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## St. Paul on Social Relationships

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## **St. Paul on Social Relationships<sup>1)</sup>**

### **I**

There are in visible Christendom two types of social theorists who derive small comfort from a study of St. Paul's letters. The first group comprises the extreme mystical individualists, who think of Christianity as being exclusively an individual escape from the wrath to come, while the second is composed of the social theorists, who insist that the Church's chief reason for existence is to prepare the nations of mankind for the establishment by God through the Church of "a home, in history and in the world, in which men shall be brothers in Christ under the paternal arch of [God's] purpose,"<sup>2)</sup> and whose petitioning has been given classic formulation by Walter Rauschenbusch:

"A city of justice, where none shall prey on others; a city of plenty, where vice and poverty shall cease to fester; a city of brotherhood, where all success shall be founded on service and honor shall be given to nobleness alone; a city of peace, where order shall not rest on force, but on the love of all for the city, the great mother of the common life and weal."<sup>3)</sup>

The viewpoint of mystical individualism — which is probably entertained only by extreme introverts, hermits, and members of violently sectarian groups on the outer circumference of Protestantism — is thus summarized by E. E. Fischer:

"According to this attitude Christianity is to be interpreted in purely religious terms, as a spiritual experience through Christ, whereby the individual Christian is assured of the forgiveness of

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1) Based on the Pauline correspondence and recorded statements of the holy apostle in Acts. Hebrews is not included.

2) Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, before the Cleveland Sunday Evening Religious Hour, quoted in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* for April 15, 1940.

3) *A Book of Prayers for Students*, p. 155; quoted in Roger Lloyd, *Revolutionary Religion* (London: 1938), pp. 137 and 138.



his sins and of everlasting salvation. As for the transformation in a social way of this earthly life, there is no promise whatever in Christianity that this will ever be accomplished. The world has always been sinful and will continue to be sinful until the end of the age. Within this sinful world, problems must necessarily arise, but they belong to the kingdoms of the world and not to the kingdom of God. With them the Church has nothing to do. Its message is a message of comfort, patience, and hope in view of a redemption which has been wrought by Christ, the effects of which, in an external and social way, will not be experienced until the return of Christ, when all evil will be suppressed forcibly.

"The task of the Church, therefore, is not even remotely related to the task which the social gospel has undertaken to perform. On the contrary, the Church must hold itself sharply aloof from all social movements. Whatever may be undertaken in the way of social readjustment, however necessary or philanthropic, belongs in a different category. It is outside the Christian view entirely."<sup>4</sup>

To the chagrin of these mystical individualists, however, a study of the Pauline letters inevitably leads to the conclusion expressed by Emile Baumann: "He does not set up an example for anchorites alone; his Christianity is social."<sup>5</sup>

Activists, on the other hand, must concede that their program is supported neither by St. Paul's precept nor example.

Occasionally activist sentiments are attributed to St. Paul—usually by a layman translating current liberal Protestant theories into the apostolic *milieu*, as when Lord Lothian affirms that "Paul certainly thought [that] it was the duty of Christians to transform [the Roman Empire] by the Spirit they manifested rather than to destroy it."<sup>6</sup>

Usually, however, the difficulty is more ingeniously evaded by assuming that St. Paul's social vision was limited by the accident of his living in the first century.<sup>7</sup>

That St. Paul was anything but an activist is clearly indicated

4) *Social Problems: The Christian Solution* (Philadelphia: 1927), pp. 26 and 27.

5) *St. Paul*, translated by Kenneth Burke (New York: 1929), p. 312.

6) The Marquis of Lothian (Philip Henry Kerr), "The Demonic Influence of National Sovereignty" in *The Universal Church and the World of Nations* (London: 1938), p. 21.

7) Thus Kirsopp Lake, *Paul: His Heritage and Legacy* (London: 1934), p. XII, explains: "St. Paul gave to the early Christian Church thoughts and conventions which were sufficiently, but not too far, ahead of the standards of his contemporaries. But as soon as (a man) sees this, he sees also that much which was once ahead of contemporary thought now lags behind it. Whether the ecclesiastical world will ever see this is doubtful."



by Sir William Ramsay's summary of the apostle's basic position: "The kind of resistance to oppression which was commended both by Paul and John was endurance; and the victory over tyranny and compulsion was gained through death. But in Paul there appears little or no sympathy with the tendency to resist the minor injustices and inequities of an unfair social organization and to devote to the task of protesting and to the meaner business of political conflict the time and energy which ought to be spent in seeking the true object of life."<sup>8)</sup>

The summary of Sir Josiah Stamp is apposite:

"The (apostolic) teachings concerning the moral dangers of wealth, the faithfulness of servants and 'keeping their place,' the compensations of non-material rewards for inequalities here, are even more (than the teachings of Jesus) explicitly in support of the *status quo*, the proper discharge of what is implicit in the current relationship. The virtues of personal charity and hospitality are greatly emphasized, and the support of the Church is enjoined in great detail. The powers that be must be respected. There is no divine mission of social discontent but rather an encouragement not to insist upon rights."<sup>9)</sup>

Elsewhere he emphasizes a fundamental truth, that the sanctions of Christianity and the sanctions of force implicit in the violent transformation of society are altogether incompatible, when he says: "The very virtue of Christian virtues is that they remain a voluntary act or habit, not subject to economic or social sanctions, and therefore can never be a part of the economic code. A piece of charity that is prescribed is a tax, or rate, or levy."<sup>10)</sup>

The immediate scope of the social philosophy of the *Doctor gentium* is the Christian community. He speaks to Christ's flock; those outside the Church, God will judge (1 Cor. 5:12). Francis Greenwood Peabody, for instance, is compelled by the facts to restrict himself to this guarded statement: "At this point the stream of Pauline ethics sweeps from the limited area of personal integrity into the broader field of social service. It is true that here, as elsewhere, the immediate intention of the apostle does not look beyond the Christian community itself. Those who have found the life in Christ are separated from 'a crooked and per-

8) *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day* (London: 1913), p. 248. It is not without interest to note that the social activism of the English and American Protestant churches is due, in the minds of at least some students of the current socio-religious scene, to the fact that in these countries "the dominant Protestant trend has been Calvinist rather than Lutheran," Lutheranism being conceived of as being marked by a strong "other-worldly emphasis" (J. King Gordon, "The Political Task," in *Towards the Christian Revolution*, p. 161).

9) *Christianity and Economics* (New York: 1938), p. 30.

10) *O. c.*, pp. 32, 33.



verse generation' and 'shine like stars in a dark world' (Phil. 2:15, citing Deut. 32:5). The social ideal . . . Paul had in mind was the upbuilding of a body of Christ in which each member should have its part in the *ecclesia* of God."<sup>11)</sup>

Earlier he avers that St. Paul "is simply considering those specific problems of duty which meet one who is already committed to the cause of Christ. Not ethics in general but Christian ethics is his theme."<sup>12)</sup>

Over against the pagan world outside the Church's pale the attitude of the Church is one of circumspect withdrawal. The world, not as a cosmic fact, but as the world of natural man, is unqualifiedly evil. St. Paul's diagnosis of the evils of society begins with individual sin, which issues in a progressively mounting individual ignorance of God.<sup>13)</sup> Not only morally but also intellectually an irreconcilable antithesis exists between the concepts of the world and the thoughts of the mind of God; the wisdom of the one is foolishness to the other (1 Cor. 1:18, 24; 2:14; 3:19). The course of pagan religion, philosophy, and morality has been consistently downward (Rom. 1:18-32). The god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4) is a demonic anti-god, and his blind votaries are truly *ἀθεοί* (Eph. 2:12). By nature all men stand in the solitary hopelessness of spiritual death outside the family of God. Their adoption into the household of God is the result of God's free choice and election (Eph. 1:5) in Christ, whose incarnation in the fulness of the time had this specific end, that He might redeem us for such adoption (Gal. 4:5). Christians have been delivered from the dominion of darkness and have been translated into the kingdom of Christ, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14). Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age (Gal. 1:4). It is this spiritual demoniac possession of the world of natural man, not entirely removed even in the regenerate, that inspires the frank and unapologetic condemnatory verdict of St. Paul with reference to unconverted humanity (Rom. 7 and 8).

Because of this antithesis between the world and the Church, the withdrawal of the Christian from the world should be absolute spiritually. Between the Christian and the world stands the divinely erected barrier of the Cross: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). Let

11) *The Apostle Paul and the Modern World* (New York: 1923), p. 254.

12) *O. c.*, p. 233.

13) The essays "The Church and Social Change" and "Theology or Sociology" in Conrad Bergendoff's *I Believe in the Church: Confessions and Convictions* (Rock Island: 1937) are significant in this connection.



every one that nameth the name of Christ therefore depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19), cease being a partaker with the children of wrath and disobedience (Eph. 5:8), and have no communion with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather condemn them (Eph. 5:11). Not conformity to the world but transformation by a spiritual renovation is the mark of the Christian (Rom. 12:2). The break with the world and all its idols and all its ideals, all its works and all its ways and all its pomps, is to be absolute and final (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

Christians are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2:10); their life as children of wrath after the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, is something preterite, from which time has divorced them (Eph. 2:2, 3).

Syncretism is a contradiction of Christianity's terms: "Ye cannot drink the Cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. 10:21). Finally, in addition to being unworldly and anti-worldly, Christianity is essentially other-worldly and eschatological in its confidence: "Our political community is in heaven, whence also we await the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall transform our vile body" (Phil. 3:20, 21).<sup>14)</sup>

Physically, however, the Christian lives in the world, and is, in a sense, part of it. On this plane absolute withdrawal from the world is regarded neither as feasible nor as necessary. St. Paul specifically declares that he has no thought of demanding that his converts retire into the splendid isolation of ivory towers nor to forbid them even casual contact with the gross sinners in the pagan mass of men (1 Cor. 5:9, 10). Neither was there any thought of directly bringing about changes in the existing order. "It was not his (St. Paul's) policy nor that of the Christian Church to advocate views which would entirely disrupt human relationships. Only where Christian principles were absolutely at variance with the existing order—as regards, for example, idolatry, impurity, and infanticide—did the Church take a firm stand. As to the family,<sup>15)</sup> and the relation of master to slave, it was content to accept existing conditions and to enjoin his adherents to be kinder and more considerate as husbands, less exacting as parents, and more merciful as masters than in the world around."<sup>16)</sup>

14) The author throughout submits his own translation of N. T. texts.—Ed. note.

15) The early Christian of course regarded the family not as an institution of the world, but as a divine ordinance.

16) F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *The Life of St. Paul: The Man and the Apostle* (London: 1933), p. 335.



## II

The fundamentally social character of St. Paul's message as far as it pertains to conduct admits of easy demonstration. The sins which he condemns as being the deeds of the physical nature (Gal. 5:19-21), as debarring men from the kingdom of Christ and of God (Eph. 5:4, 5), as marks of the perilous last days (2 Tim. 3:1-8), and as unworthy of a twice-born child of God (Col. 3:8) are to a large extent either distinctly social sins or transgressions with a profound social bearing: immorality, impurity, adultery, fornication, perversion, hatred, covetousness, disobedience to authority, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, infidelity, pride, hedonism, treason, contempt, envy, dissension, partisanship, drunkenness, carousing, ruthlessness, gossip, bitterness, slander and lying.<sup>17)</sup>

Similarly the virtues which he inculcates are largely social or socially valuable virtues: lowliness, meekness, humility, forbearance, mutual forgiveness, — "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 5:31, 32), — solidarity (Eph. 4:3), long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, moderation, and above all the *agape*, which, with St. Paul, — as commentators since the days of St. Augustine have noted with apparent amazement, — is almost exclusively a manward, that is, a social, affection. Ministering to the physical needs of fellow-Christians is described as a debt (Rom. 15:27). He counsels a sharing of the prosperity of the rich with the poverty of the poor to satisfy the demands of equity (2 Cor. 8:14). Mutual burden-bearing is a fulfilment of the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). Even the precious liberty of a Christian is limited by mutual affection: "By love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). In Philippians he pleads for likemindedness, mutual affection, harmony: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than himself" (2:2, 3). Modesty, — in the etymological sense of a just appraisal, not as a synonym for self-depreciation, — none thinking "of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3); unselfishness, each seeking not his own advantage but that of others (1 Cor. 13:5); and an accommodating flexibility of approach, after St. Paul's example, who was willing to be "made all things to all men" (1 Cor. 9:19-22) — these are the virtues which recommend, and are recommended to, a Christian. In the same strain the beginning of the ethical portion of Romans calls for a social outlook: Giving is to be done with generosity; duties of office are to be discharged with devotion; mercy is to be marked by cheerfulness —

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17) See the note on *Lasterkataloge* in Hans Lietzmann, *An die Roemer*, 2d edition (Tuebingen: 1919), pp. 34. 35.



Be kindly affectioned one to the other with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. . . . Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another (Rom. 12:8-16).

The same social virtues which are demanded of Christians in general are required of each group. The bishop-presbyters are to be blameless, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no strikers, not given to filthy lucre, hospitable, just, patient, temperate, monogamous, and possessed of a good reputation and tried pedagogical and administrative abilities (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-8). Similar virtues are demanded in only slightly modified degree in prospective deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-12).

Older men are to be temperate, grave, and sensible, marked by healthy faith, love, and patience. Older women are to be cautioned against the pitfalls of irreverence, gossip, and alcohol. The young women are to be loving wives and mothers, discreet, domestic, good, and, as spouses, submissive. Discretion is to be characteristic of young men (Titus 2:2-6).

The social nature of Christianity as conceived by St. Paul is illuminatingly defined by the application to the Church of terms designating other social relationships, such as the picture of the clan (Eph. 3:14, 15) or household (1 Tim. 3:15). The title of father is variously given to God (Eph. 4:6), to the clergy (1 Thess. 2:11), and to the patriarchs (Rom. 15:8), especially Abraham (Gal. 3:7). The children are the believers (Gal. 3:26, 27). In their relation to one another they are brethren (Gal. 6:1). The Church is the mother of us all (Gal. 4:26).

A parallel picture is that of the Church as God's building (1 Cor. 3:9, 10; Eph. 2:20-22), the individual members being conceived of either as collaborators with God or as parts of the structure.

The most completely elaborated of these metaphors is that of the Church as the mystical body of Christ, a conception so perfectly worked out that, in point of fact, it almost ceases to be a metaphor. Fernand Prat is not saying too much when he declares: "It is all a concise program of social morality, the originality of which consists in reconciling the demands of the common welfare, certainly not with selfishness but with the instinctive quest of personal interest."<sup>18</sup>

"The mystical body is real. It is called *mystical* to distinguish it not from what is real but to distinguish it from what is visible and physical."<sup>19</sup> Upon the basis of this reality St. Paul pleads

18) *The Theology of St. Paul*, translated from the tenth French edition by John L. Stoddard (London: 1934), II, p. 321.

19) Paul Hanley Furfey, *Fire on the Earth* (New York: 1936), p. 43.



for the preservation of spiritual unity (Eph. 4:4-6). The exalted Christ is "the Head of the body, the Church" (Col. 1:18), and the Church is "the fulfilment of Him which filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23). The members of the Church are therefore members of Christ—"members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. 5:30)—and members of one another (Rom. 12:5). The laws of biological growth apply to this body: The body must continue to be connected with its Head, from which it must be governed through its ligaments and sinews if it is to grow according to the divine plan (Col. 2:19). Each individual member is vitalized by the Head (Gal. 2:20). The same idea is expanded in Eph. 4:15, 16: "That we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the upbuilding of itself in love." The clothing of the mystical body consists of the social virtues of tenderness of heart, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering,—"forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye,"—love, and the peace of God, whereto Christians are called in one body (Col. 3:12-15).

The various offices in the Church have been instituted "for the perfecting of the saints unto the task of service, unto the upbuilding of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11, 12). Within the body there is a fellowship of compassion and confessorhood; "I fill up," St. Paul cheerfully affirms, "the deficiencies of Christ's afflictions in my flesh for the sake of His body, which is the Church" (Col. 1:24). The unity of the body utilizes the service and the sufferings of all for the benefit of the whole (1 Cor. 12). Holy Communion is a strong bond of union. Through it the connection of a Christian with the invisible Church is strengthened. (1 Cor. 10:17.)

The scope of the Church is therefore very definitely limited to those who are "in Christ"—a phrase which, with its synonyms, occurs 164 times in the Pauline correspondence—as opposed to those who are "in the flesh." As such Christ is both the Motivator and the object of Christian endeavor. All things are done in Him and by Him and—ultimately, no matter who the immediate object may be—to Him and for Him: "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him" (Col. 3:17). The ineluctable connection between individual salvation and mutual spiritual service is unequivocally brought out in 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11: "God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live to—



gether with Him. Wherefore exhort yourselves and edify one another." The refrain is repeated in Col. 3:16: "The Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, singing in your hearts to God with grace in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs." Such spiritual sharing is always completely mutual; to the Romans St. Paul writes, for instance: "I desire to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to the end that ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted in you by the mutual faith of you and of me" (1:11, 12). The goal ahead is conceived of as requiring and representing a common achievement, when all will have "come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

The intimate fellowship of a common faith in the saving power of Christ's atoning death commands consideration for the weak brother "for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14). Schism is emphatically condemned as a sin committed against the oneness of the Christian community by those who serve their own bellies rather than Christ's body. It is an evidence of incompletely subdued carnality (Rom. 16:17, 18; 1 Cor. 3:3, 4) and a vice which St. Paul would exorcise and banish "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:10, 11).

There is a community of affliction and of consolation among Christians (2 Cor. 1:3-6), whereby the whole Church profits by the passion of her martyrs and confessors (2 Cor. 4:15).

This interior unity of believers finds expression both in thanksgiving (2 Cor. 1:11) and in intercession, which is to be undertaken "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake" (Rom. 15:30) and which is potent for the achievement of spiritual (Eph. 6:19) and temporal (2 Cor. 1:11) blessings.

The full significance of this is probably most completely realized if we consider that there is a reverse to this coin. If we can help our fellow-Christians through intercession, "we can also injure one another. We can do this not only visibly, by scandal, but also invisibly by withholding the mutual helps which our neighbors have a right to expect of us."<sup>20</sup>

The Sacraments of the mystical body all possess a profoundly social as well as an individualistic character. It is quite true that candidates for Holy Baptism are buried with Christ in the Sacrament and rise with Him through the faith of the operation of God (Col. 2:13; Rom. 6:4), but by the same Sacrament they have also been baptized into the fellowship of the Church: "By one spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13).<sup>21</sup>

20) Furfey, *o. c.*, p. 47.

21) Cf. Peabody, *o. c.*, p. 206.



Holy absolution, (now usually preceding the second Sacrament), though representatively administered by a single person, is conceived of as the action of the Christian community as well as of the pardoning Christ (2 Cor. 2:10), and it not only confers remission and forgiveness but also includes as a consequence reception again into the fellowship of comfort and love (vv. 7-9).

Similarly the celebration of Holy Communion is a communal activity (1 Cor. 11:20), and the transgressions against brotherly love in connection with the riotous celebrations in Corinth are regarded as the more damn-worthy not merely because they imply despite to the Eucharistic Christ (vv. 27-29), but also because they are acts in contempt of God's Church (v. 22). A communion exists not only between the earthly species and the body and blood of the living Christ, but also between all those who are united by the ties of the precious body and blood which they receive.

This spiritual community expresses itself in "the very bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:14), reciprocal *agape*, a designation which St. Paul has made one of the technical terms of Christianity to describe the unmerited and unqualified love of God for man, which found its most perfect expression in the incarnation of the eternal Word and in the all-embracing atonement that climaxed in the cross and which must be reflected in the outgoing love of Christians for all the faithful and for all men. The panegyric on love as the greatest of the theological virtues in 1 Cor. 13 is intelligible only if it be remembered that herein Christians are not autodidacts but theodidacts (1 Thess. 4:9), and that it is God who causes increase and growth in mutual affection (3:12, 13).<sup>22</sup>

This mutual affection is not restricted to spiritual ministrations. It underlies the obligation both to succor the need of unfortunate fellow-Christians in other lands and to assist those coming into the community from elsewhere; thus Phoebe, the deaconess of Cenchrea, is recommended to the recipients of Romans in chap. 16, vv. 1, 2 as deserving their assistance "in whatsoever business she hath need."

Within this community, called into being by the love of God and united by the reflection of that love in hearts informed by the indwelling Word of God, all arbitrary distinctions of the physical world outside no longer constitute claims to special privilege or consideration. Baptismal regeneration becomes in the spiritual realm a true Declaration of Independence, in which the Holy Ghost, the Re-Creator, endows those who have been born of the Water and of the Spirit with certain forever inalienable rights:

22) Though subject to certain criticisms, the third chapter of Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros* (translated by A. G. Hebert—London: 1932), captioned "Pauline Agape: The Agape of the Cross," is a discerning discussion of the significance of *agape* in St. Paul.



eternal life, spiritual liberty, and the pursuit of that celestial happiness which is the joy of the soul.

In Christ nationality and race confer no privilege. He has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, so that all believers in Him now have access to one Father through one Spirit (Eph. 2:14, 18). Faith, not nationality, is the criterion (Rom. 1:16), and Abraham is the spiritual father of all that believe (4:12). The term Israel still designates God's people; spiritual Israel and Israel after the flesh, however, are not coextensive and concentric circles but overlapping circles (9:6). Jew and non-Jew are alike under sin (3:9, 10, 22-30), exposed to tribulation and anguish by their individual evil deeds (2:9, 10); and under grace, alike in receiving glory, honor, and peace. There is not only *no difference* between the Jew and the Greek (10:12), but among the recipients of the new image of God there is *no longer* either Jew or Greek, neither circumcision nor foreskin, neither nationality to differentiate barbarian and Scythian, nor liberty to distinguish master and slave, nor sex to discriminate between man and woman (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28), but only Christ.

St. Paul set a high store by education as a factor in the Christian social process. The gift of teaching is the third to be listed in Romans 12:7 and 1 Cor. 12:28; in Eph. 4:11 teachers are co-ordinated with pastors. In 1 Tim. 5:17 diligence in teaching is one of the considerations in view of which clergymen are to be accounted worthy of double honor. An aptness to teach is an essential qualification of candidates for the ministry (1 Tim. 3:2; compare 2 Tim. 2:24).

Standards in this community are absolute. Although the ceremonial law is entirely abrogated,—an expressly stated corollary both of the atonement and of the unity of Jew and Gentile,—the will of the deity who has called us in holiness to sanctification is identical, whether it be expressed in the moral injunctions of the Holy Ghost who spake by the Old Testament prophets or by the same Spirit transforming the will of the New Testament believer through the means of grace. Because of the diversity of gifts the individual guidance of no one is to be rejected out of hand—the command is express: “Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings”—yet all such directions are to be tested by the absolute standard of the revealed will of God: “Prove all things, hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:19-21).

### III

In Christ—and, by that token, in His kingdom, the Church—all believers enjoy a parity of privilege, and the distinctions of the world without constitute, as we have seen, no claims to special prerogatives. Within the Church no one has any claim upon



another save that of love, and the only constraint is the affection of Christ. Within the Church there is equality, liberty, fraternity. Yet there is neither the intention nor any sense of compulsion to transfer this situation into the social realm, either with reference to the relations of Christians with pagans, or even with reference to the relations of one Christian with a fellow-Christian. The obligations of status and contract stand unabridged and unabated. The words of Philip Melancthon might have been penned by St. Paul: "*Evangelium non dissipat politiam aut oeconomiam, sed multo magis approbat, et non solum propter poenam, sed etiam propter conscientiam iubet illis parere tamquam divinae ordinationi.*"<sup>23</sup>) Meanwhile the fraternity of Christians imposes the duties of mutual assistance, tolerance, and the avoidance of faith-shattering offense. If anything, it may be said that the Christian way as conceived by St. Paul tended to emphasize the duties of Christians and to discourage their too intransigent insistence upon rights.

Within the family parental authority is reaffirmed, the Fourth Commandment of Exodus and Deuteronomy being generalized by the omission of local allusions:

"Children, obey your parents;<sup>24</sup> for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, That it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:1-3).

"Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord" (Col. 3:20).

To these injunctions Christianity, however, added not only a New Testament version of the Old Testament command to educate the rising generation—"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4)—but also the psychologically sound caution to the fathers not to provoke their children to anger, which is represented as the antithesis of the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The *Haustafel* in Colossians (3:21) is even more specific: "Fathers, do not overirritate your children, lest they become discouraged." The discipline of a Christian home is consequently something far different from the autocratic rule which made the child a mere chattel of its parents, in that it forbade both the exercise of authority in such a way as to breed smoldering resentment and the rigid enforcement of a discipline that involved the utter destruction of initiative and individuality.

In the case of slavery St. Paul proposes no program of reform. "He accepts the relationship between master and slave as normal

23) *Apologia Augustanae Confessionis*, XVI:57 (Triglotta, p. 330).

24) Westcott and Hort bracket the words "in the Lord."



but earnestly seeks to moralize it."<sup>25</sup> To the slave—as to those in every other status—his advice was: "As the Lord hath called any one, so let him walk" (1 Cor. 7:17, 20, 24, 27). The case of Onesimus is a striking example of the precept put into practice. Onesimus must go back to Philemon, but Philemon must receive him "no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother" (Philemon 16).

Slaves are commanded to obey their masters to the very limit of their conscience. Obviously no pretext of obedience to their masters could justify their own pandering to vice or giving up their children to vice, however much common custom and law might condone such actions. Their owners are masters "according to the flesh," not of their consciences. Short of sin, however, the command to obey admits no exceptions, although the personal indignity of slavery is removed by making the real object of service not the earthly owner but the divine Redeemer: "Slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. Ye are slaves of the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:22-24). The injunction in Ephesians varies only verbally: "Slaves, obey your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling in singleness of your hearts as unto Christ, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the slaves of Christ doing the will of God heartily, with good will 'slaving' as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatsoever good thing a man doeth, he shall be recompensed therefor from the Lord, whether he be a slave or a free man" (Eph. 6:5-8).

In the pastoral epistles the same viewpoint is expressed in the form of injunctions to the clergy, with the added warning that fellowship of faith does not warrant a presumptuous familiarity on the part of the slaves: "As many as are slaves under the yoke, let them count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not be contemptuous, because they are brethren, but rather let them serve, because they are faithful and beloved, recipients of the benefit" (1 Tim. 6:1, 2). In Titus slaves are to be exhorted to honesty and faithfulness—"to be subject to their own masters in everything, to please them well, not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good faith, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (2:9).

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25) C. A. Anderson Scott, *Saint Paul: The Man and the Teacher* (Cambridge: 1936), p. 134 f.



A unique contribution of Christianity to the problem of slavery was its injunctions to the slave-owners. Only a century before, Marcus Varro in his *de Re rustica* had produced his famous tripartite classification of implements: Those with voice and speech (slaves); those with voice but without speech (animals); and those without voice (wagons, etc.). Claudius had been the first to make killing a slave a capital offense. The legal massacre of the 400 slaves of the prefect Pedanus Secundus under a law which directed that if a slave killed his master, all the slaves of the same household should forfeit their lives, had taken place barely a year before the probable date of Ephesians and Colossians.<sup>26)</sup> These and other repressive statutes gave point to the popular aphorism: *Quot servi tot hostes*.

A hierarchy of service in which slave-owners were themselves slaves of One greater was invoked for the instruction of Christian slave-owners. "Masters, act the same way toward them, forbearing threatening, knowing that their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no respect of persons with Him" (Eph. 6:9). "Masters, give to your slaves that which is just and equitable, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven" (Col. 4:1).

In the light of modern nationalist and racist theories St. Paul's position is interesting. Although in the Christian community all privileges and prerogatives based on race or nationality are denied, neither in St. Paul nor even in non-political Judaism is there any denial of race or nationality. For the latter both the Pentecostal phenomena and the "nationality" synagogues of Jerusalem (see Acts 6:9, for instance) are abundant evidence of this. St. Paul himself writes as Jew of the Jews, and his affection for his fellow-Jews is such that—like Moses—he would gladly give himself to insure their salvation: "I could wish that I were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites" (Rom. 9:3, 4). Nevertheless, while one like him, whose heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved (*ib.* 10:1) could probably have understood the fervently patriotic determination voiced by William Blake's Milton:

I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land—

there is nothing in St. Paul's writings to indicate that he set any store by nationalistic distinctions. We know very little about most of St. Paul's coworkers. We do know that many of them were Jews, as in the very nature of things they were bound to be.

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26) Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV:42.



Yet there is not the remotest evidence of racial discrimination in St. Paul's character, and it is inevitable that with his many Gentile converts, many of his most intimate associates—among them St. Luke the Evangelist—would be of other racial stocks.

To St. Paul the State meant Rome. An ocean of water bounded it on the west, an ocean of sand on the south. To the north it extended to the very fringe of the forests which sheltered the barbarians. Only on the east was there a rival civilized power—Parthia. Five to six million of the inhabitants of the Mediterranean basin were Roman citizens. It was an empire, thinly disguised by the persisting nomenclature of a discarded republicanism, built by force and kept at peace *vi et armis*. Nevertheless, though everything finally headed up at Rome, it was a masterpiece of decentralized political varietism. In all except major affairs each community was subject to local administration. Native courts, principalities, tetrarchies, kingdoms, existed all over. There were traces of what superficially seemed to be democracy. Magistrates were often elected, usually from the native population, but always in tune with local feelings.

For his own person St. Paul showed exemplary respect and obedience to civil authority. Possessor of Roman citizenship, he elected to make use of its peculiar prerogatives to secure a last interview with the Philippian church (Acts 17:37), to escape a scourging in Jerusalem (Acts 22:25) and to secure a change of venue to a higher and presumably less biased court than that of Porcius Festus (Acts 25:11). At Philippi we are probably to understand that the tumult prevented Sts. Paul and Silvanus from pleading their citizenship in order to escape a beating in the first place (Acts 17:22, 23). Two points in this episode are of interest: 1) V. 37 shows that St. Paul was fully cognizant of his rights, since he points out that not only the *lex Porcia* had been violated but also that he and Silvanus had been incarcerated unheard and uncondemned;<sup>27)</sup> 2) St. Paul makes no vindictive demands for the punishment of his lawless judges.

In his letters St. Paul emphasizes the obligations rather than the privileges of Christians in their relation to the State:

"Let every soul be subject to superior authorities, for there is no authority but of God, and those that exist are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the authority, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist receive to themselves condemnation. For the rulers are not a terror to the good work but to the evil. Wilt thou, then, not fear the authority? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is God's minister

<sup>27)</sup> Erwin Preuschen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Tuebingen: 1912), p. 104.



to thee for good. If thou doest that which is evil, be afraid. For he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is God's minister, an avenger unto wrath upon him that doeth evil. Therefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath's but also for conscience' sake. For that reason also ye pay taxes, for they are God's servants attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to every one his due; taxes to whom taxes are due, custom to whom custom is due, fear to whom fear is due, honor to whom honor is due" (Rom. 13:1-7).

Canon A. J. Carlyle offers this analysis of the passage:

"St. Paul's general meaning is plain and distinct. The order of civil government is of divine institution, a thing deriving its authority and sanction from God Himself; to refuse to submit to it is to refuse to submit to God; obedience to the State is not merely a political necessity, but a religious obligation. But, we may ask, why is this so? Why are we to take the civil order of the State to be a divine institution, to which we must render obedience as to God Himself? Here also St. Paul's answer is clear and distinct; it is because the end and purpose of civil government is to repress the evil and to encourage the good. The civil ruler is God's servant for a good purpose; the good man need have no fear of the civil ruler, but only the evil man. To put this into the more technical phrases of political theory, St. Paul means that we must obey the civil order as having a divine authority because it exists for the maintenance of justice. It is the just end of the civil State which gives it a sacred character."<sup>28)</sup>

St. Chrysostom emphasized that St. Paul "does not say, 'for there is no ruler but of God'; but it is the thing he speaks of and says 'there is no power but of God. And the powers that be are ordained of God.'"<sup>29)</sup>

It is interesting to note in passing that the discussion of this specific duty leads St. Paul to the enunciation of the general rule: "Owe no man anything but to love one another, for he that loveth the other has fulfilled the Law" (v. 8).

The other classic passages are in the pastoral letters: "I exhort therefore first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the

28) R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West* (Edinburgh and London: 1903—1936), vol. I, p. 90.

29) Quoted by Henry Pitney van Dusen in his essay "Church and State through Christian History," in the symposium *Church and State in the Modern World* (New York and London: 1937), p. 23, from C. H. McIlwain, *The Growth of Political Thought in the West*, p. 153.



sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4). To Crete he writes: "Put them in mind to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient" (Titus 3:1).

It has been urged that St. Paul's injunctions in Rom. 13 are seasonable, applying to the Roman Empire as then constituted but not obligatory upon Christians living under other *régimes*. Against this viewpoint the following considerations may be urged:

- 1) The terms used are the most general ones available to the writer of *Koiné* Greek;
- 2) There are no allusions whatever to local conditions;
- 3) The same doctrine is consistently enunciated elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Pet. 2:13-17; Matt. 22:21).
- 4) Diaspora Judaism was largely non-political and stood in no particular need of such exhortations; there is no hint in the classical authors that the repressive measures directed against the Jews were, outside of Palestine, provoked by political activity.
- 5) The situation had changed materially between the writing of Romans during the Neronian quinquennium and the writing of the pastoral epistles; yet St. Paul's advice in the latter instance is completely consistent with his former advice.
- 6) Even despite the fact that St. Paul himself was ultimately executed by the civil authority (and, significantly, not by his inveterate enemies, the Jews), the apostolic Church understood his written counsel—unquestionably amplified and reenforced by personal instruction—as binding.

St. Paul's theory of the State recognized it as supreme in its sphere, always maintaining, however, that the divine Law supersedes all human legislation. To the Hegelian concept of the State as the highest form of objective mind he could not have subscribed, let alone to its modern totalitarian applications.<sup>30)</sup>

St. Paul's line of argument on the authority of the State can be simply stated as follows: *De iure* and *in abstracto* all power comes from God, who is the Creator of society and therefore the Founder of authority, which is an essential part of the idea of society. The concrete authorities ("the powers that be"), marked by their ability to preserve law and order, are therefore truly, really, constituted, sanctioned, and willed by God. It may be further noted that only normal circumstances are contemplated and that cases of casuistry—involving doubtful, contested, usurped, and illegitimate authority—are not here considered.

30) Cf. the essay of Martin Dibelius "The Message of the New Testament and the Orders of Human Society," printed in the collection *Christian Faith and the Common Life* (London: 1938).



With specific reference to the problem of capital punishment it may be observed that St. Paul both implicitly sanctions it in principle by his reference to the broadsword of authority (Rom. 13:4), which is not borne in vain, and by his tacit recognition of the authority to inflict it on his own person if he were found a wrong-doer (Acts 25:11).

St. Paul's refusal to purchase his freedom by bribing Felix is a subtle commentary on his respect for the due process of law, however inconvenient personally its operation might be (Acts 24:26).

St. Paul says nothing about political war or peace, nor about military service, and it must be assumed that his mind in these matters is in harmony with the position elsewhere expressed in the New Testament. In any case, his use of military metaphors is of no significance for the determination of his point of view; three of the most emphatic pacifists of the early Church, Tertullian, Origen, and St. Cyprian, have a peculiar predilection for military nomenclature.

The problem of Church and State did not arise until the end of the apostolic period. The state was blissfully unaware of Christianity, and it was not proscribed as a *religio illicita* until the lines of cleavage between Judaism and the "Way" were so beligerently drawn that civil authority was compelled to take cognizance of Christianity's separate existence. For St. Paul there is no Church and State question; the issue resolves itself entirely into the relationship between the Christian and the State.

His attitude toward every variety of sex sin is uncompromisingly hostile. Tribadism (Rom. 1:26),<sup>31</sup> sodomy, pederasty (1 Cor. 6:9 ff.), and other kinds of homosexuality and perversion are marks of a degenerate philosophy that has completely turned its back upon God. Incest within forbidden degrees of affinity ("that one should have his father's wife") is denounced in 1 Cor. 5:1 as an offense which even decent pagans abhor; by implication consanguineous incest is forbidden as even less defensible. The prohibition of adultery is repeated from the Old Testament (Rom. 2:22; 13:9); fornication becomes doubly evil as being the union of a member of the body of Christ with a harlot (1 Cor. 6:15, 16).

In addition to these flagrant violations of the Sixth Commandment, St. Paul takes occasion to condemn the sins of impurity in speech (Eph. 4:29; 5:4; 1 Thess. 4:7; Col. 3:8) as unbefitting such as have become saints in Christ.

In St. Paul's doctrine of holy matrimony marriage is exalted

31) Morton Scott Enslin, *The Ethics of Paul* (New York and London: 1930), p. 146.



as the terrestrial symbol of the mystical union of Christ and His Bride, the Church.

For those who have the gift of continence celibacy in both man and woman is becoming (1 Cor. 7:1). Two considerations however are urged in explanation: 1) the "present necessity" (1 Cor. 7:26), concerning which commentators are in violent disagreement;<sup>32)</sup> and 2) the removal of a potent distraction in the service of the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32-35).

Similarly where the grace of continence exists, widowhood is preferable to remarriage as both more becoming and more blessed (1 Cor. 7:8, 9, 39, 40). Ultimately however the matter is entirely one of vocation (1 Cor. 7:17). Celibacy is required of none, — not even of the clergy (1 Cor. 9:5), — and any absolute prohibition of marriage is a doctrine of demons (1 Tim. 4:1-3). They who marry commit no sin thereby (1 Cor. 7:2, 9, 36, 38). Marriage is the symbol of the union between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-33), and this fact informs all the obligations of the marriage relationship (Eph. 5:22-31; Col. 3:18, 19; Titus 2:4, 5; 1 Cor. 7:3-5), summed up by the holy apostle: "Let every one of you so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Eph. 5:33).

To St. Paul marriage is indissoluble except by death (Rom. 7:2). Remarriage during the lifetime of a spouse is adultery (*ibid.*), and a new marriage may be contracted only after the latter's demise (1 Cor. 7:39), except, of course, in the case of fornication. Desertion is forbidden, even when the other party is a pagan, and where the initiative is taken by a Christian, the aim must be to bring about reconciliation (1 Cor. 7:10-13). Christian marriage sanctifies in a sense even the pagan partner and the offspring of such existing mixed marriages (1 Cor. 7:14). On the other hand, a Christian is not allowed to give up his or her religion for a pagan spouse: If the pagan party be the first to "depart," let him depart; the Christian party is not a slave (1 Cor. 7:15).<sup>33)</sup> Adultery is condemned not only implicitly as an offense against the sacredness and indissolubility of holy wedlock but also as an infringement of a brother's rights: "This is the will of God, even

32) Some see a reference to an immediately contemporary situation; thus Bengel: *Fames sub Claudio* (Acts 11:28), *valde diutina fuit, et gravis, in Graecia imprimis*. Others see St. Paul writing in the consciousness of the imminence of the Parousia. More likely than either is that the holy apostle has reference to the generally unsettled future of the Church in the apostolic age.

33) In the Roman Church the "Pauline privilege" may be invoked to annul such marriages. Occasionally it has been applied even on a large scale, for instance, by Pius V in the constitution *Romani Pontificis* (August 2, 1571) and by Gregory XIII in the decree *Populis ac nationibus* (January 25, 1585).



your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel<sup>34</sup>) in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of desire, even as the heathen which know not God, that no man go beyond and prejudice his brother's rights in the matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such" (1 Thess. 4:3-6).

Husbands are bidden to love their wives without bitterness (Col. 3:19) and as their own bodies, taking as their example Christ's love for the Church (Eph. 5:25-30). The wife has a claim upon the husband above that of parents (Eph. 5:31), and both have a claim upon the other's body that must be recognized (1 Cor. 7:3-6). Wives in turn are to behave themselves toward their own husbands as toward the Lord, regarding them in everything as their head (Eph. 5:22, 23) and submitting themselves unto them, as it is proper in the Lord (Col. 3:18). The injunctions to both husband and wife must be read together: "Unanimity of will and not domination of one is the ideal of marriage."<sup>35</sup>

Upon the head of the family devolves the duty of providing for their temporal needs; this obligation takes precedence over every other: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8).

Woman's status on the social, religious, and domestic plane is subordinate to that of man; there is an ordered hierarchy: God—Christ—man—woman (1 Cor. 11:3, 8, 9). When praying and speaking even in the more informal meetings of the church, where such a ministry was tolerable, she is to remain covered, lest she appear to arrogate to herself the privileges of the man, just as man is to remain uncovered in similar circumstances lest it appear that he has abdicated the place assigned to him by Christ (1 Cor. 11:4-15). In the formal services of the church, however, not only in Corinth, but "in all the churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33 b; 1 Tim. 2:12; against Foakes-Jackson, pp. 338, 339, and others), silence is imposed upon her (1 Cor. 14:34, 35). It has been urged that these verses militate against the recognition of women's services elsewhere and conflict with 11:5; that they break the continuity of the passage; and that their position is textually ambiguous (construed as a certain indication that they are an interpolation by a later hand). Nevertheless, the alleged conflict with other passages is imaginary rather than real; the continuity

34) Older exegetes understood "vessel" as *corpus* (so, for instance, Bengel); Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Midrasch und Talmud* (III, p. 632 f.), make out a good case for the translation "wife."

35) Ramsay, *o. c.*, p. 266.



is perfect, if we understand these directions as forming part of the admonitions of St. Paul regulating the conduct of divine service, the following verses being an anticipation of the argument of dissenters against the apostolic authority of St. Paul to institute such reforms, namely, that he is acting in harmony with ecumenical practice; finally, the alleged textual difficulty is not sufficient to have moved any modern editor to transfer the passage to the place which certain "Western" witnesses give it at the end of the chapter. It may also be duly noted that the considerations which St. Paul urges both here and in 1 Tim. 2:13, 14 are of the most universal character.

On the other hand, St. Paul asserts both the interdependence (1 Cor. 11:11, 12) and the equality (Gal. 3:28) of the sexes "in the Lord." He expresses his hearty and unfeigned appreciation of the ministrations of a Lydia, a Chloe, a Priscilla (whose name precedes that of her husband in four [Acts 18:18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19] of the six passages where they are referred to together), a Phoebe, and his "adopted mother," the mother of Rufus (Rom. 16:13).

Nor are women without the glory of a God-pleasing vocation. Their destiny is "to marry, bear children, guide the house" (1 Tim. 5:14), and, adorned with the graces of modesty, gravity, and seriousness, — more precious vesture than gold, or gems, or the master-creations of coiffeurs and coutouriers, — engage in the good works to which God has called them (1 Tim. 2:9, 10). Woman's normal mission is motherhood, and her salvation is assured in the faith-filled, loving, and sanctified performance of her maternal duty (1 Tim. 2:15).

In the use of alcoholic beverages St. Paul urges moderation and consideration. Under certain circumstances — where faith-destroying offense is given to a weak brother — it is becoming to abstain altogether (Rom. 14:21). Nevertheless, where the medicinal use of alcoholic beverages is indicated, total abstinence as a principle must yield to considerations of bodily health (1 Tim. 5:23). While "all things are clean" (Rom. 14:20), moderation is everywhere inculcated. Alcoholism is a bar to becoming a deacon or a clergyman; it is described as unbecoming (Rom. 13:13), as a kind of carnality (Gal. 5:19, 21), as vitiating a Christian's worthiness to receive the Blessed Sacrament (1 Cor. 11:20, 21), and as a ground for excommunication (1 Cor. 5:11). In Eph. 5:18 St. Paul voices the psychologically sound principle that "intoxication is the tragic parody of inspiration" (James Strahan): "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." The contrast of Christian sobriety with the intemperance of orgiastic mystery cults is given pointed expression in 1 Thess. 5:6-8.



The primitive Church was largely recruited from the ranks of the slaves and the urban proletariat, with individuals like Gaius, Philemon, and the city chamberlain Erastus in the minority, and, since the epistles of St. Paul were written to specific congregations in elucidation of principles as they applied to real situations, it is inevitable that the attitude toward wealth is treated less from the angle of those who have it than from that of those who lack it. Nevertheless, primitive Christians were not all poor, as St. James's round condemnation of plutocratic stinginess clearly implies, and it has been urged that St. Paul himself was not entirely impecunious. He makes a blanket offer, it is pointed out, to compensate Philemon for any loss or damage he sustained in connection with the flight of Onesimus (Philemon 18, 19). Felix is described as hoping for a bribe (Acts 28:30).<sup>36)</sup> His Roman citizenship likewise implied some hereditary wealth.

Whatever significance these arguments may possess, the fact remains that St. Paul in order to maintain himself worked as a laborer (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Cor. 9:1-18), and that "his sympathies were with the hungry."<sup>37)</sup>

There is no formal treatment of the question of wealth except in 1 Tim. 6:5-10, 17-19, where he reaffirms the general New Testament view that the possession of wealth is not intrinsically wrong, but that both its acquisition and possession are attended by dangers which jeopardize the individual's Christianity. Gain is not godliness, but contentment is. Those that will be rich usually fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition, because the love of money is the root of all evils, a cause of apostasy and sorrow to many. Those who are rich are to be cautioned against spiritual arrogance and the insidious temptation to regard their wealth as security; on the contrary, they are to be encouraged to do good, to be rich in good works, ready to share, social-minded, creating with their wealth a treasury of good works for themselves against the time to come.

The genuinely radical nature of Christianity was evidenced in its attitude toward covetousness, of which Foakes-Jackson declares: "On the whole, covetousness was the besetting sin of the age."<sup>38)</sup> It is decried as being as pagan as the vilest sins of impurity, as being a species of idolatry, and as being one of the

36) These arguments are elaborated by Foakes-Jackson, *o. c.*, p. 72.

37) Adolf Deissmann, *St. Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, translated by Lionel R. M. Strachan (London: 1912), p. 215.

38) *O. c.*, p. 53.



causes for the God's vindictive judgment upon the heathen world (Col. 3:5, 6). When inner greed found expression in an overt act of the extortioner, the church, St. Paul teaches, was to excommunicate (1 Cor. 5:11). As a prophylactic and as an antidote manual and physical labor was recommended—a rare thing in the urban communities of the Roman world, where manual labor was regarded as the curse of the slave. St. Paul himself set the example, so that his advice to the Thessalonians comes with good grace: "Study to be quiet and to do your own business and to work with your own hands, as we command you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without and that ye may have lack of nothing" (1 Thess. 4:11, 12). Titus receives a similar injunction: "Let our people learn to profess honest trades for necessary uses that they be not unfruitful" (3:14). Kirsopp Lake declares that the holy apostle's stress on "the duty of men to work for their living . . . doubtless played a part in establishing the sound tradition of European ethics."<sup>39)</sup>

The thief is bidden to reform: "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his own hands the thing which is good." The motive, significantly enough, is not to be a selfish one, to satisfy his own needs, but in order to enable generosity to become a medicine for his former sin: "That he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28). That St. Paul's contact with thieves was not academic may be suggested by Rom. 2:22 b, which passage Deissmann declares "must surely enshrine a definite recollection (of) one of his coreligionists, probably a Jew of the Dispersion, a man who used to speak with scorn of the heathen idols, enriching himself through these idols by acting as a receiver of goods stolen from a temple."<sup>40)</sup> The suggestion has at least the merit of being interesting.

Indolence and laziness evoke an exhortation "by our Lord Jesus Christ" that certain Christians who had been walking among the Thessalonians disorderly, not engaged in business but busybodies, work with quietness and eat their own bread, on the principle that has commended itself to Christian and communist (it is affirmed in the new constitution of the U. S. S. R.) alike: "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10-12).<sup>41)</sup>

Litigation between Christians before secular courts is forbidden (1 Cor. 6:1-8). A Christian is rather to suffer wrong than do wrong, to suffer himself to be defrauded rather than to defraud. Where it is felt that a decision must be rendered, justice should

39) O. c., p. 148.

40) O. c., p. 96 and n.

41) Compare the condemnation of idle young widows in 1 Tim. 5:13.



be sought through arbitration before the forum of the Church rather than by a suit at law before pagan magistrates.

The scope of Christian charity is as wide as humanity, but it begins at home. The obligation of the head of the household to provide for his own house and his own relatives has been adverted to. Similarly private resources are to be exhausted before the treasury of the church is to be levied on. St. Timothy is instructed: "If any woman that believeth have widows, let her relieve them, and let not the Church be charged that it may relieve them that are widows indeed" (1 Tim. 5:16). Similarly "if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home and to requite their parents, for that is acceptable before God" (v. 4). Those, however, who are "widows indeed"—really forsaken—are to be pensioned, provided they are past sixty, monogamous, well-reported of, hospitable, humble (demonstrated by having washed the saints' feet), and given to works of mercy (such as taking in and rearing exposed unwanted children and relieving the afflicted).

The poor and the needy are constant opportunities for kindness. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of the faith" (Gal. 6:10). The necessity for admonishing the relief chiselers in Thessalonica indicates the generosity of the Christians' subventions. The needs of Christians hundreds of miles away constitute a demand upon the purses of coreligionists everywhere. The motive is not the constraint of a commandment but the compulsion of the grace of our Lord Jesus, who, by an *admirabile commercium* though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9). The mode of taking the collection still remains the classic standard for Christian giving; the offerings are to be made regularly, frequently, individually, and in proportion to income (1 Cor. 16:1, 2).

The obligation of truthfulness is fundamental, not only for truth's own sake, but also because it will enable the Christian to "resist all empty ideologies and rhetoric" (Max Huber). Mendacity between Christians is an offense against the unity of Christ's body; because the Christians are members one of another, lying is to be put away, and every man is to speak truth with his neighbor (Eph. 4:25). Lies are hostages given to the old Adam that still inheres in Christians, and so the Colossians are urged: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man" (3:9, 10).

St. Paul was no ascetic in the ordinary meanings of that term. The physical world was not intrinsically evil. He echoes the



psalmist's dictum, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (1 Cor. 10:26), and the liberal supplying of all physical needs is an act of God's unfailing providence operating according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19). Prohibition of marriage and the proscription of meats which God has created to be received by the faithful with thanksgiving is a diabolical invention (1 Tim. 4:3, 4). Although through the fundamental unity of creation the whole physical world is in the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:19-23) by reason of Adam's lapse, this primeval curse is exorcised by God's blessing, for every creature of God is hallowed by the Word of God and by prayer (1 Tim. 4:4, 5). Ultimately the Christian is the master of everything—"all things are yours, [including] the world, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

Nor does St. Paul evince any morbid and sickly desire for death. He faces death courageously as often as he must. He confesses to a desire to weigh anchor and to be with Christ in the paradise of light and refreshment, very frankly because it is a far better condition than this earth-bound serfdom in a body of death and corruption, but he confesses an equally strong tug in the opposite direction, knowing that his work is unfinished (Phil. 1:23, 24).

Neither does St. Paul see any intrinsic spiritual merit in self-denial, as if God could thereby be mollified or placated. The *consummatum est* of the cross leaves nothing for us to do, the atonement is completed beyond our poor power to add or detract. Nevertheless, as a matter of self-restraint he keeps under his body and brings it into subjection (1 Cor. 9:27). It is the conception of giving up in order to take up, of withdrawing from the distractions of earth to savor the superior joys of heaven, of disciplining our bodies in order to liberate our souls from the thralldom of things, to cast even the possible occasion for sin out of our lives to make room for the sanctifying power of Christ's indwelling presence; deliberately to deny our own will that Christ may conform it to His (cf. 1 Cor. 7:5). Thus he admonishes: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:2, 3). To the Corinthians he writes: "Use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. 7:31). St. Timothy is exhorted to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," and is bidden to contemplate the fact that "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:3, 4).

In their relations with the world outside the church, while Christ is always their first loyalty and their fellow-travelers in the



"Way" the first concern of their affection, the opportunity to serve is not to wait upon the conversion of the object of service (Gal. 6:10). There is a basic oneness to humanity—a oneness of creation and of governance (Acts 17:26), but also a oneness of redemption through the incarnation, the atonement, and the resurrection of mankind's common Savior, to which Rom. 5:12-19 and 1 Cor. 15:22, 23 bear eloquent testimony. In a broad sense the Christian's brother is he for whose sake Christ died; but objective justification is universal, for He "died for all" (2 Cor. 5:15), and the object of God's reconciliation in Him was the whole world (v. 19). In turn this implies the obligation of missions (Rom. 10:14); St. Paul regards himself as a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians (Rom. 1:14) and as the recipient of an apostolate "to the obedience of faith in all nations" (Rom. 1:5).

A number of admonitions to virtue specifically contemplate that they are to be apparent to all men. Obviously this does not mean that Christians are to be notoriously or ostentatiously virtuous. It can only mean that these virtues are to be practiced in their dealings with those who are not Christians. Thus Phil. 4:15 calls upon the Christians to display forbearance, "an attitude for fairness, of disinclination to exact the uttermost farthing,"<sup>42)</sup> in their relations with all men. The same virtue, and in addition, gentle consideration, is to be inculcated by Titus as something to be practiced toward all men (3:1, 2). Patience and a refusal to take revenge are to characterize the attitude of Christians not only toward one another but also, and this is specifically asserted, to all men (1 Thess. 5:14, 15). Anger, even resentment justified by the provocation, is not to outlast the day (Eph. 4:26).

Most of the latter part of Rom. 12, from v. 14 on, contemplates the relation of the Christian to the world: "Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Beloved, avenge not yourselves but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay,' saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him to drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good."

The admonition of Col. 4:5, 6 summarizes the other injunctions: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one."

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42) Enslin, *o. c.*, pp. 266, 267.



## IV

The task of applying St. Paul's counsels to our own day is a staggeringly difficult one. For St. Paul did not write a manual even of first-century social theology, let alone one for the twentieth century. For the most part he is giving specific advice in certain concrete situations. Some of these situations are exactly parallel to those in our own experience; in the case of others, the most that we can do is to try to discover the abstract principle which the holy apostle is invoking and therefrom to derive counsel for our current perplexities. The omnipresent peril of tendential interpretation cannot be too strenuously guarded against in such cases. A striking example of class-conscious exegesis, for instance,—no more reprehensible, however, than when St. Paul is claimed as a patron by the defenders of the capitalist *status quo*,—is this paragraph by Professor R. B. Y. Scott of the United Theological College, Montreal, taken from his essay "The Biblical Basis" in the symposium edited jointly by him and Gregory Vlastos *Towards the Christian Revolution* (Chicago and New York: 1936):

"Like Jesus, Paul sums up the Law in a sentence: 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbor'; and it is to be remembered that the neighbor is not the individual next door but any fellow-man, even 'a Samaritan.' He counsels the bearing of one another's burdens, since men are members of one body, in which there must be no schism; a pretty commentary on the struggle for profits, with its cutthroat competition and its drive to reduce labor costs. Paul knew from experience the suffering of the workers (1 Cor. 4:11-13). But he declares that God has chosen the submerged classes whom the world despised (1 Cor. 1:26-28 [—the original has 68]). He is quite specific on the profit motive: 'They that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts . . . for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.' And quite incidentally Paul throws out remarks exhibiting an ethic which cuts right across capitalistic practice: 'Owe no man any thing save to love one another'—'If any will not work, neither let him eat.'"<sup>43</sup>)

To some extent of course the world of 40 and the world of 1940 exhibit striking parallels. Foakes-Jackson directs attention to some of these:

"The world in St. Paul's day with its Gentile background resembled in some ways our own. 1) It was cosmopolitan; 2) it was full of great cities; 3) distinguished for its grandiose rather than great achievements; 4) for the enormous wealth of individuals and the rise of new men to power and influence; 5) the people

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43) P. 91.



more and more looked to the state for maintenance; 6) side by side with much brutality there was a growing feeling in favor of more humanity; 7) scepticism was giving way to a desire for religion, though the old faiths were becoming discredited."<sup>44)</sup>

In his elaboration upon these seven points he states in part:

"Crowded into great cities, they [the people] depended on free distribution of corn and food generally and demanded entertainment at the public cost. To prevent disturbance it was necessary to keep large idle crowds fed and amused. . . . Taxation became increasingly heavy, population decreased because the industrious could not look forward to a secure maintenance of their children. Family life was disappearing owing to this and to the increasing selfishness of the age."<sup>45)</sup>

To these might be added the deification of the State, especially, although by no means exclusively, in totalitarian *régimes*; a pervading sensuality; rationalistic humanism as both the creed and the philosophy of the majority of thinkers; mass recreation; the concept of marriage as a social contract rather than a divine ordinance; and the mushrooming popularity of mystery cults and fellowships.

On the other hand, St. Paul was spared certain problems that plague our own age with unique vexation. Here we may list the conquest of space and time that has been so greatly responsible for the concentration of economic power in the hands of a relatively small group of international money-masters; the relentless intensity and uninterrupted continuity of the myriad stimuli with which modern advertising and propaganda methods assault the human will through every channel of sensory perception; the hectic march of progress which accentuates what Dr. Alexis Carrel calls the heterochronic factor that prevents one generation from completely understanding another and that has resulted in the almost complete collapse of parental authority; the rise of an economic order which has produced industrial serfs by the millions whose condition from many angles is far less secure and far less tolerable than that of the slave in the first century; the multiplication of laws beyond all reason; and the creation in man's image of practically immortal and entirely fictitious legal persons called corporations, endowed with the faculties of men but without souls, consciences, affection, or humanity.

St. Paul's world knew nothing of our "hard" liquors nor of our appallingly impersonal and efficient means of mass murder nor of a color line. The simple practice of charity was not complicated by sociological theorizing nor the arcane jargon of case-workers

44) O. c., p. 50.

45) O. c., pp. 53, 54.



and psychiatrists. The State at first ignored the Church, and by the end of the epichristian period it began to persecute it, but at least it did not seek to run the Church. As Kirsopp Lake points out, St. Paul was under no necessity of devising an "ethics of leisure"; indeed, as much as 1,500 years later Thomas of Chelsea anticipated a nine-hour day and fifty-four week only in a millennial Utopia. Nor does St. Paul consider the obligations of a citizen in a democracy, for democracy did not exist in the Roman Empire.

Some applications, however, we may make.

The evangelization of the world and the edification of the faithful in the Church Militant—this, and not the creation of a "Christian" social order, is still the divinely given mission of the Church. What Ramsay has said of the Church of the first century is no less true, *mutatis mutandis*, after nineteen hundred years:

"The development of the Church, the conquest of the world for Christ: that was the present and instant duty. For that every Christian must work: working out his own salvation with fear and trembling, he must work out also the salvation of others. To seek to revolutionize the existing Roman society could not conduce to that end but might on the contrary seriously impede it and indefinitely postpone it."<sup>46</sup>

The significance of corporate worship in this connection is thus expressed by Canon Roger Lloyd:

"Of all the ways in which the power and the grace of God are unloosed and made available for men and women in the world, the slowest but by far the most effective in the long run is the normal work and life of the Church in worship, evangelism, and witness. Once we give to each of these rather pedestrian words the full content of the meaning which it truly bears, then there is no doubt that taken together and truly expressed they constitute the most formidable, the most energetic, and the most powerful force that has ever been seen in human affairs. . . . Public worship is ultimately the compressed expression of the evangelistic need of the Church to make more Christians and to deepen the spiritual lives of those who are already its members. . . . So it is that the rhythm of the life of the worshiping body of the Church is that on Sundays the people come together to renew their vows, to receive further supplies of the energizing grace. Then they stream forth to go out on mission for the whole of the week, working out their Christian love in terms of the avocations of their normal lives, using themselves as instruments whereby the kingdom of God can be increased. Then back they come again to the church

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46) O. c., p. 250.



to offer the results of it all to God and to receive fresh power and inspiration to set in motion the same rhythm all over again."<sup>47)</sup>

The supreme response of the Christian to the love of God in Christ is faith; the supreme obligation of the Christian toward his neighbor is love, which derives both its motive and its dynamic from the love of Christ. This selfless love must find expression in every relationship of life, but it is especially necessary for the Church to continue her eleemosynary ministry. In spite of the increase in governmental programs of assistance for the dependent and the handicapped, new frontiers in technique and new areas of service are constantly presenting themselves to private agencies. The potency of such service is strikingly illustrated by the frank declaration of the Moscow daily *Pravda*, in its issue of May 30, 1934: "Christian charity, which means kindness to all, even to one's enemies, is the greatest enemy of communism."<sup>48)</sup>

While social reconstruction is not the aim of the Church, it is by no means to be despised as a valuable by-product of its ministry. The inevitability of this transforming impact upon society is affirmed by Ernst Troeltsch in his monumental *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*:

"In actual fact it will exercise a very profound transforming influence and will venture on the most searching interference with the social order; it will do this sometimes by indifference to existing conditions, sometimes by submitting existing conditions to the only valid test, the test of its own ideals and of its transcendent values; thus without any deliberate revolutionary intent it will succeed in destroying and breaking down evil institutions and in inaugurating new ones. A purely and unconditionally conservative doctrine can therefore never be produced by it. Its monotheism and universalism, its belief in redemption and its ethico-personal inwardness, contain a radicalism and a striving after unity which will always either ignore all merely temporary conditions or set them aside, and beyond all national and other forms of unity it will press forward towards an ideal religious unity which will be spiritual, inward, and living."<sup>49)</sup>

Obviously merely putting Christians in places of authority will not, however, transform a society. T. S. Eliot has achieved fame as a poet; nevertheless his observation on this subject in his recent

47) O. c., pp. 183, 184. A similar thought is developed by A. G. Hebert in his attention-commanding *Liturgy and Society* (London: 1935).

48) Quoted by Fulton J. Sheen in *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity* (New York: 1938), p. XII.

49) Translated by Olive Wyon (London and New York: 1931), Vol. I, p. 86.



brochure *The Idea of a Christian Society* (New York: 1940), is sage Christian common sense:

"I do not deny that some advantages may accrue from persons in authority in a Christian state being Christians. Even in the present conditions that sometimes happens; but even if in the present conditions *all* persons in positions of the highest authority were devout and orthodox Christians, we should not expect to see very much difference in the conduct of affairs."<sup>50</sup>

No perceptible transformation of any society can take place unless or until practical Christians are what Hilaire Belloc has called "the determining number" of the given social organism.<sup>51</sup>

The Church must have and must express an opinion on social issues which affect her membership, not with the thought of imposing them upon society, but for the guidance of those that own her as their spiritual mother. In other words, the Church must mould the social attitudes of her membership, instead of letting the world usurp this function. Obviously, because of the inevitable and generally radical antithesis between the social philosophy of the world, which is often vicious, usually pragmatic, at best humanistic, and always selfish, and the social philosophy of the Church, which recognizes as the only compulsion and restraint the love of Christ, the Church must *control* the education of its membership. It need not, nor can it, obviously, provide the entire education of its entire membership. On the other hand, it cannot be satisfied with one or a few accepted agencies—for example, the Christian day-school, the Sunday-school, even Christian secondary schools—which at best reach only a part of her constituency for a part of their lives. At this critical juncture in the Church's history these must be exploited to the full, but the necessary measure of control cannot be achieved unless the areas of pre-school years and the period of adulthood and maturity are likewise invaded by a Church-directed program of education which will utilize every available means of moulding the public opinion of its membership.

The line of demarcation between the Church and the world, between sin and right, between good and evil, must be clearly drawn and practically emphasized by the consistent practice of

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50) P. 25.

51) In *The Crisis of Civilization* (New York: 1937), p. 96 n., Belloc defines the implications of the term thus: "A determining number in any matter, economic, social, religious, or what not, is a number such that it gives its tone to society in general. It does not mean a majority; it does not mean any fixed proportion; it is discoverable only by experience, inspection, and familiarity with the activity in question."



admonition and ecclesiastical discipline. "Between the Church and the world there is no permanent *modus vivendi* possible."<sup>52)</sup>

Finally, the attitude must be inculcated that every responsibility is an opportunity. In our own day the area where this needs particularly to be instilled is in the relation of a Christian citizen to his government. The Table of Duties appended to the Small Catechism offers excellent counsel to subjects, but it is no longer exhaustive for us. In a democracy the duties of citizenship are not discharged merely by obeying, praying, and paying; the intelligent use of the franchise and of political office is quite as obligatory. We may not ask for daily bread unless we are prepared to work for it; we may not ask for a pious spouse unless we are prepared to espouse a pious person; we may not ask for pious servants unless we engage pious persons as our employees; we may not ask for discipline in this community unless we contribute to it by disciplining ourselves; and we may not in a republic or a democracy ask for pious and faithful rulers unless we are prepared to deposit our vote to elect them or for good government unless we are prepared to do those things that experience shows are essential to getting it.<sup>53)</sup>

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## Reason or Revelation?

(Continued)

Rationalism is an evil thing, working untold harm. And harmonizing Scripture as practiced by Lutheran theologians is a form of rationalism. The harmonizers operate with the principles of rationalism. True, they do not apply them as widely as the gross rationalists. They restrict the harmonizing operation to selected portions of the Christian doctrine. But there they are engaged in the evil business of rationalism, in a wicked and harmful business.

First, a wicked business. Scripture forbids it. Scripture asks us to accept every one of its teachings, even though every one seems foolish to reason, and to accept its teachings as they stand, even though certain teachings seem contradictory to others. Scripture asks us to bring all reason into captivity to the obedience of Christ, to the obedience of Scripture, 2 Cor. 10:5, and to desist from all

52) Eliot, o. c, p. 96.

53) Dr. Theodore Graebner's essay on *Christian Citizenship* (St. Louis: 1937), originally read before the Synod of the English District at River Forest, Ill., is unqualifiedly the ablest exposition of the duties of a Christian in a democracy currently available in our circles.