

chosen because it was near, and it is possible that it was intended to be only a temporary resting-place.

So then in the account of the burial of Jesus we find in our Evangelist details, peculiar to himself, which suggest accurate information, and encourage us in the belief that we have here the record of a personal disciple, who had real personal knowledge of the things which he records.

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STUDIES IN THE PAULINE THEOLOGY.

XII. THE HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP.

(1) WHEN we come to study closely what Paul has to say about the influence of the Church on the world, the life the Christian is to live among men, we are likely to meet with surprise and disappointment, for his standpoint is so different from that which is general to-day. To-day we seem to be more concerned about the soil than the seed of the Kingdom, about the meal than about the leaven, about the flesh to be preserved than about the savour of the salt : or, to use the modern fashion of speech, about the environment than about the organism. Human society—how it is to be purified and perfected—that is our concern, and the Christian Church is valued as it serves as a means to that end. It is no misrepresentation of Paul to say that his interest was exactly the reverse. The Church as the body of Christ was his primary concern, and the world appealed to him only as in need, and capable of being brought into the Church. The characteristic note is struck in the words : “ Our citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ” (Phil. iii. 20). “ Wherefore we faint not ; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light afflic-

tion, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens ” (2 Cor. iv. 16-v. 1). “ For the earnest expectation of the Creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God ” (Rom. viii. 19). Paul was a man of *faith* according to the definition of Hebrews xi. 1 : “ Faith is the giving substance to things hoped for, the proving of things not seen.” “ He looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God ” (ver. 10). He confessed that he was a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth (ver. 13). “ He endured, as seeing him who is invisible ” (ver. 27). He had “ tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come ” (vi. 5). The invisible was for him the more real world ; the future was the object of his desire. Accordingly, when he is dealing with human institutions, these are not important to him on their own account ; marriage, property, industry, are not in themselves a good. Only in so far as social relationships affect Christian character have they any meaning or worth for him. All that relates to the outer man is good or bad as it helps or hinders the growth of the inner man. A man’s relations to his fellow-men are absolutely subordinate to his relation to Christ. As Paul looked for a speedy coming of Christ to establish the kingdom of God, he did not hope or work for a progressive evolution of manners or morals, relations or institutions.

(2) Paul was, to use the phrase Lord Rosebery applied to Oliver Cromwell, a *practical mystic*. As we follow him in his travels, we see how wisely and skilfully he uses the dispersion of the Jews and the synagogues scattered over the

length and breadth of the Roman Empire as the bridge by which he, a Jewish scribe, can, with his message that Jesus is the Christ, pass over to the Gentiles; how ready he is to seize the advantage for the spread of the Gospel to be gained from the security and facility of intercourse the Roman Empire with its order and arms affords, and from the protection of the law which as a Roman citizen he himself can claim. As we witness him founding Churches, directing their organization, and counselling them in their manifold affairs, we recognize not a visionary, but what to-day is so much admired, an efficient business man. That Paul was practical the results of his labours prove. But this must not hide from us the fact that, however practical, he was a mystic still. The world might be his workshop, or market, or battlefield; but his home was in the invisible and the eternal. If we do not recognize this, we shall run the risk of imposing on Paul ideas that were not present even to his mind, because we assume in him interests that had no place at all in his heart. How can the Christian be a saint in the world? is his problem, while ours is How can society be Christianized?

(3) As regards the individual life, it is the best Jewish and even Gentile morality simplified, unified, and vitalized by love, which he commands in his moral precepts. The Christian is to be an epitome of all the recognized excellences: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are gracious; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, take account of these things" (Phil. iv. 8). There is nothing so original in his moral counsels as to call for special study. But his treatment of social relations does present some peculiar features which claim fuller discussion. As regards the State, Paul was proud of his Jewish nationality;

and in spite of all the persecution which he suffered at the hands of the unbelieving Jews, and which provoked him to utter some vehement denunciations (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16), he remained loyal to his people. "I could wish," he says, "that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3). His love inspires the hope, "All Israel shall be saved" (xi. 26). He was not less proud of his Roman citizenship; and his estimate of the providential function of the Roman Empire was very much more favourable than that which immediately after his death became current in the Christian Church. In his experience the Roman Empire was not the persecutor, but the protector. There seems to be very little doubt that in the Apocalyptic passage in 2 Thessalonians ii. 1-12 the restraint on the final manifestation of the Jewish apostasy is exercised by the Roman Empire. Paul did anticipate the removal of that restraint, but in what way he does not indicate; and probably he did not even ask himself the question. That Christ might be manifested to overthrow "the man of sin, the son" of perdition, the removal of the restraint on the development of Jewish wickedness to this consummation was necessary. He viewed events not from the standpoint of historical causality, but of divine teleology. As long as the Roman Empire lasted, however, Paul's sole counsel to his converts was submission to its authority—recognized as of God, and as exercised for the punishment of evildoers, and for the benefit to those who did well (Rom. xiii. 1-7). To base on this passage any general or permanent theory of the relation of the Christian to the State is an altogether unjustified proceeding. Who can doubt that, if Paul had been dealing with converts on whom the Roman officials were forcing the demand to worship the emperor, he would have approved an attitude similar to that of Peter and the apostles towards the Jewish rulers, "We must obey

God rather than men " (Acts v. 29) ? One thing his counsel does prove, however, that he had no expectation that the Christian Church would be able to influence the Roman Empire to improve its laws. In the preservation or purification of that society the Christian Church of the Apostolic Age had no interest, as the object of its desire was the kingdom of God to be established at Christ's second coming on the ruins of every earthly kingdom.

(4) That Paul had not the aim of the *doctrinaire reformer* appears very clearly in his treatment of the relation of the "strong" and the "weak" in the Christian Church (Rom. xiv., 1 Cor. viii.). One delighting in moral abstractions would have argued that either the use or the abstinence was right, and that the Church must do its utmost to secure the adhesion of all its members to the proper course. But Paul agrees with the "strong"; and yet counsels them to consider the scruples of the "weak," and limit their liberty in love lest a brother for whom Christ died should perish. Whether this or that custom prevailed in the Church was to him a matter of entire indifference, even when he himself distinguished the one as reasonable from the other as over-scrupulous; what he did care for was that no man should act against his own conscience under the pressure of the common opinion, and that all should have a tender regard for one another, so as to be willing to surrender rights the claim of which might do injury to others. That each Christian should realize as fully as possible his personal relation to Christ as Saviour and Lord, and that whatever he said or did should be of faith, determined by that relation, was his guiding purpose. That the members of the Church in their mutual relations should only help, and never hinder one another in reaching this goal was his constant concern; for this end he who was the fearless champion of Christian liberty was the pleading advocate of the surrender of liberty for the sake of love.

(5) It is this practical expediency, which is consecrated by the motive of love, which explains his treatment of the "woman" question. He regards all racial, social, or physical distinctions among men as transcended in Christ. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 28). An absolute spiritual equality of the sexes in the Christian Church is what he thus affirms. But when some women in the Church of Corinth drew what seemed to be the legitimate and almost inevitable practical inferences from the principle, Paul was found in opposition, and proved himself a thorough-going defender of convention. He insists on women appearing in the public assembly of the Church veiled (1 Cor. xi. 2-16), and on their keeping silence in the Churches (xiv. 34-36).

(i.) His argument for the first demand must be confessed to be an instance of his Rabbinism at the worst. His declaration "that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (xi. 3) cannot by any exegetical ingenuity be tortured into anything else than a relapse from the Christian standpoint of Galatians iii. 28 to the lower Jewish, which insisted on the inferiority and subjection of woman. Why "the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head because of the angels" (ver. 10), whatever Paul may have exactly meant, does not now appear at all self-evident. Nor is the teaching of nature as to the proper length of the hair either of a man or a woman quite so infallible for our judgment as it seems to have been for Paul's (vers. 14, 15). If Paul did not himself feel the unreality of the whole argument, it but shows that he had not escaped altogether from his Jewish entanglements as a Pharisaic scribe when he became a Christian. The first and the last verses give the real reason. He wanted his converts to "hold fast the traditions"

(ver. 2). Conscious probably that his argument could be challenged, he falls back on a last line of defence: "If any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (ver. 16).

(ii.) The second demand is supported by an assertion of woman's subjection (xiv. 34), an appeal to the current sense of propriety ("it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church," ver. 35), and an insistence on the authority of common custom. "What? was it from you that the word of God went forth? or came it unto you alone?" (ver. 36). While we must admit this reasoning to be unconvincing, we may now recognize that the apostle was guided by a sound instinct for the expedient when he thus tried to repress innovations in which Christian women were asserting their liberty at the risk of losing their reputation for propriety and modesty, and of thus bringing a reproach even on the whole Christian community. These sentiments of what is fitting in women have their moral value; and although it is needful that they should be modified as moral progress is made in defining the relation of the sexes, yet the hasty and reckless disregard of them does most injury to the woman's cause. That Paul should so unreservedly insist on conventions must, however, be regarded as showing that his interests lay elsewhere than do those of the *doctrinaire reformer* of to-day, who, having got hold of the principle of the spiritual equality of the sexes, would work out the principle to its remotest consequences, and would insist that custom and sentiment should be conformed to the principle. Had Paul had any anticipation of a permanent Christian society on earth, one cannot but suppose that he would have felt the necessity of looking at the relation of the sexes from the Christian standpoint to discover what modifications in custom or sentiment might be necessary. That he never faced this issue is no reason why the Christian moralist of

to-day, free of his preoccupation, should not frankly and boldly inquire whether woman has in modern society the position to which this spiritual equality entitles her, undeterred by his arguments, which cannot claim to be rooted in Christian faith at all. But even the modern reformer, if he is wise, will learn from Paul that common custom, as it cannot be suddenly changed, must not be recklessly disregarded. The "other-worldliness" of Paul, as we may describe his attitude, made it more important for him that no reproach should be brought upon the Christian Church, which would in any way hinder its influence with these without to save them from sin for God, than that the abstract rights of the women members should be recognized; nay even his absorption in this one interest probably is the reason why he who saw so clearly on many moral issues did not even recognize their abstract rights.

(6) In Paul's treatment of the questions of marriage and divorce there is the same spiritual detachment from social relations. He fully recognizes the moral lawfulness of marriage, and even insists in certain cases on its moral necessity. "But because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband" (1 Cor. vii. 2). "If they have not continency, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn" (ver. 9). Here he seems to regard it as a moral expedient against sensual indulgence; but even in this chapter he recognizes that marriage may be a personal union, in which a holy influence may be exercised. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (ver. 14). But that such influence will be effectively exercised he is not certain. "How knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy

wife ? ” (ver. 16). Accordingly he expresses his own decided preference for celibacy, and even desires that it should be universal (ver. 7). He lays down the general principle “ It is good (*καλόν*, not merely profitable or advantageous, but simply and morally good) for a man not to touch a woman ” (ver. 1). But qualifies the statement in recognizing that his own preference for celibacy may be a gift from God which others do not share (ver. 7). From this standpoint he gives detailed counsels to the married as well as to the unmarried.

(i.) Where both husband and wife are believing he assumes the permanence of the relation (vers. 1, 2), and insists on the mutual obligations which it imposes (vers. 3, 4), but appears to commend a living apart for a time that both partners may give themselves to prayer. While he would himself think more highly of a permanent self-denial, he advises a resumption of these relations as a concession to natural infirmity (“ that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency ”). That Paul regarded the normal relation of husband and wife as a hindrance to devotion, and as a concession to moral weakness, must be frankly pronounced a defect of moral insight in regard to this human relationship.

(ii.) Where one partner was a Christian, and the other not, another question arose. Did the difference of faith justify separation to be followed by remarriage ? As long as the heathen partner desires the relationship to continue, it is to be maintained and used for the exercise of a sanctifying influence (vers. 12–14). But the Christian partner must not insist on its continuance, but may welcome release from bondage, as there is no certainty that this influence will be effectual. “ If the unbelieving departeth, let him depart ; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases ; but God hath called us in peace ” (ver. 15). One cannot

but ask, whether, if Paul had fully realized the sanctity of this relation as Jesus conceived it, he could have given such advice. Is the Christian partner walking worthy of his or her calling in showing no further solicitude for the salvation of one so intimately related or in welcoming so readily escape from a difficult situation? Does the failure of one partner in duty end the obligation of the other? Would Christian effort of the most devoted and heroic quality be discouraged by the uncertainty of success? But a further question is involved. Does Paul mean that the Christian thus released is at liberty to marry again? Nothing is expressly said, but the phrase "is not under bondage" (*οὐ δεδούλωται*) suggests a complete emancipation from all the obligations of the previous relation. If this be so, it seems impossible to reconcile the advice with Jesus' emphatic declaration about marriage as indissoluble (Matt. v. 32; xix. 9).

(iii.) The unmarried Paul advises to continue as they are, unless they cannot restrain their sexual desires (ver. 9). The disadvantages of the married are these: (1) they "shall have tribulation in the flesh" (ver. 28); (2) they are "careful for the things of the world" (ver. 33), to please each other, and so cannot be as careful as the unmarried can "for the things of the Lord" (ver. 32). This advice is doubtless, if not altogether due to, yet partly suggested by Paul's vivid expectation of Christ's Second Coming, in view of which an absolute detachment from the present order appeared the appropriate attitude (vers. 29-31). So different is our position to-day that we cannot feel that Paul's counsels come to us now with the authority of the Spirit of God (ver. 40).

(7) But this is not Paul's last word on marriage. In the Epistle to the *Ephesians* Paul reaffirms his belief in the authority of man and the subjection of woman; but he

insists on the duty of the husband to love his wife, just as Christ loved the Church, even unto self-sacrifice, "that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (v. 26, 27). There is surely implied the thought that the love of the husband for his wife should have as its end also her perfecting in grace and goodness. A reason on a lower level follows; the love of the wife is the same as the love of self, for so closely and indissolubly are husband and wife bound together (verses 28, 29). The words which Jesus quoted in proof of the divine intention of a life-long bond are also quoted by Paul in confirmation of this argument (ver. 31). The comparison of the marriage relation to that of Christ and the Church raises the institution into a far higher ethical region than that in which the passage in 1 Corinthians moves. Characteristic of Paul's limitation, however, is it that he requires of the wife, not that she love, but "that she fear her husband." The command which follows to "children to obey their parents in the Lord," and to fathers not "to provoke their children to wrath, but to nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord," show that a common Christian faith was already beginning to purify and sanctify the home (vi. 1-4).

(8) On the question of slavery Paul is guided by the same principle as he applies to the question of marriage: "Let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God" (1 Cor. vii. 24). For the Christian life the outward condition is indifferent. In whatever position a man finds himself at his conversion, married or unmarried, bond or free, let him be content to remain in it, and make the best of it he can by God's grace. (ii) A slave is not to be troubled

because he is a slave ; for he is the Lord's freedman. A free man is not to forget that he is Christ's bondservant (ver. 22). The redemption by Christ, to be His possession, is the supreme good, in comparison with which the difference between slave and freeman is nothing. So far does Paul carry this "other-worldliness," that he advises the slave who has the opportunity of freedom not to snatch at it, but to show that a Christian can make the best of slavery. This is the interpretation of the ambiguous phrase *μᾶλλον χρῆσαι* (ver. 21) which the context demands. Paul would contradict himself, if, after laying down the principle 'Let each man abide in that calling wherever he was called' (ver. 20), he went on to advise the slave to become a freeman whenever he got the chance. As irrelevant to such advice would be the assurance which follows that the bondservant is the Lord's freedman (ver. 22). The spiritual privilege in Christ more than compensates for any social disadvantage the slave suffers. Could detachment from the present world be carried further ?

(ii.) How a slave might prove himself a Christian in that calling wherein he was called, Paul's counsels in Ephesians vi. 5-8 show. All the service to the earthly master is to be rendered from the same motive, in the same spirit, and with the same diligence and fidelity as service to Christ ; and such service will be rewarded by Christ Himself. On the Christian master also rests the obligation to treat his slave in like manner, recognizing that he himself serves the same Master in heaven with whom "there is no respect of persons" (ver. 9).

(iii.) The fullest treatment of the question is found, however, in the letter to Philemon. The lawfulness and rightness of the institution of slavery is there taken for granted. That Onesimus belongs to Philemon, that even the apostle himself has not a right to retain his services, however much

he may desire them, without the master's consent, that Philemon would be justified in inflicting some punishment on his runaway slave, all this is recognized in the letter. But, on the other hand, Paul freely confesses his love for Onesimus, and the value of his services to himself, earnestly pleads not merely for mercy to him in the remission of any penalty he had incurred, but for a welcome to him as "a brother beloved," and tenderly urges his own claim on Philemon as a reason for granting this request. When in Christian households the relation between master and slave was thus transformed, as Paul pleaded and hoped that in this case it would be, then the institution itself was likely to be soon abolished, for the inconsistency between such moral obligations and the legal status would become increasingly evident to the enlightened Christian conscience.

But, just as in the "woman" question, so in the "slave" question, Paul does not think at all about abstract rights, about the inferences that might be legitimately drawn, nay, even must be inevitably drawn, from the general principle of the spiritual equality of all men in Christ. We altogether miss Paul's point of view, and assign to him our modern standpoint, when we suggest as the reason for his treatment of this and other questions, prudence, a recognition of the disastrous consequences to the Christian Church itself of any revolutionary feeling in respect to marriage, or the status of women, or slavery. We can now see that the Christian Church would have perished, had it advocated a general emancipation, had it insisted that the moral rights of slaves should at once change their legal position. We can now see that to insist that the slave could be a Christian, and that the Christian master should treat his slave as a brother was the surer way of at last securing the abolition of slavery. But not such were the considerations which guided Paul. He was not a modern evolutionary philosopher. He did not

believe in, and expect a gradual progress of human society, and so he did not in his teaching give such counsels as would enable the Church to prove itself a potent factor in that development. He looked not for a change in the world around, but tried to show how the believer, whatever his lot, might live with Christ in the world.

(9) Paul had no occasion in any of his letters to discuss expressly the question of private property; but that he never challenged its rightness is shown by two classes of allusions. (i.) On the one hand, he urges the duty of each man to work for his own living (1 Thess. iv. 11); and although as a preacher of the Gospel he claims that he has a right to support from the Churches to which he preaches (1 Cor. ix. 4-14) yet he gives an example of such industry (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Cor. xii. 13, 14). Vivid as were his expectations of the Lord's second coming he was never carried away by fanaticism to the neglect of the lowliest earthly duty; and he severely rebukes such unhealthy excitement in the Church at Thessalonica: "Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thess. iii. 10-12). (ii.) On the other hand he appeals for liberality in giving (1 Cor. xvi. 2; 2 Cor. viii. 7; Gal. vi. 6). Possibly it is for this liberality, or at least for the grace which prompts it, that he gives praise to God in the cry, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. ix. 15). He insists that God loves such a gift only when it is freely and gladly given (ver. 7); and that it has value only as its motive is love (1 Cor. xiii. 3). He attached such importance to the collection of the Gentile Churches for the saints in Jerusalem, not as a legal due, but as love's free gift, that he was ready

to risk his life in conveying this token of the reconciling of Jew and Gentile.

(10) If Paul's counsels and entreaties to his converts do not afford direct guidance to us in our present practical perplexities, and even if we are compelled to admit that an enlightened Christian conscience to-day cannot solve some of the common problems as he did, yet on the other hand we must not rashly assume that his treatment of such questions has no value for us whatever. For in the first place his absorption in Christ and the kingdom of God, the invisible and the future remains the distinctive Christian attitude. As Christians we too must walk by faith and not by sight. Secondly, this dominant interest does still mean a detachment and an independence from the world; there must be no such fear of its frown, or hope for its smile as would supplant the Christian desire to be in all things well pleasing unto the Lord; only those whom the world cannot influence to turn them from their duty can influence the world for its good. Thirdly, as Paul was guided in his counsels and entreaties by the existing conditions of the world as he understood them, so must we in determining our duty, although our outlook on the world may be altogether different from his. Lastly, as for him the fact of fullest meaning and highest worth determining all his estimates and expectations was that Christ had redeemed him from sin by His blood, and that he was being reconciled in Christ to God, so for the Christian Church to-day this is the one thing needful, for a saved Church alone can work for the saving of the world.

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