ethic of will as rising subsequently in time to the ethic of miracle? It is *there*, as soon as we know Paul at all (1 Thess. 2:12, 4:1 ff., 5:14 ff.).<sup>100</sup>

It seems scarcely necessary to pursue this review of the ever-repeated enunciation of the same opinions farther. And if we glance over the whole course of the discussion and endeavor to estimate its results, we are surprised by their meagerness. We have already suggested that they are practically summed up in providing the most radical school of criticism with an additional tenet in their historical creed. The members of that school now characteristically affirm that, in the view of Paul, Christians are sinless men—although they one and all agree that Christians, in point of fact, are nothing of the sort. The notion was only one of Paul’s fanaticisms, thoroughly intelligible in him, no doubt, his antecedents and experiences being considered, but nevertheless symptomatic only of his enthusiastic temperament. On the other side no doubt the discussion has been useful in recalling adherents of the doctrine of the Reformation as to sin in the Christian life, from any tendency into which individuals may have fallen here and there to lose their sense of the greatness of the deliverance which has come to them in Christ in the profundity of their sense of the greatness of their sinfulness. The influence of Pietistic

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<sup>98</sup> P. 154.

<sup>99</sup> Pp. 160–162.

<sup>100</sup> It may be reassuring to note that James Moffat in a brief review of Wernle rejects his whole point of view (Hastings’ “Dictionary of the Apostolic Church,” ii. 1918, p. 380b).

conceptions, emanating from more than one source, has been very wide-spread; and wherever they have penetrated they have tended to bring with them an inclination to give expression to the recognition of the intrinsic justice of the divine judgment on our sinfulness, by a treatment of the self in accordance with it. Hair shirts and flagellations are not popular in Protestant circles; but a mood and demeanor adapted to a deep sense of the iniquity and loathsomeness of our sins may be thought to serve much the same purpose. The jibe has not been wholly without justification that many have only enough Christianity to make them miserable. There is some evidence that the discussion of the relation of Christians to sin which we have been viewing has operated here and there to quicken in the minds of adherents of the Reformation doctrine the realization that Christianity makes men happy, not unhappy, that it brings them not sin but forgiveness of sin. In sequence to the discussion at any rate there has here and there shown itself among adherents of the Reformation doctrine a desire to dwell rather on the blessings which Christianity brings than on the evils from which it delivers, rather on the glories into which it ushers the believer than the burdens from which it relieves him.

We adduce only a couple of examples of quite differing antecedents.

P. Gennrich, in the opening pages of his “Regeneration and Sanctification with reference to the Present Currents of Religious Life,”<sup>101</sup> draws a very vivid picture of the sense of new-creaturehood which filled the consciousness of the apostles—of “the joyful avowal of the actual experience of life by everyone who had experienced, in faith in Christ, the marvellously glorious and blessed effects that proceed from life-communion with the Lord.” “How movingly,” he cries, “the tone of personal experience strikes upon our ear in such confessions! What the prophets of the old covenant anticipated for the people in the time of salvation, and proclaimed in God-wrought confidence in the might and mercy of their God—that God would Himself prepare for Himself a people in whom He should be well-pleased, would establish a new covenant in which sin should be forgiven and iniquity taken away, and would create in them a new spirit—that, now, might in truth and reality be experienced in themselves by all who were lifted by Christ into communion with the Father, who for Christ’s sake granted them the children’s right, and by Christ’s Spirit created in them the sense of childship. And the experience was so transcendently great, the transformation of the whole inner and outer life-condition, which a Christian experienced who had come to faith and received baptism, was so immense, that an expression could scarcely be found which was able to compass the whole great fulness of what he had experienced and to bring himself and others quickly and impressively to the consciousness of it. This condition of new life into which the Christian knew himself to be transformed, was experienced by him as a wholly new life-state, conceivable by no human wisdom, attainable by no human art or power; as a new creative effect of the Almighty God in Christ through His Holy Spirit, who brought His almighty Becoming into the life-development of the individual even as He has brought it into the world by sending His Son; and so has worked a regeneration of humanity in Christ. In one word—it was the unanimous consciousness of the apostolic and first Christians that they were new creatures of God, born of Him to new life, *born again*: that they were now first elevated to the stage of life on which life really deserves the name of

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<sup>101</sup> “Wiedergeburt und Heiligung mit Bezug auf die gegenwärtigen Strömungen des religiösen Lebens,” 1908, pp. 5–7.

life, because it is personal life in the full sense of the word, filled with a fully satisfying content, and supported by indestructible powers, *eternal life*.” There is much in Gennrich’s personal modes of thought which is not in accord with either Paul or Luther. But speaking out of his own point of view, it is very evident that he is here straining all the resources of language in the effort to give an expression, which he can hope to be something like adequate, to the greatness of the new life brought into the world by Christianity. This is the way, he says, the apostles, who did not teach the sinlessness of Christians, thought of what Christians were. This is the way Christians, taught by the apostles what their inheritance is, feel.

The second example which we shall adduce is drawn from a very different circle, and speaks to us out of a firmly grounded and historically trained Reformed consciousness. Herman Bavinck, quoting the contention of Ritschl and his successors in this discussion, to the effect that the writers of the New Testament were accustomed to speak of their salvation in accents of glorification, proceeds:<sup>102</sup> “There is a truth in this contention which should not be denied. The Scriptures can scarcely find words enough to describe the glory of the people of God. In the Old Testament they call Israel a priestly kingdom, elected of God, the object of His love, His portion and heritage, His son and servant perfected in beauty by the majesty of God; and in the New Testament believers are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, born of God and His children, His elect nation and royal priesthood, partakers of His divine nature, anointed with the Holy Spirit, made by Christ kings and priests, incapable of sinning, and so forth. He who rejects the teaching of the Scriptures about sin and grace can see nothing but exaggeration in all this; such a radical change as takes place in regeneration and sanctification seems to him neither necessary nor conceivable. But the Scriptures are of a different mind; they give a high place to the Church, call it by the most beautiful names and ascribe to it a holiness and glory which make it like to God. The glorification of the Church which takes its beginning with regeneration is, however, equally with justification an object of faith.” It is needless to say that this recognition of the glories brought to the individual and the Church by the gospel does not in these hands in the least affect the sense of sin and ill-desert, necessary to sinners, against which as against a foil it is rather thrown up. The point which it is adduced to illustrate is merely that the fulness of this recognition of the glories of salvation—or at least the care that is taken to give it full expression—may in these instances be in part the effect of the discussion which has been in progress on the relation of Christians to sin. So far as this, advantage has been reaped from that discussion.

If now, abstracting ourselves from these individual effects of the discussion, we inquire after the real function served by this assault upon the Reformation doctrine in the great complex of the religious movements of the time, we can only say that it has operated for the support and advancement of the current perfectionist parties working in the Churches. Looked at from the point of view of the general religious movements of the time it is, indeed, in effect an attempt to supply to the contentions of these perfectionist parties a scientific exegetical basis; and it goes without saying that it is the most elaborate attempt of the kind which has ever been made. Those engaged in this attempt, of course, care nothing whatever for the current perfectionist parties in the service of which they

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<sup>102</sup> “Gereformeerde Dogmatiek,” ed. 2, iv. 1911, pp. 281 ff. (ed. 1, iii. 1898, pp. 559 ff.).

have nevertheless expended their learning and labor. There is probably no type of current religious thought and feeling for which they have less sympathy. And they care no more for the teaching of the New Testament than they do for the perfectionist parties. Bousset, in the very act of declaring that, among modern religious tempers, that embodied in Methodistic Christianity comes nearest to the Christianity of Paul, remarks that nevertheless to modern men it is abhorrent and the Lutheran is more acceptable—whatever he may mean here by the Lutheran.<sup>103</sup> These scholars have performed their service for the perfectionists while pursuing a very different purpose of their own. But in pursuing their own purpose they have been conscious all the time of possessing in the perfectionist parties allies to whose support they could appeal. There is involved in this a judgment as to the significance of the perfectionist movement in the history of Protestant thought, a judgment which is not left to the reader to divine but is openly spoken out. The purpose with which the debate has been undertaken and carried on has been to assault the Reformation doctrine of “the miserable sinner,” intensely distasteful to these men of high ethical aspirations and attainments. They saw in the perfectionist movements similar revolts against the Reformation doctrine of the Christian life and the process of salvation, and they therefore claimed in their promoters fellow workers in a common cause. They have no sense of community with them whatever in their notions of what the Christian life is, in its sources, processes, attainments, issues: but they are at one with them in their common effort to break down the Reformation doctrine and have been glad to help them in their battle, by presenting them with Paul and the rest, as their patrons—if they attached any value to that gift. And meanwhile they have derived this benefit from them in return—that they could point to them as independent witnesses to the essential correctness of their interpretation of the New Testament.

The points of connection between the two are too significant to have been neglected by either the outside observer or the inside worker. We find them therefore cursorily intimated from the very beginning of the controversy. From the one side Fr. Luther<sup>104</sup> already remarks of Ritschl’s mode of arguing on the matter and his exegetical procedure, that they “coincide with those of Methodistic Smithism”; and later it becomes a regular custom to mark this conjunction.<sup>105</sup> From the other side we find the writers of the perfectionist movements quoted by the assailants of the Reformation doctrine with a respect which is certainly notable and perhaps at times excessive. It is difficult to believe that, except as moved by a sense of party interest, Carl Clemen could have felt greatly indebted to Andrew Murray for aid in the formation of his views of Paul’s attitude toward sin in his own life.<sup>106</sup> And it is impossible to believe that Hans Windisch felt the contributions of F. Paul to scientific religious thought very valuable.<sup>107</sup> The ground of the sudden interest of these ultra-“scientific” investigators in the exegetical and theological

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<sup>103</sup> Schiele und Zscharnack, “Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart,” iv. 1913, col. 1296.

<sup>104</sup> “Die Theologie Ritschl’s,” 1887, pp. 38 f.

<sup>105</sup> Cf., for example, Bindemann, “Das Gebet um tägliche Vergebung der Sünden,” 1902, p. 12; Ihmels, “Die tägliche Vergebung der Sünden,” 1901, pp. 7–8; Feine, as cited, p. 420, note.

<sup>106</sup> “Die christliche Lehre von der Sünde,” i. 1897, p. 111.

<sup>107</sup> As cited, p. 2.

opinions of such purely “practical” writers, is that they wish to exploit the movements which these writers represent as aids in their own assault on the Reformation doctrine of sin and grace. It is for this purpose, for example, that Windisch introduces quite an elaborate account of these movements in the closing pages of his volume.<sup>108</sup> “There are now to be noted,” says he, “some very interesting movements within the history of the Churches of the Reformation since the eighteenth century, that may perhaps be considered reactions against the Lutheran Christianity which no doubt strives against sin, but above everything consoles the pious for their sins—the person of Luther is here left out of account.” These movements are named as English Methodism and above all in our day the so-called Sanctification Movement. The language in which they are introduced is very carefully guarded, but what is meant is simply that in these two movements, Methodism and what we know as the Higher Life Movement, with its continuations, we have “reactions” from the Reformation doctrine of the “miserable sinner.” And accordingly we are told clearly a page or two later, where the problem of sin in the Christian life is spoken of,<sup>109</sup> that “Methodism and the Sanctification Movement present therefore a reaction from the solution of Christian miserable-sinnerism which is fostered in Lutheran circles.” This representation is true. The perfectionist teaching of these several movements whether in its crasser or in its more guarded forms, is a revolt against the Reformation doctrine not only of the continued imperfection of the Christian in this life where he enjoys only the first fruits of salvation, but of sin and grace in general, which constitutes the pivot on which the whole system of Reformation teaching turns. And we may count it among the most beneficent results of the discussion of the Biblical teaching on the sins of Christians which we have been reviewing, if we can learn from it this fact; and with it this other fact, that the appeal of these movements to the Scripture in behalf of their teaching has, in the most elaborate effort which has yet been made to validate it, completely failed. The most striking thing about the long continued attempt which has been made to prove that to Paul the Christian is a sinless man is the clearness with which it has come out that Paul knows nothing of a sinless man in this life.

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<sup>108</sup> Pp. 531 ff.

<sup>109</sup> P. 533.