

DELIVERING TO SATAN.

THERE are two passages in the Epistles in which the phrase, "to deliver unto Satan," is used in the one with reference to the incestuous Corinthian (1 Cor. v. 3-5), in the other with reference to Hymenæus and Alexander, who had thrust from themselves (I use the language of R.V.) faith and a good conscience, and had made shipwreck concerning the faith (1 Tim. i. 20). I propose to examine these passages, more particularly the first. They run thus :

For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

. . . Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.

It is obvious, on the slightest perusal of the passage, that we have portrayed to us a very solemn and awful ecclesiastical function. The whole ecclesia, or assembly, of the Church, the entire body of those that "are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints" (1 Cor. i. 2), is to gather together in solemn conclave. This the Apostle has determined upon after due consideration, for this, I think, is implied in the word "already." He was far away from the Corinthians at Ephesus, but had had them constantly in his mind. Though he was absent from them in the body, his spirit was, as it were, present with them, and he had discussed the matter with himself as to what he would have done if he had been present with them. This was his decision. His whole spirit was on fire with righteous indignation. They had not half realized the guiltiness of

the sinner. "Ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this thing might be taken away from among you" (1 Cor. v. 2). He knew what ought to be done to the man who had "so wrought this thing." They must remember that, when they met in this solemn way, they were to be gathered together "in the name of our Lord Jesus." They were to realize that Jesus Christ, who had promised to be with two or three gathered together in His Name, would be there present with them "with power." St. Paul tells them what to do, claiming authority for himself as an Apostle, but with the deepest conviction that in what he is saying he has the spirit of Jesus. The guilty person, and any like him—for St. Paul seems here to be laying down a general rule—are to be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Handed over to Satan; but what for? That this punishment may result in the spirit being saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. It is St. Paul's sentence which the Christian community ratify (for so it must be taken) and adopt as their own.

A similar conclave we must imagine to have been held in the case of Hymenæus and Alexander. It is St. Paul's sentence again, "whom I delivered unto Satan." There is no direct mention here of the temporal character of the punishment, but it is implied in the object of the delivering to Satan: "that they might be taught not to blaspheme." Whether these three guilty persons were led to repentance through bodily suffering or not we know not; Hymenæus, at any rate, about two years later, seems still to have been occupied in overthrowing the faith of others (2 Tim. ii. 18).

I do not propose to go any further into the character of the punishment or its relation to ecclesiastical excommunication. I desire rather to look backwards. Was there anything which suggested to St. Paul to do exactly what he did do? There certainly was. The infliction of temporary

bodily afflictions is attributed both in the Old and in the New Testament to Satan, notably in the case of Job in the Old Testament. But the parallel which can be drawn between this delivering to Satan and what we are told in the Book of Job has never been, to my knowledge, fully drawn out. When it is, it seems to suggest that the Apostle had this, at any rate, in his mind when he issued his instructions to the Corinthian Church.

In the New Testament the sanctified in Christ Jesus, those who have been made "children of God" and admitted into His Church, are to assemble together. In the Old Testament "the sons of God" assemble themselves, those who are dedicated to God's service. None would be absent in this assembly any more than in the other. It is such a solemn occasion as that of which Micaiah spoke: "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left" (1 Kings xxii. 19), and in both cases the evil spirit, or Satan, was close at hand. In the New Testament the assembly is to be held as if it were acting with the Lord present in bodily form with it. In the Old Testament "the Lord" (the title used in the case of any manifestation of the Godhead; see, *e.g.*, Gen. xviii.) is there present in visible form, presiding over the assembly of the sons of God. "The Lord" was present in that assembly "with power," just as St. Paul said His power was to be present with the Corinthians. In the New Testament the person dealt with had sinned. In the Old Testament, though we are told that in the time of trial Job did not sin, and that there was "none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil" (Job i. 8, 22), yet Job himself is the first to acknowledge his own unworthiness, and, while still undelivered, to repent in dust and ashes. In both cases the person arraigned is delivered to Satan. Job's affliction was for

his perfecting. The object in the New Testament was the salvation of the sinner, that, on his repentance, his soul might be saved in the day of the Lord and have infinite blessings. In the Old Testament, when Job has undergone his godly discipline, the Lord accepts Job, as He will accept every true penitent, and blesses his latter end more than his beginning. In this way the comparison between the story of Job and the directions of St. Paul to the Corinthian Church can be drawn out. The resemblance, of course, is not exact; just as type and anti-type never exactly correspond. But enough has surely been said to show that there is apparently some connection between St. Paul's mode of dealing with the open transgressors of his time and the mode of action in the heavenly Court as depicted in the Book of Job.

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*A HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE
TO THE GALATIANS.*

XXIV. GREEK LAW IN GALATIAN CITIES.

IN the preceding section we noticed that Paul assumes among his Galatian readers familiarity with a certain system and state of legal procedure. They are expected to catch at once the sense of an allusion to the identity and equivalence of the ideas Adoption and Heirship. There must therefore have existed around them in actual practice a system of law, according to which an heir was called a son in ordinary language and usage. To what part of Asia Minor does this fact point?

The mere fact that a regular testamentary system is implied proves that the old native condition of society had been replaced in the Galatian territory by a western civilization: the system of wills and will-making, wherever