

XI.

RELATION BETWEEN THE FLESH AND
SIN.—CONCLUSION.

WE have thus endeavoured to ascertain, and to vindicate in opposition to other views, the distinctive sense of *σάρξ* in Pauline usage, and have thereby completed the task which we proposed to ourselves in these Lectures. We disclaimed at the outset the intention of pursuing the subject in its theological bearings; but we stated that it was hardly possible to avoid incidental reference to the great issues bound up with it. So close, in particular, is the connection between the Apostle's conception of "the flesh" and his doctrine of "sin" that we cannot but briefly touch on it, simply in order to indicate the conclusions which our investigation directly or collaterally suggests as regards that momentous and much discussed question, and more especially with reference to certain views urged in the works that we have been discussing. These conclusions are chiefly negative, but not the less important in the light of the stress that has been

laid on the positive propositions to which they are opposed.

1. There is no just ground for the allegation that the Apostle identifies *σάρξ* with *ἁμαρτία*. The very expression *σάρξ ἁμαρτίας*, which brings the two terms into so close a relation, precludes their equivalence, for, if the term *σάρξ* had of itself necessarily implied the conception of sin, there would have been no need of, or meaning in, the explicit addition of *ἁμαρτίας*. The Apostle, who has at Rom. vii. 17, 18, 20 spoken so strongly of the power of indwelling sin, has at the same time distinguished it not only from the Ego, but also from the *σάρξ* in which it dwells. So far from the conceptions of sin and the flesh being identical, they are most explicitly separated in the exhortation of 2 Cor. vii. 1 : "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh (*μολυσμοῦ σαρκός*) and spirit." The flesh is not in itself defiling, although it has undergone defilement; and while it needs, it also admits of, cleansing. The Apostle's own statement, as regards his Christian life, at Gal. ii. 20 : "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," sufficiently shows that he does not regard the flesh as essentially and always associated with *ἁμαρτία*.

2. The Apostle does not identify *σάρξ* with the material body or outward bodily substance of man. We have seen that the attempts to apply this view of

the facts of Pauline usage utterly fail to explain them otherwise than by postulating an extension of the conception of matter coined for the occasion, which makes it embrace the whole man and thereby cease to be mere corporeal matter. The *σάρξ* with which the Apostle deals is the *σάρξ* of the living man, animated by the *ψυχή* as its principle of life—a fact which would, to the ordinary mind, seem enough to preclude the idea of mere materiality. And not only so, but it is distinctly used as co-ordinate, or practically synonymous, with *ἄνθρωπος*. Of course, where it stands expressly contrasted with other elements pertaining to man, such as the human *πνεῦμα* or the *νοῦς*, this contrast necessarily limits its comprehensiveness; but where it stands without any such restriction, or in contrast to the divine, it must be held to follow the precedent of the Old Testament *basar*, on which it was undoubtedly moulded, and of which Lüdemann himself affirms that “the *basar* is everywhere not a material unity, but embraces in an emphatic manner the nature of man mental and corporeal (*das geist-leibliche Menschenwesen*) with its internal distinctions.”¹

3. The Apostle does not identify matter, or the material side of man, with evil. He makes no reference to matter as such (*ἕλη*) at all, nor does he present anything at all resembling either the

¹ *Anthropologie des Apostels Paulus*, p. 28.

language or the conceptions of that philosophic dualism which meets us with so persistent and tedious an iteration in Philo. We may certainly apply to the forced attempts of some recent writers to discover traces of Philonian thought in St. Paul the remark of Lüdemann in regard to Philo finding his own ideas in the Old Testament: "Alexandrian Hellenism has imported its own dualism into the Old Testament when interpreting it (*hineingedcutet*), but the Old Testament itself withal has not said a word on the subject."² St. Paul preserves throughout the standpoint of Jewish monotheism. He recognises all created things as called into existence by God, as subsisting for Him, and as subservient to His purposes (Rom. xi. 36: "From Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things"; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iv. 6; Col. i. 16 f.); and he has explicitly declared that "every created thing (*πᾶν κτίσμα*) of God is good, and not to be rejected" (1 Tim. iv. 4). And, while it is evident that the view which regards matter as necessarily evil is inconsistent with the Apostle's recognition of the sovereign supremacy of God, it is also clear that it is logically incompatible with the recognition of any *real service* of God while the material organism remains. But the Apostle has no hesitation in exhorting his readers (Rom. xii. 1) "to present their bodies a living sacri-

² Anthropologie des Ap. Paulus, p. 27.

fice, holy, well-pleasing unto God," and in designating this as their "reasonable service" (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν).

4. St. Paul does not associate sin exclusively or predominantly with the body or with the sensuous nature of man, although he sees in these its instruments or manifestations. He summons his readers in the passage quoted above (2 Cor. vii. 1) "to cleanse themselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit," as though the spirit as well as the flesh might undergo defilement and stand in need of cleansing; and at 1 Cor. vii. 34 it is set forth as the aim of her who cares for the things of the Lord, that "she may be holy in body and spirit"; while at Rom. xii. 2 he posits as the essential foundation of the Christian life a transformation "by renewal of the mind," and at Eph. iv. 23 defines more precisely the sphere of that renewal as "the spirit (the motive governing power) of the mind." The ἐπιθυμίαι have their seat in the heart (Rom. i. 24).

The frequent and prominent mention of the body is due, not to its being regarded as the *source* of sin, but to its being the *seat* or scene of sin's *manifestation*, the organ in and through which it shows itself. The counsels of the heart, the resolves of the will in which sin has its origin, are for the present hidden (1 Cor. iv. 5: "The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will

make manifest the counsels of the heart"); but they find expression, and execution, in the *σῶμα* and its *μέλη*. This function of the *σῶμα* as the instrument of man's action is very apparent in such a passage as 2 Cor. v. 10: ἵνα κομίσηται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος, πρὸς ᾧ ἔπραξεν, εἴτε ἀγαθόν, εἴτε κακόν. It is in this way that sins come to be termed *πράξεις τοῦ σώματος*, as accomplished by its agency; and the body itself may even be spoken of as *σῶμα ἁμαρτίας*—the body that is subject to the rule of sin (Rom. vi. 6). Thus, too, we may account for the recurring mention of the *μέλη* as the organs by means of which what is in man becomes outwardly visible, and what is inwardly resolved on becomes carried into effect (Rom. vi. 12, 13: μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα ἀδικίας κ.τ.λ., vi. 19: παρεστήσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν δούλα κ.τ.λ.). The function of the *σῶμα* or *μέλη* is indicated as that of practical activity by the presence of such words as *πράσσειν*, *κατεργαζέσθαι*, *ἐνεργεῖν* (e.g., Rom. vii. 5: τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν); and, as is well remarked by Wendt, the statement in Rom. vii. 23 that the law of sin rules in the *μέλη* and wars against the law of the *νοῦς*, has its special significance in the contrast between the merely *theoretical* ineffective attitude of the *νοῦς* and the *practical* controlling influence of sin which knows how to carry its wishes into *execution*.

“It is,” says Weiss, “such expressions as these that have given a handle to the erroneous view that Paul conceives of sin as dwelling in the body and its members, while it is in these that the dominion of sin only comes to manifestation, because the *νοῦς*, in which lies the only reaction against this dominion of sin, belongs entirely to the inner hidden life of man, and on account of its powerlessness never determines the outer life of man in any visible way. Sin can make the *νοῦς* powerless, and thereby restrict it to the domain of the hidden inner life, while it positively controls the *σάρξ* and incites it to an action antagonistic to God, which becomes visible through the members of the body.”¹

5. While St. Paul undoubtedly represents the *σάρξ* as the seat of sin, thereby associating sin with man's creaturely nature or the creaturely side of that nature, and while he presents vividly its power in and over man, depicting especially its relation to the law as the occasion of developing it in Rom. vii., he has not there, or elsewhere, given any explanation of the psychological origin of sin. As Wendt remarks, his design was to set forth not the origin of sin *from* the *σάρξ*, but the power of sin *in* the *σάρξ*. He has nowhere pronounced the *σάρξ* in itself sinful; he has nowhere declared it even to be, as such, the *source* of sin, though we sometimes find

¹ Weiss, *Bibl. Theol. d. N. T.*, p. 252; comp. Wendt, p. 209f.

this proposition imputed to him ; and still less has he propounded any theory, such as his philosophic expositors would ascribe to him, as to the principle or ground-form of sin consisting either in bodily matter, or in that aggregate of feelings and impulses associated with the bodily organism which constitutes the sensuous side of man. We have shown that *σάρξ* is not resolvable into mere sensuousness any more than into mere matter : and that much of the Apostle's language is incompatible with any such restriction as is imposed on it by those who attribute to him an exclusive reference of sin to the sensuous nature, either as a philosophical principle or, as in the case of Schmidt, on the lower ground of an induction from experience of its practical operation in life.

The very fact that the Apostle more than once lays it down as the characteristic principle of the new life of the Christian, that he no longer lives to or for himself (Rom. xiv. 7 : " for none of us liveth to himself " ; 2 Cor. v. 15) rather warrants the inference that the root and principle of sin is to be found in man's thus *living to himself*—in the selfishness that converts his creaturely position into a self-asserting independence, and makes himself the sole object of his thought and care—a view which derives some confirmation from the circumstance that in 2 Thess. ii. 4 sin reaches its culmination in the arrogance of the " man of sin who opposeth

and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God."

6. But, while the Apostle has not explained the psychological origin of sin, he has indicated pretty distinctly its *historical* origin in Rom. v. 12 ff.; and we are not warranted by any canons of exegesis in *explaining* that passage *away* after the manner of Dr. Pfleiderer—who finds in it a suggestion of the speculative idea that “properly (*eigentlich*) not the individual first man, but man as such (*der Mensch an sich*) is the subject of the fall,” and recognises “the historical beginning as the mere form for the generality of a principle that has no beginning (*einer anfangslosen Prinzips*)”—even if we should “thereby ensure the essential material agreement of Rom. v. 12 f. with the mode of view of Rom. vii.” When St. Paul uses words that clearly affirm a *historical* beginning, we are bound to take him at his word, and have no right to impute to him anything else. It can only be regarded as an illustration of what Dr. Pfleiderer calls “the artifice of the idea (*List der Idee*),”¹

¹ Paulinismus, p. 91: “There is no other means of reconciling the faith still formally subsisting in the absolute truth of the letter with the material progress of the ideal conviction, than just that “artifice of the idea,” by means of which the religious spirit conceals from itself its new developments, until the fruit gaining strength is able to dispense with and throw off the protecting husk of the old.”

when, after frankly admitting the verdict of exegesis, and asking that its results should be recognised independently of each other, he conceives that he can settle the matter by first asserting a formal contradiction and then resolving it by an alleged "speculative idea" lurking beneath St. Paul's words, of which St. Paul was himself unconscious.

But exegesis not only declines to accept Dr. Pfleiderer's resolution of the difficulty which his assumed formal contradiction creates; it demurs to the suggestion that such a writer as St. Paul could have allowed himself to fall, within the compass more especially of one and the same Epistle, into any such contradiction, and it may reasonably maintain that such a result is a strong presumption of the error of the process by which it has been reached. There is not, in reality, any incompatibility between St. Paul's account in Rom. v. 12 of the *origin* of sin in the race, and his description in Rom. vii. of its *development* in the individual. The alleged variance arises only, when the passages are interpreted in the light of imported philosophical conceptions, such as that of objective *ἀμαρτία*, of which the Apostle probably knew nothing—certainly has said nothing.

7. St. Paul's doctrine of sin has its basis not in speculation, but in experience. He deals with the facts as they are given to him in man's life and

history.¹ The *σάρξ* is not necessarily in itself sinful, for the creature, as originally constituted by God, and adapted to the conditions of earthly existence, could not but be recognised by St. Paul, in accordance with the Biblical teaching, as "very good." But the *σάρξ*, as it has actually existed from the time of the introduction of sin in Adam's transgression, is recognised by the Apostle as tainted with sin, in accordance with the generalised experience represented in Gen. vi. 12, "All flesh hath corrupted its way upon the earth"; and the term, which in itself denoted the distinction of man from God, carries accordingly, in the Apostle's use, the connotation not merely of contrasted weakness, but of self-willed antagonism (Rom. viii. 7: "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God"). It is this broad basis of universal expe-

¹ Dr. Gifford, in his clear and concise excursus on "the Flesh," subjoined to the Introduction of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans ("Speaker's" Commentary), pp. 48-52, has called attention to the form of the expression in Rom. vii. 18: "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." "It is important to observe that St. Paul's judgment is the result of practical experience (*οἶδα*), not of any speculative analysis of the ideas of 'flesh' and 'sin.' He found as a fact sin dwelling in his flesh; we may add that he regarded this as a fact of universal experience (iii. 9-20); but we have no reason to suppose that he regarded sin as inseparable from the very essence of 'the flesh'; we are still far from the conclusion that in the Apostle's mind 'the flesh' is by its nature and from the beginning the principle of sin" (Pfleiderer, p. 62)."

rience that forms the explanation of the Pauline use of *σάρξ* in so close relation to sin, and of the strong expressions used to characterise it. The creature as subsisting in distinction from God has become practically equivalent to the creature opposing itself to God; and *σάρξ*, which marks creatureship, connotes also its invariable empirical accompaniment of *ἁμαρτία*.

Wendt has an interesting discussion¹ of the leading passages in which the Apostle seems to indicate a judgment as to the value or non-value of the *σάρξ*, classifying them according as they bear on the intellectual, moral, or religious value thereof, and according to the character—analytic or synthetic—of the judgment so expressed; and conceives himself to have established the distinction that, while the *σάρξ*, on account of its creaturely weakness, is incapable of knowing what is divine and of fulfilling the law, it only errs and sins (hypothetically), *when* it would know the divine and fulfil the divine will *with its own powers*. But, ingenious as his distinctions are, and ably as they are worked out, they are liable to the criticism of Weiss that such refinements are alien to the Apostle's habits of thought and alter the true point of view. And it seems sufficient to take up the ground occupied by the latter, when, in opposition to an objection of Schmidt that the ab-

¹ Occupying the latter portion of his book, p. 167-216.

sence of the article in such expressions as *κατὰ σάρκα περιπατεῖν, ἐν σαρκὶ εἶναι*, must be held to point to human nature generally rather than to human nature as receiving its qualitative definition from experience, he remarks that "St. Paul does not philosophise over *σάρξ* and *ἁμαρτία* in the abstract (*an sich*), but discusses the fact as it stands (*den Thatbestand*) of the dominion of sin within empiric humanity. Now within this sphere of fact there is only a *σάρξ* ruled and perverted by sin. St. Paul may therefore very well speak of the nature of the *σάρξ* generally, and yet be throughout thinking only of the *σάρξ* as it is constituted in empiric humanity."¹

8. To this category of *ἁμαρτία* as universally in experience predicable of the *σάρξ* there is one exception. Christ Jesus appeared *ἐν σαρκί*, and yet was sinless. The sinlessness of Christ, which indeed forms the necessary presupposition of all His work in condemning sin and redeeming men from it, is expressly affirmed by the Apostle in 2 Cor. v. 21: *τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν*, where the form of the negation *μὴ* undoubtedly points to a subjective judgment, but the judgment can only be exegetically that of the subject of the sentence, namely, God.² But, notwithstanding

¹ Bibl. Theol. d. N. T., p. 247, note.

² The peculiar interpretation put upon this passage by Holsten, in which he has hardly been followed by any one

this explicit statement, Holsten, Lüdemann, and Pfeiderer have strangely enough found evidence of Christ's having had a *σάρξ ἁμαρτίας* in a passage which has been generally taken by interpreters as implying, if not affirming, the very opposite, namely, Rom. viii. 3: "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Here it is asserted that the words *ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας* denote not a similarity to the flesh characterised as having *ἁμαρτία*, but such an exact copy or reproduction of it that the *σάρξ* which the Saviour had may be itself described as *σὰρξ ἁμαρτίας*.

This opinion which is maintained by its champions with great confidence not only in opposition to the great bulk of interpreters, but even in opposition to the adverse voice of such illustrious chiefs of their own school as Baur and Zeller and Hilgenfeld, rests except Hausrath—viz., that it refers to the pre-existent Christ, who, as *πνευματικός*, knew no *ἁμαρτία*, but was made *ἁμαρτία* by God, when at his incarnation he assumed with the *σάρξ* the objective sin-principle thereto belonging—has been conclusively refuted by Schmidt (*Paulinische Christologie*, p. 98 ff.) and by Pfeiderer, who pronounces it "erroneous, 1st, because the whole context speaks not of the incarnation, but only of the *death* of Christ; and, 2nd, because of the analogy with *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ*, under which, according to Pauline usage and to the connection (comp. especially verse 19: *μὴ λογιζόμενος . . . αὐτῶν*), there can only be understood imputed ideal righteousness, and therefore the *ἁμαρτία* of Christ can only be a merely imputed ideal one."

on two assumptions—1st, That *ὁμοίωμα* signifies, as Holsten puts it, “not a similarity which posits, but a likeness which cancels, distinction (*nie auf eine Ähnlichkeit geht, welche den unterschied setzt, sondern auf eine gleichheit, welche den unterschied aufhebt*)”; and, 2nd, That *σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας* must be taken together as one inseparable conception: sin-flesh, flesh inherently sinful. For neither assumption is there sufficient ground.

As regards the first position, our confidence in it is considerably shaken at the outset by the fact that hardly any two of the expositors who have examined the meaning of *ὁμοίωμα* are agreed in defining it, or in applying their definition. With Baur, Zeller, and Hilgenfeld, *ὁμοίωμα* means “that which is made similar (*Aehnlichgemachtes*)”—a sense most naturally suggested by the relation to *ὁμοιος*, and by the form of the verbal noun ending in *-μα*; but, while Zeller holds that the similarity ascribed to Christ consisted in His possession of a real human *σὰρξ*, which merely lacked *ἁμαρτία*, Hilgenfeld conceived it to consist in His having a *semblance* of *σὰρξ ἁμαρτίας* (in a Docetic sense). With others, the stress is laid on the notion of likeness (*Gleichheit*); but, while Holsten brings into prominence the element of form (*Gestalt*), and assigns to Christ a visible “sin-flesh-shape” altogether agreeing with that of men, Overbeck drops the very idea of *form* which

Holsten had treated as essential, and emphasises the abstract idea of *congruence*, so that the *ὁμοίωμα* of a thing is constantly that which is “essentially (*im Wesentlichen*) nothing else” than the thing itself, and Christ’s flesh was in his view essentially nothing else than human sin-flesh. Pfeiderer again prefers to fall back on Holsten’s element of form, and makes *ὁμοίωμα* “the sensible form, the visible *appearance*, so that Christ appeared in a form which was that of sin-flesh and consisted of sin-flesh, as in the case of other men.” And lastly, Lüdemann declares himself not satisfied with any of these views, especially finds fault with Pfeiderer for returning to Holsten’s view as regards the prominence of form, pronounces the latter to be utterly irrelevant in this case where the likeness spoken of has reference not to form but to *matter*, and propounds a solution of his own, which is to this effect: “Substantives ending in *-μα* denote the result of an action, and preserve throughout the mark of *origination by action*. ‘*Ὅμοίωμα* accordingly signifies ‘copy’ or ‘reproduction’ in the sense of that which is copied or reproduced after an original (*Nachbildung* in the passive sense *eines nachgebildeten*).” He claims for this definition the merit of bringing out the ‘tendency to similarity, to repetition of the original,’ and at the same time leaving open the question wherein the similarity consists. “What the Apostle here says is that God sent His Son in a

copy [*Nachbildung*] of the sin-flesh. If it is asked why he does not say merely *ἐν σαρκὶ ἀμαρτίας*, the answer is simple. In the sin-flesh of mankind, which through community of descent (*Geschlechtsgemeinschaft*) is a self-subsistent whole forming an unity (*einheitliches Ganze*) and as such belongs to the aggregate (*dem Complexe*) of the *χοῖκοί* alone, the pneumatic celestial man could not come to have (*bekommen*) any share at all without some further process (*ohne weiteres*). If he was to appear withal in a body of such matter, this matter had to become in a special way newly formed—as it were, mingled anew—for Him in particular after the subsisting original of sinful flesh. If this matter was really to be the same as that of mankind—and this was, as will soon be evident, unavoidably necessary—he had of necessity to be (*so musste er . . . sein*) a *ὁμοίωμα*, a copy, a repetition of the same.”¹

It is not at all necessary to enter on any detailed examination of the arguments—largely one-sided—by which these opinions are respectively supported, because the incongruous results arrived at serve to a

¹ *Anthropologie des Apostel Paulus*, pp. 116-121. Lüdemann has given in a note (p. 116 f.) an abstract of the leading views, from which we have partly derived the statement given above. The question was fully discussed by Overbeck, Zeller, Hilgenfeld, and Pfeleiderer, from their several points of view, in articles contributed to the *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* in 1869, 1870, and 1871.

great extent to neutralise or refute each other. A considerable amount of research and a far greater amount of ingenuity and refining have been expended on the discussion of St. Paul's use of *ὁμοίωμα* in the other passages where it occurs, and of its use in classical Greek and in the LXX. (as *e.g.* at Ps. cvi. 20: *καὶ ἠλλάξαντο τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν ἐν ὁμοιώματι μόσχου ἔσθοντος χόρτον*, where, if we should apply the principles contended for by some of the writers we have named, we should have to maintain that the *ὁμοίωμα* reproduced the living calf and the eating of grass); but rarely have such efforts been made with so entire and so obvious a missing of the mark.

Let it be granted that in most cases *ὁμοίωμα* approaches more to our conception of "likeness" than to that of mere "similarity"—although, as it seems to us, Wendt and Cremer have too readily conceded the validity of the position contended for in this respect, and it is, in point of fact, absurd to attempt the laying down of a rigid rule as regards a conception so varying, if we may so speak, in the *percentage* of its strict application according to the objects of which it is predicated—the plainest principles of exegesis, coincident with the dictates of common sense, require us to assume in each instance that the term is chosen because of its

special fitness to convey the meaning, or shade of meaning, that the writer would express. We are bound to suppose in the case before us that, when St. Paul used the peculiar phrase *ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας*, he had a reason, and a sufficient reason, for using it and each part of it. If he had wished merely to say—what some expositors practically assert to be all that he meant—that Christ was sent “in the flesh,” or “in sin-flesh,” he would most naturally have expressed that meaning by *ἐν σαρκί* or *ἐν σαρκὶ ἁμαρτίας*. But he has used the more complex expression, and has used it presumably to convey an idea different from what is conveyed by either of the simpler forms.

Now, to determine what is the real sense of *ὁμοίωμα*, we must bear in mind not only—what is so strongly insisted on—that it denotes something more than mere resemblance (not to say, semblance), but also—what is too often forgotten—that it denotes something falling short of, or different from, identity. It is this latter side or aspect of the word that Holsten and his supporters practically ignore. To affirm “likeness” is at once *to assert* ‘similarity’ and *to deny* ‘sameness’. The proposition laid down and so strenuously maintained by Holsten—that the conception of “likeness” in *ὁμοίωμα* cancels distinction—is, I venture to say, sheer absurdity, and would, if true, utterly destroy the *raison d’être* of the

word, which must, in the very nature of the case, imply a distinction, such at least as to preclude its being interchanged with terms more strictly expressive of parity, equality, or identity.

When Pfeleiderer treats it as "beyond doubt that, if the expression *ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκός* merely occurred, no one would hesitate to translate it simply : in flesh-shape = in a shape, form of appearance, which was that of all human flesh and itself consisted of flesh," we should certainly hesitate to accept his statement as a fair or full account of our procedure in such a case. We should not at once assume that *ὁμοίωμα σαρκός* meant a shape which consisted of flesh any more than we should assume that *ὁμοίωμα μόσχου* means a shape that consisted of and was calf ; for, if "in flesh-shape" meant merely "in a shape of flesh, which was flesh," we should certainly wonder why the writer had not at once used "in flesh." We should on the contrary naturally credit the writer with purpose and with judgment in the use of his words, and we should set ourselves to ask why he had chosen the phrase "in a shape made like to flesh," or, in other words, to inquire not merely wherein lay the *resemblance*, but also wherein lay the *difference*—logically inseparable from the form of the expression—between the *σάρξ* and its *ὁμοίωμα*.

Moreover, if we were disposed to look very

minutely into Lüdemann's application of his definition—which seems to us in itself to come closest to the original import of the word—we might venture to ask, whether a copy formed after an original can, without risk of misunderstanding, be termed a *repetition* of it? whether, on his own showing, the matter which had to be newly made or newly mingled did not by that very new making differentiate itself from what previously existed?—and whether, if it was inevitably necessary (though the necessity exists only for Dr. Lüdemann's theory) that the matter should be really the same as that of *sinful* flesh, the Apostle might not have been expected to use some word other than the one which—whatever it may mean—certainly does not quite denote *sameness*? We cannot—if we have regard to the ordinary principles of exegesis—but proceed on the assumption that the Apostle chose his expression because it best expressed his thought; and we cannot do justice to the import of the word *ὁμοίωμα* by looking merely at one, even if it be the main, aspect of it, and ignoring its element of differentiation—its implication of a difference that precludes identity.

When we keep these points in view, the only natural and reasonable explanation is seen to be that which has commended itself to the great majority of exēgetes, namely, that Christ appeared in a body which was like that of other men in so far as it consisted

of flesh, and was unlike in so far as the flesh was not "flesh of sin." To this Lüdemann objects that it is an arbitrary course and tantamount to a *petitio principii*, thus to place the element of likeness on the side of the *σάρξ*, and the element of unlikeness on the side of the *ἁμαρτία*. We reply that, apart from all reference to the analogy of the Pauline doctrine elsewhere, and apart from the explicit assertion in 2 Cor. v. 21, the immediate context in the verse before us practically necessitates this reading of the Apostle's meaning, for it explicitly states that Christ *had* the *σάρξ* as the element or sphere wherein the condemnation of sin took place, and it implies that He *had not* personally the *ἁμαρτία*, seeing that He was sent to achieve, and did achieve, what was impossible otherwise for man in consequence of the weakness of the flesh which was the seat of *ἁμαρτία*—namely, its condemnation. How could one, who Himself had *ἁμαρτία*, condemn it?

And this brings us to the other assumed ground for the interpretation given by Holsten and Pfeiderer—namely, that *σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας* must be taken as one conception, and *ἁμαρτία* must be held inseparable from the *σάρξ*. We have already pointed out that the very fact of the addition of *ἁμαρτίας* precludes the conception of sin being essentially part and parcel of the flesh. It may be predicated of it; empirically it may be constantly associated with it;

but it is not *necessarily involved* in it; and the very circumstance that St. Paul has in this same verse so markedly dissociated the two is itself a cogent argument against the alleged necessary connection between them.

But Holsten, who contends that this passage really attributes to Christ a 'sin-flesh'—that is, a bodily substance which had in it the objective principle of sin, although in his case it did not pass into *παράβασις*, into subjective consciousness of actual sin, in consequence of its energy being kept in check by the divine *πνεῦμα* of the pre-existent Christ—has adduced *four* grounds for his position. One of these we have already disposed of—namely, the peculiar exegesis by which he makes St. Paul assert *ἁμαρτία* as an attribute of Christ in the passage where he himself describes Christ as *μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν*, 2 Cor. v. 21—a position so obviously untenable, that Pfeiderer has expressly disclaimed it.¹ Another—namely, that St. Paul's whole anthropology knows no flesh that is not a 'sin-flesh'—is a mere *petitio principii*, the question being precisely whether the case of Christ here mentioned is not a distinct evidence to the contrary.

A third ground is put by him in the form of a question: How could God have condemned to death

¹ See above, p. 321, note.

the *ἁμαρτία ἐν τῇ σαρκί* on the cross of Christ, if the *σάρξ* of Christ had not been a *σὰρξ ἁμαρτίας*? But—to say nothing of the fact that the words *ἐν τῇ σαρκί*, if thus bound up with *ἁμαρτία*, would seem a somewhat meaningless repetition of the thought already, according to Holsten's view, covered by *σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας*—it has been well pointed out by Wendt that we must on purely grammatical grounds set aside Holsten's construction. "If St. Paul had wished," says Wendt, "to express at the close of the verse the thought that God has condemned sin which had its seat in the flesh, he must have distinctly written: *κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τὴν ἐν τῇ σαρκί* (comp., e.g., Gal. iv. 14, *τὸν πειρασμὸν τὸν ἐν τῇ σαρκί*). Here, where he has not so written, we are grammatically required to connect the more precise definition *ἐν τῇ σαρκί*, not with the substantive *ἁμαρτίαν*, but with the verb *κατέκρινεν*, so that it designates the sphere or arena where the condemnation was accomplished (comp., e.g., Rom. v. 21, *ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ*)."

The last ground on which Holsten holds that Christ had 'sin-flesh,' and the one on which, in common with Pfeiderer, he lays the greatest stress, is that the current interpretation, which takes the *σάρξ* of Christ to have been without *ἁμαρτία*, goes in the face of the whole course of thought (*der ganzen Ausführung*) from chapter vi. to chapter viii. 3 (Holsten

has "*bis* 7. 3," but he evidently means viii. 3), which has laboured to prove that, because man is in bondage to *ἀμαρτία* only through his flesh, the cross of Christ, as the death of this very *σὰρξ ἀμαρτίας* of man, has delivered him from the bondage of sin.¹ Pfleiderer thus expresses the same idea: "We must remember that, according to the whole context of the passage, and generally of the section Rom. vi.-viii. the existence of *ἀμαρτία* in the *σὰρξ* of Christ is so much a logical postulate that with the denial of it the whole argument of the section would be destroyed, and the peculiar doctrine of St. Paul as to the cancelling of the power of sin in the flesh by Christ's death would be deprived of its basis."²

These are strong words, and all the more so that the "peculiar doctrine" here ascribed to St. Paul has only been discovered to be his of late years, and that the great majority of expositors have not at all experienced the need of any such key as is now pronounced indispensable to the value or validity of the Apostle's argument. It might be sufficient to say in reply, 1st, that St. Paul has nowhere assumed or proved that man is in bondage to *ἀμαρτία* only through the *σὰρξ*, in the sense in which these terms are understood by the discoverers—or inventors—of

¹ Holsten, *Zum Evang. des Paulus und des Petrus*, p. 436 f.

² Pfleiderer, *Paulinismus*, p. 154.

this key to his meaning; and, 2nd, that the doctrine of objective *ἁμαρτία* in their sense of it, so far from being indispensable to the grasping of his argument, is not even compatible with his language at the two points on which it has been specially sought to engraft it.¹

But Wendt has so pointedly called in question the bearing and significance of this boasted theory, even from the point of view of its supporters, that we cannot but quote his words. "Would it not really be a thoroughly clear and luminous thought of the Apostle, if he were thus to discern in the simple objective process (*Vorgänge*) of the destruction of the *σάρξ* of Christ along with the objective *ἁμαρτία* therein contained the cardinal act (*den principiellen Akt*), whereby the longed-for deliverance from the sin-dominion of the *σάρξ* should be brought about? That process would certainly be simple enough—only it appears to me to be *quite too* simple really to meet the object aimed at in accordance with St. Paul's apprehension of it. In other words, we cannot well see—and it is nowhere clearly expressed even by the theologians who would discern this meaning in St. Paul's words—how it is held to be possible for that objective process in the death of Christ to bring about the very object, with which the Apostle in his discussion

¹ See above pp. 83-86.

was solely concerned. Granting in the first instance that the question really related to the conquest and destruction of objective sin, the Apostle would have needed to specify—because it could not otherwise be at all discerned—*how* [literally, *in how far*] the death of Christ could have a cardinal value for this destruction. The putting to death of the *σάρξ* of Christ is withal not an unique process, in which an extraordinary and hitherto unheard-of blow against the *σάρξ* and sin in the *σάρξ* would have been struck, but it is merely an individual instance of a process quite general and regular in its occurrence. With the same warrant any other case of the destruction of a *σάρξ* in death might be pointed to, and a judgment of condemnation over objective sin in the *σάρξ* be discerned in it; with much greater warrant would the general fact of the death of the *σάρξ* be urged as a cardinal judgment of God over sin in the *σάρξ*. Indeed, if the question were as to the higher or lower value which the individual case of death has as evidence of the cardinal destruction of objective sin, we should be inclined *a priori* to ascribe to the death of Christ in this respect even a specially low, if not the lowest, value. For, if in Christ's case the objective sin was and remained as harmless and ineffectual as it can at all be conceived to be, seeing that it never became subjective and actual transgression, we should conjecture its destruction to

be—alike as regards difficulty and relative value— inferior to the destruction of objective sin in the *σάρξ* of other men, in whom it had attained to vigorous manifestation and exercise.

If we view the matter apart from reality, there are only two possibilities conceivable, in which the putting to death the *σάρξ* of Christ and the *ἁμαρτία* in this *σάρξ* would have had a cardinal value. The first possibility would be in the event that no destruction of the *σάρξ* had taken place before Christ, and that the death of Christ had been the cardinal commencement of this destruction, which would thenceforth repeat itself in every case of death as a renewed conquest of objective sin in the *σάρξ*. The second possibility would be in the event that the destruction of the *ἁμαρτία* and the *σάρξ* of Christ had really been an ultimate valid destruction of the *σάρξ* or at least of sin in the *σάρξ*, and that not only in reference to the *σάρξ* of Christ, but in reference to the *σάρξ* generally, so that subsequently to this cardinal destruction there would have been no more objective sin. Only these two possibilities are conceivable, and neither of the two has, according to the Apostle's clearly expressed view, really occurred.

But the difficulties hitherto encountered are considerably increased, when we consider that in the whole connection of the Pauline discussion, in which

our passage is embraced, there is in fact no question at all about the cancelling of that alleged objective sin. Assuming even that St. Paul knew such an objective sin—a question to be considered apart—the discussion in the connection before us at any rate concerns *not* the point that this sin shall be broken in itself or in its objective subsistence, *but rather* the point that it shall be destroyed in its control of the subjective will, in its actual energy. The *felt need* of redemption (*Erlösungsbedürfniss*) which the Apostle describes in chapter vii., has reference merely to deliverance from this power of *subjective* sin, and the *achieved result* of redemption (*Erlösungserfolg*) which the Apostle describes in chapter viii. likewise concerns merely deliverance from this *subjective* power of sin *notwithstanding* the continued subsistence of the $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$, in which the objective sin would be inclosed. The destruction of objective sin in the $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ of Christ would therefore neither have met that need, nor have been able to explain the result achieved. If it was well nigh impossible to see how the destruction of objective sin in the death of Christ could have the significance of a cardinal defeat of objective sin generally, it is even far less clear how that destruction can have the value of a cardinal victory over subjective sin. The process accomplished in the death of Christ always remains completely apart from the process to be accomplished in

the individual man; a rational reason why the former should have an influence on the latter, can hardly be conceived. At most there prevails an outward analogy in form between the two processes: but it would prevail just as exactly, if instead of the putting to death of the $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ of Christ there were named the putting to death of any other $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ whatever.

Pfleiderer has become aware of the great incongruity (*Incongruenz*) which we should have thus to assume in the connection of Pauline thought. He expresses himself at the close of his discussion of our passage as follows (p. 118): 'On the likeness of the $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ condemned in Christ's body to ours rests the very conception that that death has been immediately in itself the destruction of the sin-principle for men collectively—no doubt a difficult conception withal, inasmuch at any rate as the destruction of the flesh in the case of Christ has quite a different sense than it has in the case of Christians; in the former it is the flesh as the natural substance of the body, in the latter it is the flesh as the moral principle of sin—consequently the same subject, doubtless, on both sides, but according to two wholly different points of view.' Pfleiderer finds the solution of this difficulty in the Apostle's 'immediate mysticism of faith' (*unmittelbaren Glaubensmystik*). But if it is allowable to speak of a mysticism of St. Paul, we are certainly far more warranted in speaking of his

dialectic; and we must be very careful lest under cover of that word of many meanings 'mysticism,' we impute to the Apostle lines of thought which would run directly counter to all the acuteness—elsewhere so well attested—of his dialectic.

It would thus appear that this lately found key to the Apostle's argument ends, by the confession of Dr. Pfleiderer himself, in placing that argument on a footing of undoubted obscurity and of very dubious relevancy or cogency, in which Dr. Baur can only see one of his 'unsolved antinomies,'¹ and which Dr. Pfleiderer can resolve into nothing better than mysticism leaving all argument far behind it! The key is declared to be indispensable to the right apprehension of the Apostle's meaning—"to deny this assumption," says Dr. Pfleiderer, "is to cut the sinew (*Nerv*) of the argument"—but the meaning that results from its application is declared practically to be no meaning at all!—a *reductio ad absurdum*, which is of itself sufficient to dispose, not certainly of the validity of the Apostle's argument, but of the value of the alleged key to it.

If it should be asked why St. Paul has added the word *ἀμαρτίας* to *σαρκός*, and has not contented himself with the simple *ἐν σαρκί*, or *ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκός*, we may fairly reply, with Weiss, that "the express bringing out of that condition of the em-

¹ Vorlesungen über Neutest. Theologie, p. 191.

piric *σάρξ* could not be dispensed with in a connection, where the point under discussion was the reference of the mission of Jesus to the sin that ruled there, in so far as it could only be conquered in the sphere of its previous sway," Or we may quote the fuller expression of the same idea in the words of Wendt: "The *σάρξ* is designated *σάρξ ἁμαρτίας*, in order to indicate, not *wherein*, but *wherefore* Christ became quite like the *σάρξ*. The fact that Christ was fully creature has, for St. Paul and his discussion, an interest, only in so far as the creature — according to his previous discussion of the subject—is regularly sinful and needs a redemption from the condemnation associated with sin. What is indicated by the simple genitive *ἁμαρτίας* is yet more definitely brought out by the express addition *καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας*. We may reproduce the thought of St. Paul approximately by paraphrasing his words thus: 'God sent His Son so, that he in his nature fully answered to the conception of the creature, which, as experience shows, is for the most part sinful and on account of this very sin formed the object of Christ's manifestation as creature. And the bearing of Christ's creaturely manifestation on this sin is specified by the Apostle in the last words of the verse, where he says that God through the mission of His Son had pronounced a judgment

¹ Bibl. Theol. d. N. T., p. 293, note.

of condemnation within the creature itself over sin. This thought becomes intelligible only on the presupposition that Christ as *σάρξ*, as creature, was quite free from sin. If, forsooth, Christ was fully *σάρξ* and, *notwithstanding*, the sinless Son of God, He was Himself precisely as *σάρξ* a judgment pronounced by God over sin, to the effect that sin does *not* belong to the conception of the *σάρξ*, that the creature does not, as such, stand in moral dualism overagainst God, but rather that, as in Christ, so also in the community associated with Him *notwithstanding of all creatureliness* a fulfilment of the divine will has become possible (verse 4)."

The inquiry which we have now brought to a close has, we trust, served to show that, while the treatises by recent German scholars of which we spoke in the outset are unquestionably marked by great acuteness and subtlety, they present a somewhat motley combination of exegesis, criticism, and speculation, dubious in methods and incongruous in results; that the leading idea common to them of St. Paul's having partially drawn his thoughts or language from Greek philosophy—apart from its threefold improbability, in view of the readers to whom he addressed himself, in the light of his own pre-eminently Jewish nationality and culture, and in the face of his special

disclaimers of dependence on, or alliance with, the wisdom of the world—has no foundation in the facts of the case; and that, on the contrary, the Apostle's language rests throughout on the precedent of Old Testament usage and finds therein at once the warrant for its employment, and the key to the variety of its shades of meaning.

We have seen that there is no adequate exegetical ground for the distinctive positions which these writers have laid down as to *σάρξ* carrying everywhere a fundamental reference to the matter of the earthly body or implying a necessary element of sin, and as to *πνεῦμα* involving the conception of substance, any more than for the special distinctions drawn by them between *σάρξ* and *σῶμα*, or—more or less in common with certain Biblical psychologists—between *πνεῦμα* and *ψυχή*. We have traced, on the other hand, as regards *πνεῦμα*, its origin from, and affinity to, the Hebrew *ruach*, its paramount place in the Pauline system as the divine power initiating and sustaining the Christian life, and its connotation of a religious aspect and interest even when applied as a designation for the mind of man; while we have found the leading senses of the Old Testament *basar* reproduced in the case of *σάρξ*, and the significance of the latter term—in its most characteristic Pauline use of contrast to *πνεῦμα*—to lie not in the conception of material substance, nor in that of man's

lower sensuous nature, but in the contradistinction of the creaturely nature of man—or creaturely side of his nature—to the new life wrought by the power of the divine Spirit in Christ.

And, if we have been in any measure successful in establishing these conclusions, it would seem that in this field at least theology may well dispense with such gratuitous hypotheses and fanciful refinements as those which we have passed in review; that it may with advantage fall back on the principle that “sacred Scripture is its own best interpreter”; and that it may find in the general results of a process conducted in accordance with the methods and canons of a sound exegesis a fresh confirmation of the well known judgment of Winer, that “the controversies among interpreters have usually led back to the admission that the old Protestant views of the meaning of Scripture are correct.”