

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS OR PAULINISM
POLEMICALLY STATED.

The term "Paulinism" is one which has obtained much favour in Germany and France and the British Isles, as a convenient word to denote the type of doctrine for the establishing and proclaiming of which the great apostle gave all the strength he had from the time of his conversion to the day of his death. There are objections to its use, the most serious of which is that it might tend to foster the idea that Paul alone was the author of this doctrine, or that he had a special monopoly of it. An impression such as this would be very unfortunate, as it would lead ultimately to the extreme "Tendency-Theory" of the Tübingen school—a theory, the fallacy of which, in its fully developed form, is more and more being recognized. But if we guard ourselves against this error, the term has obvious advantages to recommend it, for it shoots through a system of doctrine all the romance which is added to it by the devotion of a man possessed of great heroism and sincerity combined with remarkable mental balance.

The key to this system is the conception of *sin* and *grace* which the ardent Jewish scholar gained in his intense struggles after righteousness—for that was his consuming passion. These new conceptions, which came to him with his spiritual experience on the way to Damascus, became the starting point for an entire reconstruction of his system of theological thought; for he now proceeded with wonderful care to apply to all spheres of his mental life the new principles of thought which he had faith to believe were able to bear all the strain that could be put upon them. He spent many years in quiet meditation testing and trying his new system under the Holy Spirit's influence until he had mastered not only its general principles but also its details. His own sad experiences with law in the past, would make him all the more clear in his view of grace, so that when the time arrived for him to step out as a public champion of this type of Christian Theology, he was a soldier that needed not to be ashamed. Step by step he was drawn onward until he became the most conspicuous figure in the early churches. His preach-