

Doubtless every one who has obeyed the invitation of God and set sail for the new world with an honest heart shall come at last into the fair haven of peace, whatever storm and head winds he may meet on the way; but all will not come in after the same fashion. Some ships will make the harbour mouth with difficulty, with torn sails and bare decks, and heavy losses—hardly saved; others will enter the harbour with a flowing tide and a following wind, their sails full set and showing white in the light of the sun, and they shall have an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom. Some believers may only escape to the shore on broken pieces of their ship, humiliated and half-dead, like David; others, like St. Paul, will come in as treasure ships, bearing with them the argosy of sacrifices and of services beyond all human reckoning, and at the very sight of their coming the inhabitants of the other land shall gather to bid them welcome and to escort them into the presence of the King.

JOHN WATSON.

*HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES
TO THE CORINTHIANS.*

VII. RELATION TO PHILOSOPHY.

THIS digression on baptism leads on to another. Paul has been led to affirm that his special duty and gift lay in preaching, and he again goes off to state emphatically the principle in his preaching. He had not trusted to philosophic argument, for to do so would be to distrust the power that lies in simply preaching the Cross.

But this second digression brings him back to the original and main topic. The strength and at the same time the weakness of the Greek intellect lay in its acuteness, its capacity for making delicate distinctions and re-

finements, and its philosophic subtlety. The Corinthians shared in this Greek characteristic, and their habit of discussing and philosophizing about the doctrine of Christ was distracting their view from realities to unimportant distinctions. Just as it had led them to make that vain and dangerous distinction between the Christ of Paul and the Christ of Apollos and the supposed real Christ that lay behind them, till they forgot that Paul and Apollos and Peter were mere instruments of the one Christ, so also it prevented them from properly seeing and feeling the power that lay in the Cross and in the simple preaching of the Cross. While they discussed and criticised the style and the content of Paul's preaching, and subtly analyzed it, and delicately weighed its philosophic value, they lost sight of the one and only reality in it—the Cross of Christ.

On this topic Paul enlarges at great length and from various points of view (i.-iv.). In this theological discussion we notice only the following features, which suggest certain historical inferences.

1. Paul is continually striking at the philosophic vice of the Corinthians. They have not learned that the first step in the true philosophy is to strip from themselves every shred and scrap of their acquired knowledge, like Descartes in the beginning of his *Discourse on the Method of Using the Reason Aright*: they must begin as bare as they came into the world, and build up their nature anew: they must make themselves babes, and grow into strength through weakness: they must cease to feel themselves to be philosophers, and recognise that they are fools, in order that they may be able to commence to learn. The beginning of true knowledge lies in the recognition of one's ignorance. Mere words of philosophic insight are absolutely inefficacious: the Corinthians must seek for that which has in it force and motive power, which can move the will: "for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (iv. 20).

This state—the fully realizing and simply confessing of one's ignorance and natural incapacity—is called by Paul “folly,” for to the clever Corinthians and the sophisticated man of the world it seems the character of a fool and a simpleton. But Paul only says all the more emphatically that a man must become a fool, a simpleton, in order that he may become wise (iii. 18): to become simple is the necessary and unavoidable first step on the road to the Divine Sophia.

On the moral side that same quality of “folly” would be the character that, from an innate rightness and healthiness, revolted against the impurity and frivolity of surrounding society, and declined to make pleasure, wealth, power, the absorbing aim and end of life. In the most corrupt state of Roman society we observe striking examples of this simplicity and purity, examples that gather lustre and beauty in contrast to the worldliness around them, but which were liable to be ridiculed in refined and fashionable society as “folly.”

2. Paul distinctly has in his mind, as he thinks of the Corinthian position, the Stoic paradox that the philosopher is everywhere sufficient for himself, always master of his circumstances, rich, powerful, free (though he be in prison or in a hovel), wise, everywhere king.

*Sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives,
Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum.*

The sage is half divine,
Rich, free, great, handsome, king of kings in fine.¹

Throughout the Epistle that thought recurs. The Corinthians “have knowledge.” To them all things are lawful.² They are masters of their world. Especially,

¹ Horace, *Epist.* I. 106. f., translation by Conington.

² 1 *Cor.* viii. 1 ff., as excellently interpreted by Prof. W. Lock, see *EXPOSITOR*, July, 1897, pp. 67, 73.

the thought gives point to the sarcastic contrast between them and the apostles (iv. 8 ff.): "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us¹. . . . We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are powerful; ye are honoured, but we are dishonourable." The thought which was stated in a complimentary way in i. 5, "Ye were enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge," is here given in a sarcastic form in iv. 10, but the word changes from *γνώσις* to *φρόνιμος*.

The same thought underlies the remarkable language of iii. 21 f.: "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours." But here it is neither ironical, as in iv. 8 ff., nor complimentary, as in i. 5; it is the word of a seer and a mystic.

3. The most remarkable feature of the whole passage (i.-iv.) is the ease and deftness with which Paul turns to his own purposes the ideas of philosophy. While he draws out in long detail the sarcastic contrast between the clever, able, successful Corinthians, and the foolish, helpless, hapless apostles, or between the grace and skill of Greek philosophy and his own humble, simple, unadorned preaching, he is really handling the deep topics of philosophy with a mastery that no other could have shown. And the most marvellous fact about the modern appreciation of these marvellous four chapters is, that many commentators and writers take his sarcastic humility with perfect seriousness, and almost pity this wretched, uneducated, narrow, bigoted Jew, who has, "with stammering lips and insufficient tongue," to stand before the polished Greeks.

In truth Paul is here creating a Christian philosophy, and constructing a philosophic language to express it. It was not so difficult a task to make the Greek tongue express

¹ The Revised Version is much inferior here to the Authorised Version.

this new philosophic theology as it was 150 years later for Tertullian to re-express the Christian philosophy in the hard and intractable and anti-philosophic Latin, for Greek lent itself naturally and readily to the expression of high and ideal thought. But still it was by no means an easy task; and only a mind trained both in Greek philosophy and in Hebraic theology could have achieved it with the perfection that Paul has attained—a perfection so complete that the words become living, and brand themselves in the readers' hearts.

Paul is fully conscious of the nature of his task. He has to express the Sophia of God (i. 21; ii. 7), *i.e.* Christ who is the Sophia of God (i. 24, 30). So far is Paul from objecting to Sophia; his special work is as much to set forth the true Sophia, as to destroy the false Sophia. He is the σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων, the philosophic architect, who lays the foundation for others to build upon (iii. 10). He has to create the language in which to express that true Sophia: the Sophia and the words in which to express it are both the gift of God: "We received . . . the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us by God: which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, fitting spiritual words to spiritual ideas" (ii. 12 f.). So also, "We speak Sophia among the mature; we speak the Sophia of God, the Divine system of true philosophy, the hidden scheme in which the intentions of God in the world find expression; and we speak it in the form of a mystery" (ii. 6 f.).

To set forth that Sophia was the work of Paul, the duty for which he was sent; and to that work he must necessarily devote his whole attention, leaving to others the work of baptizing (with all that was implied therein, much more than the performance of the ritual act), as we have seen in § VI.

4. Paul's severity towards Greek philosophy must not be misunderstood or exaggerated. It implies neither ignorance nor mere stolid resistance to education. One may inveigh against bad education, without being an opponent or depreciator of education. Just as, to the Judaizing Phrygians of the province Galatia Paul inveighs against the evils and dangers of Judaic formalism, so here to the disputatious and sophistic Greeks of Corinth he inveighs against the evils and dangers of philosophic verbalism and juggling with arguments; but, in regard alike to Judaic ritual and to philosophical education, there was another side to Paul's opinion which is revealed in his life and work and in other parts of his letters. He held both that Jewish birth and blood implied the obligation to observe and practise the whole Jewish ritual (1 *Cor.* vii. 18), and that the Christian must learn from the world around all that is best in that world.¹

VIII. THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AS A PART OF SOCIETY.

In attempting to understand aright the position and character of an early Christian community, we must be on our guard against the idea that all that was best in contemporary society tended toward Christianity. That was by no means the case. Those who were the most educated—in the best sense—those who were most refined and high-minded—those who were purest in life and aspirations—were often entirely content with their theories of the world and of the Divine nature; and, in spite of the general corruption of Pagan society, there were many striking examples of noble purity of spirit and life in the Roman Empire at the time when Paul was preaching.

In Roman official life, too, there were many admirable officers, devoted to their work, honest and incorruptible, with a splendid ideal of what a Roman official should be

¹ *St. Paul the Trav.*, p. 149.

and should do.¹ It was by no means the case that these tended to become Christians. The routine of official life made many of them quite incapable of assimilating such new ideas as that men should think for themselves, and should refuse to accept the State worship which was the very essence and criterion of loyalty to the Empire.

There were undoubtedly many of those early Christians who, taken in the naked reality of human character, were not equal in tone and spirit to many of the best Pagans, and in themselves were incapable of rising to the same high level of life, or the same sanity and clearness of judgment. I am not thinking of mere hypocrites, who may have joined the Church from mere selfish motives; there were such, we may be sure, even though Christianity offered little worldly inducement. The fire of persecution under Nero and Domitian and later emperors, doubtless, cleared the Church of them, to a large extent, from time to time, though peace would always bring them back. But we cannot doubt that many of the genuinely devout Christians in Corinth and Ephesus and everywhere were very commonplace individuals; some were naturally of low and vulgar nature in many respects. They represented the average, imperfectly educated stratum of ordinary society. They had by no means shaken off all the habits of thought instilled into them by Pagan parents and surroundings when they became Christians. They required to be constantly watched, corrected, incited, guided, reprimanded, encouraged. Their history was certain not to be a steady, uniform progress towards excellence: no human progress ever is so, except in the imagination of some theorists on religious history. There would assuredly

¹ The letters of the younger Pliny about his uncle show us a thoroughly conscientious, hardworking, and humane officer; and the fact that he was far from brilliant intellectually makes him all the better a representative of the average.

be frequently a tendency among them to slip back into their old Pagan habits and thoughts, to mix up old superstitions with new religious ideas. Some of them were quite unable to rise to the Christian ideal. Paul must often blame them for faults utterly unworthy of the religion they professed ; and in this letter we find many proofs that much patience and much hopefulness were needed in treating the Corinthian Church.

Paul gives a brief picture of the general social standing of the members of his Churches in 1 *Corinthians* i. 26. This picture is not intended (as has sometimes been assumed) for a description of the Corinthian Church specially, but we may safely assume that that Church was not widely different from the other Pauline Churches. In that passage Paul bids the Corinthians (i. 26) observe the principle that lies in the calling of Christians out of the world into the Church : not a large number of those whom the world counts its philosophers—not a large number from the official class clothed with the authority of the Empire or of the municipalities—not many out of the old and aristocratic families—have been selected. No one within the Church should plume himself in his advanced education or his official rank or his long descent, for though a few Christians possessed these worldly advantages, the reason of their calling lay not in those, but in very different qualifications.

This passage is often misinterpreted as proving that the early Church was mainly drawn from the dregs of society. No such implication lies in it. To the historian the fact stands out clear that the work of the Christian Church in society was to create or to enlarge the educated, the thoughtful middle class ; and that those who were most suitable to form such a class were those who tended to drift towards the Christian Church. Hence the Church, when it was at its best, represented the force that stood in opposition, but in perfectly loyal opposition (as it always maintained), to

the imperial government, because the government claimed to think for its people as a parent for his infant children, while the Christians claimed to think for themselves.¹

It is probably true that the class of freedmen and slaves was strongly represented in the Church. But the freedmen, as a class, were set free because their natural ability and character had made them more useful to their masters free than as slaves; they were to a remarkable degree a moneyed class, and their money had been made amid great disadvantages by sheer force of character and conduct. At the same time they were also, as a rule, devoid of the higher education (which was almost entirely restricted to the free citizens), and as rich and uneducated and unpolished *parvenus*, they were often exposed to the ridicule of satirists and the contempt of the aristocratic and free born.

But they were also a class in which the average of ability and natural gifts must have been high; a class of self-made men, many of them possessing considerable aspirations, all of them endowed with much enterprise and energy—distinctly a vigorous stock. They were not separated from the free population around them by any obvious barrier of colour and race, as are the emancipated coloured population in the United States of America at the present time. Hence the stigma of slave descent could not be permanently maintained through generations, and neither law nor custom tried to do so.² Yet this vigorous, able class rested under various disabilities and disqualifications, which rendered it an element of real danger to the

¹ This is one main thought of *The Church in the Roman Empire*.

² The son of a freedman was *ingenuus*, and free from many of the disabilities of his slave-born sire; the grandson of a freedman was free from all disabilities, and could rise to all *honores* in the State (Claudius introduced a stricter rule, but did not maintain it; see Sueton. *Claud.* 24). This was true only of the most representative classes of freedmen—viz., those set free by the most complete and legal methods, *vindicta*, etc.

state. Augustus, with his marvellous power of foreseeing and guarding against possible sources of disturbance in society, recognised and provided against this danger by creating a special sphere for the activities and ambition of that large class. A career was provided for freedmen, subordinate in character, yet opening to them distinctions, outward show, official dress and equipment, and abundant opportunity of gratifying vanity, and parading before the public eye their wealth and ostentatious liberality; and, like all Augustus's provisions, this special career was directed into the Imperial service and worship, so as to attract the feelings of the whole class towards the person of the emperor.¹ But, like almost all the Imperial arrangements, it had one serious evil. It appealed to the worse side of man's nature: it tended to develop and employ the freedmen's energies on the side of personal vanity and empty show alone: it was absolutely without educational effect: it was killing to the loftier impulses, while it gave free play to the more contemptible qualities. It was part of the general Imperial policy—food and amusements to the poor, dress and parade to the freedmen—which, while it made them loyal at the moment, inevitably degraded and debased in the course of generations the tone of society in the empire.

The slaves who were attracted to the new religion were, doubtless, for the most part of similar type to the freedmen, and may be classed along with them. They were those who were on the way to earn emancipation.

The freedmen were, as a rule, engaged in trade, and were, on the whole, a moneyed class. All of them, of course, used Greek as their ordinary speech in Corinth. The wealthy *parvenu* freedman was often satirized for his unsuccessful attempts to ape the manners of higher classes

¹ Such seems a fair account of the theory underlying Augustus's institution of the *Seviri Augustales*.

in society. In that Greek city he would imitate Greek fashionable society with a strain, perhaps, of Roman manners added, for the freedmen, as a body, owed their position to Roman law.

In Corinth the names Fortunatus, Achaicus, Gaius, probably indicate freedmen. Fortunatus was a characteristic servile name. Achaicus belongs to the class of geographical names, which (when not titles of honour bestowed on Roman conquerors) were commonly servile. Gaius was a *prænomen*, and the right to bear a *prænomen* was the distinguishing mark of freedom: hence a freedman loved to be addressed by his *prænomen*, as Horace says,

“Good Quintus,” say, or “Publius” (nought endears
A speaker more than this to slavish¹ ears).

“Quinte,” puta, aut “Publi” (gaudent *prænominē molles*
Auriculæ).

Gaius, of Corinth, then, was probably a rich freedman, to whom the honourable duty of entertaining the guests of the Church was assigned (*Rom.* xvi. 23). In his Pagan days he would have aimed at the honourable position of a *Sevir Augustalis*.²

After the preceding paragraphs were in type, an excellent illustration recurred to my memory. The freedman Gaius Pompeius Trimalchio in Petronius's romance (which furnishes the only surviving picture of contemporary Pagan society of the freedman class) is regularly spoken about and addressed, both by his household and by his friends, as “Gaius” simply. “Gaius Noster” was the name that pleased and flattered him. He was *Sevir Augustalis* at

¹ *i.e.*, the ears of one who has been a slave, but who is now marked by the *prænomen* as free. Hor. *Sat.* II. 5, 33.

² In Asia Minor a name like Gaius or Lucius was often assumed by a provincial as his single name of the Greek fashion. In such cases Gaius or Lucius is no longer a *prænomen*, but has become a non-Roman name. That custom was, however, not common in Greece at this time, but belonged rather to the less educated cities.

Cumae, and a leading personage there in his own class and set. The contrast between Christian and Pagan society at this time could not be more strikingly and pointedly brought out than by a comparison between the two contemporary Gaiuses in the surroundings amid which each moved and lived. Petronius was writing only a very few years after Paul (earlier than A.D. 66), and he lays his scene about A.D. 47-57.¹

Tertius and Quartus are also names which, perhaps, point to freedmen: in that case they would be actually names of slaves, who would retain them, as *cognomina*, after being set free. But they might equally well belong to provincials, especially resident strangers, not pure Greeks by birth, who settled in Corinth for purposes of trade.

The inference from these facts, and from the whole tone of the Epistle, is that the Church in Corinth contained a very considerable number of persons belonging to the well-to-do class of busy traders, many of whom were actually freedmen, some of whom probably were still slaves. But, when we read of slaves, we are not to think of oppressed and degraded human chattels, like those of the cotton plantations in modern Mississippi before 1860, or of the similar class in the ancient *ergastula*, where the gang-system was practised on great estates, but of the household slaves and town slaves, well treated, on the whole comfortable, and enjoying considerable privileges according to an unwritten code of customs. These persons constituted, not indeed the majority, but certainly the strength, of the Christian community in Corinth;² and besides them there were also a few persons of the higher classes, philosophers, officials imperial or municipal (such as, at Athens, Dionysius the Areopagite); and around the

¹ So Friedländer, *Cena Trimalchionis*, p. 7. Some place the scene under Augustus or Tiberius. On the name Gaius, see Friedländer, p. 207.

² There are certain dangers, liable always to arise from the predominance of this "middle" class; and these can, perhaps, be observed in this letter.

Church there was a fringe of persons interested, but not actually converts (such as the friendly Ariarchs in Ephesus, the proconsul in Cyprus, and so on).

To all these there must, of course, be added a large number of the really poor, the suffering class in society. There was plenty of opportunity for the well-to-do Christians in Corinth to exercise charity among their associates in the Church as well as outside of it, and perhaps to plume themselves a little on their charity and virtue. But the tone of ironical admiration of the rich, clever, influential Corinthian Christians in iv. loses all its effect if it is taken as addressed to a congregation of the poor and needy and humble only. It is addressed to persons who prided themselves not a little on their success in life and on the skill with which they had assimilated the manners of the most highly-educated and aristocratic classes.

Such was the Corinthian Church; and, as we have said, the other Pauline Churches were not widely different. But this first Corinthian letter conveys a stronger impression of wealth and ease, and of the faults incidental to them, than any other of Paul's letters.

IX. SOSTHENES AND CHLOE.

Sosthenes (i. 1) is a doubtful personality. The name was a common one; and Sosthenes of Corinth, who is mentioned in *Acts* xviii. 12, need not necessarily have been the same person. But, if the two were the same, then certainly the History would be found very illuminative of the Epistle.

Sosthenes of *Acts* was a Jew of rank, still unconverted in the latter part of Paul's stay in Corinth; and if he be the Sosthenes of the Epistle, he must have been converted, possibly by Apollos; and his influential position in Corinth would be the reason why he is named as associate author of the Epistle. If he were one of Apollos's

converts, there would be special reason why he should be associated as joint author to stamp with his authority the warnings against criticism and faction.

We can, however, be certain only of one thing, viz., that Sosthenes, the author of the Epistle, was a person known to the Corinthians, and standing in some position of authority as a teacher or preacher among them. Such was necessarily the case with an associate author of the letter to the Corinthians.¹

Chloe (i. 11) is unknown. Nothing can be affirmed about her; and yet some probable inferences follow from the reference to her. We cannot suppose that Paul quotes the statement of messengers sent by one of the factious Corinthians as trustworthy evidence about the factions. It is clear that "the representatives of Chloe" are quoted as being in themselves good and sufficient witnesses, and therefore they must have stood outside the factions as external observers. Paul does not desire that Stephanas, or Fortunatus, or Achaicus, should be taken as his authorities; they were Corinthians, probably affected by the common fault of Corinthians; and it could only cause ill-feeling, if they were understood to be his authorities. Chloe, therefore, was not a Corinthian. She was an outsider; and her representatives were unprejudiced witnesses in the matter.

Again, when we observe the important position of this woman, who was evidently head of a household, and perhaps of a business (like the Lydian woman from Thyatira at Philippi), we must recognise that Chloe was much more likely to belong to Asia Minor than to Greece. In Asia Minor, particularly in the less Græcized inner parts, women occupied a much more influential position than in the Greek cities.

Probably, therefore, Chloe was a native of some city of

¹ *Hist. Comm. Gal.*, § II. p. 239 f.

Asia Minor,¹ head of a business whose agents were passing to and fro between Corinth and Ephesus.

X. THE TITLE "CORINTHIANS."

It is noteworthy that Paul does not use the Latinized adjective *Corinthiensis*, but the simple *Corinthius*. In the case of Philippi, on the other hand, he uses the Latinized adjective *Philippensis*, *Φιλιππησίους* in Greek.

Now, it has been pointed out in *Hist. Comm. Gal.* § XXV.² what an important and characteristic feature is that use of the Latinized form of the adjective. It is exceedingly rare in Greek, and occurs only where the city is distinctively Roman and Latin. When Paul addressed the people of Philippi as *Philippenses*, he signified by this term that he regarded them as "men of a Roman *Colonia*," Latins, not Greeks. We are reminded of the pointed description of Philippi in *Acts* xvi. 12 as a *Colonia*; and we remember how many Roman features appear in the incidents narrated at Philippi.³ Paul and Luke illustrate one another as usual. Each marks out Philippi as a city that prided itself on its dignity and its Roman character; and Paul, by addressing his converts as *Philippenses*, shows that he did not regard their pride in their own city, their *patria*, as either dead in their hearts after conversion, or as wrong in itself. The address is strikingly analogous to that in *Galatians* ii. 1, where the citizens of four cities in South Galatia are addressed as "men of the province Galatia."

But Paul does not address the Corinthians as *Corinthienses*, he writes to them as *Corinthii*. Both Corinth and Philippi were Roman colonies: why, then, the difference?

¹ Macedonia, where also women occupied a higher position than in Greece, is out of the question, because in that case the agents would rather travel between Corinth and a Macedonian harbour.

² Compare also § XIV.

³ *St. Paul the Trav.*, pp. 218-224.

Is it that he saw the Church to be thoroughly Greek, and not Roman? Or is it that the adjective *Corinthius*, not *Corinthiensis*, was in regular use in the city? The Latin adjective, in fact, seems to be known only from a quotation from the grammarian Festus, who mentions it as specially used to indicate a foreigner (or a Roman colonist) residing in Corinth. But all other evidence points to *Corinthius* as being the form used invariably by Romans; and the Latinized Greek form, *Κορινθῆσιος*, seems never to occur.¹ Paul therefore probably followed the Corinthian usage, which was Greek, and the Philippian usage, which was Roman. That implies that Corinth had not become so thoroughly Romanized a place as Philippi; it was distinctively a Greek city, though a Roman colony.

We remember that in *Acts* xviii. the incidents at Corinth have not a strong Roman tinge. The presence of a Roman governor and his tribunal is a feature that belongs to Corinth, not as *Colonia*, but as capital of the province. We find the purely Latin name Titius Justus and several other Latin names, especially of freedmen; but otherwise the local colour is on the whole Greek rather than Roman. There is little to remind us that Corinth was a *Colonia*, and its colonial dignity is not alluded to. Its rank as capital of Greece entirely outweighs its rank as a Roman city; and in the Bezan Text and the *Textus Receptus* the population are called Greeks in xviii. 17. This is an important point, deserving further notice. It has elsewhere been argued that the reading *Hellenes* is correct and necessary there (*St. Paul the Trav.*, p. 259); and we shall now see how much meaning the term carries with it.

Here we notice that in *Acts* the term *Hellenes*, or *Greeks*, is used with noteworthy propriety: the people of Thessa-

¹ Taken alone, the failure of the Greek form (necessarily rare in our authorities) would be unimportant.

lonica, of Beroëa, of Ephesus, of Iconium, of Syrian Antioch,¹ are spoken of as Hellenes. Those were all cities which had no claim to be Roman (except in the general way of being parts of the Roman provinces Macedonia, Galatia, Syria): they were counted Greek cities, and reckoned themselves as such. But the people of the *Colonia* Antioch, Lystra, Philippi, are never called Hellenes. Even though in point of blood, and rank, and stock, the majority of the population were not Roman *Coloni*, but Greek-speaking natives (who in so far as they had a Greek education and knew the Greek language were, according to the current designation, Greeks); yet, where the Roman idea was vigorous, these persons preferred to hear themselves designated as residents in a Roman *Colonia* (or members of a Roman province), rather than as Greeks. The only doubtful *Colonia* is Corinth, and in that case we see that Luke and Paul agree in thinking of it as the capital of Greece rather than the Roman *Colonia*, and we can observe some probable good ground for that view.

This may seem a slight point; and some of my critics will perhaps ridicule me for dwelling so much on it. But it is precisely in such little details of custom and usage and politeness that truth to life can be judged.

There are, of course, at least two other uses of the word "Hellene" which must be distinguished from the above: (1) the generic contrast of "Jew and Greek," where "Greek" is representative of a class, and the antithesis is almost equivalent to "Jew and Gentile": (2) the use of "Greek" to imply the non-Jewish blood and descent of an individual: Timothy's father was a "Greek" (*Acts* xvi. 1, 3), Titus was a "Greek" (*Gal.* ii. 3).

¹ Corinth is doubtful (see preceding paragraph), but should probably be added to the list, if we are right in discrediting the authority of the great MSS. in *Acts* xviii. 17, and believing that the Received Text is nearer the truth.

XI. THE CRIME.

Paul now proceeds to a crime which had been reported to him, and had roused his extreme indignation. One of the Corinthian Christians had taken to wife his stepmother. The circumstances are not described, because they were already known to the readers; and it is not easy to attain any certainty about them. From 2 *Corinthians* vii. 12 it would appear that the father (assuming him, as seems inevitable, to be the "wronged man" there mentioned) was still living and known personally to Paul, and therefore presumably a Christian. On the other hand, the entire silence about the woman's conduct and about any punishment for her is hardly reconcilable with the idea that she was a Christian. If she were not a member of the Church, her conduct did not fall under the cognizance either of the Church or of Paul.

On the whole, then, it would appear probable that the Pagan wife had separated from her husband, and that her stepson had thereupon married her. Any other supposition seems excluded by some of the conditions of the case. We notice that ingenious special pleading could set up some sort of defence or excuse for this action, which would not be the case in a more aggravated form of the crime (*e.g.* supposing it to have been brought about by the stepson tempting the woman to leave the father for the sake of the son).

It is evident that some such special pleading was possible in this case, and was actually practised, for it seems implied without doubt that the Corinthian Church was palliating the act and acquiescing in it. The Corinthians had not reported it in their letter to Paul; they had not asked his advice about it, yet they were quite aware of the circumstances,¹ which were not concealed from the world. It must have seemed, therefore, to them to be a

¹ ἀκούεται ἐν ὑμῖν, v. 1.

thing which concerned only the individual, and with which the Church had no right or call to interfere.

The expression by which Paul indicates the blackness of the crime—"such immorality as [*is*] not even among the Gentiles"—has been misapprehended, as if Paul meant that such an act either was unknown or at least was universally disapproved among the Gentiles.

But it was not the case that such marriages were universally disapproved among the Gentiles. On the contrary, it must have been well within Paul's knowledge that marriages between even closer relations, and blood relations,¹ were regular and customary in eastern Asia Minor, near his own city of Tarsus, and were widely practised elsewhere.

Nor was it true that Paul is thinking of Greek and Roman feeling specially, taking those two peoples and civilizations as standing for "the Gentiles." Are we to suppose that the Corinthians had become laxer in their moral judgment when they adopted Christianity, and were now ready to condone an act which in their Pagan days they would have regarded with horror? Or can we believe that Paul said so or thought so? I think not.

The real question that has to be answered is this: Would ordinary society in Corinth, or any other of the Greek cities of the Ægean coasts, have been shocked and outraged at a marriage between a man and the divorced second wife of his father? No one that has studied the state of Greek society will answer that question in the affirmative. Every one knows that there was not in those cities such strictness of moral judgment. Greek custom and law had always been very lax as to restrictions on marriage. Marriage of uncle and niece, or aunt and nephew, had al-

¹ Marriages between parent and child, or between brother and sister: Eusebius and Basil speak very emphatically about these customs in Asia Minor (eastern), and I have pointed out in the *Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1897, p. 425 f., various facts bearing on this.

ways been freely permitted in Athens. Stepbrother and stepsister might contract marriage with one another, if their relationship were through the father (though not if it were through the mother). When certain marriages are stigmatized as barbarian and offensive to Hellenic feeling, (as *e.g.* in Euripides, *Andromache*, 174 f.), they are those of near relatives, alluded to above. It would be hard to find proof of any Greek objection to this Corinthian marriage even in the strictest period of Greek morality, if there ever was any strict period.¹ Certainly moral judgment was laxer in Ægean lands in A.D. 56 than in B.C. 450-400.

In short, the Corinthian Church, when it condoned this crime, was simply judging as the Corinthians had always judged. It was not sinking below its Pagan level. It was standing contentedly on that level.

What then does Paul mean? He is, beyond all doubt, referring to the Roman and Imperial law, which (though not the immediate ruling law² in the Greek cities) was certainly known in a general way in the Corinthian *Colonia*. He means, not that such a marriage was condemned by all Gentiles, but that it was condemned by the law which was most authoritative and supreme among the Gentiles—the law of the great empire.

Now Roman marriage custom was very much more severe than Greek. The old Roman laws had been extraordinarily strict in its prohibition of marriage between relations, forbidding even second cousins to marry one another. But the rule was relaxed by degrees. By the

¹ When one asks for proof of the statement (made in many books on Greek Antiquities) that such a marriage would have offended Greek feeling, one finds that the proof reduces itself to this passage of Paul—misunderstood, as we contend.

² It is pointed out in *Hist. Comm. Gal.*, p. 181, that Rome did not try or desire to destroy existing civilization and law by forcing her own on the Greek cities. Rome made it a rule to "let well alone."

beginning of the second century B.C. marriage between first cousins had become legal, and in 49 A.D. marriage between an uncle and his niece (if she were his brother's daughter) was legalized in order to admit the marriage of Claudius and Agrippina.¹ Again, marriage with a step-parent or stepchild or parent-in-law, etc., was never allowed in Roman custom or law; affinity, in the direct line, always was a bar to marriage. Stepbrother and step-sister could never marry. This Corinthian marriage was, and always remained, illegal in Roman law.

The Corinthians, in practice, stood on the Greek level of moral feeling in regard to marriage; but Paul could count on the knowledge of Roman custom, which was to be expected in a *Colonia*, even an eastern *Colonia*.

W. M. RAMSAY.

JOSEPH: AN ETHICAL AND BIBLICAL STUDY.

LECTURE II.

DURING the seventeen years of his boyhood and youth, Joseph's life was being equipped and fitted. He was, in those childhood's days of shelter and seclusion, like a ship that is being rigged and manned within its harbour. Shape was being given to his life by outward circumstances, and the spirit was being developed in the lad which would make headway or leeway or no way at all whenever the time came for him to be launched on the world. The sea, with its tumult of voice and motion, was awaiting him; but, whilst his father's house was his home, he knew only the safe seclusion within the gates.

So it is with every youth in every home. With some quiet years, shut off from stress and strife, the lives of all

¹ But marriage between an uncle and his sister's daughter was never allowed by Roman law nor between a nephew and aunt.