A HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

XXXII. GALATIANS III. 23–25.

BEFORE the age of Faith began, we of the Jewish race were shut up and kept under the guard of the Law, in preparation for (with a view to) the approaching revelation of Faith. Thus the Law has played the part of "a servant, responsible for our safety, and charged to keep us out of bad company,"[1] until the age of Christ arrived, so that we might be made righteous by Faith. For that result could not have been attained unless special care had been taken of us during the interval. We could not safely be permitted to be free at that time, for we could not then acquire Faith, that vitalizing and strengthening power, seated in our mind and working itself out in our conduct, which enables those who have seen and known Christ to be free and yet safe.

But now the age of Faith has begun, and we are set free from the guard and the directing care of the Law.

When Paul compared the Law to a *paidagogos,* he intended undoubtedly to describe it as having a good moral character, and exercising a salutary, though a strict and severe, effect on those who were placed under it. He speaks no evil of the Law; he represents it as subsidiary and inferior to Faith, but still as a wholesome provision given in God's kindness to the Jews.

Further, he chose an illustration which would make this clear to his Galatian readers; and they must, therefore, have been familiar with that characteristic Greek institution, the *paidagogos,* and considered it salutary and good. This throws some light on the social organization in the

[1] The best way of explaining Paul's meaning is to imitate closely the description of a Paidagogos given in the *Dictionary of Antiquities* (Smith), II. p. 307.

Galatian cities, for it places us in the midst of Greek city life, as it was in the better period of Greek history. "In the free Greek cities the system of education was organized as a primary care of the State. The educational system was the best side of the Greek city constitution. Literature, music, and athletics are all regulated in an interesting inscription of Teos, the salaries of the teachers are fixed, and special magistrates survey and direct the conduct of teachers and pupils." [1]

In that period it would appear that the *paidagogoi* were trusted servants and faithful attendants, standing in a very close relation to the family (in which they were slaves). Their duty was not to teach any child under their charge, but simply to guard him. Among the Romans, who adopted this institution from the Greeks, the *paidagogos* gave some home instruction to the child: he was a Greek-speaking slave, who looked after the child, and taught him to use the Greek language. Though he also accompanied the child to school, yet there was not the same kindly feeling in the relationship of guardian and ward in Rome as in Greek cities during the better period. Roman *paidagogoi* were often chosen without the slightest regard to the moral side of their teaching, and brought the child in contact with the lower side of life among vicious slaves; and in the later Greek period, amid the steady degeneration of pagan manners in the whole Roman empire, Plutarch complains that a slave, worthless for any other purpose, was used as a *paidagogos*; and a little earlier Juvenal gives a terrible picture of the upbringing of young children, which, though exaggerated in his usual style, is still an indication of what was becoming characteristic of ordinary pagan homes (though certainly with some, probably many, brilliant exceptions).

[1] Quoted (and shortened) from *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, Pt. II. p. 440.

In contrast with the Greek care for education, the Roman imperial government lavishly provided shows and exhibitions of a more or less degrading character for the population of Rome and the provinces, while the degeneration of the provision for watching over and educating the young in the cities was the worst feature of the Roman period. This had much to do with the steady deterioration in the moral fibre of the population, and the resulting destruction of the empire.

This passage of the Epistle, therefore, places us in the midst of Greek city life as it was in the better period of Greek history. When read in relation to the provision for education in the Greek cities, the illustration which Paul selects becomes much more luminous.

But there is nothing here characteristic of North Galatia. We are placed amid the Greek-speaking population of Antioch and Iconium, where Greek ways and customs had been neutralized since Alexander had conquered the country and left behind him a long succession of Greek kings. Even in Lystra, recently founded as a military station in a more barbarous district, and off the main line of trade, the probability is that only a minority of the population were so used to education that this illustration would have appealed to them; but I have often argued that it was among that minority that Christianity first spread.[1]

Moreover, it is an early state of Greek manners which is here presented to us. We turn to Plato for the best illustration of Paul's meaning, and not to late writers. Similarly, in the case of the Diatheke, Paul's words in iii. 15 implied an early stage in the development of that idea.

That is all characteristic of South Galatia, where Greek government existed for nearly two centuries after 334 B.C.,[2]

[1] *Church in Rom. Emp.*, pp. 57, 146 ; *St. Paul the Trav.*, ch. vi.

[2] The chief Græcizing influence, however, was the Seleucid rule, lasting only about a century, and ending in 190 B.C.

and then gave place to Gallic and Pontic supremacy. Thus it was a rather early form of Greek society which maintained itself in a city like Pisidian Antioch; and that society was likely to be kept vigorous by the constant struggle which it had to maintain against Oriental influence.

No other reference to *paidagogoi* occurs in Paul's writings, except 1 *Corinthians* iv. 15. It may perhaps be fanciful, but it seems to me as I read that passage that it is distinctly more contemptuous in tone than the allusion in *Galatians* iii. 24, 25. Moreover, it implies, apparently, that the *paidagogoi* are teachers, elementary teachers, of those whom they look after. There we have the later, the Romanized conception of the *paidagogos*, which naturally ruled in a town like Corinth that was at once a Greek city and a Roman colony.

XXXIII. GALATIANS III. 26–30.

In *v.* 25 Paul changes almost unconsciously from the use of "we," as "we Jews," to the wider sense, in which it embraces also the Galatians (and all Gentiles who come to the Faith). Then he explains in *vv.* 26–30 why he ranks Galatians and Jews together. The working of the Faith which you feel in Christ Jesus makes you sons of God, for all who are baptized to Christ have clothed themselves with Christ, and put His nature and person round them in becoming His people. Christ is the sum of all who believe in Him; He takes them all into Himself; He admits no distinction of nationality, or of rank, or of sex; all are placed on an equality and made one in Him. And if you are part of Christ and partake His nature, then you are the seed of Abraham (for Christ is the true seed of Abraham, *v.* 16), and therefore you are heirs according to God's promise.

We note that the distinction of the "true seed," and superior right of the "true seed" to inherit, is characteristic both of Greek law in general, and in particular of the

late-Syrian law (which we take to be a survival of Seleucid law analogous to that which prevailed in South Galatia).[1]

Comparing this passage with Paul's writings as a whole, we see that this obliteration of distinctions in Christ is the end, but not the beginning, of the life in Christ. Beyond all doubt Paul considered that, practically, to become a part of Christ implied membership of the Church of Christ: that was the actual fact, as the world was constituted. But the Church was not to begin by abolishing all distinctions in social life: that abolition would be the result of the gradual working of Faith in the individual, and of the gradual lessening of the distance that separated the actual state of these struggling and imperfect congregations from the perfect realization of their true nature in Christ.[2]

Paul rather accepted the existing state of society, with its distinctions and usages, except in so far as they were positively idolatrous. He bade the slave continue as a slave, the woman stand in the same relation to the man as was the rule of society. The realization by each individual of his or her true life in Christ was to be sought in accepting, not in rebelling against, the present facts of life in the world: their present situation was of indefinitely small consequence in comparison with the goal towards which Faith would bring them.

But the words which Paul here uses imply, necessarily and inevitably, that the Church, as it disengages itself from and rises above the existing state of society, and as it remakes the facts of the world in the course of its growth, must rise above those distinctions which have no reality in Christ. How far the Apostle was conscious, at the moment,

[1] See Mitteis, p. 326, and Bruns-Sachau, *Syr.-Röm. Rechtsbuch*, p. 4.

[2] The difference in tone and spirit of the Pastoral from the rest of the Pauline Epistles is greatly due to the fact that the former are mainly concerned with the practical steps in an early congregation, while the latter rather exhibit the ideal to be striven after (though this is not fully true of either group).

of the meaning that lay in his words, is doubtful. He uttered the truth as he saw it clearly revealed to him: he was not interested in speculation as to its future effect on society: he lived in the present crisis. An observant and thoughtful citizen of Rome might perhaps have been able to see—as the modern scholar can now look back and see—how the diffusion of Roman civilization and government was tending to obliterate the distinctions of nation and race, and to unite alien peoples in a wider patriotism. The philosophic mind might perhaps see—as some philosophers then actually saw, at least dimly and faintly—that the subjection of one man as a slave to another was unnatural, and must pass away. We can now see that, though not very clearly: nominally we hold slavery as abolished; but really slavery is far from abolished in any country.

But what is implied as to the relation of man and woman by these words of Paul's, we still cannot discern.[1] We can indeed see with certainty, in comparing nation with nation and religion with religion, that one of the most important forces in the progress of society lies in the education which the mother conveys to her children, and that where a religion (as, for example, Mohammedanism) does not tend to raise the standard of thought and feeling, knowledge and character, among its women, no amount of excellence in abstract principles and truths will make that religion a practical power for steadily elevating the race which clings to it. From the contemplation of such facts we may guess as to the future, but we can only guess.

The remarkable expression used here is one of the many little touches throughout this Epistle which place the reader in the Græco-Phrygian cities of Asia Minor. Among them the position of women was unusually free and important, and they were often entrusted with offices and duties which

[1] The change of form, "bond nor free, male and female," springs from the feeling that the two cases are not precisely analogous.

elsewhere were denied them. Hence, the allusion to the perfect equality of the sexes in the perfect form which the Church would ultimately attain, would seem far more natural to the people of these Græco-Phrygian cities than to pure Greeks or Romans.

XXXIV. The Infant Son and Heir (Gal. iv. 1–7).

So long as the son who has succeeded to an inheritance is a child, he is treated in practice like a slave subject to orders, though in theory he is the owner and master. But the property and its child-master are directed by guardians and stewards, until the child has reached the age named in the Diatheke of his father.

Here we observe the distinctively Greek touch that the term "heir," used by Paul, is almost convertible with "son."[1] The same term is often used in the inscriptions of Asia Minor and elsewhere in precisely the same way as here to indicate "a son after he has succeeded to the inheritance" as the representative of his father, undertaking all the duties and obligations of his father.

A state of society is contemplated as familiar to the Galatian Christians, in which the father by his Will ordinarily nominated a term when his infant heir was to come of age. This does not imply that there was no age fixed by law in cases where a Will had not been made; but it does seem to imply that in the circle of Paul's readers the maker of a Will was free to fix such age as he pleased. It is known that Seleucid law differed from Roman law in regard to the legal period of full age. Mitteis (p. 107) points out that in Tyana the legal term for coming of age was different from the Roman: he ascribes this to Greek influence, but probably it is Anatolian (and South-Galatian) custom.

Further, Paul clearly describes a state of society and law

[1] See above, § xxiii. p. 204, and § xxviii. p. 325.

in which the father by his Will appoints two distinct kinds of adminstrators for his child, so that the infant owner is said to grow up under the rule of guardians and stewards (ἐπίτροποι and οἰκονόμοι). The former is the regular term in Greek law for the guardian of an infant, appointed by the father, or by the law in default of the father's nomination. It was also the regular translation of the Latin *tutor*.

The *oikonomos* or steward is less easily understood. A state of the law is implied in which the father by Will named both a guardian and an *oikonomos* for his infant child. Presumably the guardian (ἐπίτροπος) exercised a more complete authority over the infant than the *oikonomos*, who (as the name implies) merely regulates household and business matters for the infant. Now in Roman law that distinction was well known: an infant was under a *tutor* until he reached the age of 14, and thereafter under a *curator* until 25. But in Roman law the *curator* could not be appointed by the Will of the father.[1]

In pure Greek law, as for example at Athens, this distinction seems to have been unknown; and Paul's words have less meaning when we think of pure Greek manners. But the law and manners of the Græco-Phrygian cities (and of the Seleucid cities generally) were not pure Greek. They were Hellenistic, having the form which Greek ideas assumed, when they went forth to conquer the East and were inevitably modified in the process.

Accordingly, everything becomes clear when we look at the Syrian law-book. The same distinction is there drawn as in Rome: a child is subject to an *Epitropos* up to 14, thereafter he is able to make a Will and dispose of his own property, but the practical management of the property remains in the hands of a *curator* till the ward reaches the

[1] An elementary fact, stated in any manual of Roman Antiquities or Law: see *e.g.* Ramsay's *Roman Antiquities*, p. 255; Mitteis, p. 218.

age of 25.[1] But the Syrian law differs from the Roman in permitting the father to appoint both *epitropos* and *curator* by Will. This is exactly the state of things which Paul speaks of; and the probability is that the distinction of *epitropos* and *oikonomos* dates back to the old Seleucid law, and thus persisted both in Syria and in South Galatia. In Syria, however, as time went on, Roman law affected native custom; and so the name *curator* was substituted for *oikonomos*.

Thus once more we find that we are placed amid Seleucid, and therefore South-Galatian, not among North-Galatian,[2] manners and law.

XXXV. The Rudiments of the World (Gal. iv. 3 and 9).

As in the world of business, so it was in religion: while we Jews, the heirs and sons, were children, we were like slaves, subjected to rudimentary principles and rules of a more material and formal character. But when the proper time, contemplated by the Father in his Diatheke, had arrived with Christ, then we all, Jews and Gentiles, receive in actual fact the inheritance and the position of sons (which previously was only theoretically ours, as we could not as yet fulfil the conditions necessary for accepting the inheritance).

There seems to be here the same transition as in iii. 52 f. from "we" in the sense of Jews to "we" embracing all true Christians, Gentile alike and Jew; and Paul goes on to explain his reasons and to justify the transition.

[1] The Syriac seems to borrow the Greek term in one case, the Roman in the other (to judge from the German translation in Bruns and Sachau, *Syrisch-Römisches Rechtsbuch*, p. 5).

[2] The Roman lawyer Gaius, I. 55, points out that the North Galatian law retained the old Gaulish (Cæsar, *B.G.*, iv. 19) and non-Greek principle (also Roman) that the father had absolute authority, even to death, over his children. Mitteis, p. 23 f., infers from this and other facts that the North-Galatian law and customs were quite distinct from those of the Hellenized or half-Hellenized races of Asia Minor.

Previously, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to false gods. But now, when you have come to know God, or rather when God has taken cognizance of you (for the change in your position is due entirely to His gracious action and initiative), how is it that you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elementary rules, to which you wish to make yourselves slaves again completely, while you pay respect to sabbaths, and new moons, and annual celebrations, and sacred years, as if there were any virtue and any grace in such accidental recurrences in the order of the world. I am afraid that I have spent trouble and labour upon you in vain.

It is clearly implied that there was a marked analogy between the bondage of the Jews under the "rudiments of the world" and the bondage of the Gentiles under the load of ceremonial connected with their former idolatry. The Jewish rudiments are contemptuously summed up as "days and months and seasons and years"; and each of these terms was applicable in startlingly similar fashion to the pagan ceremonial practised in Asia Minor.[1] A few sentences, written in another connexion and still unpublished, may be here quoted: "A highly elaborate religious system reigned over the country. Superstitious devotion to an artificial system of rules, and implicit obedience to the directions of the priests (cf. *Gal.* iv. 3–11), were universal among the uneducated native population. The priestly hierarchy at the great religious centres, *hiera*, expounded the will of the god to his worshippers.[2] Thus the government was a theocracy, and the whole system, with its prophets, priests, religious law, punishments inflicted by the god for infractions of the ceremonial law, warnings and

[1] Examples of the similarity are given in a series of articles in the *Expository Times*, 1898, October, etc., on "The Greek of the Early Christian Church and the Pagan Ritual."

[2] *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 134 ff., 147 ff., 94 ff., etc.

threats, and the set of superstitious minutiæ, presented a remarkable and real resemblance in external type to the old Jewish ceremonial and religious rule. It is not until this is properly apprehended that Galatians iv. 3–11 becomes clear and natural. Paul in that passage implies that the Judaizing movement of the Christian Galatians is a recurrence to their old heathen type. After being set free from the bonds of a hard ceremonial law, they were putting themselves once more into the bonds of another ceremonial law, equally hard. In their action they were showing themselves senseless (*ἀνόητοι*, *Gal.* iii. 1), devoid of the educated mind that could perceive the real nature of things. There is an intentional emphasis in the juxtaposition of *ἀνόητοι* with *Γαλάται*, for it was the more educated party, opposed to the native superstition, that would most warmly welcome the provincial title. Hence the address 'senseless Galatians,' already anticipates the longer expostulation (iv. 3–11), 'Galatians who are sinking from the educated standard to the ignorance and superstition of the native religion.' "

Obviously the enumeration, "days and months and seasons and years," is merely a contemptuous summary of the formalistic side of Jewish ritual; and there is no implication that the Galatians were actually observing at the time a sacred or Sabbatic year. The meaning is merely "are you about to enslave yourselves to the whole series of their feeble and poor ceremonies?"

XXXVI. He sent forth His Son (Gal. iv. 4).

When the preparatory stage had come to an end and the world was ripe for the new development, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

It seems almost incredible to the outsider, who judges

evidence after the ordinary methods of historical students, that this verse should be regarded as proof that Paul understood and believed Jesus to be plainly and literally "the son of Joseph." Yet the opinion has been strenuously and confidently maintained that Paul was ignorant of any idea that Jesus, so far as concerned His birth, was anything else except, in the strictest sense, Joseph's son. But the words which Paul here uses plainly imply the following points in his belief and in his teaching to the Galatians:—

1. Jesus existed in the fullest sense as the Son of God before He was sent forth into the world.

2. He was sent forth with a definite duty to perform, retaining the same nature and personal character in the performance of this duty that he had previously possessed. That is proved by the common use in Luke of the verb "sent forth" (ἐξαποστέλλω), and its natural sense as the despatching of a suitable messenger, qualified by his personal character and nature, for the duty to which He is sent.

3. For this duty Jesus took human form and nature: the words γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός express simply that He became a man among men.

4. To discharge this duty, it was indispensable that Jesus should be subject to the Law, in order to show in His own case how by dying to the Law a man rises superior to it: thus His death was the purchase of men, paid in order that they might be placed in a position to avail themselves of the adoption as sons, open to them by the Diatheke of the Father.

It is clear that the teaching, so briefly summed up in this verse, is to be understood as already familiar to the Galatians: Paul is merely revivifying it in their memory. And, in the discourse which Luke gives as typical of Paul's teaching in Pisidian Antioch and elsewhere (Acts xiii.

16–41), exactly the same teaching is set forth in very simple language, language so simple that its full meaning hardly impresses itself on the reader until he compares it with the Epistle. Paul there quotes "Thou art My Son"; and he says "the Word of this salvation is sent forth to us," using the same verb as in *Galatians* iv. 4. The context shows that "the Word" here is not to be taken in the mere sense of news or spoken words, *ῥήματα* (as Meyer-Wendt explain): it is used in a mystical sense, and it forms the transition from the simpler expression of the Synoptics to the language used about "the Word" in the Fourth Gospel. That Luke employs this term in his brief abstract of Paul's Galatian teaching, must be taken as a proof that Paul intentionally expressed himself in mystic language as to the relation between the Father and the Son. This was not a subject about which he spoke openly.

It has often seemed to me that this was the subject about which he "heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter" in the vision described in 2 *Corinthians* xii. 4. Though it is vain to seek to know the contents of a vision, which the seer pointedly refuses to speak about, yet the mystic language which Paul uses on this subject may justify, perhaps, a conjecture as to the vision.

The peroration of the address at Syrian Antioch insisted on the marvellous and mysterious nature of God's action in the sending forth of His Son: "I work a wonder in your days, a work which you would not believe, if one should recount it to you."

XXXVII. The Address at Pisidian Antioch.[1]

It is evident from the Epistle, that Paul must have insisted orally to the Galatians on the preparatory character of the Jewish Law. He must have shown them in his first preaching how the history of the Jews becomes in-

[1] This section was suggested to me by a remark of Mr. A. Souter.

telligible only as leading onward to a further development and to a fuller stage. That is the whole burden of the address reported in brief by Luke.[1] The typical words, "the fulness of time" (τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, *Gal.* iv. 4), are echoed in the words of that address: John was fulfilling his course (ἐπλήρου τὸν δρόμον); the Jews fulfilled the words of the prophets by condemning Jesus (ἐπλήρωσαν κρίναντες), God hath fulfilled His Promise (ἐπαγγελίαν . . . ἐκπεπλήρωκεν).

Further, Paul must have previously laid special stress in addressing the Galatian Churches on the fact that the Promise made to the ancestors of the Jews cannot be performed except through the coming of Christ; that Christ's coming is the fulfilment of the Promise; that Christ is the true seed of Abraham; that men cannot be placed in a position to receive the ratification of the Promise except by being identified with Christ and becoming a part of Christ; and that in this way only do they become fully the sons and heirs who actually succeed to the inheritance.

This, which is the burden of the Epistle, is also the burden of the address: "ye could not be justified by the Law," "through (the action of) Jesus every one that hath faith is justified."[2] That idea is urged and reiterated, time after time, in the Epistle; it is specially emphasized in the address; the word in which it is expressed, δικαιόω, is never used in Acts except in the address; it occurs with extraordinary frequency in the Epistle and in the kindred letter to the Romans, but is very rarely used elsewhere by Paul.

The address twice declares that Jesus came as the fulfilment of the Promise, *vv.* 23 and 32 f. It lays stress on His being of the seed of David (therefore ultimately of Abraham). It is plain what a decisive part in the con-

[1] Acts xiii. 16–41.

[2] διὰ τούτου, *i e.* Christ. This phrase is characteristically Pauline.

version of Paul, and in the message to the Galatians presupposed in the Epistle (see § xxii.), was played by his coming to realize for himself, and his declaring to others, that Jesus was not dead. In the address the same truth is insisted on at length as fundamental in the message which God has sent.

The word "inheritance" is not used in the address with the same prominence as in the Epistle; the more explanatory and the more Petrine[1] "remission of sins" appears instead of it. "Inheritance" is used only of the Promised Land (*κατεκληρονόμησεν*).

The Epistle points out how the hanging upon a tree was necessary as a step in the working out of the duty for which Christ was sent; and the address describes how, when the Jewish leaders "had fulfilled all things that were written of Him, they took Him down from the tree." Paul never uses this expression "the tree," *ξύλον*, in this sense in any other Epistle. Peter uses it twice in *Acts* v. 30 and x. 39, as well as in his first Epistle ii. 24.

We notice, in this connection, that Peter also uses the word "fulfil" (Acts iii. 18) in a way remarkably similar to that which Paul emphasized to the Galatians, and that his addresses there and in v. 30 ff. are remarkably similar to Paul's Galatian address. Is not the similarity in their view the reason why Paul specially turned to Peter, and why he went to Jerusalem at first with the single intention of interviewing Peter (*ἱστορῆσαι Κηφᾶν, Gal.* i. 18)? Finally the resemblance between their addresses at the beginning of their career finds its confirmation at the end, when Peter's Epistle is so instinct with Pauline feeling that Lightfoot believes he had read *Rom.* and *Eph.* Hence he inherited the care of Paul's churches and the services of Paul's coadjutors (1 Pet. i. 1; v. 12, 13).

The coincidences between the Epistle and the address at

[1] Acts ii. 38, v. 31, x. 43 (Petrin); Paul ine Acts xxvi. 18; Col. i. 14; Eph. i. 7.

Pisidian Antioch are so striking as to make each the best commentary on the other. It may be said in explanation that the topics common to them are those which are fundamental in Paul's Gospel and must appear in every address. But there is no such close resemblance between the Epistle and any other of Paul's addresses reported in Acts, and the Antiochian address stands in much closer relation to this than to any other of Paul's Epistles, even the kindred letter to the Romans.

W. M. RAMSAY.

DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN ROMANS.

VIII. THE REIGN OF LAW.

IN chapter vi. St. Paul set before us, as a reply to the objection that God's purpose of mercy is a reason why men should continue in sin, a description of the new life He would have us live, in its relation to God, to the death and the resurrection life of Christ, and as contrasted with our past life of sin. While thus delineating the new life, he made the astonishing assertion, "ye are no longer under law." This passing assertion he explains in chapter vii. 1–6, by saying that his readers "have been put to death to the Law through the (crucified) body of Christ," that they have been put beyond reach of the efficacy of the Law (*κατηργήθημεν*), and have died to that in which they were held fast. A reason for this deliverance from the Law is said to be that the emotions of sins aroused by means of the Law were at work in the members of their body bringing forth fruit for death.

The above explanation lies open to serious objection. Possibly it was designed to raise the objection. If by means of the Law sinful passions were aroused, if in order that we may be united to Christ we must needs die to the