

THE CHURCH IN THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

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IN this paper it will be taken for granted (1) that "the Epistle to the Ephesians" is an Epistle of S. Paul, (2) that it is a circular letter to Christians in Asia Minor, and (3) that it was written towards the close of S. Paul's imprisonment in Rome, about the year A.D. 63. The mention of the date suggests a reason for the letter. The five first years of Nero's reign, dominated to some extent by the humaner influence of Seneca, were over. Tigellinus, associate of Nero in his brutality and sensuality, had come into power. The world-conscience, shocked by Caligula, was to be more profoundly moved by the barbarities and senseless orgies of the worst monster who has ever disgraced a human throne. That monster was to be worshipped as God, and the cult to be more stringently enjoined as a test of loyalty. Special pressure to observe it might be expected in Asia Minor, a Province directly ruled by the Emperor and owing its prosperity to the Imperial régime. The Church in Asia must prepare itself for persecution.

Important as Rome undoubtedly was for the missionary work of the Apostle, his work there had been hampered by his imprisonment. He could not preach in the Synagogue nor lecture in the Forum. For whatever reason, S. Luke dismisses that work in a few lines. To Ephesus he devotes far more space than to any other sphere of Pauline activity. We are told how the Apostle was twice hindered by the Spirit from entering Asia, how brief was his first visit, and also the special circumstances attending his final arrival. The variety of the interests concerned and of the difficulties encountered is impressed on us. There Aquila and Priscilla, in a sense founders of the Church, Roman Christians, had forgathered with the Alexandrian Jew Apollos, and had brought him to Christ. Roman organization and Greek philosophy had been united in the preliminary work. There, the Apostle found disciples of John the Baptist, Jewish sorcerers, Asiatic magicians. There, for two and a half years, he had laboured with signal success. "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." There, by his collection for the Christians of Jerusalem, he had prejudiced the success of the collection for the Temple at one of its chief centres, and had thus made the Sadducees for the first time opponents of the Church. There he had spoilt the trade of the silversmiths of the great goddess Diana. There, in what way we know not, he had "fought with beasts." There, as usual, the Jews had laid plots against him. How he loved the work there, how he loved the converts and their presbyters is recorded in his farewell address. There, we are told, more than elsewhere, of the parting embraces and tears. Nor may we forget that the preaching of the word was there confirmed by a signal display of miracles. No, S. Luke was not wrong in his

special attention to the Church of Asia Minor. Rome was destined one day to eclipse it in Europe. But if we remember the debt which our theology owes to the gospel and epistles of S. John, or that which in all ages of persecution the Church has owed to the Apocalypse, or the debt of our Church government to the Pastoral Epistles; and again remember the connection of all these with Asia Minor, we shall feel that the instinct which fastened on the importance of that Province to the Church was, in fact, an instinct of inspiration.

S. Paul was not alone in being moved by this instinct. Two other Apostles, S. James and S. Peter, wrote letters to the Christians of Asia Minor, letters which the Providence of God has preserved for our instruction. They were all written, according to our chief commentaries, within the same quinquennium, A.D. 58 to 63, possibly within the same triennium, 60 to 63. The order of their appearance seems to be, first, the Epistle of S. James, then S. Paul's to the Ephesians, and, thirdly, that of S. Peter. All three were circular letters written not to one Church, but to a wide district of Churches. S. James writes exclusively to Jews of the Dispersion, Christian Jews evidently and without reference to Gentiles. He had Palestine and Syria primarily in view, but from the Dispersion Asia could not be excluded. The picture which he draws is far from attractive. Antinomianism is sheltering itself behind S. Paul's doctrine of Justification by Faith. The synagogue is honoured (!) by visits of the religious plutocrat. There is much talk, all want to teach, fiery disputation, prayer and profane oaths from the same lips, self-conceit, back-biting, profiteering, oppression of the sweated worker, forgetfulness of the Judge who is at the door. We are reminded of S. Paul's denunciation in the epistle to the Romans, but the portrait is more lifelike, more realistic. If we put ourselves in the position of the Gentile convert, we are not surprised that he is under a temptation to run a separate Church of his own. Indeed, if S. James' insistence on the whole law broken by transgression of one commandment includes the ceremonial law, a mixed Church of Jew and Gentile becomes an impossibility.

Then comes to the same district the Epistle to the Ephesians, addressed primarily to the Gentile Christians. It opens with such an idealized picture of the Jewish Christian as we have nowhere in the New Testament. S. Paul writes in his own name, but he quietly associates his fellow Jewish Christians with himself in addressing the Gentiles. We, blessed with all blessings in heavenly places in Christ, chosen before the foundation of the world, pardoned of all our sins, privileged to know the mystery of the Will of God, inheritors of His Kingdom by predestination, seated with Christ in the heavenly places, *we* pray that the eyes of you Gentiles, once exiles from the commonwealth of Israel, without hope, without God in the world, may be opened to know the glory of the Divine inheritance in the Saints. There is nothing like this in any other New Testament writing. It removes the sting which lurks in the Epistle of S. James. It lays upon the Divine purpose the whole

burthen of the long-delayed evangelization of the world. It calls to unity, to mutual confidence, to the privilege of a position far above any that had been vouchsafed to the circumcision. While insisting on the doctrine of the free grace of God and the abolition of the law of commandments with its precepts (touch not, taste not, etc., see the Epistle to the Colossians) it avoids the question of justification and of the bitter controversy surrounding the Jerusalem decrees. It calls to unity, to purity of life, and to preparation for war in which spiritual powers of wickedness will be arrayed against the Church of God.

S. Peter's letter addressed to the Dispersion is not confined to Jews of the Dispersion. Gentiles are no doubt included. It knows no special privilege of Israel, hints at no alienation between Jew and Gentile, sees the persecution as even more imminent, is aware that the very name of Christian may be a death-warrant, and anticipates the glory of martyrdom. Silvanus and Mark are bearers of the letter, S. Paul's two companions in travel. The hatchet is buried. The old controversies are forgotten. The two letters, those of S. Paul and S. Peter, are strongly characteristic. The eyes of S. Paul are fixed on the vision glorious, which for him never fades into the light of common day. S. Peter, who has walked with the Christ of daily life, still walks with Christ step by step in an earthly pilgrimage now drawing to its close. Marriage for S. Paul is seen in the mysterious light of the relation between Christ and the Church. S. Peter, "who was himself a married man," thinks of it in the terms of jewellery, hairdressing, clothes, in terms of the relations between Abraham and Sarah.

It is time to leave these prefatory notes and to turn to our subject, the Church in the Epistle to the Ephesians. We may sum up the teaching on that subject under the heads of (1) the Temple, (2) the New Man, (3) the Bride of Christ, (4) the Body of Christ, (5) the Pleroma, which I will translate provisionally as "the full complement, the consummated whole of Him Who is fulfilling His design in all creation."

We will follow this order as presenting to us the simpler ideas first. (1) *The Temple*. "Ye are built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone, in Whom every building fitted and welded together groweth up to a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom ye also are being built together with us into a habitation of God in (or by) the Spirit." The Spirit is not the builder here, but the indwelling, Temple-inhabiting God.

To the Jews the "Temple" suggested Jerusalem, to the Gentiles Ephesus. It is possible that in Asia as at Corinth, there was the temptation to break up the Church into congregations of Apollos, of Aquila and Priscilla, of Paul or of Peter: or at least into Jewish and Gentile congregations. The Jewish Christians might become some new shade, for there were many shades, of adherents of the Synagogue, while the Gentile Christians might be loosely attached members of one of the heathen tribes of their city, and so retain, or be qualified for, citizenship. Either course would render them

inconspicuous and secure them from persecution. S. Paul makes it quite clear that no such separate foundations are possible for the Saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. God is building Himself a new Temple on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Himself being the chief Corner Stone. The very care with which the Apostle sought out a reconciling phrase has been used as an argument against his authorship of the letter. To the Church of Corinth he could write, "ye are God's building. According to the grace given me as a wise master builder I laid the foundation, another buildeth thereon. But let each see how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." But in the case of the Asiatic Churches he was only one among many master builders. Especially would he avoid conflict with S. James and S. Peter. Therefore he varies his metaphor. Christ is the corner-stone of the foundation. The Apostles and Prophets, of whom there is reason to think there were many (Bigg on 1 Peter, p. 73), are also part of the foundation, for through them came the evangel. So skilfully are the Ephesians reminded that whatever rumours may have reached them of dissensions between S. Peter and himself, or of criticisms of his doctrine by S. James, Christ Who is the corner-stone brings all the rest of the foundation into line. In Him all questions of priority in the Apostolic college or Prophetic order disappear. The new Temple is built on a new foundation, and on that one alone.

The purpose of the Temple is to be a home of sacrifice, and as to the character of the sacrifice S. Peter and S. Paul are in entire agreement. The sacrifices are spiritual sacrifices, acts of self-oblation for the community, tokens of the presence of the inspiring and uniting Spirit. Such were the gifts of the Philippians to S. Paul, "a sweet-smelling savour, an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God." "I am poured in libation on the offering and liturgy of your faith." "We are a savour of Christ in those that are being saved and those that are perishing, to the one a fragrance of life unto life, to the other a fragrance of death unto death." These are a few out of many passages which shew that the sacrifices of the new Temple are acts of self-surrender on the part of the living spirits of men, self-surrender for mutual service, whereby this Temple, built up of living stones, is cemented, and grows up to fulfil the design of the Divine Architect. "Be ye therefore imitators, of God, children beloved, as Christ also loved you and gave Himself for you, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

(2) From the Temple we pass to the *New Man*. "He is our peace, Who made both one (= united both), and dissolved the partition wall, or the barrier, and abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments in precepts, that He might create the two into one new man" (Ephesians ii. 14, 15). We are not to think here of the old nature which has to be laid aside, or of the new man which has to be put on. This truth has its place, but it is another place. Here the Apostle is teaching us that the second Adam is

the start of a new creation. The former creation was a history of separations. The first Adam became as it were two, male and female. His descendants were shattered into a multitude of races by Babel. By the call of Abraham a further division was introduced. The world was divided into the "people" and the "no people," the covenanted and the uncovenanted. The second Adam going behind all these has made of Jew and Gentile one man; of Barbarian Scythian, Greek and Roman, one man. "Ye are all," he says to the Galatians, one man, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female" (Galatians iii. 28). He says the same to the Colossians (iii. 11), adding, "Christ is all (everything) in all (His Saints)." This new man must grow up into a perfect man. The standard which he is to reach, the stature to which he is to attain, is that of the completeness of Christ, in Whom the design of God is completely realized. You will see that we are here dealing with something different from the reform of individual characters. If it were possible for each Saint separately to be a second Christ, we should be short of S. Paul's conception. He is putting before us the fusion of the whole body of the regenerate into a unity. He is thinking of the Church, though he does not expressly say, This new man is the Church. The new humanity in Christ is not for S. Paul an abstract conception, but a new living organism. In this new man creation returns to Him from whom it came forth.

(3) *The Bride of Christ.* "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it in the laver of water, in (or by) a (or the) word,¹ that He might present to Himself the Church all-glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it might be holy and blameless." We are turning over the pages of a letter addressed to Greek and Asiatic Gentiles. The Apostle is trying to rescue the married life of his converts from the degrading effects of former religious associations. Heathen temples were not only places of assignation, but places where sensuality might be indulged as an act of worship. Heathen gods and goddesses set evil examples to their worshippers. The stories of their loves were publicly and shamelessly enacted in theatres. The heathen who retained his moral purity did so in spite of his religion. S. Paul appeals, not as S. Peter did, to the purity of patriarchal life, for that life in fact was not without its blemishes. He prefers to use the prophetic idealization of the relations between Jehovah and Israel. Especially he seems to have in mind Ezekiel xvii. where the LXX uses words that are echoed in the "cleansing in the laver of water," and the adornments which Jehovah heaped on His bride are paralleled by the Church all-glorious.

¹ It is suggested that S. Paul is thinking of a Divine creative word establishing marital relation, corresponding to the word (Genesis ii. 24) by which Adam and Eve were united. A curious parallel is to be found in S. James i. 18, "He begat us by a word of truth," on which see the note in Dr. Hort's Commentary. Compare also "Now ye are *clean* through the *word* which I have spoken unto you," (S. John xv. 3).

It is no wonder that S. Paul speaks of his teaching as a great mystery. It was indeed a holy audacity that not only put the Gentile on the level of Israel, and so made the new brotherhood the true antitype of the most sacred and enduring relations established between God and His people. No, the audacity did not end there. That sublime and wonderful relation was brought into the home of the humblest Christian. What Christ was to the Church that the husband was to the wife. Conjugal infidelity was to be as inconceivable, and especially on the husband's side—as infidelity of Christ to His Church. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Conversely we are taught that the Church on which this love is outpoured is all-glorious, spotless, without wrinkle, holy and blameless. Truly a great mystery.

(4) *The Body*. "He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, inasmuch as it is His Body" (i. 22). Again, "that He might create the two into one new man, and might reconcile both in one body to God, through the Cross" (ii. 16). "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (iv. 4). "He gave some Apostles and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for equipping the saints to a work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ" (iv. 11, 12). "From Whom the whole Body fitted together and knit together through every supplying joint, according to the proportionate working of each several part, maketh increase of the Body to the building up of itself in love" (iv. 16). "No one ever yet hated his flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ doth the Church, for we are members of His Body" (v. 30). We are so familiar with these words that we hardly realize that, with two exceptions (1 Corinthians x. 17 and 1 Corinthians xii. 27), the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ belongs exclusively to the letters of the Captivity addressed to the Asiatic Churches. We can hardly avoid seeking for an explanation of this fact. It is the more important because in the passages in the Corinthians there is no mention of the Church. "We who are many are one Body"—in reference to the Holy Communion—and "ye are the Body of Christ," in reference to using spiritual gifts for mutual edification. But in the Epistles to the Asiatic Churches, there are twelve references to the Body, and in four of these the Church is specifically called the Body of Christ.

I do not remember to have seen this point noted in any commentary, and my suggestion must be taken for what it is worth. It is that the impending persecution was likely to try the Asiatic Saints at their weakest point, the separation which Christianity had wrought between them and their fellow-countrymen, whether Jew or Gentile. As Jews they had exceptional rights secured to them in Asia by a special constitution, as Gentiles they had civic rights dependent on tribe membership, which in its turn involved worship of tribal gods. As Christians they were outcasts from public life. If only the powers of evil could drive a wedge into the infant community, hardly ten years old, sending the Jews back to Judaism, and the Gentiles to

paganism, all the labour spent on these beloved Churches was lost. On the other hand, they could not form themselves into a corporation or society. The Imperial law tolerated no such unions. What could be done? S. Paul with his wonted courage and statesmanship—yes, and guided by the Holy Spirit using the Apostle's mental gifts—drew Jew and Gentile together by their living union with Christ. Hitherto, as we have seen, he had spoken of them as the Temple in which the Spirit dwells, the new Man modelled on the second Adam, the Bride cherished by the Bridegroom. Yet all these relations, though close to Christ, were external to Him. Under the figure of the Body, he portrays a union which almost amounts to an identity. Their union with Christ makes their relation to one another as close as their relation to Him, and it is a union which all the powers of Hell cannot dissolve. For you cannot kill or dismember the Body without destroying the Head. It were as easy to kill Christ once more as to kill the Church, for indeed the Church is seated with Christ in heavenly places, triumphant not only over human malice, but also over the powers of Hell.

It is true that S. Paul moves here in a plane of thought in which it is hard for us to follow him. But it was not hard for these Asiatic Christians. Earthly things were to them a counterpart of heavenly. Ramsay gives us an Asiatic coin in which the upper half depicts a sacrifice in heaven, the lower a sacrifice on earth (strange anticipation of an idea afterwards adopted by some Christians). To S. Paul the ideal, the heavenly, was the real. The Saints of Asia might have their common worship, their presiding officers or Bishops, their, as yet unwritten, laws; might be visited by Apostles, and receive three letters from three different Apostles in three years. All these things might tend to form a corporation, the extension of which might in time to come become world-wide. But for the Apostle these were not the realities. The reality was this, that Christ lives in every Christian, and by the fact of this life makes all Christians one with one another. He speaks of the Soma the body; he does not call it Somateion. The Body of Christ to him is not a "somateion" or corporation. It is a living soma, which death cannot touch. As for Christians who belong to the *psuche* (soul), but not to the soma of Christ, S. Paul could not have imagined them. For without the soul, as S. James says, the body is dead. In Christ, or not in Christ, alive or dead; there is nothing between the two. "Where Christ is there the Church is, and where the Church is Christ is." It is true, no doubt, that the translation of S. Paul's ideas into practice is full of difficulty. He who taught that in Christ there is neither male nor female, bade wives to be subject to their husbands. He, who found in Christ neither bond nor free, returned Onesimus to Philemon. Dr. Hort reminds us "that in the necessary work of building itself up as a corporation the Church would have needed far-seeing wisdom indeed to save itself from unconsciously giving insufficient heed to building itself up as a true body."

(5) *The Fulfilment of the Divine Purpose.* We have come to the most difficult part of inquiry. It would be time well spent to devote a whole paper to the words, "the fulfilment of Him Who fulfilleth the whole in all its parts." All that can be here attempted is to indicate lines of inquiry and the general conclusions to which they have led me. As to lines of inquiry: (1) There is sufficient material in S. Paul's use of *pleroma* to determine his meaning. We need not go outside his Epistles, in which the word *pleroma* occurs twelve times. (2) S. Paul is quite consistent in adhering to the proper grammatical force of *pleroma* as a noun ending in "ma" formed from a verb. Such nouns signify not the doing of a thing, but the completed, determinate act. *Pleroma* is not a process of filling or fulfilling. In Romans xiii. 10, "Love is the *pleroma* of the law," we have the phrase nearest to an exception but it is no exception. If there be any other commandment it is summed up in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love, therefore, is the summary of the law. The connection of summing up with *pleroma* settles this point. S. Paul does not mean that "love" is a process of fulfilling the "law"—however true that may be, but that the whole law may be epitomized in the one word love. With this text may be taken the words "I know that in coming to you I shall come in the *pleroma* of the blessing of Christ" (Romans xv. 29):—that is in the plenitude of the blessing which Christ has to bestow: all the blessing that Christ can give will Paul bring with him.

The two passages in Colossians i. 19 and ii. 9 indisputably refer to a completed fulness, not to a process of fulfilling, "in Christ it pleased Him that all the completeness (*pleroma*) should dwell," the whole of the Divine work of creation of the world seen and unseen, its sustention, headship of the Church, the beginning of all things, the firstfruits of resurrection, the reconciliation of all things—these constitute a Divine conception which in all its fulness has been realized in Christ. The process of completion has been in time, and extended, but as a fully conceived and complete idea, it was the Father's pleasure that it should wholly centre in Christ. "In Him," we read, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead" (ii. 9)—"all that constitutes Godhead has its home in Him." In both passages we read of a *pleroma* which "dwells," has its settled home—not one that is in process of being worked out: dwells, not energises.

With these two passages are naturally associated Ephesians iii. 13, "that ye may be filled up to all the fulness of God," and iv. 13, "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." In both cases there is a standard to be reached. But a fluctuating or ever-rising standard is impossible of attainment. It is true that the standard of the completeness of God being infinite is unattainable, but the fact that it is infinite rules out the idea that it is progressive. Progress must imply a state of previous deficiency.

We have now exhausted seven of the twelve uses of *pleroma*.

Of the remaining five,¹ four have clearly an eschatological significance. Romans xi. 12: "If the stumbling (of the Jew) is the riches of the world, and his defect the riches of the Gentile," how much rather his pleroma, and xi. 25: "Hardening of heart has come upon Israel till the pleroma of the Gentiles come in and then all Israel shall be saved."

In these two passages is reflected the Apocalyptic idea that the end of the age and the regeneration can only take place when the number of the saints has been completed. "The times and periods of the world's history have been predetermined by God." "The underlying idea is predestinarian" (Box, *Ezra Apocalypse*, pp. 35, 36). To this idea let us return after briefly noticing that this thought of predetermined time and seasons reappears in Galatians iv. 4, "When the fulness of time was come God sent forth His Son," where the reference is clearly to the previous decree or settlement of the Father immediately preceding the pleroma, and in Ephesians i. the dispensation of the fulness (pleroma) of the times, which God appointed for Himself to sum up all things in Christ. Notice once more the summing up and the pleroma appearing together as in "Love is the pleroma of the law."

Now we return to the predestinarian language which we found in Romans, a destiny not merely of times and seasons, but of the number of the elect. In the light of this language we must read the words. The passage which we have to consider stands at the end of the first chapter of the Ephesians (v. 23), "gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, for it is His Body, the fulfilment of Him that filleth for Himself all in all."

The whole chapter rings with the eternal purpose of God: "He chose us before the foundation of the world, having foreordained us to sonship" . . . "according to the good pleasure which He predetermined in Himself for a dispensation of the pleroma of the times." "We had our inheritance being foreordained according to the purpose of Him Who works in us according to the council of His Will that we should be the praise of His glory who first hoped in Christ." Another characteristic of the chapter is the exaltation of the might of God, the "greatness of the power according to the energy of the might of His strength." S. Paul seems to ransack the dictionary for synonyms of power displayed in the exaltation of Christ above all rule and authority and power and dominion—not only far above all Cæsars, but also above the spiritual powers of wickedness in heavenly places. Where Christ is seated at God's right hand in the heavenly place there we too are seated, far above all the powers that are plotting persecution against us. They cannot touch Christ, and they cannot hurt us, for He is Head of the Church, we the Church are His body, the

¹ Of these five the fifth is a quotation from the LXX, "The earth is the Lord's and the pleroma thereof." Parallelism makes it certain that here pleroma is the equivalent of "all who dwell therein." The idea which this use of pleroma suggests is that the Church is to the new heavens and the new earth, what the inhabitants of the world are to the present earth.

fulfilment of Him that is fulfilling for Himself the whole in all its parts.

Now I will ask you to remember that the Churches of Asia were called to a far more severe persecution a generation later, and that letters were again written to encourage them. In those letters they were transported by the Seer into the Heavenlies, and there beheld between the throne and the living creatures and elders the all-prevailing Lamb, saw Him open the book, which none but He could open, saw Him break the seals, and after all the catastrophes attendant on the six seals, saw the 144,000 sealed, and the great multitude which no man could number before the throne of God and serving Him day and night in His Temple. What John the Divine expressed in form of Apocalypse, S. Paul tells us in his dithyrambic prose. Paul also has visioned the preordained Israel and the Gentile. He also tells us that they were *sealed* with the Spirit which is the earnest-money of the full possession. He also sees Christ exalted in the heavens and His people exalted with Him. He is the Head of the Body, the Church, and what can pleroma be but the full told complement, the sum of God's elect, Who is everywhere fulfilling the whole of His design in all creation.

This eschatological significance of the first chapter is confirmed if you set beside the latter part of Ephesians, 1 Corinthians xv. 23, 35, where you have the same glorification of Christ, the same exaltation over all powers, the same quotation from the Psalms, and the same end in view, "that God may be all in all." God is the source, God is the end of creation.

I find myself, therefore, obliged to reject Dr. Armitage Robinson's explanation of the pleroma which is dominated by evolutionary conceptions to which S. Paul was an entire stranger. No doubt S. Paul believed and taught that the Divine purpose included a body of affliction and tribulation still incomplete. He also believed and taught such sympathy between Christ and His people, as is indicated in the words, "In all their afflictions He was afflicted," and in this sense the afflictions of Apostles and martyrs constituted a volume of the afflictions of Christ, which was as yet incomplete. But the idea of the "Christ that is to be" seems to me entirely foreign to the thought of S. Paul, and a reading into his words that which we wish to find there. But that is not exegesis.

To conclude. The Apostle in view of imminent persecution fortifies the saints to whom he writes with the remembrance of the living unity of all believers in Christ—We are one being in Christ—not one abstraction. If the Christians are a Temple they are a living Temple, they are one man, they are the Bride of Christ, they are a body, not a corporation, they are the Divine idea which is finding its fulfilment, and that very shortly. We love abstractions, S. Paul did not. We live in days when martyrdom is almost inconceivable, S. Paul did not. Our minds are dominated by ideas of indefinite, almost infinite Progress, S. Paul's was dominated by the idea of a Fall, ending in a catastrophe. Our thoughts are as much suffused by Arminianism, as S. Paul's were by

Calvinism. For us Heaven is hardly a world at all, for S. Paul it was a place where he had been. Our Heaven excludes all conception of evil, S. Paul's heaven was the scene of a warfare with evil, in which the battle was not completely won. When we ask, "What is the Church in the Epistle to the Ephesians?" we must make up our minds whether we mean to ask, "What was in the mind of S. Paul?" or "How can we apply the words of S. Paul to an existing Institution?" They are both legitimate questions, but they are different questions.

My answer to the first question is that S. Paul was conscious that the Saints throughout the world were more than isolated individuals in whom one Spirit breathed. They were a brotherhood or society embodying that Spirit so that the world might be conscious that Christ was still living, and living not only as the ascended Lord in the Heavens, but also in the person of a new fellowship upon earth. As yet that fellowship was loosely organized, knit together by two sacraments, striving to express itself by material acts of service, such as the forwarding of missionary brethren on their journey, or transmission of relief to the necessitous Saints in Jerusalem. The Apostle welcomed and encouraged such acts, he passed on messages of greeting from Church to Church. But the society as a whole was knit together rather by its ideals, its standard of morals, and its brotherly love than by external institutions. S. Paul says "one baptism." Why did he not add, "one eucharist, one priesthood?" There was discipline in each local Church, but of central authority very little. The Jerusalem decrees were imperfectly observed. S. Paul's own authority was questioned even in the Churches that he had founded. His proclamation of the unity of the visible Church was an act of faith, prompted by his assurance that the purpose of God to sum up all things in Christ could never be defeated. Martyrdom and heresy were to institutionalize the Church, and, after that, prosperity and State alliance were to stereotype a constitution. These things were hidden from the Apostle's foresight. He could see the ideal—its practical realization he could not see.

How, then, can we apply the vision of S. Paul to the realities of to-day? Surely not by identifying it with any one of the existing institutions that invoke its name, nor by giving heed to unhistoric fictions. The Church is one Temple, not many: one man, not Greek, Anglican, and Latin; one bride, not three; one body, not many. The brotherhood formed by Christ exists to-day as it existed in S. Paul's day, and it is animated by the same Spirit. Unhappily divided by institutions intended to secure its unity and its purity, it survives in the Christ-society throughout the world which ever has been and ever will be at war with the powers of darkness, the world rulers who preach the gospel of materialism. Its unity is dimly perceptible to us, but it is not hidden from Him Whose eyes of flaming fire still keep watch over the Churches, Who punishes their sins, sympathizes with their sorrows, and controls their destinies. In the midst of all their failures and disheartening

bickerings and in spite of traitors within their folds, there still exists among them the ecclesia of God. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" and they know Him. "We are slow," says Newman, "to master the great truth that Christ is, as it were, walking among us, and by His hand, or eye, or voice, bidding us follow Him. Who will recognize Him on the day of His Coming? . . . The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. She has already attired herself; while we have been sleeping, she has been robing; she has been adding jewel to jewel, and grace to grace; she has been gathering in her chosen ones, one by one, and exercising them in holiness, and purifying them for her Lord, and now her marriage hour is come." So nearly did Newman approach to reconciliation of faith in the one visible Church on earth with faith in the Church invisible of the Puritans, the company of the redeemed, the object of God's electing love before the foundations of the world were laid. For us there are billions of planets more important than our own all to be summed up in Christ. May not by far the greater part of His Church be there? Can we measure up God's pleroma with our ecclesiastical footrules?

Messrs. Morgan & Scott Ltd. publish for the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society "*And the Villages thereof*," by Maud Elizabeth Boaz, C.E.Z.M.S. Missionary, China (3s. 6d. net). Graphic scenes depicting various aspects of work in China are drawn from an extensive experience of the life of the people. Incidents telling of Christian enterprise, and successful work in the homes of many, give a cheering sense of the steady advance of the Gospel, in spite of many failings and discouragements. An admirable series of photographs adds to the interest of a well-written and frequently amusing volume of missionary experiences.

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