

PAULINE AND OTHER
STUDIES

IN EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY

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IN my *St. Paul the Traveller* a conception of Paul's character is stated, which seems to me to be so patent in the narrative of *Acts*, that it must have been the conception entertained by the author. My aim in that book was rather to show clearly what was Luke's conception of Paul than to state my own views of the Apostle's character; though, to a certain extent, my own conception necessarily tinges the picture. The attempt was, of course, a delicate and difficult one; it is founded on a certain theory of Luke's own character and action, and partakes of the uncertainty that attaches to that theory. The evidence of the *Epistles* is interpreted according to my conception of the situation, as they would appear to Paul's contemporaries, not as they appear to us in the nineteenth century. This whole process is so delicate that the opportunity of weighing and pondering over a conception of the Apostle's character, formed by one who takes much the same view as I do of the historical facts and incidents and dates, is valuable; and I am indebted to Mr. Baring-Gould for several good ideas¹ and much interest; but also I must confess that I have often felt repelled by the way he belittles

¹ *E.g.*, that the loss of the offerings of the "God-fearing," whom Paul tempted away from the synagogues, annoyed the Jews (p. 180, etc.).

and (in my opinion) misrepresents a great man. The passage at foot of page 327 is a libel on Paul: "Paul is thoroughly Oriental in his indifference to the welfare and sufferings of the brute creation. . . . He imputes to the Almighty the same insensibility to pity and care for the dumb beast that he possessed."

Mr. Baring-Gould defines his aim in this book as follows: "The line I have adopted is that of a man of the world, of a novelist with some experience of life, and some acquaintance with the springs of conduct that actuate mankind"; and he describes the novelist as "one who seeks to sound the depths of human nature, to probe the very heart of man, to stand patiently at his side with finger on pulse. He seeks to discover the principles that direct man's action, to watch the development of his character, and to note the influence that surroundings have on the genesis of his ideas and the formation of his convictions."

The programme was quite fascinating to one who, like myself, has attempted (in a humbler way and on a less ambitious plan than Mr. Baring-Gould) "to take Church History for a moment out of the hands of the theologians," and treat it on freer lines. I have none of the prejudice, which he anticipates, against a novelist's attempt to understand and depict the mind of Paul. On the contrary, the most illuminative page that I have ever read about the central scene of Paul's life, that scene whose interpretation determines our whole conception of Paul's work, the appearance of Jesus to him "as he drew nigh unto Damascus," is in a tale by another novelist, Owen Rhoscomyl.¹ Hence I welcome the application of Mr. Baring-Gould's method, as he defines it, to the personality of Paul. He has, however,

¹ This illuminative page is quoted in *The Education of Christ*, p. 9 f.

not given himself fair play. Instead of trying simply to present his own view to the reader, he tries too much to correct the views of others; he lays so much stress on those sides of Paul's character which have, in his opinion, been too little regarded, that his picture of the Apostle is one-sided. The qualities on which he insists, and to which he returns with painful frequency, are so unpleasant that the character which he sets before us is repulsive and almost detestable. It is rare that any sentence is devoted to the good or great qualities of Paul's mind.¹ His blunders, his failures, his weaknesses, his domineering nature, fill up most of the book. Mr. Baring-Gould knows that he was even a bad workman (p. 296).

My objection to Mr. Gould's book as a whole is, not that it *is* a novelist's view, but that it *is not* a novelist's view. I have not been able to feel that he presents Paul as an intelligible character, clearly understood by the author, and therefore easily recognisable by the reader; and he leaves Paul's work and influence more completely a riddle than before. One seems in this book to see two Pauls, sometimes coalescing more or less into a single picture, sometimes separate from one another, as if one were looking through a badly focussed optical instrument; and neither of the figures of Paul, which thus dance before one's eyes, seems to suit the work and life that are shown us in *Acts* and the *Epistles*. The author describes his aim in the words, "I treat the great Apostle as a man". I went to the book, hoping to find a man there. I found much that was interesting; I found a view so different from my own that it was bound to be instructive by forcing me to try to understand the causes which had produced it. But I do not find in it a man: I

¹ Examples on pp. 127, 434, 436 f.

find a conception, half double, half single, like the Siamese twins. Now, as I have been requested, I shall state the reasons for this opinion, though I feel as if it were ungrateful to do so, after the kind terms in which he has referred to my work on the subject. I would not have promised to write this paper, had I not thought at first that it was likely to be far more laudatory than it is.

Briefly, I may say at the beginning that on almost all the main controversies as to the facts of Paul's life, I find myself in agreement, or nearly so, with Mr. Baring-Gould. It is in the general conception that he does not persuade me. I do not insist that I am right, and I am eager to study any view that differs from mine, but I feel very sure that his view is not right, because it fails to make history intelligible.

To make Mr. Gould's position clear, it should also be mentioned that the author accepts all the Epistles attributed to Paul as his genuine work, and as divinely inspired writings, and that he is fully convinced of the miraculous character of Paul's conversion. He accepts the Divine element in the narrative of the early Church, holding "that to eliminate that is to misconceive the story of Paul altogether". But he is "indisposed to obtrude the Divine and miraculous, wherever the facts" can be explained without such a supposition.

Before criticising details, I will quote what I thought one of the best passages in the book: "As the moon has one face turned away from earth, looking into infinity, a face we never see, so it is with the mystic. In him there is the spiritual face—mysterious, inexplicable, but one with which we must reckon. And this it is that makes it so difficult to properly interpret the man of a constitution like

Paul. We have to allow for a factor in his composition that escapes investigation" (p. 138).

We must try to put shortly the character of the man Paul according to Mr. Baring-Gould, and it will be best to do so as much as possible in his own words. The central point in his theory is thus stated: "The generally entertained idea of St. Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles, preaching to the unconverted, drawing the net of the Church in untried waters, must be greatly modified. He did not carry the Gospel to the heathen, though he certainly travelled among them" (p. 417, compare 148, 435, etc.).

Paul was, it seems, rarely able to persuade others fully as to his sincerity or his authority as an Apostle. "Obviously the Apostles did not altogether trust Paul's account of his vision seen at Antioch. They thought he had unwittingly coloured it to suit his own wishes" (p. 121). "It must be allowed that he possessed a faculty of giving these matters a partial aspect, and embroidering them to suit his purpose, which is calculated, if not to awake suspicion, at all events to call forth reserve" (p. 122). "Were they (*i.e.*, the elder Apostles) to accept the assurance of a man of whom all they knew was that he was a weather-cock in his religious opinions, and that in a matter of supreme importance?"

Extreme and ill-regulated statements of this kind prevent the author from achieving a fair presentation of his own case, and will tend to prevent the good points in the book from being appreciated.

Further, the author seems sometimes almost to doubt if Paul had any faith in his mission. For example, on page 239, he asks, "could Paul have thought, could these shallow sciolists have conceived it possible, that the badly expressed words in which he professed his convictions would outlast

and overmaster all their cobweb-spinning, and that, in a few years, deep into the rock where Paul stood and received their jeers, the cross would be cut?" I should have believed that Paul thought, and was even firmly convinced, that his words would last; but Mr. Gould apparently leads up to a negative answer.

The reasons why Paul could never convert any of the Gentiles, except certain God-fearing proselytes who had been already half-converted by the Jews, were various; but the chief were, first, his ignorance and utter want of education in anything except the narrowest and straightest Judaic legal teaching; secondly, his utter inability to argue.

As to Paul's ignorance of all things Greek, except a certain fluent command of a vulgar provincial dialect, so bad that it made his language in speaking a subject for contempt and ridicule in Athens and Corinth (p. 226, etc.), Mr. Gould speaks with remarkable emphasis in various passages.

Paul had been altogether outside the circle of Greek studies; and had no knowledge of Greek philosophy or thought. "Paul was as incapable of appreciating the art treasures of Athens as he was of giving proper value to its philosophy." "As he had no appreciation of art, so had he none for Nature" (p. 227). "So, he was ignorant of Greek history, and out of sympathy with the noble struggles of the past" (*ibid.*); for "the entire system of training under Gamaliel had been stunting to the finer qualities of the mind" (p. 228). "He had no knowledge of geography" (p. 317).

In Tarsus during boyhood he did not attend Greek schools, and was never allowed to come "in contact with the current and eddies of thought among the Greek students".

He was even kept by his strict father from associating with such Jews as were not strict in their adherence to the Law and to the traditions of the rabbis. He learned nothing of Greek thought; and, inasmuch as "it is not probable that there was an elementary school at Tarsus" (*i.e.*, a Jewish school), "he learned texts of his mother and the interpretation from his father". "As he worked at the loom, the old Pharisee laboured to weave as well his prejudices, interpretations, hatreds and likings into the texture of his son's mind." Thereafter, as he grew old, Paul "would be placed under instruction in the traditions with the ruler of the synagogue".

In this narrow system of education, "which had tortured his growing mind," Mr. Gould finds the explanation why Paul went "to the opposite extreme," when he "deserted the religion of his youth".¹

Not merely was Paul kept from any share in Greek education; but also the amusements of the city were forbidden to him. "As Jews, the tentmaker and his son abstained from theatrical and gladiatorial shows"; but at this point the author remembers, apparently, how frequently Paul took his illustrations from the games, and he makes an exception as regards the circus. Probably "he took advantage of having a seat² in the circus, and followed the contest with zest".

But why should we consider that the circus was permitted to Paul, and not the other amusements of the

¹ See pp. 51-53.

² The idea that Paul had a seat in the circus by right (for which I know of no justification) seems to spring from the mistaken idea (p. 60) that the Roman citizenship and even equestrian rank were gained by Paul's father from his having held office in the city. See the remarks below, on p. 340.

stadium and the amphitheatre? He very often takes his illustrations from the foot-races and athletic sports of the stadium. Once at least he uses an expression which derives its force from the *venationes* in the amphitheatre.¹ Are we not as fully justified in supposing that attendance at the stadium and amphitheatre was permitted to Paul as at the circus? Is it not obvious that, if we once admit the principle that Paul's illustrations and comparisons and metaphors give a clue to his own early experiences and education, it becomes difficult to draw any such hard line of demarcation between the Jewish boy Paul's surroundings in Tarsus and those of the young Greeks? Canon Hicks says well: "See how essentially Greek is his perpetual employment of figures drawn from athletic games. . . . Not less essentially Greek are his metaphors from the mysteries, or from civic life, or from education. It is plain that St. Paul's mind is stored with images taken from Græco-Roman life; he calls them up without effort. He returns to some of them again and again. Even when a metaphor is suggested by an Old Testament text like *Isaiah* lix. 17 and xi. 5, he works up the illustration (1 *Thess.* v. 8; *Eph.* vi. 13) after the manner of a pure Greek simply describing a Roman soldier."²

Those whose intellectual life has been chiefly spent in Greek, like Professor Ernst Curtius, or Canon E. L. Hicks (who knows as much about the Greek cities of the Asian coast at the period in question as any living man), recognise in Paul a man whose mind is penetrated with Greek thoughts and familiar with Greek ways. Those who are come to him fresh from Roman surroundings recognise in

¹ *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 230.

² *St. Paul and Hellenism*, p. 7 f. (*Studia Biblica*, iv.).

him a mind which works out in practical life many of the guiding ideas of Roman organisation, and which often expresses itself in words whose full meaning is not apparent without reference to Græco-Roman Law.

That Paul was, above all things, a Jew trained in the Mosaic Law and its scholastic or rabbinical interpretation is quite true; but the old-fashioned (unfortunately not wholly old-fashioned) idea that he was nothing more than that is miserably inadequate and utterly misleading. It has maintained itself so long, because Pauline study has usually been almost exclusively in the hands of men whose education has been directed in their early years to classical Greek authors, and then to Jewish life and history. The life of the Græco-Asiatic cities, a life inarticulate to us because its literature has wholly perished (and perished unregretted)—a life known only to the antiquary through the laborious piecing together of scattered fragments of stories, inscribed and uninscribed—is a subject which the Pauline interpreters, as a rule, only enter¹ in search of illustrations; but he who is to appreciate Paul rightly must first make himself as familiar as Hicks and Curtius have been with the life and surroundings and education, amid which he worked and preached, and then proceed to study his works, instead of regarding Paul always as the Jew, and reading him with a mind always on the outlook for Judaic ideas, and with the vague prepossession that nothing is Greek which does not resemble the Greece of Demosthenes and Plato.

The author has on page 277 ff. an interesting comparison between the Roman *Jus Gentium* (a statement of those elementary and universal principles of equity which were recognised, or supposed to be recognised, by all nations,

¹ Even the best seem to enter with minds already made up.

and which lay at the basis of all right law) in its relation to the statute law, and the Gospel principles of justice and duty in their relation to the Mosaic Law.¹ In each case the modification of hard, inelastic, formal laws was sought in a return to first principles, in an appeal to fundamental and elementary conceptions of moral rectitude. The comparison may be considered perhaps a little fanciful; but I do not think so. The distinction between principles of right and rigid regulations was in the air at that period; and the educated men were thinking of it, or, at least, were in that line of thought.

This comparison illustrates a point on which Mr. Baring-Gould differs diametrically from me; and the comparison which he himself here draws seems to tell strongly against his view and in favour of mine. It is impossible to determine how far Paul was distinctly conscious of the analogies that exist between his conception of Christianity and certain features of the Imperial system; but, if he had any consciousness of these analogies, he must have been far more familiar with the Roman world than Mr. Baring-Gould is willing to acknowledge. And, even if he were not conscious distinctly of the Roman analogies (though, for my own part, they are so numerous that I cannot believe them to have been hit upon ignorantly by him), yet at any rate his point of view is that of the educated men of the period; he is not

¹ Dr. E. Hicks refers to the same subject less fully in his suggestive little book on *Greek Philosophy and Roman Law in the New Testament*. See also *Hist. Comm. on Galatians*, pp. 337-374. Mr. Gould speaks, not quite accurately, of the *Edictum Perpetuum* as issued by the *prætores peregrini*; but it was specially the declaration by the *prætor urbanus* of the principles on which he intended to interpret justice (*jus dicere*). It is inferred that the final codified *Edictum Perpetuum* includes the equity of the peregrine prætors; but the record is that it was the codification of the *Edictum Urbanum*.

a mere narrow and ignorant Pharisee, as Mr. Gould regards him, but a man familiar with the thoughts and questions of the time.

In that antithesis lies the crucial fact on which Mr. Gould and I are opposed to one another. Regarding Christianity as having come "in the fulness of time," when the world had been in part brought to that stage of education and thought in which the new religion was comprehensible, and regarding the organisation of the Church as arising naturally out of, and excellently suited to, the facts of the time, I cannot consider Paul as being wholly ignorant of, and out of sympathy with, the Greek and Roman world.

Mr. Baring-Gould does not consider that the facts and surroundings of Paul's life are of supreme importance. "I put aside," says he, "details unnecessary to my purpose, archæological, epigraphical, historical, geographical. My book is not, therefore, a life of St. Paul, if incidents and accidents make up a man's life, but a study of his mind, the formation of his opinions, their modification under new conditions, and the direction taken by his work, under pressure of various kinds and from different sides. At the same time I have done my best endeavour to be accurate in such details as were to my purpose to mention, having had recourse to the latest and best authorities" (p. ix.).

After this depreciation of historical study we are rather surprised to find that there is contained in chaps. i. and ii. a general sketch of the character of Jewish education, thought and society—such a sketch as few would attempt to write who had not made long and careful study of the evidence. From some pages we get the impression that, in this author's estimation, when you have seen one Jew you have seen all Jews; and the Jew whom he has seen is the Jew in whom

the Talmud finds delight, and whom the rabbis of the early centuries of our era tried to train. Chap. i. describes the Palestinian Jews according to that type; and chap. ii. paints the extra-Palestinian Jews as much the same: "All the Hellenistic Jews, to the number of three millions, who made the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem to keep the Passover,¹ differed from the Jews resident in the Holy Land in no other particular than that of language" (p. 50). One rubs one's eyes after reading such a statement, and goes over it again in order to see if one has read aright, and has not omitted a negative, or in some other way got the wrong sense.

But it is an error to take the Talmudic picture of a perfect Jew for a portrait of the actual Jew of Palestine in Paul's time; and it is a still greater error to think that the foreign Jews were not often strongly affected by Greek and Roman education.² In other places the author speaks more correctly on this last point.

Mr. Baring-Gould has not much doubt that Paul married Lydia at Philippi, or would have done so "but for untoward circumstances," falling "under the more or less despotic control³ of the rich shopkeeper," like Hercules in the palace of Omphale, "and delivered from it by a very peculiar circumstance," *viz.*, the adventure with the slave girl. On the whole Mr. Gould concludes that it is more

¹ Taken literally, this seems to imply that 3,000,000 Jews annually came to Jerusalem from abroad for the Feast. "A man of the world" would hardly make such a statement; but probably the author has here merely made one of those awkward sentences which sometimes obscure his real meaning, and are apparently due to haste (see below).

² Many examples in my *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, ch. xv.

³ He thinks that the money which Paul evidently had command of at Cæsarea and in Rome was all supplied by Lydia (p. 402).

probable that the marriage did not actually come off. It was, according to him, a lucky accident that Paul had to leave hurriedly, so that "the Church of Philippi was given a chance of growth independent of his presence"; for the idea seems to rule through this book that Paul ruined every Church which he founded or interfered with, partly by his lack of ability to convert, partly by the bad influence which he had on those whom he converted. The only persons on whom he could exercise much influence were, apparently, women: in Macedonia "he liked . . . the independence of the women and their amenability to his preaching". Timothy, "evidently a tender-hearted, gentle, sensitive person, whose bringing up by two women, and whose delicate health, made him wanting in initiative, . . . was precisely the sort of person Paul liked to have about him; one who would obey without questioning and follow without murmur" (p. 206).

The author recurs frequently to his idea of a feminine element in Paul's nature. I believe he is right, for there is always something of that element in every great nature; but Mr. Gould gives an unpleasant, gibing turn to his expressions on the subject. He points out that, if Christianity was to be trammelled by being bound to the text of the Judaic Law, it never could become a religion for the world, nor one of progress. As for Paul, "this he did not see,¹ but he felt it by a sort of feminine instinct, and what he felt, that he was convinced was right". The closest analogy which he can find to illustrate Paul's character is in St. Theresa, who "was a female counterpart of St. Paul" (p. 127, a very interesting passage, well worth reading).

Mr. Gould seems more than half inclined to think that

¹I should have thought that, if there were anything in the world that Paul saw more clearly than another, it was this.

Stephen and Paul were wrong in method, and that their action was a misfortune to Christianity. The older Apostles preferred the wise and calm course of work. "They strewed the seed over every tidal wave that rolled to Jerusalem at every feast, and then retreated to the ends of the earth, whereas Paul darted about dropping grains here and there" (p. 259). Paul has had the luck to be the "most advertised," and his "comet-like whirls" are more "striking in story" than the quieter but more effective work of the other Apostles, who "sat at the centre, forming as it were a powerful battery sending out shock after shock to the limits of the civilised world" (p. 259; see also pp. 200, 300). But Paul, "as he had no knowledge of geography, supposed the world was very small, and that he could overrun and convert the whole of it in a very few years" (p. 317).

Even the blame of Nero's persecution is laid on Paul. "So little did Paul conceive of the possibility of Nero becoming a persecutor, that apparently he took the occasion of his appeal to detach the Christian community from the Synagogue, to organise it in independence, and so place it in such a position that, after the fire, the tyrant was able to put his hand down on it, and select his victims. . . . But for this step taken by Paul, it would have been difficult to distinguish them from the Jews."

Still more strange than the oft-repeated diatribes against Paul's inability to convert the heathen, or to make himself intelligible to them, are the passages in which the author describes the evil consequences of Paul's work. These culminate in the sentence: "His model Churches either stank in the nostrils of the not over nice pagans through their immoralities, or backed out of antinomism into Judaic observance" (p. 316, compare p. 304 ff., etc.).

I have left myself no space in which to speak of the many pages in which ridicule is poured on Paul's argument. "His reasonings convinced nobody, and he was himself conscious at last how poor and ineffective they were" (p. 317). Nothing is more difficult than to understand or sympathise with the style of argumentation current in ancient times. Take Plato's arguments in *Republic* I. Nothing could well seem on a superficial view more pointless or more unfair, except some of those which Plato elsewhere puts into Socrates's mouth. Yet it would be hardly more foolish to consider Plato as incapable of arguing in a style which his public could understand than it is to pour contempt on Paul's reasoning. Mr. Gould has not taken enough time to understand it.

It must be frankly stated that Mr. Baring-Gould seems not to have given himself the time to do justice to his own thesis. He has made a number of slips in details, both of fact and of style, which are hardly explicable except on the supposition of extreme hurry.

As to errors of fact, he considers that the breaking of bread, etc., at Assos (*Acts* xx. 7 f.) took place on the Saturday afternoon and evening, not on the Sunday, as the words plainly imply and the commentators whom I happen to have at hand all¹ understand; and on this, apparently, he founds an elaborate theory as to the origin and nature of the Agape-meal.² On page 74 he maintains that the seven deacons (*Acts* vi. 5) were "all Hellenistic Jews. It is hardly likely that as yet a place in the ministry would be given to a proselyte."

¹ Doubtless some others take the same view as Mr. Baring-Gould, for nothing in Luke or Paul is so clear, that some will not misunderstand it.

² See pp. 188, 253, etc. The Agape-meal had, as he thinks, a totally different meaning and origin in Jerusalem and in Antioch.

But it is expressly said by Luke that one of them, Nicolas, was a proselyte Antiochian. On page 79 he finds significance in the fact that Stephen's burial "was not conducted by the believers, though they lamented his death; but by 'devout men,' a term specially applied to the uncircumcised proselytes". Apparently, he has been content with the English version, and has not consulted the Greek Text: the "devout men," who buried Stephen, were *εὐλαβεῖς*, a term perfectly applicable to the believers, and not *σεβόμενοι*, which is the term applied to "uncircumcised proselytes". On page 242 Diolcus seems to be spoken of as a harbour on the Saronic Gulf. On pages 224-226 it would almost seem that Thessalonica and Berœa are treated as one and the same city. Mr. Baring-Gould describes the coming to Thessalonica and the riot; and "the result was that Paul and Silas were expelled from Berœa"; and this is not a mere slip of the pen, for there is no allusion to any visit to Berœa; and the confusion between the two cities continues through pages 225 and 226. On page 60 there occurs a strange sentence: "As his father was a citizen, and he likewise, they were not mere residents of Tarsus, but enjoyed the privileges and position of Roman citizenship". Taken strictly, this implies an idea that Paul's Roman rights belonged to him in virtue of his Tarsian citizenship.¹ That would, of course, be quite erroneous; but the following paragraph seems to prove that such was the author's idea, for he goes on to speak as if the enjoyment of office in the city would carry with it equestrian rank.

I cannot close without protesting against a passage on page 418: "The Americans send out and maintain missions

¹ On p. 47 he speaks more correctly on this subject; but his words there are discordant with p. 60. The view stated on p. 60 has been often maintained by writers on Paul.

to the Mohammedans in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, but the missionaries have long despaired of making one convert of the disciples of Islam, and they poach for congregations among the historic Christian Churches". In every point of view this sentence is false. The missionaries to whom Mr. Baring-Gould refers were sent out from the first for the purpose of educating the Christians, and never with the intention of converting the Mohammedans. They were welcomed and protected by the three reforming Sultans, Mahmud and his two successors, which would never have been the case had their action been in any way directed to convert the Turks or other Mohammedan peoples. Further, their primary object is not to proselytise among the Armenians, but to provide an educational system of schools and colleges for a people who had been so repressed and degraded that they were wholly without the humblest educational organisation. To this day members of many Churches attend these schools, knowing, after sixty years' experience, that no attempt will be made to interfere with their religion. I have talked frequently with members of the Armenian and the Greek Church who have been educated at the missionary schools; and speak on their authority, as well as on that of the missionaries themselves. Moreover, every one who has even the most superficial acquaintance with the facts of recent Turkish history and life knows that a great number of Bulgarians were educated at the Mission College in Constantinople, Robert College. Was Mr. Gould ignorant of this, and of the part they have played in emancipated Bulgaria, or does he think that M. Stoiloff (who succeeded Stambuloff as Prime Minister) and the other Bulgarian College students were converted, or that the missionaries aimed at converting them? In the following sentence he betrays

some apprehension that he may be ignorant : he proceeds, "these missionaries, I daresay, give themselves out as labouring among the unbelievers, but all their efforts are directed in quite another direction". This is all dragged in, without being relevant in any way to the subject, simply in order to give Mr. Baring-Gould the opportunity of showing his dislike for people of whom he has heard vaguely, but about whose work he knows nothing, and has not thought it necessary to inquire. They seem to him to resemble Paul. In their inability to convert unbelievers, they try to pervert Christians ; and so "Paul would have liked to convert the heathen, but he could not do it ; he had not the faculty. He proposed it more than once, but there it all ended."

We should have expected that a writer about St. Paul, who adopts "the line of a novelist with some experience of life," would take some trouble to familiarise himself with the general facts and situation of the country where his scene lies. Mr. Baring-Gould prefers to be ignorant of the modern facts, though he has certainly taken some trouble to acquaint himself with the ancient. But he can never free himself from a ruling prejudice against the method of "any Paul or Barnabas rushing about founding Churches" (p. 260).