

the finances of the Inquisition, while, on the other hand, every punishment to which they were sentenced meant a possible commutation for money. Indeed, the terrible gulf between inquisitorial theory and practice could not have been caused altogether by mistaken religious zeal, however strong that might have been. No theory of religion will explain why, while the inquisitorial censors laboured to suppress free-thought, they constantly allowed mere indecencies to pass; or, again, why, although the Visitation of 1544 showed that all but two of the subordinates at Barcelona were "defamed for improper relations with women," yet not one was dismissed. No doubt the Inquisition did owe its origin mainly to religious zeal, though from the first this was strongly alloyed with self-interest. But its development followed the lines on which so ill-matched a team must always run. Fanaticism still continued to supply much of the motive power, though less and less; while the direction which the movement took was more and more definitely determined by unblushing commercialism.



The Discrimination of Christ.

AN EXPOSITORY STUDY ON LUKE IX. 57-62.

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OUR Lord's methods of dealing with the multitude are an inspiring lesson in width of religious outlook. His intercourse with the individual is an instructive study in depth of spiritual insight. It is with the latter that we are here concerned—Christ's dealings with three single personalities—the men to whom He used the illustrations of the fox-hole, the graveyard, and the straight furrow.

Two preliminary points are worth noting—the context of the story, and the typical nature of the characters.

I. These three men are mentioned by St. Luke in connexion with the enlistment of the seventy disciples, whose wider

evangelistic work in chapter x. follows the more limited mission of the twelve Apostles in chapter ix. 1-6. Space will not permit a lengthy discussion of the always delicate matter of chronological context, the question whether St. Luke's setting of the story is preferable to that of the briefer parallel in St. Matthew viii. 9-22.¹ It can hardly be maintained that the word *καθεξῆς* in St. Luke i. 3 indicates a rigid chronological order; but it may, I think, be fairly urged that, in the passage before us, there is a sufficiently close link between text and context to assume a deliberate intention, literary or chronological, probably the latter, in the mind of so careful an author. We can scarcely mark as accidental or artificial such obvious connexions as those, for instance, between the desolate note of ix. 58 and the rebuff of ix. 53, between the call of ix. 59 and the appointment of x. 1, between the preaching of ix. 60 and the hearing of x. 16, as well as other points noted in the body of the present paper.

II. The twice-repeated use of *ἕτερος*, "another type,"² not *ἄλλος*, "another specimen" (vv. 59 and 61; see also Matt. viii. 21), appears to indicate that these three incidents are selected by the Evangelist as typical of the remainder of the band of recruits, and of our Lord's methods of personal dealing with them. Christ has no hard-and-fast rule of approach to men. It is the "quack" doctor who makes one prescription serve as a panacea for all maladies. The good Physician diagnoses each case by its symptoms.

It remains, then, for us to inquire what types are before us here.

¹ Salmon ("Human Element in Gospels") prefers St. Luke's order here, though without reference to the grounds argued below. He also notes St. Luke's habit of straightening out events which have become chronologically tangled.

² I do not forget here the arguments elaborated by Ramsay ("Hist. Comm. Gal.," pp. 260-266) as to the meaning of *ἕτερος* and *ἄλλος* when contrasted (in Gal. i. 6, 7); but if I may venture to say so without presumption, the great scholar is somewhat less convincing than usual, and ends by giving a meaning to the passage which it is difficult to imagine St. Paul as intending. So here the older view of the respective meanings has been retained, with such weighty authorities as Lightfoot, Alford, Meyer, Moule ("Commentaries on Galatians"), Trench ("Synonyms," p. 358, eleventh edition), and Thayer-Grimm (*sub voc.*).

1. "*A certain man said unto Him, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.*" There can be no hesitation in classifying this man. He volunteers without waiting for a call. He is

THE WARM-HEARTED MAN.

He is enthusiastic, even effusive. Perhaps, as we examine his words in the light of the Master's reply, we may detect an undertone of fussiness. So much is conveyed by tone and manner which a written record cannot reproduce; and it may well be that both the warmth of the protestation and the apparent coolness of Christ's response were in less marked contrast, as the words were spoken. For, after all, there is nothing culpable in warm-heartedness; and this vow of lifelong devotion is an acceptance of the conditions Christ Himself had already laid down in ver. 23 of this chapter: "If any man would come after Me, let him take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Yet warm-heartedness is a very different thing from hot-headedness. The Master has no desire to repress zeal. On the contrary, His chosen trio were the most enthusiastic of the Apostolic band. Yet fire is proverbially a bad master, though a good servant, as is hinted in vers. 54-56. So Christ urges deliberation and thought. A hurried decision now may mean a hasty denial later. The thought of the reputation of the Companion may be obscuring the recollection of the weight of the cross.

Perhaps, also, as we remember St. Matthew's sidelight, that the man was a scribe (viii. 19), we may suspect that some air of condescension marred an otherwise irreproachable profession. Christ will have no indiscriminate enrolment, even of an influential recruit. It is one of the countless minute proofs of His Divine pre-eminence which are ever sparkling on the Gospel page. The ordinary leader enrolls first and warns afterwards. But Christ is determined that what is done shall be done with open eyes. Had this man counted the cost of his following? The wondrous ministry is drawing to its eventide, and the shadow of the cross is already upon it (ver. 22). The closed doors and open hostility of the Samaritan villagers

(ver. 53) have just given point to the fact that nothing so permanent or comfortable as a fox-earth or a bird's-nest is the earthly lot of the Son of man. And the disciple is not above his Master. He who undertakes to "follow whithersoever He goeth" must be prepared to "enter into a city" and not be "received" (x. 10). The besetting sin of the scribes was "they say and do not" (Matt. xxiii. 3). And Christ demands, not wordiness, but work. Can the man who "loves to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi" bear to "be despised" (Matt. xxiii. 7; Luke x. 16)? Is he who "loves the chief place at feasts" prepared to eat thankfully whatever is "set before him" (Matt. xviii. 6; Luke x. 7)? Will he who "loves greetings in the markets" be faithful to the injunction to "salute no man by the way" (Matt. xxiii. 10; Luke x. 4)? Is he whose fellows are still wolves "devouring" the sheep so changed in heart as to become a "lamb in the midst of wolves" (Matt. xxiii. 14; Luke x. 3)? All this is conveyed in essence in Christ's words: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." There is no thought of discouraging honest devotion, but His counsel to the warm-hearted man is deliberateness. It is the glow of a well-weighed consecration which melts the ice-bound indifference of the world.

2. *"And He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But He said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God."*

In this case there is no voluntary offer; the Lord gives a definite call. And, judging by a mere surface-reading of the text, it looks as though the man's response were beyond reproach. A sad bereavement, a temporary delay for the needful burial, and then he will be free. So we usually understand it; and in this light the request seems reasonable, and Christ's reception of it a little hard. But it is never wise to doubt the Lord, and none who have seen Him by the grave of Lazarus can ever question His sympathy in time of death.

But I think a closer study of Eastern ways will show to us that the man's father was not dead at all! For, in the first place, burial in the East takes place almost immediately after death, and the relatives stay within doors until the funeral has taken place.¹ A friend who knows Palestine thoroughly writes to me in response to my inquiry as follows :

"Yes, you are right. In the East the dead are always buried the same day, and the people have to stay indoors and sit on the ground for eight days fasting and praying."

This man, then, would not be likely to be out of doors at all, if the burial of his father were actually before him.

But further light is thrown upon the incident by facts which have only recently come to my knowledge. It is, of course, one of the best-known features of tribal custom that an eldest son regards the due performance of parental funeral rights as in the forefront of filial duty ; and so also the parents look upon it. One of the inducements which God offers the aged Jacob in going down into Egypt is that Joseph (who had now received the birthright, 1 Chron. v. 2) shall perform these offices when death overtakes him (Gen. xlv. 4 ; *cf.* Ovid, *Her.* I. 101, 102). Now, it appears that the lifelong anticipation of this duty has led to its becoming a convenient excuse when unwelcome demands are made. In a fairly recent book the following incident is narrated : "An American was endeavouring to persuade a stalwart Syrian lad to try his fortunes in Chicago. The lad evidently felt the temptation, but he turned smilingly towards the middle-aged man at his side and, pointing to him, answered, 'Suffer me first to bury my father'" ("The Holy Land," p. 101, Fulleylove and Kelman, published by Black).

Soon after reading this I received a letter from a missionary in Toro, Central Africa, lamenting the withdrawal of a certain native boy, who had at one time seemed eager for baptism, but had recently cooled down and gone home, with the excuse, "I must first go and bury my father."

¹ John Lightfoot states that the man's father was neither dead nor dying, though he assigns no reason for his opinion (vol. iii., p. 83, ed. Pitman).

And on a later occasion, when I had given the above explanation in public, a missionary from Ceylon confirmed it by telling me that he, too, had several times received the same excuse from unwilling pupils.

The words, then, are simply a polite refusal, and we are now in a position to classify the second case. If the first was the warm-hearted, this is

THE COLD-HEARTED MAN.

The other would promise anything; this man will promise nothing. And this is the reason for the stern reply, which at first is so perplexing, but now becomes perfectly natural.

“*First my father?*” No, “*Seek ye first the kingdom.*” It is one of the fundamentals of loyalty to the Royal manifesto on the Mount (Matt. vi. 35). There are many callings, there can be only one call; and for this man the Master’s will is “*Go, preach*”—an evident allusion to the evangelistic mission of chapter x. And the demand is couched in the most solemn terms, calculated to disperse all apathy. “Let those whose souls are dead, see to the burial of those whose bodies are dead.” A living soul has a more urgent work, to call into eternal life the careless and moribund.

“*Go thou.*” Whereas the Lord had in the first case counselled deliberateness, He now enforces the need for immediate decision, with quite unwonted peremptoriness.

We now turn to the last of the three types.

3. “*And another also said, I will follow Thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*”

Christ’s reply guides us at once in our classification. This is, obviously,

THE HALF-HEARTED MAN,

or at any rate one who is in danger of becoming so; but it must be admitted that this is not easily deduced from the surface-reading of his response to Christ’s call.

We note at the outset that the whole incident is strikingly reminiscent of Elijah's call to Elisha (1 Kings xix. 19-21). This disciple uses practically the same words as Elisha did. And in the answers of both Elijah and our Lord there is an identity in tone, a common tinge of annoyance, which shows that under the wording of an apparently simple request there lurked a possibility of evasion of the call.

It is well, too, to bear in mind that Christ did not refuse the man's petition. He never discourages manifestations of affection in domestic relationships. To draw any conclusion of this kind would be entirely erroneous. But affectionate courtesy is one thing, dawdling ceremoniousness is quite another. The Oriental has a most provoking habit of wasting valuable time on trivialities. When Abraham's steward had won Rebekah as bride for his master's son, he decided to commence his return on the following day. "And he said, Send me away to my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, *at the least ten*; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not" (Gen. xxiv. 54-56). In the urgency of Christ's contemplated mission, a like hindrance, a farewell which might involve ten days, was certainly a possibility calling for warning; and the thought of similar minor delays elicited the prohibition of x. 4, "Salute no man by the way."

Further, we note that the man's emphasis on the word "first" calls forth a protest, as in ver. 61. Nothing is more necessary in the work of the kingdom than a true perception of what things come *first*. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. x. 37).

And again the man places the word *Lord* last (see R.V.). When *κύριε* comes in that unusual position, it appears to indicate distance or hesitation (see Matt. xxvi. 22; Luke v. 8, xxiii. 42 (?); John viii. 11, ix. 38), and it is precisely this hesitation which Jesus deprecates. And so, in an answer which interestingly recalls Elisha's occupation when his call came, Christ reminds this new recruit of a ploughman's temptation.

Others may be ploughing in the same field (as in Elisha's case), and there is the inducement to look back over the shoulder in the interest of conversation, or perhaps the hail-storms incident to the season may lash the face, and cause the head to turn aside. Yet not by heeding such distractions are good furrows made; a straight eye, a strong arm, a constant hand, are requisite. And "no man who has put his hand (only one hand is needed for the light Syrian implement) to the plough, and keeps looking back [*βλέπων*, the habit rather than the act], is suitable for the kingdom of God." So the man whose temptation is half-heartedness is exhorted to diligence in this new work. For the greatest stumbling-blocks in the history of the kingdom, all down the ages, have been the cold ashes of fires that once burned bright. Devotion to the kingdom and the King must be like the ancient burnt-offering, new every morning, with the old ashes of the past consecration cleared away (Lev. vi. 11, 12; *cf.* another offering, 1 Kings xix. 21).

So with His delicate discrimination the Master deals with each according to his need: here urging on the impetuous a counting of the cost, there pointing out to the careless the gravity of refusal, and yet again pressing on the waverer the needful perseverance.

Follow, follow, follow—the one word is common to each of the three cases (Luke ix. 57, 59, 61). And the voice of the Master utters it still, though to His discriminating ear it probably bears a different meaning in every life it touches. Yet [as the etymology of *ἀκολουθεῖν* suggestively reminds us] it means one thing, always and for all men—a pathway in which He walks with us; and, beside that, a kingdom in which, though we share His toil, we are also to be partners of His throne.

