

after his reconciliation to St. Paul, especially in Roman circles, where he was known only as St. Paul's faithful minister. There seems to be no reason for setting aside the literal meaning of the word, or for doubting that we have in it a reference to a personal peculiarity which had impressed itself on the memory of the Roman Church. Such a defect, to whatever cause it was due, may have moulded the course of John Mark's life. By closing against him a more ambitious career, it may have turned his thoughts to the various forms of ministry for which he was perhaps naturally fitted. As the colleague of St. Paul and the interpreter of St. Peter, "Mark the stump-fingered" has rendered enduring services to the Church, which, in the absence of such an infirmity, it might never have been his lot to undertake.

H. B. SWETE.

THE FINAL STAGE OF CULTURE.

(REVELATION xxii. 2.)

A TREE in the midst of a street is a beautiful thing. Sometimes it is sad as well as beautiful. I remember, in the days of boyhood, in one of the busiest streets of the most commercial of cities, how there stood in the heart of the thoroughfare the stump of an old tree. One could not look at it without a twinge of pain; it was the last rose of summer. It marked the final trace of a kind of life that was passing away. It told that the country was being expelled by the town. It suggested a state of things that was dead, an age of rustic simplicity which a past generation enjoyed, and which had left behind only the skirt of its garment.

But it is a very different matter when the tree has overtaken the city instead of the city overtaking the tree.

Where you *plant* trees in the midst of a street, you have the beauty without the sadness. And why so? Because the rural element has there changed its place. It is no longer the pursued, but the pursuer. It is no longer the spectacle of expiring country life; it is a marriage between the country and the town. It exhibits to the eye the union of things which are commonly thought of in isolation, and presents to the mind the image of a meeting between the old culture and the new.

Such is the impression conveyed by the picture before us. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." The tree of life is here, as I take it, the generic name for an entire *class* of trees. Each bank of the river is said to be studded with trees of this order or species. The effect is that there rises up in the imagination a picture of the meeting of extremes. We have a feeling such as we experience in seeing the old man play with the child, or in witnessing in age the spirit of romantic youth. St. John's ideal of the city of God—the final or Christian stage of civilization, is a paradox. It is something different from all previous ideals. It is a union of extremes. It joins two ends of the string; it unites elements that hitherto had been deemed antagonistic. Let us try to estimate the force of this new conception.

There have been two extreme shades of culture—the garden and the street. The garden is the earlier. It is the child-life of humanity. I have in a previous paper expressed my opinion that the tree of life in the book of Genesis is meant to convey the idea of spontaneous energy. It is life unimpeded, unrestrained, unfettered by the sense of obstacle. It has no fear, no feeling of limit, and therefore no self-consciousness. It is marked by simplicity, or

as we say, rusticity. Because it has no sense of obstacle it is an age of faith; because it has no fear it is an age of outspokenness. It says what it believes, and it believes what is said. It enters thoroughly into the enjoyment of everything; its joy is its strength. It is more allied than any other period to the life of the plant. Its defect is that it *is* in the garden. It is a purely individual life. It has not awakened to the fact that each man is but the fragment of a vast building. It has not realised the pressure of another life than the personal—the life of the community. It lives by the impulse of the moment; it has not learned that the moment affects the centuries.

At the other remove from the garden, and reached after a series of gradations, is the street. It is the direct opposite. If the former was all spontaneity, this is all convention. If the former was the individual without the community, this is the community without the individual. If the former was the yielding to the impulse of the moment, this is the death of all impulse. We become a part of the community. We cease to have a will of our own. We live by rule—the rule of the street. We do what others do, and because others do it. Custom becomes our conscience, the deviation from custom our reproach of conscience. The spontaneity of the individual life has given place to the fear of being singular; the city has put out the garden.

Now, in the view of St. John, the ultimate stage of culture—the culture of Christ, differs from either of these; and it differs in the direction not of contrast but of amalgamation. It finds in its bosom a place where the discordant elements may unite and rest. The marriage supper of the Lamb, which reconciles so many things, reconciles also the extremes of civilisation—the garden and the street. It gives back the tree of life—the spontaneity of the child's heart, the sense of unrestrained joy. But it plants this

tree of life in a new locality—in the midst of the thoroughfare, in the scene of the old conventionalism. How does it cure this conventionalism? By a thing called love. Instead of making me feel that I am a part of the community, it makes me feel that the community is a part of me. Instead of sinking my individual self in others, it enlarges my individual self to include others. I enter into a fellowship where every one is recognised as more than a brother—as a member of the same body. It becomes possible literally to love my neighbour as myself. There is a worldly conformity which is the result of *unworldliness*. I may see in the streets of the city a phase of thought which I have surmounted, but which was mine yesterday. I put myself in the place of my own yesterday. By the very spontaneity of love, by the very spirit of the garden, I enter into the work of the street, and live in the experience of other lives.

Christian culture, then, in the view of St. John, is a marriage—the union of the garden and the street. Now, every union implies a giving up of something. Each side surrenders an element for the use of the other. Not only is there no exception here, but there is in the passage itself a distinct implication of the special things which each of the parties surrender. We shall consider in the light of St. John's own statement these two things—what the garden gives to the street, and what the street gives to the garden.

And first, he says that the garden has given to the street variety. In the midst of the thoroughfare the tree of life yields a diversity of fruit each month. The garden is naturally more varied in sympathy than the street. In rural life we see human nature in all its forms, unrestrained and luxuriant. In the life of the town these varieties tend to disappear. Men are planed down to a common level, and that which makes the difference between them is more

or less suppressed. But in the marriage supper of the Lamb, in the fellowship which comes from being members of Christ's body, John says it will be very different. The tree of life will here flourish in an environment opposite to the home of its nativity. It will flourish in the street by *transforming* the street—by impregnating the life of the town with its own variedness. Henceforth we shall cease to associate the city with uniformity. It will become what the country is—a place of human nature. It will break forth like rustic life into a multitude of types. It will reveal what the life of the peasantry reveals—the wondrous diversities of the spirit of humanity, the many mouldings of the mind of man, the myriad forms in which the human heart can live and move and have its being.

There is a deep significance in the monthly yielding of the fruit. It suggests that the varieties in the city of God are proved and illustrated by the varieties of type in the character of the twelve Apostles. There is a very remarkable passage in the opening chapter of John's Gospel in which, if I am not mistaken, he has himself given us a clue to the principle on which one apostle's nature was allowed to differ from that of the other. I allude to the words in John i., 16, "of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace." The expression "grace for grace" has puzzled the commentators. I doubt if any phrase would render it exactly into English. But I have no doubt at all that it means and ought to be translated "*grace in contrast to grace.*" What he wants to say is this: "Wherever any of us had a bias of the mind toward a particular direction, Christ gave us a bias in the *opposite* direction. The gift which came to each, came to the side on which he was weak. A man was inspired, not in the point where he was already strong, but in the places where he was defective. Every man of our company had to enter the city by a new gate—the gate over against that by which he first came in.

He that entered by the north had to walk toward the south. He that dawned in the east had his setting in the west. He that began on the top of the hill had to end his pilgrimage in the recesses of the valley."

And if this is true to the Greek original, is it not also true to the fact? Take any one of the New Testament leaders. Do we not find that each gets a special gift exactly in the direction opposite to his first endowment? Take John himself. He is by nature a man of fire, of eager haste to realise the goal. What does he become? A man of waiting power, tarrying till the Lord comes—a man who has reached the long-suffering of love, or, as he calls it in the Apocalypse, "the patience of Christ." Take Peter. He is by nature, that is to say, by original grace, the man who sees the crown. His eye, like the eye of the child, rests on the completed triumph, and observes not the cross between. What does he become? Read his first epistle, and what do you see? A man of the cross distinctively, before all things—emphasising the sweet uses of adversity, declaring that the trial of faith is more precious than gold. Or, to name no other, take Paul. He is, by first endowment, the apostle of faith. In the heat of controversy, in the atmosphere of theological strife, he might be in danger of forgetting that faith worketh by love. But with the next month there comes to him a new kind of fruit—the charity for his brother man. It breaks forth in the most glorious of all hymns; it permeates every crevice and corner of his being; it makes him gentler, mellowed, every day. The last state of these men is better than their first.

Here, then, is the answer to the first question—What does the garden give to the street? We come now to the second—What does the street give to the garden? And the answer is, an interest in secular or political life—the healing of the nations. The great defect of the garden is

an absence of this interest. We live among the flowers and the thoughts suggested by them, and we forget that outside men toil and spin, work and weep, struggle and die. The leaves of the garden are all right; but they have not found their function. They are for the healing of the nations; but in the garden there are no nations; there are only individuals. The tree of life has too limited a sphere. To give it an adequate sphere you must plant it in a community. You must bring it into the city, into the haunts of men. You must let it be planted beside rivers of water—places of mercantile traffic, places of communication between land and land. Hitherto, it has been doing less than its destined work; it has been ministering only to the private troubles of the heart. It will reach the cause of its being when it comes to the healing of the nations.

And, let me ask, Is not St. John here again true to the facts? Take any nation that needs healing—needs civilising, as we say. What is that which it requires? Is it not simply the tree of life? Is not its disease just the fact that it has not unimpeded energy, that some part of the vital system is wanting? The excesses of unhealed nations are the result of defects—parts wanting in the framework. It was so even with that Roman world which St. John desired to convert. In some respects it was more civilised than the Christian community; yet there was a branch of the tree of life which it did not possess and without which its development was retarded. But if it were so even in John's day, what shall we say of ours? Civilisation has passed over from the Pagan to the Christian world. The enemies of the cross are no longer the sons of culture. The nations left to us outside of Christ are distinguished by their want of animation. They might be called "*dead in trespasses and in sin.*" They are dead—no longer like the Roman world by the absence of a single branch—but by the want of half their sap. India, with all her gropings

after infinitude, has neglected an element at her door—the life of woman. China, with all her boasted antiquity, has not gone back far enough to take up the spontaneity of the child. The Mohammedan nations, with all their claim to possess the Prophet of humanity, have ignored humanity itself—the impulses of the heart. Ours is a far more arduous task than that of the first missionaries. It is no longer mere conversion; it is, along with that, civilisation, culture, the spirit of progress, the rights of man. The tree is defective all round—in root, leaves, and branches; it is “more life and fuller that we want.”

Where shall we find it for our missionary labours? Remember that, though every nation is defective, they are not defective in the same way. The fruit that meets the want of one will not meet the want of another; that is just the reason why, in the process of healing, the seer beholds “all *manner* of fruits.” What is wanted for these nations is a complete life—a life all round. Each is deprived of some vital centre; the life that shall kindle all must be a universal life. The command to teach all nations is a bold command; it asks the possession of a diversified nature. Buddhism was only victorious over one class of minds; it had but one manner of fruit. The power that would demand a conquest of the world must have fruits for all nations.

And here it is that Christianity finds both its consistency and its strength. For Christianity is the presentation of a complete life—a tree in all its branches. “Ye are complete in Him” is the emphatic utterance in which Paul expresses his sense of Christ’s universal adaptation. In Him every want finds its special supply; *that* is the warrant for a universal mission field. Here the spirit of India will find that which it lacks—the life of womanhood, the feminine qualities of the soul. Here the spirit of China will meet what it has left behind—the freshness of a little

child. Here the savage tribes will encounter a new ideal of manly strength—the power of self-restraint. Here the followers of Mohammed will be stirred by an impulse more potent than the sense of destiny—the throbbings of affection, the instincts of the heart. Here is courage for the over-timid and fear for the over-courageous, a burden for the careless and an absence of care for the burdened, a power that can soften the hard and give hardihood to the soft and effeminate. It is because it is the tree of life—life universal, life all round, life with every manner of fruit at its command, that the religion of Christ is the healer of the nations.

GEORGE MATHESON.

ARE THERE TWO EPISTLES IN 2 CORINTHIANS?

(Continued.)

THE occasion of St. Paul's writing 2 Corinthians i.-ix. was the successful result of the mission of Titus to the Corinthian Church. This is admitted by all. The keynote of these chapters is truly described in the *Speaker's Commentary* as "Comfort in affliction"; the word *παράκλησις* occurring eleven times in these chapters, while it does not appear once in 2 Corinthians x.-xiii. The Apostle does not leave us in doubt as to the cause of this comfort, and of the joy with which he says that he now overflows (2 Cor. vii. 4). It was the coming of Titus, and not his coming only, but the tidings which he brought with him of the repentance and zeal of the Corinthian Church, which had changed his great sorrow into great joy. This keynote of *παράκλησις* is struck in the very beginning of the first chapter, and it is maintained throughout; for whenever for a short interval the writer digresses in order to give counsel or warning, he comes back again quickly to the