

*THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST'S  
KINGDOM.*

II.

IN the Sermon on the Mount it was our Lord's first care to proclaim that in His kingdom the demands of righteousness were to be rather heightened than relaxed. He intimates that the natural goodness of the publican and the legal righteousness of the Pharisee must be outdone; that natural disposition must be underpropped by principle, and that outward and compulsory sanctity must be replaced by inward and spontaneous goodness. In all that passes for righteousness these qualities must be found. But what are to be the contents of the new righteousness? In what forms is it to express itself?

Our Lord makes no attempt to draw up a code which shall anticipate and legislate for every situation in human life. He does not put into the hands of His followers a manual of conduct which will infallibly direct them in every emergency. The futility of this method of guiding men had been abundantly illustrated in the history of those generations of the pious who had striven to adapt themselves to the requirements of the scribes. Our Lord did not, indeed, discard the Decalogue. In regard to the contents of the law as well as in respect of its spirit, He could say: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." But, instead of developing the Decalogue into a myriad of detailed precepts, He adopted the opposite method of reducing it to one great principle. This was one of the many evidences that the religion or human condition which our Lord introduced

was appropriate to the adult stage of the race, and had left childhood behind.

The principle out of which, according to our Lord, all righteousness would necessarily spring is most fully stated in His reply to the scribe, who asked Him, What commandment is the first of all? To this question Jesus answered (Mark xii. 29) : " The first is, Hear, O Israel ; the Lord our God, the Lord is one ; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And, as is added in the parallel passage in Matthew xxii. 40 : " On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." In Luke x. 25 ff., this reduction of the whole law to the principle of love is referred to a lawyer and not to Jesus. Beyschlag suggests that either the lawyer had it from the mouth of Jesus, or that Luke's version of the conversation mingles two incidents. But the conversation which follows in Luke's narrative is itself sufficient proof that even liberal and progressive lawyers of our Lord's time had not by any means grasped the root-principle of the law. Besides, our Lord was conscious that, as announced by Him, the law of love was " a new commandment." It was new in including within the term " neighbour " every man who had need of help, in exhibiting the kind of help which was most needed, and not least in at once revealing the reality of love as a motive, and in furnishing a sufficient spring or source of love.

It may at first sight seem surprising that Jesus should so seldom explicitly urge the love of God. This surprise is reduced when we reflect that the love of God manifests itself in various forms in human conduct, and that these forms were explicitly inculcated by our Lord ; but especially when we reflect that His entire manifestation was intended so to reveal the Father as to quicken in man a childlike love. To

command men to love God, to explain the reasonableness and duty of loving Him, has little effect in comparison with an effective presentation of God in a lovable aspect. The effectual method of producing love to God is, not to reiterate, emphasize, or enforce the commandment to love Him, but to exhibit Him so that love necessarily springs up in the heart. The ordinary teacher not being able to compass the latter method, contents himself with the former; the true teacher, who is once for all to make the love of God possible, brings Him within human sight and human feeling, and supersedes the necessity of elaborate verbal inculcation. In all that He said, and in all that He did, therefore, Jesus was saying, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; He was bringing home to men's consciousness a God whom they could not but love.

But He also directed attention to the various modes of expression which the love of God would find for itself in human conduct. With great elaboration and insistence, according to the Fourth Gospel, He explained that His whole activity sprang from His love of God. It was His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to accomplish His work (John iv. 34). "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do" (xiv. 31). His own life, therefore, was the supreme and final illustration of the expression in human conduct which the love of God finds for itself. It was not only the manifestation of God's love for man, but also the full and fit expression of man's love for God. And hence He becomes our supreme law. His example covers our life more adequately than any code of instructions could. His example never leaves us at a loss, because it is not the detail of His life but the spirit of it we are to reproduce. We need not live houseless, though He did; we can follow Him without becoming peripatetic teachers like Himself. But by virtue of His example and of the detail of it, we come into

the knowledge of His Spirit, and are drawn on to His devotedness and dedication to God. And as His love for the Father taught Him what was the Father's will, so the only path for us to that knowledge is sympathy with the Father, guided and quickened by the Spirit of Christ.

But besides showing in His own life what the love of God prompted, He also explicitly taught that the love of God, implying and nourishing, as it does, sympathy with Him, necessarily manifests itself in the doing of His will. If true, love cannot satisfy itself with verbal professions, but only with expenditure of activity, of being, in the fulfilment of the loved one's purposes (Matt. vii. 21). The very reason why the love of God is declared to be the first commandment, or the radical principle in human nature is that it has, as the necessity of its life, a governing place in the whole range of human conduct, and a transforming power in human character. If true, it will conquer all unworthy and irreconcilable affections, and will thus become a purifying principle in man. This governing place of the love of God is perhaps best seen in our Lord's demand that He Himself, God's representative, shall be loved with a supreme and unrivalled affection (Matt. x. 37; Luke xiv. 26). In the love of God all other loves are judged, those that are unworthy being extinguished and made impossible, those that are worthy being fostered and strengthened. It is only when supreme that the love of God becomes the regenerating, cleansing, and elevating principle in the heart.

This supremacy of the love of God is especially pressed by our Lord over against the other great competitor of man's service. "No man can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. vi. 24). The context shows that by mammon is here meant what we with sufficient definiteness call "the world"; and our Lord bids us mark that it is impossible to divide our devotion between God and the world as if adjusting the claims of rival com-

petitors, but that, on the contrary, the one service must be subordinate to the other, that is, must be rendered only in so far as is necessary in order to accomplish the service of the other. First in our thoughts must be the inquiry, How can we serve God? and we are only so far to busy ourselves with the world as may be necessary in order to our serving God. We may find that the bulk of our time must be consumed in concernment with worldly affairs; but so long as it is thus we can best serve God, we are not disobeying Christ's word. For the world is not inherently evil: it is evil only in so far as we make it so by allowing it an undue place in our affections.

That our Lord took no Manichæan or monkish view of the world is apparent from His delight in nature, His free entrance into human joys and festivities, His interest in all human occupations, and His explicit teaching on several occasions. Through all nature the presence of His Father shone. It was He who clothed the lilies and fed the birds. The whole world was the expression of the Father's kindness: in the sun and the rain there was a spiritual significance. In the innocent joys of men He took a part. The marriage bond is drawn closer by His word (Matt. xix. 3-9), while at the same time He recognises that marriage is not for all. Children He delights in as the joy and hope of the world. Especially in the parable of the unjust steward does He set forth the relation of wealth to the eternal world. There (Luke xvi. 9-13), while the same lesson is being taught, that men cannot serve both God and mammon, it is at the same time shown that the service of God involves the use of mammon. The main teaching of the parable is that wealth or intercourse with the world and the world's goods is put in our power in order that through a right use of what we now possess our eternal condition may be secure and happy. And our Lord does not shrink from putting this in the strongest way, and affirming that the discipline

we receive by the ordinary social life of this world is necessary for our probation: "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

In the love of God the love of man is involved. This is not so explicitly affirmed by Jesus as by His followers (1 John iv. 20; James iii. 9, i. 27), but it is involved in much that He says; especially in such words as those of Matthew v. 43-45. Our Lord found it needful to give fuller interpretations of the second great commandment than of the first, because the prepossessions of the Jews tended to blind them to its significance. He found Himself compelled to enlarge the sphere in which it was ordinarily applied, and also to illustrate what was involved in "loving"; or, as Beyschlag puts it,<sup>1</sup> He had to answer a twofold question: Who is my neighbour? and What is it I must do to my neighbour?

The former question was put in express terms to our Lord by the lawyer already referred to. And in reply Jesus uttered the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke x. 30-37), which was so constructed as to bring out clearly that neighbourhood is determined not by locality, or race, or official connection and obligation, but by pity or love. I am neighbour to him I can help and do help. He is neighbour to me who needs my help. Love does not ask the question, Who is my neighbour? It recognises no barriers to its expression. No needy person is born over its border. All such distinctions as are involved in the question, Who is my neighbour? have no existence for love.

The same subject is handled in the Sermon on the Mount from a different point of view. Here the barriers between man and man which had been erected by Jewish prejudice or misunderstanding were removed, and the very claim to stand in a peculiar relation to God, which hitherto had nursed in the Jew alienation and a sense of superiority, was

<sup>1</sup> *N. T. Theologie*, i. 112.

used to urge universal charity. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. v. 43-45; cp. Luke vi. 27-36; John xiii. 34; Matt. xviii. 32, the parable of the unforgiving servant). That it was not generally understood among our Lord's contemporaries that love to man as man was a duty, is apparent from the elaborate manner in which He inculcates it.

In thus removing all barriers between man and man, and in resting the whole of human conduct on this one principle of love, our Lord introduced a new idea. It is quite true that in the Wisdom literature of the Jews anticipations of His teaching regarding the forgiveness of injuries (Prov. xv. 1; Eccles. xxviii. 2-5), being kind to enemies (Prov. xxiv. 17, xxv. 21), giving alms freely (Tobit iv. 7), and so forth, may be found. It is even true that Plato inculcates the forgiveness of injuries, and repudiates the popular opinion that justice means to do good to one's friends and harm to one's enemies. Confucius and Mencius remarkably anticipate the royal law of doing to others as we would be done by. But "anyhow, Christianity may claim this peculiar merit, that it has set up that type of conduct as a general law for every man, which among the ancients was admired as the exceptive virtue of the few" (Blackie's *Four Phases of Morals*, p. 283). And moreover the significant feature of our Lord's teaching is that He rested the entire strain of the relations of man to man on this one principle.

In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord both gives us a compendious guide to all intercourse with our fellow-men, and exemplifies it in a number of details. The principle which is to guide us universally is this: "Whatsoever ye

would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt. vii. 12). Here the instinct of self-preservation and self-help is enlisted in the service of others, and that very principle which might seem most seriously to militate against sacrifice for our neighbour is used in his service. Sympathetically putting ourselves in his place, we at once apprehend what he requires and are also incited to aid him in its attainment. The excellence of the law is twofold. There are no circumstances in which it does not prove a sufficient guide, and there are no persons who cannot apply it; the simplest needs no other counsellor to instruct him, and the wisest can discover no fuller source of light.

The details by means of which our Lord exemplifies what love to our neighbour requires are given in Matthew v. 38-42. The injunctions recorded in these and the preceding verses have given ceaseless trouble to interpreters, and have from time to time elicited from the critics of the Christian Church a good deal of plausible but fallacious calumny. John Stuart Mill, in his stimulating, though often misleading treatise on Liberty, has the following: "The maxims and precepts contained in the New Testament are considered sacred, and accepted as laws, by all professing Christians. Yet it is scarcely too much to say that not one Christian in a thousand guides or tests his individual conduct with reference to these laws. . . . All Christians believe that the blessed are the poor and humble and those who are ill-used by the world; that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven; that they should judge not lest they be judged; that they should swear not at all; that they should love their neighbour as themselves; that if one take their cloak, they should give him their coat also; that they should take no thought for the morrow; that if they would be perfect they should sell all that they have and



give it to the poor. They are not insincere when they say that they believe these things. They do believe them, as people believe what they have always heard lauded and never discussed. But in the sense of that living belief which regulates conduct, they believe these doctrines just up to the point to which it is usual to act upon them."

From a different point of view, and with greater vehemence, these sentiments have of late years been reinforced by Count Tolstoi. This earnest and Christian writer attributes the unsuccess of Christianity to the fact that the Sermon on the Mount has not been literally interpreted and enforced in conduct. And not only such leaders of opinion, but many a humble Christian also has been of this mind. Anxious to discover why the world is no better and happier, and why the religion of Christ does so little to mend it, he reads the Sermon on the Mount and says, This is the secret; men have not obeyed Christ. Here are precepts which the Church ignores. Christianity does not mend the world, for this simple reason, that Christianity as Christ meant it does not exist in the world, but only a spurious, degenerate, pithless imitation of it.

These precepts therefore demand special attention. Our Lord's prohibition of oaths (Matt. v. 33-37) has been interpreted by the Society of Friends in such a sense that they refuse to take an oath even in a court of justice, or to employ any confirmatory addition to their "Yea, yea." This seems to be a misapprehension of our Lord's meaning. It is against the Oriental habit of interlarding the whole conversation with oaths that our Lord declares Himself. The recognised distinction between the Oriental and the Anglo-Saxon is the false and lying habit of the one, and the frankness and truth of the other. But where lying is the habit a statement is accepted only when accompanied by the strongest asseverations. Hence the constant use of oaths in conversation. Where we should say, "Is that

possible?" or simply "Indeed?" the Arab says "Wallah," that is, "By God," or "Do you say that on oath?" All such swearing, says our Lord, cometh of evil, or "of the the evil one," ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ. In chapter xiii. 19, 38, ὁ πονηρὸς is used of the enemy who sows bad seed in the field. In the Lord's Prayer the same meaning is admissible. But in the closely succeeding verse of this fifth chapter, v. 39, a personal evil one may indeed be meant, but not the devil. In favour of the personal interpretation in verse 37 it might be urged that the father of lies is certainly the father of strong language. It results from the want of faith between man and man. A man's "yea" should be as good as his oath, and happily often is. Sometimes swearing is merely the inarticulate emphasis of ignorance, and is used by persons who do not know their mother-tongue sufficiently well to be articulately and intelligently emphatic. As Carlyle says of his father, "In anger he had no need of oaths, his words were like sharp arrows that smote into the very heart" (*Reminiscences*, i. 8). Simplicity of language accomplishes the speaker's purpose better than all exaggeration and asseveration, for through it truthfulness of heart and mind come to be recognised.

The Quaker movement has not been without appreciable result for good in society and in commerce, making some stand for truth and much-needed simplicity in life, but it is impossible to give to our Lord's words the application for which they contend. Certainly Paul did not so understand them, for on urgent occasion he used the strongest oaths possible, as in 2 Corinthians i. 23: "I call God to witness upon my soul"; and in the same Epistle, xi. 31: "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not." If we are not prepared to say that Paul's language on these occasions is "of evil," then we must conclude that our Lord's words are spoken generally and indicate the direction in which we should

strive rather than lay down a hard and fast rule for every possible case.

Other interpreters, notably Mr. Ruskin, have laid hold of the words, "from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (v. 42), and have argued that it is unlawful for a Christian to take interest on money lent. If these and the other precepts of this Sermon are to be taken in rigid literality, the inference is inevitable. But in regard to this prohibition it inevitably occurs to the mind that there are two very different classes of persons who seek loans. There are persons of slender means or no means at all, women too old, or too delicate, or too inexperienced to cope with the world except at a great disadvantage, friends in a temporary difficulty, and those countless cases of genuine need which are constantly arising in a society like ours; and there are, on the other hand, the wholly different classes of persons who wish money to push a public undertaking, or for their own commercial benefit. To treat the two classes alike is unjust. To require interest in the one case is a cruelty; in the other a justifiable transaction. The one class can only with distress give interest; the other class is prepared and glad to give it.

The interpretation of these precepts aid us to see the meaning of this whole passage and of all similar injunctions. They depict an ideal state. They point in the direction towards which all Christians must strive. To enforce them uniformly, in all circumstances and cases, is impossible. Our Lord apparently did not intend this. "He uses an ideal statement, for by means of an ideal statement He can best work actual results." "No snare of sin is half so dangerous an enemy to goodness as an imperfect ideal."<sup>1</sup> Useless also is it to expound these precepts in detail. He only understands them who does his own best to live into their spirit. They are intended to give a concrete and

<sup>1</sup> Mackintosh's *Christ and the Jewish Law*, p. 95.

easily remembered expression of the ideal which Christian men will honestly seek to realize in their life. They are of the nature of proverbs which the dull logical mind, that concerns itself only with the letter, will break its teeth upon, but which honesty sucks the truth out of and converts into invigorating blood. The precepts of Christ are of use only to those who are prepared to make the most of them; and he who recognises that there is teaching here which must not be lightly passed by as impracticable, because it is difficult of application, will not find it impossible to discriminate between those cases in which a literal fulfilment is obligatory, and those in which he can through the definite precept meet and satisfy the spirit of the Master. These strongly worded precepts have served to turn men's minds to the more peculiar aspects of Christ's ethical teaching. They have served to bring home to the mind of Christendom the necessity of cultivating the spirit they embody, and they have done so with tenfold the force which would have been exerted by prosaic instructions.

The type of character which is formed by the ethical teaching and spirit of Christ has its root in these radical graces of love to God and love to man: and these again are rooted in the great truths set in the forefront of Christ's teaching, the Fatherhood of God and the consequent Brotherhood of men. Love, carrying with it the essence of Christian morality, was therefore especially urged by the Apostles. And it is interesting to trace how this root grace develops into the various virtues as the exigencies of human life evoke this or that manifestation of Christian character. It is not only the passive virtues of meekness and lowliness of mind, of patience and forgivingness, of endurance of wrong and submission to oppression, that spring from love; but equally the active and aggressive virtues of courage, and truth, and self-devotion. It is obvious in all human life that love is thus the mother of all

fineness and strength of character, and that where love exists there you may expect heroism and self-sacrifice, justice and truth. And the distinction of the morality introduced by Christ consists in this, that He took this mother-virtue and gave it its true and dominating place, and by disclosing the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men, and identifying both these doctrines with His own person and revelation, He at once gave an extension to the realm of love, and furnished it with a root in reality such as it had never before known.

MARCUS DODS.

ON THE PROPER NAMES IN S. MARK'S GOSPEL.

A STUDY IN THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM.

I PROPOSE in this article to take the proper names of persons and places which occur in S. Mark's Gospel, and to examine what becomes of them in the parallel sections (as far as there are such) of SS. Matthew and Luke. My object in doing this is to draw attention to what I believe to be a new and interesting argument in favour of the oral theory of the origin of the Synoptic Gospels.

To save the reader's time I assume at the outset that the oral theory is true. The arguments in support of it will be given as the article proceeds. I assume also that S. Mark i. 2-xvi. 8 is practically conterminous with what we may call, after Papias, "S. Peter's Memoirs of the Lord," or "Petrine Tradition," which I believe to constitute the first cycle of Oral Gospel.

In deciding which passages of SS. Matthew and Luke are to be considered parallel to S. Mark, I have generally followed Mr. Rushbrooke's *Synopticon*. Even in the history of the Passion, where many of S. Luke's narratives appear to me to come from independent sources, I have