

THE CITIES OF THE PAULINE CHURCHES.

IN gradually building up a proper conception of the transformation which St. Paul wrought in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, it is necessary to estimate rightly the world in which his work was performed, viz. the cities in which and the society to which he preached. The two most important documents for the historian are the Epistle to the Galatians and the First Epistle to the Corinthians: these have to be studied in their relation to the known facts of history and life in the countries concerned. The first of these documents has already been treated by the present writer with such thoroughness as he can attain. The second has been similarly treated in the EXPOSITOR in its first half; and the succeeding paper of the series, written eight months ago, he desires to think over for another year before printing. But the most salient questions in the rest of *First Corinthians* relate rather to the inner history of Christianity than to its external relations; and it is the latter which we are desirous of studying.

Next to those two documents in importance, as the foundation on which the historian of the Pauline Churches must build, come the letters of John to the Seven Churches of Asia. It is necessary to become very clear about their meaning before attempting the difficult problems connected with the letters to the Colossians and to Timothy.

As a preliminary, we must get some conception of the general characteristics of the great Graeco-Asiatic cities in which the Pauline Churches grew. Disregarding differences, we shall try to describe briefly the chief forces which

had been at work in all those cities, and the most prominent features common to them. If this had been systematically done by writers on the subject, probably some current statements about Paul would never have been made.

Let us look specially at the Seleucid foundations, the many Antiochs, Seleucias, etc., scattered over the western Asiatic lands. The fact that Tarsus itself was once called Antioch, and lost that name chiefly because there were too many cities already bearing it, shows how important those Seleucid cities are for our purpose. Paul's experience of Greek life was gained mainly in Antioch on the Cydnus; and the knowledge of Greek thought and society which he acquired there he applied afterwards to the work which fell to his lot in Antioch on the Orontes, Pisidian Antioch, Ephesus, etc.

The successors of Alexander the Great were Greek kings, ruling oriental lands and peoples. To maintain their hold on their dominions it was necessary to build up a suitable organization in the countries over which they ruled. Their method everywhere was similar: it was to make cities that should be at once garrisons to dominate the country and centres of Graeco-Asiatic¹ manners and education, which the kings were desirous of spreading among their oriental subjects. Sometimes they founded new cities, where previously there seem to have been only villages. Sometimes they introduced an accession of population and change of constitution in already existing cities, a process which may be described as refounding. In both cases alike a new name, connected with the Seleucid dynasty,² was almost

¹ We use the rather pedantic adjective to describe the form which Greek civilization was forced to assume, as it attempted to establish itself in oriental lands: it did not merely change the cities, it was itself strongly modified in the attempt.

² We speak of the Seleucid foundations; but similar remarks apply also to other foundations, Ptolemaic, Pergamenian, etc.

invariably substituted for the previous name of the village or city.

The new population consisted generally of colonists brought from foreign countries, who were considered intruders and naturally not much liked by the older population. The colonists were granted property and privileges in their new cities; and they knew that the continuance of their fortunes and rights depended on the permanence of the Seleucid government. Thus those strangers constituted a loyal garrison in every city where they had been planted. With them were associated in loyalty the whole party that favoured the Seleucid policy, or hoped to profit by it. It would appear that these constituted a powerful combination in the cities. They were in general the active, energetic, and dominating party.

How important in the New Testament writings those new foundations of the Greek kings were, is brought out very clearly by a glance over the list of cities. Tarsus, Syrian Antioch, Pisidian Antioch, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded or refounded by Seleucid kings: Ephesus, Smyrna, Troas, Pergamum, and Philadelphia, by other Greek kings in the same period and under similar circumstances.¹

Two classes of settlers were specially required and encouraged in the Seleucid colonies. In the first place, of course, soldiers were needed. These were found chiefly among the mercenaries of many nations—but mostly of northern race, Macedonians, Thracians,² etc.—who made up the strength of the Seleucid armies. The harsh, illiterate, selfish, domineering tone of those soldier-citizens was often satirized by the Greek writers of the third and second centuries

¹ Troas, Pisidian Antioch, and Lystra were refounded at a later date as Roman colonies.

² A Thracian soldier in 2 *Maccabees* xii. 35. Thyatira was a Macedonian colony. Laodicea and Philadelphia perhaps had Thracian and Mysian colonists: see *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. pp. 34, 200.

before Christ, who delighted to paint them as braggarts, cowards at heart, boasting of false exploits ; and the boastful soldier, the creation of Greek wit and malice, has been perpetuated since that time on the Roman and the Elizabethan stage in traits essentially the same. -

But the Greek kings knew well that soldiers alone were not enough to establish their cities on a permanent basis. Other colonists were needed, able to manage, to lead, to train the rude oriental peasantry in the arts on which civilized life must rest, to organize and utilize their labour and create a commercial system. The experience of the present day in the cities of the east Mediterranean lands shows where such colonists could best be found. They were Greeks and Jews. Nowadays Armenians also would be available ; but at that time Armenia had hardly come within reach of even the most elementary civilization. Only among the Greeks and the Jews was there that familiarity with ideals, that power and habit of thinking for themselves and of working for a future and remote end, which the kings needed in their colonists. Modern students do not as a rule conceive the Jews as an educated race, and some can hardly find language strong enough to describe their narrowness and deadness of intellect. But when compared with the races that surrounded them, the Greeks excepted, the Jews stood on a far higher intellectual platform : they knew one book (or, rather, one collection of books) well, and it was a liberal education to them.

One might hardly expect to find that the Greeks were loyal subjects of Seleucid kings. They were apt to be democratic and unruly ; but it is as true of ancient as it is of modern times that the Greeks are " better and more prosperous under almost any other government than they are under their own." ¹ They accommodated themselves with their usual dexterity and pliancy to their position ; and

¹ *Impressions of Turkey*, p. 256.

circumstances, as we have seen, made them dependent on the kings. The stagnant and unprogressive oriental party looked askance at and disliked the Greek element; and the latter must regard the kings as their champions, even though the Seleucid kings were far too autocratic and too strongly tinged with the oriental fashions for the Greek colonists to feel in thorough sympathy with them. But settlers and kings alike had the common interest that they must dominate the uneducated mass of the ancient population. Thus the constitution of the new cities was a compromise, a sort of limited monarchy, where democratic freedom and autocratic rule tempered and restrained each other; and the result was distinctly favourable to the development and prosperity of the cities.

It may seem even stranger that the Jews should be found by Seleucid kings their best and most loyal subjects outside of Palestine, for those kings were considered by the Jews of Palestine to be the most deadly enemies of their race and religion. But the Jew outside of Palestine was a different person and differently situated from the Jew in his own land. Abroad he was resigned to accept the government of the land in which he lived, and to make the best of it; and he found that loyalty was by far the best policy.¹ He could be useful to the government; and the government was eager to profit by and ready to reward his loyalty. Thus their interests were identical.

The fullest freedom in religion was granted to those Jewish settlers. The ordinary regulations of the cities were modified to suit their beliefs and customs. When allowances of oil were given to other citizens, the royal law was that an equivalent in money should be granted to the Jews, whose scruples forbade them to use oil that a Gentile had

¹ Moreover, the Jewish colonies planted by the Seleucid kings in Asia Minor and Cilicia were all older than the Maccabean rising: see the following article.

handled or made. Scruples like this divided the Jews from their neighbours in the cities, and thereby made them all the more sensible of the fact that it was the royal favour which maintained them safe and privileged in the places where they lived as citizens. In Palestine their ritual kept the Jews aloof from and hostile to the Seleucid kings, and fed their national aspirations. But in the Graeco-Asiatic cities their ritual actually bound them more closely to the king's service.

Through similar causes, at a later time, the Jews in Palestine (except the Sadducees) hated the Roman Empire and regarded it as the abomination, and they were subdued only after many rebellions and the most stubborn resistance. And yet, through that troubled period, the Jews outside Palestine were loyal subjects of the Empire, distinguished by their special attachment to the side of the emperors against the old Roman republican party.

Moreover, the Jews, an essentially oriental race, found the markedly oriental policy of the Seleucid kings far more congenial to them than the Greek colonists ever could. Hence the Jewish settlers formed a counterpoise against the Greek colonists in the Seleucid cities, and, wherever the Greek element seemed too strong, the natural policy of the kings was to plant Jews in the same city.

That remarkable shifting and mixing of races was, of course, not produced simply by arbitrary acts of the Greek kings, violently transporting population hither and thither at their caprice. The royal policy was successful, because it was in accordance with the tendencies of the time. Migration and intermixture of peoples, which had been going on even under the Persian domination in many cities of Asia Minor (as might be shown in the case of Tarsus and many other places), was immensely stimulated by the conquests of Alexander the Great, which opened the East and gave free scope to adventure and to trade. During the

fine season of the year, May to September, there was abundant opportunity for travelling. The powerful monarchies and states kept the sea safe; and, as has been said by Canon Hicks, a scholar who has studied that period with special care and ability, in the third century B.C., "there must have been daily communication between Cos (on the west of Asia Minor) and Alexandria."¹

Thus the Graeco-Asiatic cities between 300 and 100 B.C. were in process of natural growth through the settling in them of strangers; and the strangers came for purposes of trade, eager to make money. The kings interfered only to regulate and to direct to their own advantage a process which they had not originated and could not have prevented. What they did for those strangers was to give them the fullest rights in the cities where they settled. The strangers and their descendants would have always remained aliens; but the kings made them citizens, gave them a voice in the government and a position in the city as firm and influential as that of the best, increased their numbers by assisting immigrants, and presented them with lands and allotted them a place in one of the city tribes.² In Cos or Iasos or Ephesus the Jew was an alien, protected sometimes by treaties with kings or Romans;³ but in most Seleucid towns there was a body of Jewish citizens, enrolled in a special tribe or trade guild, and having their own special regulations in each city (their charter of rights)⁴ for protecting their peculiar customs.

The Seleucid cities, therefore, were merely examples of the whole class of Graeco-Asiatic cities. They were, probably, the most favourable examples of the class, having

¹ Paton and Hicks, *Inscriptions of Cos*, p. xxxiii.

² Usually this was done by creating new tribes in which the new settlers were enrolled.

³ e.g. 1 *Maccabees* xv. 18 ff.

⁴ The *νόμος τῶν Ἰουδαίων* at Apameia, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, ii. p. 538, no. 399 *bis*.

a better tempered and balanced government than most Greek cities (as we have just seen). Tarsus, in particular, was proverbial as an orderly, well administered city.

Even the Jews, though introduced specially by the Seleucid kings, and always most numerous in the Seleucid colonies, were spread throughout the great cities of the Greek world, and especially in the chief centres of trade and finance (as might be expected). Thus, in a document of the second century B.C., at the Carian town of Iasos;¹ we find Nicetas, son of Jason, of Hierosolyma; and the well known list in 1 *Maccabees* xv. 23 shows how many cities and kingdoms of the coasts of Asia Minor contained Jewish settlers about 139 B.C. Those Jews were resident aliens doubtless, not citizens; as Jews were citizens only in the new foundations of the kings, and in that list such cities were not mentioned (being classed under the kingdoms to which they belonged).

The result of that free mixture of races in the Graeco-Asiatic cities was to stimulate a rapid and precocious development. There was great ease of intercourse and freedom of trade, a settled and sound coinage and monetary system, much commerce on a considerable scale, much eagerness and opportunity to make money by large financial operations. There was also a notable development on the intellectual side. Curiosity was stimulated in the meeting of such diverse races. The Oriental and the European spirit met in the cities, each tried to understand and to outwit the other.

This great experiment in human development was conducted on a small scale and in a thin soil, but was all the more precocious on that account, and also the more short-lived. It was a hot-house growth, produced in circumstances which were evanescent; and it was unnatural and unhealthy.

¹ Le Bas-Waddington, *Voyage Archéol.* iii. no. 294.

The smallness of scale on which all Greek history was conducted is one of its most remarkable features. In Greece proper, as contrasted with the big countries and the large masses of modern nations, the scale was quite minute. In the Graeco-Asiatic states the scale seemed much greater; but development was really confined to a number of spots here and there, showing only as dots on a map, small islets in the great sea of stagnant, unruffled, immovable orientalism. The Greek political and social system demanded a small city as its scene, and broke down when the attempt was made to apply it on a larger scale. But no more stimulating environment to the intellect could be found than was offered in the Graeco-Asiatic cities, and the scanty glimpses which we get into the life of those cities reveal to us a very quick, restless, intelligent society, keenly interested in a rather empty and shallow kind of philosophic speculation, and almost utterly destitute of any vivifying and invigorating ideal.

The interest and importance to us of this moment in society lies in the fact that Pauline Christianity arose in it and worked upon it. In every page of Paul's writings that restless, self-conceited, morbid, unhealthy society stands out in strong relief before the reader. Paul knew it so well, because he was born and brought up in its midst. He conceived that his mission was to regenerate it, and the plan which he saw to be the only possible one was to save the Jew from sinking down to the Pagan level by elevating the Pagan to the true Jewish level.¹

The letters of Paul need to be constantly illustrated from the life of those cities, and to be always read in the light of a careful study of the society in them. It was, above all, the philosophical speculation in which they excelled and delighted that Paul detested. He saw serious danger in it.

¹ This idea is illustrated at greater length in two articles on "The Statesmanship of Paul" in the *Contemporary Review*, 1901, March and April.

Not only was it useless and resultless in itself, mere "empty deceit";¹ and nowhere is his irony so cutting as in the many passages where he alludes to the philosophical acumen of the Corinthians in contrast with his own simplicity of intellect. But, far worse, it led directly to superstition. Vain speculation, unable to support itself in its lofty flight, unable to comprehend the real unity of the world in God, invented for itself silly genealogies² in which nature and creation were explained under the empty fiction of sonship, and a chain of divine beings in successive generations was made and worshipped; and human nature was humbly made subservient to these fictitious beings, who were described as "angels."³

This philosophical speculation cannot be properly conceived in its historical development without bearing in mind the mixed population and the collision of Jewish and Greek thought which belonged to those great Graeco-Asiatic cities. It united Greek and Jewish elements in arbitrary eclectic systems. The mixture of Greek and Jewish thought is far more conspicuous in Asia Minor than in Europe. Hence there is not much trace of it in *Corinthians* (though some writers try to discover it, and lay exaggerated stress on it): the Corinthian philosophers were of a different kind. But in the cities of Asia, Phrygia, South Galatia, and Cilicia—all along the great roads leading east and west across Asia Minor—the minds of men were filled with crude attempts at harmonizing and mingling Oriental (especially Jewish) and Greek ideas. Their attempts took many shapes, from mere vulgar magical formulæ and arts to the serious and lofty morality of Athenodorus the Tarsian in his highest moments of philosophy.

When we think of the intellectual skill, the philosophic interest, and the extreme cleverness of the age, we feel the

¹ Col. ii. 8.

² 1 Tim. i. 4.

³ Col. ii. 18-23.

inadequacy of those arguments—or rather those unargued assertions—according to which the Epistle to the Colossians reveals a stage of philosophic speculation too advanced for the first century, and such as could not have been reached earlier than the second century. How long would it take those clever subtle philosophic inquirers in those cities to achieve that slight feat of intellectual gymnastic presupposed in the Epistle?

The noblest feature of Greek city life was its zeal and provision for education. The minute carefulness with which those Asian-Greek cities legislated and provided for education—watching over the young, keeping them from evil, graduating their physical and mental training to suit their age, moving them on from stage to stage—rouses the deepest admiration in the scholar who laboriously spells out and completes the records on the stone fragments where they are written, and at the same time convinces him how vain is mere law to produce any real and healthy education. It is pathetic to think how poor was the result of all those wise and beautiful provisions.

The literature of the age has almost utterly perished, and the extremely scanty remains, along with the Roman imitations of it, do not suggest that there was anything really great in it, though much cleverness, brilliance, and sentimentality. Perhaps Theocritus, who comes at the beginning of the age, might rank higher; but the great master of bucolic poetry, the least natural form of poetic art, can hardly escape the charge of artificiality and sentimentality. In the realm of creative literature, the spirit of the age is to be compared with that of the Restoration in England, and partakes of the same deep-seated immorality.

The age was devoted to learning: it investigated antiquities, studied the works of older Greek writers, commented on texts; and the character of the time, in its poorness of fibre and shallowness of method, is most clearly revealed in

this department. It is hardly possible to find any trace of insight or true knowledge in the fragments of this branch of literature that have come down to us. Athenodorus of Tarsus was in many respects a man of ability, courage, education, high ideas and practical sense; but take a specimen of his history of his own city: "Anchiale, daughter of Japetos, founded Anchiale (a city near Tarsus): her son was Cydnus, who gave his name to the river at Tarsus: the son of Cydnus was Parthenius, from whom the city was called Parthenia: afterwards the name was changed to Tarsus."¹ This habit of substituting irrational "fables and endless genealogies"² for the attempt really to understand nature and history, was engrained in the spirit of the time, and shows how superficial and unintelligent its learning was. Out of it could come no real advance in knowledge, but only frivolous argumentation and "questionings."

Only in the department of moral philosophy did the age sometimes reach a lofty level. A touch of oriental sympathy with the Divine nature enabled Athenodorus and others to express themselves with singular dignity and beauty on the duty of man and his relation to God. But the "endless genealogies" frequently obtruded themselves in their finest speculations.

Such then was the motley population of the numerous Seleucid colonies which were planted in Lydia, Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia during the third century, and in Cilicia during the second century B.C. The language of the settlers was Greek, the language of trade and education; and it was through these cities that a veneer of Greek civilization was spread over the Asiatic coasts. The country people for centuries continued to use the native language, and even the native part of the city population long spoke the native language alongside of, or to the exclusion of, Greek. But Greek was the sole language of educa-

¹ Quoted by Steph. Byz., *s.v.* Anchiale.

² 1 Timothy i. 4.

tion, of government, and also of trade on anything except the humblest scale. Those who learned to read and write, learned to read and write in Greek; and the native languages have left hardly any written memorials. One has to go as far east as Syria and Armenia before one finds any evidence of a native oriental language maintaining itself under Christianity and demanding for itself a translation of the Scriptures. Further west, Christianity came in a Greek garb, and imposed its language on its adherents.

The prosperity, both material and intellectual, of the cities was very great under the kings. As the dynasties decayed, the Romans took over their power, and during the disintegration of the Roman Republic and the long Civil Wars, the cities suffered severely from misgovernment and extortion. But prosperity was restored by the triumph of the new Empire, which was welcomed with the utmost enthusiasm by the Graeco-Asiatic cities. The Roman Empire did not, as a rule, need to found cities and introduce new population in order to maintain its hold on Asia Minor. It stood firmly supported by the loyalty of the city population. Only on the South-Galatian frontier was a line of *Coloniae*—Antioch, Lystra, etc.—needed to protect the loyal cities from the unsubdued tribes of Mount Taurus. With that exception the few Roman *Coloniae* in Asia were founded for sentimental or other reasons, as Troas, Parium, Philippi. Names like Claud-Iconium, Claudio-Derbe, have been interpreted as indicating Roman *Coloniae*; ¹ but this is erroneous. Claud-Iconium did not become a *Colonia* before the time of Hadrian. Such titles were a badge of

¹ This error occurs even in the new *Real-Encyclopaedie* of Pauli-Wissowa, art. *Colonia*, iv. p. 551: where the only authorities are (1) *C. I. G.* 3993, which is late, and refers to the Ælian colonia: (2) *C. I. G.* 3991, which by its terms (*δημος*) shows that Claudiconium was not a *colonia*: (3) Eckhel's errors. It seems vain to protest against this and other similar blunders, until some German scholar has found them out, after which the world will believe. Meanwhile, every writer takes them on his predecessor's authority.

loyalty and devotion to the imperial policy in those cities, which boasted of their importance in the "Galatic Province."¹

But the history of those cities, and the letters of Paul, show that a very high degree of order, peace and prosperity may result in a thoroughly unhealthy life and a steady moral deterioration, unless the condition of the public mind is kept sound by some salutary idea. The salutary idea which was needed to keep the Empire sound and the cities healthy was what Paul preached; and that idea was the raising of the Gentiles to equality with the Jews in religion and morality.

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CYRUS, THE LORD'S ANOINTED.

II.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE GREEK HISTORIANS.

THE first notice of Cyrus in extant Greek literature is to be found in the *Persæ* of Æschylus, "the earliest specimen of Greek history which we possess, though written in verse."² The date of the play is B.C. 473, seven years after the great defeat of the Persians at Salamis, and about sixty years after the death of Cyrus.

In the drama the shade of Darius appears on the stage and narrates the history of the Persian monarchy. After speaking of his Median predecessors he continues: "Third after him Cyrus, a man favoured by fortune (*εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ*). By his rule he made peace for all his friends, and won for himself the people of the Lydians and of the Phrygians, and harried (*ἤλασεν*) all Ionia by force, for seeing he was kindly" God envied him not (764-768).

Considering the temper of the Athenian people, the

¹ τῆς Γαλατικῆς ἐπαρχίας, C. I. G. 3886.

² Paley's *Introduction to the Persæ*.