

introduced into the East by Alexander the Great, we should not be surprised to find weights on this standard in use in Palestine in the Seleucid period. Ten per cent. of the Lachish (Tell el-Hesi) weights are on the Attic standard, with an average drachm of 65.6 grs. It is also represented by at least two of the larger weights from the Seleucid town of Sandahannah. The smaller of the two is the leaden market-weight, to which reference was made in section ii. above. It bears on its face, running round a central ornamentation, the legend: ΑΓΟΡΑΝΟΜΟΥΝΤΟΣ ΑΓΑΘΟΚΛΕΟ- [YC], i.e. 'Of Agathocles, Controller of the Market' (Bliss and Macalister, *Excavations in Palestine*, 61, fig. 28). Its weight of 145 g (2238 grs.) shows it to be a tritemorion, or one-third of an Attic mina, of which the drachm ( $\frac{1}{100}$ ) yields the normal value of 4.35 g, or 67 grs.

The other Sandahannah weight is a large circular bronze, measuring  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter and weighing 669.445 g, nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. (*loc. cit.*). It represents a mina and a half, slightly over weight, or 150 drachms, of which the mina is 446.3 g. It can scarcely be separated from two of the larger weights of the same period from Gezer, of 223.78 and 553.12 g, which are respectively  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  of the same mina.

Last of all I find a reminiscence of the last days of the Syrian domination in Gezer in another leaden weight (*E. G.* ii. 286, fig. 435). It resembles in shape and style Agathocles' market-weight; on its face it shows two cornucopias crossed—a symbol of the later Seleucid kings,—a  $\Delta$  and four balls symmetrically arranged. It weighs 263.60 g

(over  $9\frac{1}{2}$  oz.). There is no unit so large as 65.9 g, of which it could possibly represent four ( $\Delta$ ). But if we combine with this the four balls, we have a weight of 4 times 4, or 16 Attic tetradrachms of 16.48 g, yielding a drachm of 4.12 g, or nearly 64 grains, a result practically in agreement with the weights of the Seleucid coins in the middle of the second century (Babelon, *Les Rois de Syrie*, clxxxiii.).

#### SUMMARY OF RESULTS.

The results of the preceding investigation may be summed up in a word. Apart from the ancient standards of the original Babylonian shekel of 126 grs., and the Egyptian ket of 140–146 grs., of which no *inscribed* examples are known to me from Palestine, we have evidence, in the inscribed weights from Gezer and elsewhere, of the use in Old Testament times of the following weight-standards: (1) the Phœnician shekel with normal values ranging from 218 to 230 grs.—the true Hebrew silver shekel, and 'the shekel of the sanctuary' in terms of which the temple dues were paid; (2) the early Eastern standard, best known as the Aeginetan or Attic commercial standard, originally of 100 grs., more or less; (3) the perhaps equally ancient Syrian or Hittite standard of 160 grs.; (4) the Babylonian and Persian silver standard, of the normal value in the Persian period of 173 grs., the stater, of which the siglos or 'median shekel' was one-half; and (5) in the Seleucid period the Attic monetary standard, of which the tetradrachm shows a maximum weight of 270 grs., and its drachm  $67\frac{1}{2}$  grs.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF ACTS.

#### ACTS xi. 24.

For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.

THE Scripture method in narrative is generally dramatic. It does not name the qualities of the heroes it presents to us, but shows their qualities through their words and actions—the meanness of Jacob, the chivalry of David, the impulsiveness of Peter, the courage of John the Baptist. It gives

us by a few strokes and shades a picture so vivid and lifelike that no comment is needed. But in this text the sacred writer describes the character of Barnabas, and says of him that 'he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.'

In thus commending Barnabas, attention is directed to character rather than to gifts. Barnabas was not a man of outstanding ability, or brilliant talents. He was not possessed of a striking personality, such as makes men leaders of great

movements. He was a man of gentle and kindly disposition, one who had earned the title of Barnabas, 'a son of consolation,' his real name being Joses; and it was only his goodness, which enabled him to do the right thing in the right way and at the right time, that gave him a place in the inspired record.

In Scripture men are not commended because they displayed signal heroism under circumstances which few of us may ever know; but because in the daily round of ordinary duty—in hours of adversity and prosperity which come to every man—in campaigns in which we must all play our part, they practised justice, fostered affection, cultivated faith, glowed with gratitude, endured with patience, spake with moderation, and melted with mercy. It is this that makes the Bible record of God's saints so precious to us. We see men of like passions with ourselves, located by Providence in situations similar to our own, influenced by motives which should possess our breasts, and developing virtues within the reach of all.<sup>1</sup>

Following the words of the text, we may look first at the *goodness* of Barnabas, and then at the *sources* of it.

## I.

## BARNABAS' GOODNESS.

'He was a good man.'

Nothing is half so mighty as goodness. If an ambitious man should ask, 'How can I make my name to be remembered longest upon the earth?' the answer would be, 'Try to be good, and to do good.' Goodness, whatever form it may assume, has a powerful attraction for men, especially eminent goodness, or goodness under circumstances in which it presents a contrast to surrounding wickedness, and has to contend with adverse influences. Such was the goodness of Barnabas. It was not a sickly goodness, like the beauty of a hot-house plant, but strong, and active, making a place for itself, and producing effects in the lives of others. His piety was not only real in kind but superior in degree. He was eminently good, good above many of the saints of God by whom he was surrounded. There is a remarkable fact stated respecting his decision and self-denial in the account of his first setting out as a Christian disciple; and it often happens that you may infer to a great extent the characteristics of an individual from the first great act of his spiritual life.

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Hitchens.

A traveller in Nicaragua, in 1857, notes this curious circumstance in his diary. 'There is a church at Stivas, over the principal portal of which is a very well-executed bust of the leader of the American Revolution, and, on inquiring of a native of the town, I was informed that it was a bust of the "good saint, George Washington!" I confess that, as I passed this church, I felt like taking off my hat, and I did it, not because of custom, but because I could not help it.'<sup>2</sup>

1. His goodness had the grace of *liberality*. He was one of the first to set the example of devoting his substance to the Church of Christ. In the fourth chapter of Acts we read, 'and Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.' He first yielded himself unto the Lord, and then he gave his possessions. The man was carried away by his idea; he was ready to make a sacrifice. No sooner did the new ideas of Christianity fall upon his heart than he took fire from them, and, careless of the future, feeling that the new life of emotion and thought begun in him would re-create and fill his whole being, he sacrificed his fortune and his future, without a moment's hesitation, to the support of the new Church. He took no vow of poverty; he made himself poor at once in earthly possessions, but rich in love. It is delightful to read of this prompt enthusiasm, this rapid dash of emotion into action, and it is the keynote of the character of Barnabas. No fear, no prudence, no weighing of possibilities held him back. He believed his impulses; he let himself swing with the swing of his emotion, and the word or the act leaped forth with a kind of glorious unthoughtfulness. Wise persons may call him unpractical, but after all it is by unpractical people like Barnabas that the greatest part of the noble work of healing, teaching, evangelizing, and uplifting mankind is done.

A man's use of his money is perhaps just as big a test as life can bring. It has been said that the last thing in a man to be converted is his pocket. Now Barnabas, in a day when a special endowment of generosity had fallen upon the Church, when many gave all they had, and there was a spirit of fellowship so marked and deep that no one counted anything his own—even in that day Barnabas is singled out as one who having land sold it and gave the proceeds to the apostles, no doubt because of the utter sincerity of the spirit in which it was done.<sup>3</sup>

2. His goodness was *free from prejudice*. Owing to the persecution about Stephen, Christians

<sup>2</sup> J. N. Norton, *Milk and Honey*, 44.

<sup>3</sup> J. Oman.

became scattered as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, and preached the gospel in each of those places, addressing Jews only. But some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, on reaching Antioch, spoke also to the Greeks. This was an innovation, but God set His seal upon it; for we read, 'The hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.' The news of this made no small stir in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was nothing if not orthodox, and jealous of its calling and privileges. But the Spirit of Christ was in their midst, and the Church would not censure or attempt to suppress this movement if it were truly of God. So they selected Barnabas to visit the disciples in Antioch and see the work for himself. A better messenger could not have been sent. Barnabas possessed the open eye and the unprejudiced heart, and at once he perceived in the movement 'the grace that was of God,' and rejoiced in it. This was contrary to the expectations of the Jerusalem Church, contrary it may be to the feelings of Barnabas as he set out on his mission; but what he saw was too evidently of God for him to hesitate for a moment. He was glad at what he witnessed, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

When he came to Antioch and saw the work that was going on, when he saw lives morally purified and intellectually ennobled, without any of the usual ceremonies or observances of Judaism being insisted upon, he could not refrain from avowing his sympathies: he had no eyes but for the signs of God's grace among the people, and altogether neglecting the ecclesiastical order to which he had been accustomed he gave himself to this new manifestation of the work of God. This is what the writer of the chapter before us seeks to account for in this at first sight irrelevant observation, and his mode of accounting for it is noteworthy. In modern times it would seem most natural to say that Barnabas was a man of broad sympathies; Barnabas was a man of marked liberality; he was a man of loftiness of view, from which all the little distinctions of Jew and Gentile faded into nothingness. But the writer says nothing of this kind; he simply remarks that Barnabas 'was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.' And it is a fact in life's experience that greatness, genuineness, goodness of heart, far oftener than brilliance of intellectual

ability, is the true solvent of prejudice, and the true healer of schism. But we must understand the nature of this goodness aright. Far be it from us for a moment to suppose that it was mere weak amiability. It is difficult to put into other words this quality of goodness, which commends itself to every unaffected heart; but perhaps we may say that wherever goodness attracts us to love, we note in it a mingled frankness, kindness, affection, Christian love; there is a singleness of eye, which knows no duplicity, no taint of impurity; it is inspired by a love which is no selfish passion, but signifies rather, if we may so speak, the transference of the moral centre of gravity from self to God and His creatures.

The man who rejoiced in the grace of God as he saw it struggling through hard soil, beneath ungenial skies, in the young believers of Antioch, looks on brighter fields to-day. By this time he has asked in astonishment, with the beloved disciple, Who are these that are arrayed in white clothing, and whence came they? The man who has an eye to see and a heart to love true believers, marred by many imperfections on the earth, shall look, ere long, upon the saints made perfect. The eye that glistens now at the sight of grace will be permitted soon to gaze on glory.<sup>1</sup>

3. Barnabas was a *peacemaker*. When Paul came to Jerusalem after his conversion and assayed to join himself to the disciples, they were all afraid of him. His reputation as a persecutor might well make them regard him with suspicion. Doubtless, they thought, 'He has hostile reasons for mingling with us. It is his object to spy us out and betray us.' They could not believe that one so prominent as the opponent of Christianity, and so violent in the measures which he adopted, should have altered his purpose, still less that he should have become himself a follower of Christ. 'They were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.' But Barnabas intervened with warm-hearted testimony to Paul, and to the great change he had undergone, how he had seen the Lord in the way, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. His goodness made him quick to see goodness in others, and ready to do it honour. There was in him no evil eye of suspicion; no withholding of tribute to another's piety where it was deserved.

Can any service well compare with this rendered by this son of encouragement? He interpreted the Church to Paul, and Paul to the Church. He made him feel at home in it. He showed him that

<sup>1</sup> W. Arnot, *The Church in the Home*.

on the old conservative ground, without a split or schism, there was room for all his originality, all his freshness, all his independence, all his new conceptions of the gospel. On the one side he showed the power of the Church to absorb new life; on the other he encouraged and guided that new life to attach itself to the old without doing injury to it. His sunny nature dispelled all sullenness of temper, all sense of disappointment or unsuitability, which may for a time have clouded the imagination of Saul of Tarsus—so gloriously won, so strikingly called, and then for a time so little appreciated in his new fellowship.

## II.

### THE SOURCE OF HIS GOODNESS.

‘Full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.’

1. The truth to notice here is that Barnabas was in this respect the sharer of a common blessing. The bestowment of the Spirit was not confined to the Apostles and Evangelists of the New Evangel. It is said that the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the Word; and in another place that after prayer they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Barnabas did not differ from his fellow-believers, nor was he greatly distinguished beyond them; but all that he was and all that he achieved was by the Holy Spirit.

(1) The great promise of the gospel is precisely this promise. We seriously limit and misunderstand what we call the gospel if we give such exclusive predominance to one part of it as some of us are accustomed to do. The first word that Jesus Christ says to any soul is, ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee.’ But that first word has a second that follows it, ‘Arise and walk!’ and it is for the sake of the second that the first is spoken. The gift of pardon, the consciousness of acceptance, the fact of reconciliation with God, the closing of the doors of the place of retribution, the quieting of the stings of accusing conscience—all these are but meant to be introductory to that which Jesus Christ Himself, in the Gospel of John, emphatically calls more than once ‘the gift of God,’ which He symbolized by ‘living water,’ which whosoever drank should never thirst, and which whosoever possessed would give it forth in living streams of holy life and noble deeds. The promise of the gospel is the promise of new life, derived from

Christ and maintained in us by the indwelling Spirit, which shall come like fresh reinforcements to an all but beaten army, in some hard-fought field, which shall strengthen what is weak, raise what is low, illumine what is dark, and shall make us who are evil good with a goodness given by God through His Son.

‘Some time since a physician who is using electricity for therapeutic purposes asked me to go to his office, saying that he would show me some wonderful things. When I reached the office he put me into the insulating chair and then turned on 300,000 volts of electricity into my body—not dynamic, otherwise I should not be here to tell the tale—but static electricity. Instantly I felt that I was surcharged with power. I felt it streaming from me invisibly. He then took an ordinary electric light without the carbon film inside, and gave it to me to hold. Immediately the room was lighted with the electricity flowing from my body and streaming through the glass. He took that from me, and put a chain in my hand which was attached to a machine. Instantly the machine began to run furiously, all because of the power that I received and was now discharging. I felt myself filled with a mysterious potency. Before the current was turned through me I was as powerless to do these things as I now am. After the current was turned on, these and other things were child’s-play to me.’ So the soul filled with the Spirit through faith in Christ is a radiator of the light and energy Divine.<sup>1</sup>

(2) But to be filled with the Holy Ghost is not necessarily to rank with the greatest even in the kingdom of heaven; for all natures are not equal, and He comes to aid in their completion, not to recreate them. One man is as the lowly wayside cottage, and another as the magnificent mansion, for both of which there is a common sunlight, which enters, however, in proportion to the windows open to it, and fills just as much space as it has access to. Into every little creek, no less than into the glorious bay wherein boats come and go and ships can ride for anchorage, the tide will roll if they are exposed to it, but the creek remains a creek, and the bay has uses and grandeur which alone belong to it.

You may have seen a tiny stream trickling down the mountain-side. As it proceeds, other streams join it in succession, till it becomes a river, ever flowing and ever increasing till it reaches the ocean; and yet from that ocean came every drop of water that rolls in that river’s bed. It gives only what it has received. It could not flow, it could not be, without the free gift of all from the sea. The deep and flowing river depends on the tiny spring. Cut it off from its source, and immediately it ceases to flow. So it is ever spiritually. God gives all. ‘From him, and by him,

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Schaffler, *Pastoral Leadership*, 136.

and to him are all things.' To saved man the profit, but to God the praise. 'We are his workmanship.'<sup>1</sup>

2. Barnabas was also full of faith. It was because he was full of faith that he was full of the Holy Ghost; and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost gave illumination and force to his faith. His faith not only enabled him to grasp the gospel for himself with confidence, and to appropriate its sanctifying influences, but imparted the assurance of the gospel's success. He expected to witness its triumphant progress, and what he expected, he realized. After the statement, 'he was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith,' it is significantly added, 'and much people was added unto the Lord.' Often success is not achieved because it is not expected.

We have all heard about the student who was in the habit of preaching out of doors, and who went to Mr. Spurgeon one day to say that, although he had been preaching a long time, there were no conversions. 'What!' said Mr. Spurgeon, 'and do you expect that every time you stand up to speak, the Lord is going to save souls through your preaching?' 'Oh no!' he answered, 'not that.' 'Then,' said Mr. Spurgeon, 'that is the reason why you do not get it.' Ah! Mr. Spurgeon had him. And it is just want of faith that prevents success on the part of many a would-be soul-winner.<sup>2</sup>

3. But Barnabas, though full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, had his frailties, and made some mistakes. None are perfect, not even those in whom the grace of God is most conspicuous. Barnabas had the faults of his virtues. His gentleness and willingness to see good in all sometimes betrayed him into compliance with error, and leniency towards unfaithfulness. He was good, but sometimes weak, lacking the sterner stuff of

<sup>1</sup> J. Davies, *The Kingdom without Observation*, 160.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Stewart, *Talks about Soul-Winning*, 82.

which heroes are made. He is a warning to us, as evidencing how the highest gifts and graces are corrupted in our sinful nature, if we are not diligent to walk step by step, according to the light of God's commandments. Be our mind as heavenly as it may be, most loving, most holy, most zealous, most energetic, most peaceful, yet if we look off from Him for a moment, and look towards ourselves, at once these excellent tempers fall into some extreme or mistake. Charity becomes over-easiness, holiness is tainted with spiritual pride, zeal degenerates into fierceness, activity eats up the spirit of prayer, hope is heightened into presumption. We cannot guide ourselves. God's revealed word is our sovereign rule of conduct; and therefore, among other reasons, is faith so principal a grace, for it is the directing power which receives the commands of Christ, and applies them to the heart.

But Barnabas overcame at last. And at his death he seemed more than ever the steadfast Apostle of Jesus. According to tradition, he ended his life where he began it—at Cyprus. One day he went into the synagogue of Salamis, and began, as was his wont, to preach Christ to the assembly. Certain Jews who had come over from Syria to the island to stir up the people against him, laid their hands on him, and confined him in the synagogue until night, when they dragged him forth, stoned him to death, and then tried to burn his body to ashes. But his body is said to have resisted the power of the flames, though it did not that of the stones, and St. Mark buried it. Such a man takes rank as a leader among 'the glorious company of the apostles' and 'the noble army of martyrs.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Church Pulpit Year Book*, ii. (1905) 155.

## Canaan and the Babylonian Civilization.

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FRIEDRICH DELITZSCH, in his *Babel und Bibel* (1902, p. 28), says: 'When the twelve tribes of Israel entered Canaan, they came into a region completely under the sway of Babylonian civilization.' Many scholars have given to this statement their tacit or even explicit approval. For instance, we find such repetitions of Delitzsch's assertion as the following: 'The religion of the Canaanites

was the ancient Oriental one,' *i.e.* Babylonian.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, from this assumption it is frequently inferred that the Israelites became acquainted with and adopted the Babylonian legends and myths after their entrance into Canaan.<sup>2</sup> I may be

<sup>1</sup> H. Winckler, *Religionsgesch. und geschichtl. Orient*, 1906, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Gunkel, *Kom. zur Genesis*, 1909, p. 73.