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spite of this the fact remains—and Spitta quotes many instances to prove it—that among the hymns dealing with the Lord's Supper, the meaning which he has assigned to the rite is that which is most frequently and most effectively adopted in giving expression to the devotion of the believer.

G. WAUCHOPE STEWART.

### THE EASY YOKE.

WHEN Jesus said, "My yoke is easy," He probably had in His view a contrast between His teaching and that of the scribes. Be that as it may, it is certain that His "yoke," compared with theirs, was easy. Therefore we may fitly adopt "the Easy Yoke" as a title for this paper, in which it is proposed to consider some of the sayings uttered by our Lord in connection with His various encounters with the religious teachers of Israel. This study will form a suitable sequel to the preceding one on the *Disciple-Logia*. The latter, curiously enough, exhibit Christ as a Master in a light which might readily suggest that His yoke was the reverse of easy, though no instructed disciple would ascribe to it such a character; for such an one understands that severity and gentleness are not incompatible. But the fact remains that to see clearly with what justice Jesus claims to be a genial, reasonable Master we must study the words in which His moral and religious ideas are set in sharp antagonism to the doctrine of the scribes.

These words are many, as we learn from Matthew's Gospel, which contains the fullest account of our Lord's anti-scribal polemic. To consider them all, even in the most cursory manner, is impossible within our limits. It is also quite unnecessary for our purpose. It will suffice to weigh the import of those words that have been preserved in the Gospel of Mark, which, meagre as its report of our

Lord's teaching is, nevertheless contains materials sufficient to define His position as against that of the scribes.

The sayings preserved in Mark have all a stamp of genuineness which leaves no room for doubt that they form together a little treasure of veritable utterances of the great Master. They are, one and all, of permanent value; perennial light for Christians, not merely temporary lightning directed against an evil system prevalent in Israel eighteen hundred years ago. The apostolic Church from the first perceived their importance, and felt their light-giving power; hence their sure place in the primitive tradition, and in the written page of the archaic Gospel which bears the name of Mark.

The collection of relative *Logia* consists of eight in all. Five of these are contained in the section Mark ii.-iii. 1-6, whose general heading might be "sundry conflicts with scribes and Pharisees." Briefly indicated, they are as follows :

1. "Power on earth to forgive sins," chapter ii. 10.
2. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners," ii. 17.
3. "New wine into new bottles," ii. 22.
4. "The Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath," ii. 27.
5. "Always lawful to do good," iii. 4.

To this group of five have to be added the following three :

6. "Not that which goeth into the mouth, but that which cometh out, defileth," vii. 15.
7. "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder," x. 9.
8. "To Cæsar Cæsar's, to God God's," xii. 17.

Matthew has all these *Logia*; Luke omits (6) and gives (7) in a very imperfect form.<sup>1</sup>

The first two announce the advent of the era of grace ;

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvi. 18.

the next four contain the charter of spiritual liberty ; the last two lay the foundations of social health by proclaiming the sanctity of the marriage tie and by assigning to the State its legitimate sphere.

1. "Power on earth to forgive sins."

I take these words to be the essential part of the sentence in which they are embedded : "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Pardon on *earth*, not merely in heaven ; pardon abundant, everywhere like the air, not a scarce commodity relegated as to its exercise to the upper celestial world, and not much of it even there, or even of the will to pardon. Such is the latent antithesis. It marks the difference between the old era of legalism and the new era of grace ; between the God of the scribes and the God of Jesus. Under the old regime of legalism God was conceived of simply as a Moral Governor, rendering to every man according to his works. Under such a system there was little room for pardon, which was crowded out of the universe by retributive Justice. God did not exercise it, men did not expect it, neither did they practise it. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was the law for God and for man. Such was the conception of the moral order which had possession of the minds of the fault-finding scribes, who called Jesus a blasphemer because He had said to the palsied man, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." It was under the inspiration of an utterly diverse conception of that order that Jesus spoke the cheering word, and his reply to the fault-finders was meant as a vindication of the new anti-legal view. Formally a dispute as to His personal right to forgive, the question at issue between Him and His critics was really one involving a great principle. A whole world of new religious thought is covered by the brief phrase "power on earth to forgive sin." It meant : "God is not a mere Governor and Judge. He is more characteristically, more divinely, a God who de-

lighteth in mercy. Nor does He look on the exercise of mercy in the light, chiefly, of a prerogative to be jealously guarded, but rather of a virtue to be imitated and a pleasure to be shared by all who have received His Spirit. Law was the watchword of old, let grace be the watchword now. Let all men know that God multiplieth pardons. Let all men who believe this strive to inspire hope by preaching, as they have opportunity, the forgiveness of sins. To a fellow-man, suffering grievously, and looking on his suffering as the penalty of special sin, speak the cheering word: Brother, thy sins are forgiven. This is always true in the sense that past misconduct need in no case be an inevitable doom; and when general unbelief prevails in the forgivableness of transgression, it is a truth worth proclaiming. Proclaim it, in spite of the disease which seems to be the standing evidence that sin has not been forgiven. Heal the man's soul by the beneficent proclamation if you cannot heal his body, and so break the spell of the false theory which has too long held sway over men's minds, that particular forms of physical evil are always the penalty of particular forms of moral evil. Heal the soul by the Gospel of pardon; that any son of man can do, if it be reserved for the Son of man to heal the body. Nay, heal the soul, I say, and thereby you may help not a little to heal the body; for hope in the heart and peace in the conscience are precious medicines for the whole nature of man."

2. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

This second Logion gains in significance by juxtaposition with the first. The resulting meaning is: sin not only pardonable abundantly, but sinners rather than the righteous, in some ways, the favoured ones. How inconceivable this to the scribe mind accustomed to legalistic ways of thinking! "To whom can the favour of God and the blessings of the Messianic kingdom belong but to the righteous? Doth not God reward every man according to

his works, bestowing on the just all desirable good, and visiting the unjust with punitive evil? Yet here is one who is ever talking about the kingdom of God, and gives Himself out as its herald, yet has the effrontery to tell us that He invites to its benefits, by preference, sinners, such as these publicans and their dissolute companions, with whom He has just been associating. We called Him a blasphemer before when He said, 'Son, thy sins are forgiven'; may we not with even better reason call Him a blasphemer now, nay, one who abolishes moral distinctions, upsets the moral order, overturns the very foundations of God's throne?"

The distress of the legal pedants was, doubtless, great, but what of that? The word that scandalized them has brought deep abiding comfort to the great heart of mankind, to the hearts of sinners, who are ever the great majority. The kingdom for sinners, not for righteous men or saints—it is a beneficent, epoch-making, eventful revolution. It puts all good things within the reach of the erring, even of those who have greatly erred. All things, not merely pardon, but power to be and to do good—eminent attainment in sanctity and wisdom. For, of course, the new policy does not undervalue righteousness; it simply adopts a new method of propagating it. The kingdom is for sinners in order that they may be saints, and for producing sanctity reliance is placed on the effect of magnanimous treatment. In the new era of grace retributive justice is superseded by divine generosity. God forgives that He may be feared. Divine goodness is trusted to as the great power making for repentance. The new way is better than the old, which simply told men what to do under penalties, and left them to themselves. The old way failed, Jeremiah being witness. The new way may fail in many instances also, but on the whole it works well. Forgiveness does foster piety. Men love God because He is gracious. The human heart bounds passionately towards goodness under the inspiration of un-

merited favour. So the greatest sinner may become the greatest saint; forgiven much, he greatly loves. No such devotees as Paul and Augustine and Bunyan. Divine rigour never produced such men. "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Who shall stand, I say, not in judgment, but even in moral integrity? Strictness, severe judicial rigour, is depressing and repressing. It chills the soul, freezes up the moral energies, produces only two types of men: the moral pedant, the Pharisee, who addicts himself to petty duties, and in his blindness thinks thereby to fulfil all righteousness; and the profligate, who, despairing of pleasing the exacting Taskmaster, gives up trying, and abandons himself to lawless impulse.

The foregoing words of Jesus throw open a career of spiritual life full of great possibilities to all, even to the most degraded. The effect of the next group of four is to set free that life from the hampering power of artificial restrictions connected with ascetic practices, holy times, and ritual rules. By the new evangelic policy of pardon, transgressors are set free from the bonds of an accusing conscience and of evil habit; by the charter of liberty contained in the four words next to be considered, pardoned, regenerate men are set free from the not less serious bonds of conventional religion. Emancipation in the latter form is not less necessary than in the former. The two together constitute complete redemption. Such complete redemption Jesus provided for in His teaching.

3. "New wine into new bottles."

The old bottle into which it was proposed to put the new wine was "fasting." "Why," they asked, "do Thy disciples fast not?" Who the interrogants were, whether John's disciples or Pharisees, or both together, matters not, in this practice there was agreement between them. They fasted on system, and thought that all religious

people should do the same. It was an old pious custom, and it was good for the soul, and on both grounds observance was desirable. Not content with observing the practice themselves, they attempted, with the characteristic intolerance of zealots, to concuss the Jesus-circle into conformity. Jesus firmly resisted pressure, and defended nonconformity with weighty argument embodied in parabolic forms of thought. "Would you have a wedding party fast? Who would patch an old garment with a piece of undressed cloth, or pour new wine into old skins?" The principle implied is: in religion, practice must correspond to spirit; and the latent reason annexed: when this law of congruity is disregarded, practice becomes mechanical to the detriment of the spirit. But this only throws us back on a previous question: Why should the spirit of the Jesus-circle be different from that of Johannine and Pharisaic circles? A similar question arises at all transition times bringing new departures. Lovers of old ways cannot understand the plea of innovators. The claim to be new wine appears to them simply conceit; is not religion essentially ever the same? It may be conceit, but it may also be something very different. As a matter of fact, religions are not all alike. There are religions of fear and religions of faith, servile religions and filial religions; and their ways are of necessity diverse. Such a wide difference existed between the religion of Jesus and His disciples, and that of John and the Pharisees. The religion of John and the Pharisees was legal; the religion of Jesus and His disciples was evangelic. The former was a service rendered in fear to a severe Taskmaster; the latter was a service rendered in gladness of heart to a gracious, benignant Father in heaven. Naturally the one resolved itself into scrupulous task-work, and crystallized into a round of duties periodically, painfully, punctiliously, or perchance, in the long run, perfunctorily and mechanically,

performed. As naturally the other abhorred task-work, rejoiced in spontaneity, would not suffer hands and feet to be shackled by incongruous custom, that it might be free to run in the way of God's commandments, and to do His will with both hands earnestly. This is the evangelic spirit. It is the spirit which answers to the new era of grace. Jesus asserted its rights as the inbringer of that era, and the true sons of that era will ever be jealous for these rights. Tame submission, fond clinging to old custom, means lapse into legalism, with its enfeebled energies and unheroic timidities. Doubtless there is something to fear. The liberty of the spirit may degenerate into license, and issue in a wild religion of wayward, fitful impulse. But the risk must be run. The world cannot do without fresh inspiration, and impetuous, passionate enthusiasm—all that is within roused into activity, giving birth to new thoughts, new songs, new ways of acting, to the glory of the Father in heaven. Are we not dying for lack of the new wine at this hour? Oh for a breath of the Jesus-spirit to heal our weariness and languor, and free us from the yoke of routine!

4. "The Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath."

In Mark alone; one of two quite invaluable words of Jesus we owe to the archaic realistic Gospel, the other being the Parable of the *Blade, the Ear, and the Full Corn* (iv. 26-29). The saying preserved by the other two synoptical Evangelists in common with Mark, "the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath," would not have compensated for the loss of this word. For that saying, taken by itself, contains an exceptional statement about one person claiming lordly prerogative for the unique Man, whereas the word peculiar to Mark enunciates in clear, crisp style a great principle applicable to the human race. It is an important contribution to Christ's doctrine concerning the sovereign worth of man. Setting him, by

other sayings, above the animal creation—better than bird or beast ; assigning to his soul, or moral being, more value than the whole world, He here sets man above important religious institutions, and declares the interest of humanity to be the supreme end which these institutions must serve as means. “A greater than the Sabbath is here,” He virtually affirms. This attitude of championship for the human interest as against the divine, falsely conceived to be a rival interest, was characteristic of Jesus. It was the natural, inevitable attitude for one who conceived of God as a Father, and of gracious love as the most central attribute of the divine nature. For Jesus the divine interest and the human interest were coincident ; if He seemed to set the human above the divine, as when He said, “First be reconciled with thy brother, then offer sacrifice,” it was only because the religious teachers of Israel, past and present, had so grievously mismanaged their business as to give to the divine an anti-human aspect.

The Sabbath afforded a peculiarly favourable and important opportunity of asserting the just claims of the human against a falsely and mischievously conceived divine. In the first place, to state that the Sabbath was made for man was to state a simple, undeniable fact, of which any one could satisfy himself by an intelligent, unbiassed reading of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. By the statute of institution the Sabbath was a divinely-given resting-day for weary men and beasts, humane in its intention, and having men’s good for its *raison d’être*. Then, secondly, the Sabbath was a very obtrusive institution. Once every seven days it came round with its call to men to cease from toil, to remember that man was more than a drudge, and that human life was more than labour with the sweat of the brow for daily bread, and to lift up their hearts with thankfulness to the God by whose considerate providence it came to pass

that there was such a thing as a Sabbath. To say that the oft-recurring day of rest, so differently spent from the other six, was made for man, was a very impressive way of saying: Man is not the slave of sacred institutions; they exist for his benefit. Then, once more, no sacred institution had been more utterly *dehumanised* than the Sabbath. Therefore in connection with none was it more needful to formulate the true, normal, wholesome relation between man and religious institutions.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that this famous *logion* implied a certain amount of *disparagement* of the Sabbath. The effect of such a supposition would simply be to lessen the value of the principle proclaimed. The very point of the declaration lies in this, that man's superiority is affirmed *in connection with an institution whose great worth is acknowledged*. Man greater even than the Sabbath; the Sabbath, with its beneficent provision for rest, there for man's benefit. The more valuable the institution, the better fitted to illustrate the principle: the *raison d'être* of religious institutions serviceableness to the higher interests of humanity. Hence, what Jesus here says of the Sabbath He would, on proper occasion, have said of any sacred object whatsoever, even of one whose value was beyond dispute. He might have said, The temple is made for man, not man for the temple; or even, The Bible is made for man, not man for the Bible. All such things are subject to the test of utility, which is freely applied in the New Testament. In the Epistle to the Hebrews "unprofitableness" is assigned as a reason for the discontinuance of the Levitical ritual (vii. 18). Of the Holy Scriptures, on the other hand, it is affirmed by the Apostle Paul that they are *profitable* for the edification of the man of God (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). They *are* profitable, and they *must be*; that is the very reason of their existence. If, therefore, by perverted use, *e.g.*,

through Rabbinical interpretation, they cease to be useful, it then becomes seasonable to say, "The Scriptures were made for man, not man for the Scriptures." That was said in effect by the Reformers when they translated the Scriptures into the common tongues. It is said to-day, when the rights of criticism are asserted against the conservatism of traditional reverence, and an endeavour is made to ascertain the true history of the sacred literature with a view to a better understanding of its meaning. The Bible must, by all means, be made a useful book, and not allowed to become the fetish of uninstructed piety.

5. "Always lawful to do good."

This saying does not so much enunciate an independent principle with reference to Sabbath observance, as state a corollary from the great truth just considered. If the very reason for the existence of the Sabbath is to promote man's good, then it cannot be incompatible with true Sabbath keeping to do good. In instituting the day of rest God acted the part of a *benefactor*, and in doing beneficent work man simply becomes an imitator of God. But it goes without saying that the beneficence of man must not take such a shape as to frustrate the beneficence of God by depriving toiling men of their much-needed, divinely-given boon of rest. Doing good might be so widely construed as to include all useful labour carried on on other days of the week. That would mean the abolition of the weekly rest; therefore such comprehensive definition must be disallowed. Ordinary bread-earning labour must be suspended, if the rest is to remain; and no one will object to the suspension who in his heart believes that the weekly rest was made for man's benefit, or that it is of truly beneficial tendency. In the nature of things the suspension cannot be complete, but every humane man will consent to its being as complete as possible. He will say, Let the one day in the week, con-

secrated from time immemorial to recreative leisure, be a *bonâ fide* resting-day for weary men. But in proportion as he has entered into the spiritual freedom of Christ's wise teaching he will also demand that rest be rationally defined, that pedantic, superstitious, tyrannical rules prohibitory of so-called "work" shall not be imposed, rules such as that which interdicted rubbing ears of corn between the hands as a species of threshing. More generally, he will insist that the category of permissible acts classifiable as Sabbath well-doing cannot be authoritatively fixed, and that every Christian must be free to exercise his own judgment under law to Christ. Christ did not ask leave of the Pharisees to heal a withered hand; He did what His heart dictated, and let them blame Him as they pleased. A little more of this Christ-like boldness would not be amiss. Abstinence from deeds which conscience does not condemn, from fear of criticism, is a line of conduct that has no value in the kingdom of God, and its prevalence in a religious community is neither a sign nor a cause of spiritual health.

6. "Not that which goeth into the mouth, but that which cometh out, defileth."

The fourth *logion* states the true relation of man to sacred things of real and permanent value. They are made for man, must be such as to promote his moral and spiritual interests; therefore when, by abuse, they fail to do that, there is need of reform. So the matter stands in reference to Sabbath, Bible, Church, clergy, etc. The *logion* now to be considered states the relation of man to religious institutions of no intrinsic permanent value, but at best serving only a temporary educational use to man in the period of his spiritual minority. The institution in connection with which the *logion* was spoken was the system of rules for securing ceremonial purity as interpreted and enforced by Rabbinical tradition. With reference to these rules, and all sacred things of similar character, the formula

must be, ceremonial made for man *in his minority*. This implies ultimate abrogation, whereas the *logion* concerning the Sabbath implies perpetuity, subject always, however, to correction of abuse. Accordingly, the terms in which Jesus expressed His view of ceremonial ablution virtually point to eventual abrogation. "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth" (though taken with unwashed hands) means that ceremonial uncleanness is an imaginary evil. It may have been necessary in a time of moral rudeness to treat it as a reality, as a method of impressing on men in their spiritual childhood the distinction between holy and unholy; but from the point of view of an enlightened conscience the insignificance of ceremonial is the eternal truth. Hence if it can be said, even of the Sabbath, "Not man for the Sabbath," *a fortiori* it may be said, Not man for ceremonial ablutions, or for anything of merely symbolic, ritual nature. Ritual being in its nature transient, subjection of man to it permanently will involve arrest of his moral growth, keeping him for ever in a state of childhood. Yet perpetuation of the ceremonial yoke was what the scribes aimed at. It never entered into their minds that religious usages might serve a useful purpose for a time, and be the reverse of wholesome when continued beyond the destined hour of abrogation. Nay, with the characteristic perversity of their kind, they were more zealous in enforcing the unconditional and everlasting obligation to observe ritual and ceremonial than in inculcating the duty of keeping the Sabbath, though their zeal in that work was sufficiently intense. Hence the encounter between Jesus and the scribes in reference to washing of hands was the bitterest of all the encounters recorded in the Gospels. It finally fixed the purpose of the religious guides of Israel to destroy the dangerous revolutionary Teacher of Galilee on the earliest possible opportunity. Jesus understood that they aimed at His life, and that they sought in the neglect

of His disciples a fitting justification for murderous intentions. But He felt that on such a matter there could be no compromise. The hour for abolishing the yoke of ceremonialism had come, and the emancipating word must be spoken. And spoken it was, not merely to the scribes or to the disciples, but to the multitude, who were invited to "hear and understand." When He said in their hearing, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man," Jesus literally gave His life a ransom for the many. It was a great redemptive word, spoken at that cost to the Speaker. Would that all who bear Christ's name understood its import! But how many, even at this hour, are doing their utmost to bring the Church again into bondage!

The foregoing group of four sayings make for the redemption of the individual conscience. The remaining two make for the redemption of society, or for Christian civilization.

7. "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

Christ's doctrine of marriage was characteristically generous. It expressed manly sympathy with the gentler sex—with woman, weak, helpless, defenceless, unfairly treated, at the mercy of a husband's caprices, and with no redress, when put away, save a document declaring, "She is no longer my wife; she may marry another if she pleases." But it was more than generous, even the enunciation of a clear, distinct principle concerning the conjugal relation, to the effect that it was of such an intimate nature as to be indissoluble, so long at least as both parties were faithful to each other. "Marriage," said Jesus, "makes two one, in flesh, in heart, in interest, for life. Such is God's will, such the will of *nature*; for man and woman are made for each other, need each other physically and spiritually, complete each other." In taking up this high ground He appealed from the imperfect statute concerning the bill of divorce-

ment, meant to mitigate an existing evil, to the lofty ideal of the marriage tie set forth in the book of Origins (Genesis ii. 23-25). The scribes lost sight of the ideal, and busied themselves with the bill of divorcement: by all means let that be in due order. Not a word spoken by them against the bad custom of unjust putting away, but only cheap, safe zeal to insure that the unjust, unmanly putting away be gone about with due legal formality. It was left to Jesus to speak the brave word, and it was spoken by Him without any thanks from the men of the legal schools. But what cause Christendom has to thank Him! His protest against putting away has given woman status, and so has put it within her power to bless the stronger, rougher sex with the sweet refining influences of her finer tastes and sensibilities. The protest is a two-edged sword, defending woman at once against the caprice of lust and against the caprice of religion. For both lust and religion have been enemies of woman's marriage rights, the one by saying, I put away this woman that I may have another I love more; the other by saying, I put away or forsake this woman that I may spend the rest of my days in solitude, devoting myself entirely to the culture of sanctity and the saving of my soul. Over against the two extremes, which meet in a common inhumanity, Jesus sets the ideal, "the two one for life," so defending society against the degrading influence of lawless appetite on the one hand, and against the less repulsive, but not less anti-social, influence of ascetic sanctity on the other.

8. "To Cæsar Cæsar's, to God God's."

This famous word is doubly admirable: for its controversial dexterity, as addressed to adversaries bent on deadly mischief, and for its permanent didactic value. From a polemical point of view it is simply evasive, adroitly refusing the direct answer desired by the crafty interrogants, and so rescuing their intended victim from their toils. They came,

sent by their masters—for, as Matthew tells us, they were *disciples*, young men who might be presumed to be candid enquirers, and therefore the more likely to put Jesus off His guard—they came asking, “Is it lawful and religiously right to give tribute to Cæsar? shall we give or shall we not give?” How finely they simulate earnestness in that “*shall we give or shall we not give?*” and at the same time virtually dictate the form in which the answer must be given. It must be yes or no, give or do not give. Either answer will bring Jesus into disfavour with persons whose power is to be feared. “Yes” will make Him unpopular with those who desire Jewish independence; “No” will expose Him to the displeasure of the Roman authorities; no answer at all will make Him an object of suspicion to both parties. The answer actually given rescues Him from all these risks, and, for the rest, leaves the question where it found it. The tribute penny, with Cæsar’s image and superscription, showed that Cæsar was ruler in Palestine *de facto*, but it did not prove that he ruled *de jure*, and that was the question at issue. It was well that Jesus answered His malignant questioners evasively, for such men did not deserve an answer such as they wished. Yet the beauty of Christ’s reply is that, while it said nothing to them, it says much to us. It tells us that Cæsar has his place, that theocracy does not exclude secular government, that Messianic ideas and hopes do not necessarily mean political independence. Broadly viewed, it is another vindication of the human as against the falsely conceived divine; for while it assigns both to God and to Cæsar a distinct sphere, the emphasis is on “Cæsar.” The inmost leanings of all Pharisees and scribes was against the Roman yoke. Their attitude on this question was simply a particular application of the principle, the Divine interest all-absorbing, “No room for both God and Cæsar in this Holy Land!” “Nay,” said Jesus, “room for both, in this land and in the world; Divine Rule

not the foe of human rule ; a great reality, yet not needing jealously to assert its rights as against civil governments, able rather to assert itself within these, and through them." Wholesome, beneficent teaching ! For of all forms of misgovernment, the worst is a theocracy administered by professional religionists, which is what it always comes to. The reign of God sounds well ; but when it means the reign of Rabbis, scribes, zealots, priests, ecclesiastics, the despotism of the basest Cæsar that ever abused imperial power is to be preferred. This kills the body, that kills the soul.

A. B. BRUCE.

*A HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE  
TO THE GALATIANS.*

XIII. SPIRIT OF CHAPTERS III., IV.

THE historical questions connected with the second chapter are the most difficult and most keenly debated in the whole Epistle ; and it seems best to leave them aside for the moment, in order to examine them with more advantage after having discussed all the other chapters. We assume, then, at present, that in his autobiographical retrospect Paul has impressed upon his Galatian readers the direct divine origin of the message which he had brought to them. God had spoken to him, and he had delivered the message to them, as he had been commissioned to do. Some private communications had passed between himself and the older Apostles ; but these had been simply a declaration of his intentions and views, and there had been no communication made by them to him of any ideas which he should transmit to his converts.

Paul's aim now is to revivify among the Galatians the memory of their first condition, before any contradictory