

at times culpably defective, nor are the exigencies of space sufficient to excuse such shortcomings. Probably he himself would admit that he works upon the principle of cutting out everything that is miraculous, merely to clear the ground in a preliminary way, and what sort of a ruin the Gospel story becomes when such a maxim is rigidly applied to it, every one can discover for himself. Even St. Paul's rapid summary of the appearances of the Risen Christ, which few have had the temerity to assail, has met with the usual fate of statements which do not fall in with preconceived opinions, the greater part of it being audaciously dismissed as spurious. There is a typical footnote on one page which tells us that no one can possibly regard

the questions of Thomas and Philip in Jn 14 as traces of historical reminiscence. Little wonder that when Soltau came to sum up the results of his investigation he found himself advising his readers to abandon, as a secondary and uncritical excrescence upon historical reality, the idea of a Saviour who has come down from heaven and gone to heaven again (p. 136). Let us hope that calmly and surely the Church will choose, and is choosing, between the immovable certainties of faith—which are also the demonstrated verities of history—and all such unreasonable aberrations of subjective caprice.

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St. Paul the Roman.

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WE have seen the greatness of Paul as it is shown in his dealing with the Hebrew and the Greek life of his day—how he changed both of these, and made them live again in forms that conserved their best elements and set them free to do their work in the world. Subtle elements they were in both cases. For the Hebrew he gave a new meaning to the Race, the Law, and to the Tragedy of the Cross. For the Greek he found for them what their poets and philosophers had sought—the true Appreciation, the true Liberty, the true Conception of Flesh, the true Ideal Life. In both nations these ideals were in Paul's time but words; he made them powers—*real things*. Both nations were dying. He made them live in the spirit for ever.

The case of Rome was very different. She was not a dead but a living power in his time. Her ideals were not subtle, but plain and common-sense. Her empire was at its strongest. Her legions had mastered the world. It was only historians of wise and penetrating insight who saw the inevitable decay and downfall which the future held for the empire. They saw it, and painted dark pictures of the worst side of Roman life. But they had no remedy. Bitterness and angry vexation were all they had to give.

Paul also knew that seamy side of Rome. In

the first chapter of his Roman Epistle he describes it in dreadful plainness. But he saw too the magnificent greatness, the practical effectiveness, the still available possibilities of the empire. He was large enough in mind and imagination to grasp this situation for Christ, to claim it in Christ's name, and so to save it.

Rome was great in common sense and practical genius. 'Rome was so successful, because she almost always yielded to the logic of facts.' She conquered the world; but she allowed the Greek language, not the Latin, to be its speech. She allowed the conquered nations to retain their nationality, the towns their municipal governments, the people their religions. And the empire that cast its shadow over every land and sea, had for its characteristic notes the Roman dignity and pride—that *gravitas* which was the Roman quality. It had the Roman law and the Roman sense of justice. It had the Roman strength and belief in strength, the Roman endurance and courage and obedience and efficiency.

Now in all this there was a very great deal which must have appealed to Paul, who was at heart far more Roman than has often been observed. A recent writer tells us that 'though Paul was excellent as a man in the Bible, he would hardly have done in real life.' But the fact is just that

he *did* do in real life ; that he was so pre-eminently a practical man ; that he was so closely in touch with everything that in his day was living and effective. Had there been newspapers then, Paul would have read them to purpose. He was the very last man in the world to imagine that 'intellectual darkness was the guarantee of spiritual light,' or that because a man was not a Christian, he must therefore be a fool.

Such a man could not but be in closest touch with Rome. We find traces of this continually in his writings—often surprisingly. For instance, the Roman law impresses him, and that great forensic system of theology which has been for so many centuries the very centre and backbone of Christian belief, owes something to this fact. Again, in his doctrine of adoption, he is using, changing, and wonderfully enriching a Roman practice of investing persons formerly not sons with the filial status.

Thus Paul and the Roman spirit understood each other well. Everyone must have noted how confidently and with what gusto he appealed unto Cæsar. Every student of his life must have felt how differently he fared under Roman judges from his treatment by either Jews or Asiatics. Gallio would have nothing to do with the Jewish persecution of him, Lysias saved his life, Festus and even Felix protected him in safety.

Professor Ramsay, to whose work this article is deeply indebted, takes a most interesting view of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, which brings out this point. It was, he says, a book written to prove that Christianity was legal in Roman law. He thinks that it is an unfinished book, and that Luke contemplated writing a third book giving an account of the trial and acquittal of Paul. Of the book as it stands he says: 'He was engaged in composing this book under Domitian, a period of persecution, when Christians had come to be treated as outlaws or brigands, and the mere confession of the name was recognized as a capital offence. The book was not an apology for Christianity ; it was an appeal to the truth of history against the immoral and ruinous policy of the reigning emperor ; a temperate and solemn record, by one who had played a great part in them, of the real facts regarding the formation of the Church, its steady and unswerving loyalty in the past, its firm resolve to accept the facts of Imperial Government,

its friendly reception by many Romans, and its triumphant vindication in the first great trial at Rome. It was the work of one who had been trained by Paul to look forward to Christianity becoming the religion of the empire and of the world, who regarded Christianity as destined not to destroy but to save the empire.' Thus there runs through the whole book a very artful and very convincing strain of argument. The Romans find everywhere their law and their sense of justice leading them to befriend and protect Christianity, which is thus quietly identified with the honour of the Roman Empire. And this leads us to that new view of Paul's greatness which now we find. The greatness of St. John the mystic went into hatred—a historic and undying hatred of the harlot city. The greatness of St. Paul, the man of affairs, went into a tremendous scheme for utilizing the Roman Empire for Christ's purposes. 'He was beyond all doubt one of those great creative geniuses whose policy marks out the lines on which history is to move for generations and even for centuries afterwards.'

Let us now consider three great illustrations of this fact, viz. : Paul's use of the Roman Roads, the Roman Citizenship, and the Roman Imperialism.

1. *The Roman Roads.*—As the Roman wars brought the armies, and after victory the colonists, farther and farther across the world, it became necessary to establish lines of communication with the most distant places. The Romans never did this sort of thing by halves, and the roads they built remain to this day the wonder of succeeding generations. Radiating from Rome as a centre, these grand military roads stretched like a huge spider web to the ends of the earth ; linking towns and villages with each other, uniting whole regions into consolidated states, and all leading eventually into one or other of those great Italian highways like the Via Appia and the Via Latina, which at last passed under the arch of the city gate.

Looking back to the first century, as the student's eye falls on that network of highways, it wanders until on one of them it discovers the solitary figure of this man Paul, staff in hand, and with no very large scrip to carry his belongings. That figure walking on the Roman road is one of the most significant in all history.

The Roman policy in the main was to allow religions to propagate themselves without interfer-

ence. In the city itself men from all corners of the earth might worship their own gods. In the provinces they might worship what they pleased. It would seem that it was Gallio of Corinth whose action determined finally Paul's grand line of conduct. Gallio, whose 'caring for none of these things' has been much misunderstood, really showed Paul that Rome was not prepared to check an enterprise he had long been maturing. This was no less than the enterprise of making Christianity the religion of the civilized world. That this was in his mind we gather definitely from a trivial looking reference in the Epistle to the Romans, where he says he intends to go on from Rome to Spain. Spain was the most Romanized country, the chief seat of Roman civilization, in the West, and this plan is full of significance.

Thus when we speak of Paul as the great founder of foreign missions,—as the apostle of the Gentiles,—we must not think simply of a preacher and organizer of individual churches in many different heathen places. We mean rather that here is one grand organization which one statesmanlike mind found ready to his hand and deliberately used. The Roman roads had made the world one, connecting the various centres of Roman government throughout the provinces. Paul, like Wesley, 'regarded the world as his parish.' But it was a world already organized for him. He did not go to savage heathendom, as if any one place were as suitable as any other for the propagation of the gospel. He chose the ganglia of the nerves, the central points of the roads, the chief Roman centres, such as Puteoli, Corinth, Ephesus, Antioch. At Rome itself he established a church, with the distinct purpose of making that the headquarters, the natural base of operations, for a missionary campaign through Western Europe. Elsewhere he chose the commercial, military, and intellectual centres in which to establish the gospel.

What fascinating work it must have been! how full of excitement and adventure! As we see that solitary figure on the Roman road, quickening his pace as he comes near some new centre, we can feel the more excited beating of the pulse and see the kindling eye. He is off to stand, to speak, to take what comes, ever in new towns. It is his lifework. Yet it never can have grown dull upon him; and to the end, driven onward by his great plan, he feels on each occasion the excitement of

watching and speculating as to the result of each new attempt and venture.

A little thought reveals to us at once how original and how Titanic this plan of his was. Who were they who trod these roads then? Soldiers out from the capital, merchants, marketing countryfolk, and all the traffic, old and new, that flows on century after century. But the most significant thing of Paul's time was the *inflow* from the provinces to Rome. 'All movements of thought throughout the empire acted with marvellous rapidity on Rome, the heart of the vast and complicated organism.' . . . 'The Imperial policy fostered intercommunication and unity to the utmost; and it is not too much to say that travelling was more highly developed, and the dividing power of distance was weaker, under the empire than at any time before or since until we come down to the present century.' This being so, we see a stream of evil travellers invading Rome continually. Impostures, superstitions, unnatural and shameful luxuries of vice,—every imaginable degradation and corruption that could be found anywhere in the world,—flowed steadily Rome-wards to find a market there; until Sallust speaks of the city as the cesspool of the world.

The old Roman party of the time, conservative and staunch, dreaded this evil inflow. They saw how it was ruining Roman thought and manners. They opposed it with all their strength. But they were powerless to check it. Rome's very greatness, her brilliance and attractiveness, had become her danger. Her very highways—the chief monuments of her strength and robustness—were becoming the means of her weakening and decay.

It was this that Paul rose up to check, doing what the emperors, the historians, and the philosophers of Rome confessed they could not do. Planting Christianity at the knots, or crossing-places of the roads, he set *its* stream also flowing Romewards. From all directions the gospel of Christ flowed into the city, along with so many baser things. And it was largely on account of this that Rome attained the pre-eminence she reached as the centre of Christendom in these early days. Surely it was a statesmanlike way of doing foreign mission work.

2. *The Roman Citizenship.*—Roman history has for its distinction this, that in it we have the record, not of one country governing other countries, but of a single city making herself mistress of the

world. It is interesting to remember how much the single city counts for in the New Testament. St. John and St. Paul are responsible for this. But John hated Rome. His city was Jerusalem, and the whole magnificence of his inspired imagination is spent in reconstructing that desolated capital into the New Jerusalem, with its sunless light, its worship without a temple, its jewel gates and golden streets, its river and trees of life. It is not of the earth, but descends from heaven—at least not of the *present* earth, for it may be a forecast of the better days of the future here as well as of the heavenly city.

Paul also was a man of the city, but his city was Rome. He had nothing to say of her streets or gates or temples. It was her citizenship that fascinated him. And he did for that idea what John did for his Jerusalem—glorified and spiritualized it, and set it free to conquer the imagination and to draw the desires of the world.

In the case of a city which is mistress of the world, municipal ideas and privileges become national and indeed universal ones. With us the 'freedom of the city' is a small affair; with Rome, it was the greatest affair of all. Just as the Greeks divided the world into Greeks and barbarians, so the Romans divided it into citizens and strangers. Besides other rights, citizenship conferred these: that the citizen could not be scourged; that he could not (except in extremest circumstances) be arrested; and that he had the right of appeal from all minor courts to Cæsar himself.

At first the citizenship of Rome was confined to inhabitants of the city. In later days, Caracalla extended it to inhabitants of the provinces. Paul lived in the middle time, when Julius Cæsar had widened it, not to the provinces, but to the whole Italian peninsula. Thus in Paul's time a citizen meant either a native of Italy or a stranger who had received the privilege either by buying it at an enormous price, or as a reward for some distinguished service. It was conveyed in a diploma, to forge which was a crime punishable by death. The possession of that diploma stamped a family as one of distinction, and at least of moderate wealth. It superseded all other honours, and placed its possessor among the aristocracy of any provincial town.

To this latter class—the class of strangers who had in some way acquired the privilege—it would seem that the family of Paul belonged; though we

know nothing of the circumstances under which Paul's father had received the citizenship.

This we do know, that Paul prized and openly boasted of the honour. It is true that he, who so willingly suffered all things for Christ's sake, allowed his enemies to violate this privilege on eight different occasions; but when he asserted it, he did so with pride and with effect. At Philippi he brought the magistrates cringing to his feet in the prison; at Jerusalem he turned the cheek of Claudius Lysias pale when he declared himself.

It was not, however, for the sake of the individual distinction it conferred upon him that Paul valued the privilege most highly. Like all else, this was valuable chiefly as it became an instrument in his hand for Christ's service. For his mission work it was as perfect an instrument as a man might ask. The point where Paul most of all broke away from the Jews was his universalism. He had broken down that wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, which formed so impassable a barrier before his time. Rome, by offering to all the world the fellowship of her city, led men in every province to try to gain it. And once a Roman citizen (so strong and glorious was the bond), a man might be said to have changed his nationality, and to belong to the one great family of Rome. It can be easily seen how great a help this must have been to him when he too planned his universal brotherhood.

But Paul heightened and spiritualized every instrument he used. The worth of citizenship must ultimately be measured by the worth of the city that gives it. No one could see more clearly than Paul that the moral worth of Rome was utterly out of proportion to the idea she had created of the worth and glory of her citizenship. So he, to whom this great political and social fact must have often seemed a huge sarcasm, took it only for the model of a spiritual ideal. The true Rome was heaven, the true citizenship was to have heaven's diploma. 'Our citizenship is in heaven,' he writes to the Philippians. Again, in the same Epistle, he says, 'Behave as citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ.' While writing to the Ephesians he says more fully, 'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.'

We see what he has done in this. With Paul

a metaphor ceases to be a metaphor. It becomes a force that seizes upon spiritual truth, and impresses its own stamp upon it. Just as Paul took the Roman highways, and turned them from military and commercial to Christian and spiritual uses, so here he does with Roman citizenship. It was the highest point of honour, the most coveted privilege in the world, making men hold themselves erect and feel the dignity of their position. It was also the greatest political and social bond of union between man and man. In Paul's use of it we see this nation of the world bringing its honour and glory into the City of God (to quote John's expression). The citizen idea forces the social and public side of Christianity upon everyone who accepts it; it also confers upon every humblest Christian the self-respect, the dignity, the erect bearing of a citizen of no mean city.

3. *The Roman Imperialism.*—In this we have by far the most striking and the most evident connexion between Paul and Rome. In his time Imperialism absolutely dominated the thought of the Roman world. 'Every group of Roman citizens meeting together in a body in any part of the empire, formed a part of the great conception "Rome," and such a group was not an intelligible idea except as a piece of the great unity.' While Rome allowed the provinces to retain much of their old life, she set herself to discourage local patriotism. This she did in many different ways. She fed them with corn in time of dearth; she set up amphitheatres, and instituted games and gladiatorial shows; she tried to take up the education question, and arrange for educating the world; last and boldest, she set up a new imperial religion—the universal worship of the Roman emperor—which was to unite all nations in worship; and, since its priests of every land were to be imperial officers, it was expected greatly to strengthen the imperial cause.

Such is some slight sketch of the Roman Imperialism of the time. It will be remembered that Jesus Christ was crucified on the charge of having set up a kingdom that was to rival it. This was what His enemies took Him to mean when he spoke of a 'kingdom of God.' It is true His reply was, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Yet that kingdom of His was, in fact, destined to take its models from worldly kingdoms. First Paul in his conception of the Church; then

Augustine in his *City of God*; then Dante in his '*De Monarchia*,' set Christ's kingdom along the model lines of the Roman Empire. It needed some such defining and sharpening Christ's description of it was necessarily a vague and general one, so given (in His beatitudes and other sayings) as to adapt itself to the conditions of each successive age. What Paul did for it was to adjust it to the political conditions of his time—in a word, to the Roman Empire.

That this is so is as certain as anything we know of Paul. As Professor Ramsay has shown past all doubt, he took up an attitude of friendliness towards the Imperial Government, which he never tries to conceal. This, indeed, was usual with provincial citizens, and particularly with Jews who had acquired the privilege. They were noted as warm partisans of the empire. To Paul it was in every way a congenial idea. 'The grand style of thinking about affairs came natural to him,' and the imperial idea exactly suited that 'grand style.' We can see this especially in the Epistle to the Romans. Evidently the writer is stimulated by the thought that his words were going to Rome. It is an epistle quite imperial in tone and style. He is not abashed by the imperial city, but in strong sympathy with its large ideals. He writes as one who feels that he has a thought imperial as Rome herself.

Ay, a thought greater and more imperial. It is the thought of the Church Invisible—the ideal Church, which Paul was founding and realizing on the earth. That Church, as Paul conceived it, was to be a new unified humanity—unified very much on the lines of the Roman Empire. Each local church was to have its local home rule, and yet all were to be unified in an imperial central government. Christendom was to be a unity, at once self-governing and subject to a central authority. The emperor was Christ; the centre heaven. With this difference, the Church was practically a Holy Roman Empire.

The intense spirituality of this conception was the main feature in which it differed from and excelled the Roman Imperialism. Its universality, in which all distinctions were lost, was the direct result of its spirituality. There was to be neither 'Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free,' because 'all were to be one *in Christ Jesus*.' It was 'a spiritual society, in which nothing was to be taken into account but the personal relation

of each member' to Jesus Christ, the common object of faith and service. All divisions were to be merged in that bond of union; all Christians everywhere forgetting their differences and remembering their common Lord; every body of Christians who happened to come together anywhere recognizing their corporate existence to mean for them simply that here there was a small part of that great Church which was the religious counterpart of the Roman Empire.

This thought is one which must in a peculiar way come home to every thinking man to-day. What the future of politics is to be, God only knows. There is much that at least seems moving towards Imperialism. The federation of colonies, the merging of smaller states in larger, and many other signs of the times appear to point towards this. What the new Imperialism is to be, who can tell? This is not the place to discuss such things. But, while men's thoughts and speculations are busy on these problems, here is a master-thought—one of the greatest of Paul's thoughts—which it will be well for us all to remember, and to keep firmly fixed in our minds. This is the true Imperialism, in which no nation grudges another its place, but all are united under the central rule of Christ. For, in this Imperialism, 'the kingdoms of the world are become the *kingdom* (singular, not plural) of God and of His Christ.'

That was Paul's ideal—the most Titanic of all his thoughts. How far was it realized? How far did it fail? To a large extent, indeed, it failed, or seemed to fail. It was spoiled by individual churches, whose saints or teachers were set up by small-minded devotees as the successful rivals of other churches and their heroes. It was spoiled still more by the worldly-mindedness of the early ecclesiastics, who accepted Paul's Imperialism, but centralized in Rome instead of

heaven, and took the Bishop of Rome for emperor instead of Christ. From the side of Rome, too, it failed. Rome failed to see in Paul one who, better than any man of his time, understood her policy—saw farther into it than her own statesmen saw—was her ally; and whose New Imperialism might have saved her empire from ruin. Spain had only a chain for Columbus when he returned and gave her a new world; Rome had but a prison and an executioner for Paul when he offered her an Eternal Empire.

Yet it succeeded—Rome would not see it, but Paul's New Rome lived on. The highways, the citizenship, the empire more and more took Christian form, and lived on through the sack of Rome. 'One of the most remarkable sides of the history of Rome is the growth of ideas which found their realization and completion in the Christian Empire. Universal citizenship, universal equality of rights, universal religion, a universal Church, all were ideas which the empire was slowly working out, but which it could not realize till it merged itself in Christianity.' In a word, 'Christianity did what the Roman emperors tried to do and failed.' They succeeded in feeding the world, and in amusing the world—and it is probable that in both of these respects it would have been better for the world if they had failed. They failed in their attempt to educate the world and to give it a universal religion, and so to unify it in a permanent empire. These things Christianity did, and largely through the instrumentality of Paul. From these early days till now, and from now till the end of time, there goes on with Christendom the true Imperial Ideal—all men free, equal, educated, worshipping, under one central government which is the empire of God. It is for each successive age to realize that ideal as God will give it wisdom, and largeness of mind, and power of action.