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verdict, it is no true loyalty to the memory of so fearless and open-minded a searcher after truth to shut our eyes to the growing light, and hold fast by ancient authority."

E. H. GIFFORD.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

IV. CEREMONIAL.

OUR Lord's idea of righteousness is illustrated by His attitude towards the outward religious observances of His day. What His attitude was is not at once obvious. The teaching of St. Paul regarding the relation of ceremonial to morality is easily intelligible, because in more than one of his epistles the subject is explicitly discussed. Pushing his idea of the spirituality of the religion of Christ to its logical issue, St. Paul declared that ritual belonged to the childhood stage of religion. It was part of that system of tutors and governors which was left behind by the spiritual adult. It was the symbol which became insignificant when the reality appeared: the shadow which was displaced by the body, which was Christ. When St. Paul expressly handles any subject he leaves one in no doubt of his mind: but the ideas of our Lord can only be gathered from a careful examination of His conduct as well as of His words.

Respect for the ceremonial law is legibly written in the life of Jesus. He was circumcised and thus bound theoretically to the whole ceremonial law; He ate the Passover and paid the Temple tax. In compliance with the injunction of the ceremonial law He commanded the healed leper to show himself to the priest. The fiery zeal which usually smouldered in His breast was fanned into consuming flame by the desecration of the centre and stronghold of ritual and ceremony, His Father's house. Sacred places, sacred seasons, sacred actions and sacred persons were alike

respected by Him, and this respect He enjoined on His disciples in such utterances as that of Matthew xxiii. 2, 3: "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do."

At the same time there are in the Gospels intimations that our Lord foresaw the abolition or absorption of all ceremony in Himself and in His kingdom, and that the respect He showed to the enactments of the Levitical law was respect to an obsolescent institution. He sheds tears of regret, indeed, over the anticipated destruction of the Holy City and its temple, but it is with no apprehension that the interests of His Kingdom will be interfered with. He is aware that the Temple has served its purpose, He intimates that it will be replaced by His body, and He declares that henceforth men will worship the Father in spirit (that is, without regard to special locality) and in truth (that is, in reality, not by symbol and observance). Similarly, in His last Passover, He intimates that even this great national religious celebration, in some respects the very heart of the Jewish ritual was passing away, having at length been fulfilled by growing into the memento of the deliverance accomplished by His own death.

It must also be borne in mind that even while conforming to usage and outwardly submitting to traditional enactments, He did so under protest and with significant comments. This is especially apparent in his payment of the Temple-tax, as recorded in Matthew xvii. 24–27. The half-shekel, or δίδραχμον, was originally exacted by Moses as the ransom of each Jew, and in our Lord's time was applied to the up-keep of the Temple.[1] Peter, when asked whether his Master paid the tax, unhesitatingly affirmed that He did. This of itself is strong evidence that our

[1] In *v.* 27 Jesus uses ἀντί, apparently with some reminiscence of the original meaning of the tax.

Lord was not known by His disciples to neglect any part of the law. But on this occasion, while our Lord pays the didrachma, He does so under protest and with explanation. By a single parabolic question He leads Peter to see the unreasonableness of all such exactions. "What thinkest thou, Simon? The kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? From their sons, or from strangers?" (ἀλλοτρίων, subjects not their own children). Peter answers, "From strangers," from those who are not their own children. "Therefore," says our Lord, "are the sons free."[1] The application of this condensed parable Peter could not miss. If earthly kings do not support their house by exactions from the royal family, the heavenly King could require no tax from any who stood to Him in the relation of sons. It has been questioned whether Jesus here means to claim a special relationship to God, and consequently a special and unique exemption from the tax, or if He means to include with Himself, under the term "sons," Peter and all believing persons. The former opinion is advocated by Meyer and Bleek, the latter by Olshausen, Keim and Weiss. The fact that our Lord miraculously paid the tax for Peter as well as for Himself, and the manner in which He uses the plural throughout, although the question of tax-paying was raised solely on His own account, seem to indicate that He meant to exempt all the sons of God from enforced payments. And He pays the tax, not because it is strictly just and reasonable, but "lest we cause them to stumble"; that is to say, lest it should be supposed that He had no interest in the worship of the Temple and no desire to maintain it.

Evidently, then, it is the *compulsoriness* of the payment He objects to. His Father's house was to be maintained, but not by exactions legally enforced on willing and unwilling alike. He desired that God's children should sup-

[1] Thus in opposition to *servi* the Roman children were pre-eminently *liberi*.

port and frequent the Father's house, but it jarred upon Him to have this support exacted as a tax from all and sundry. The children are free, let their gifts and service also be free. The little parable, like other parables, cannot be applied in all its parts. It cannot be said that the upkeep of God's worship should be left to those who are not His children, and that they should be compelled by law to maintain it. That is a lesson which would seem incongruous in the lips of our Lord. What is meant by the parable is that the taxing of God's children for the maintenance of His house is unreasonable. His service must be free, voluntary.

Here our Lord lays down a fundamental principle governing all religious observances. The tax-paying spirit is the bane of worship. Elaborate ceremonial, with its rigid order, its punctilios, its disabilities, its exactions, its inevitable observances, tended to foster the idea to which men are naturally prone, that worship is a paying of dues. Here as elsewhere Christ intimates that such a relation between God and us as moves us to offer Him payments in the spirit of subjects who must pay or fall under legal penalties, is no true relation. God means us to be His children, and therefore free. He repudiates what we pay Him as a tax. He does not desire what we render on exaction. Service that is done by constraint, as a payment of taxes, He refuses. We are to enter into the freedom of His own Son, and to learn from Him a free spirit and bearing. The teaching, then, which, through Peter, He conveys to His church is that in His kingdom all is free, spontaneous, spiritual, and that all that is legal and compulsory, all outward exactions, are doomed.

But observances are dangerous not only because they oppress and benumb the spontaneity and freedom of religious service, but because they are apt to usurp an importance that does not belong to them, and to be considered

ends in themselves, and not means. No observance is appointed for its own sake, as if there were some virtue in the mere performance of the thing prescribed. It was this lesson which our Lord taught in His treatment of the Sabbath law, and which He enounced in the words: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 27). It is for man's aid all observances are appointed; their existence is justified only in so far as they attain that end, and that end is always greater than the means used for its attainment. The relation of man to the world is on the whole such that life can be maintained and all earthly affairs managed in six-sevenths of our time. The tendency of some of the factors in civilization is to overdrive men, and induce the idea that this world is all, and demands all our time. The Sabbath checks and rebukes such tendencies. Every seventh day says to us: You are not merely a world's drudge, a machine for the production of earthly goods, you are a man, a child of the eternal; you are here not merely to accumulate money and live a life of sense; you are here to cultivate friendship, to educate yourself in all good, to know God and become meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

This was explicitly taught when Israel came out of Egypt. To this overdriven race of slaves a weekly rest was a new sensation, and nothing could be a more delightful badge of their freedom than cessation from toil every seventh day. It was a new idea to them to have one day in seven all their own, a day in which they were loosed from earthly toil, and were provided for by Him who gave them the day. "For that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days." Nothing could have more simply taught them the significance of the transition they had made from the service of an earthly master to the service of Jehovah.

By the idea that lay at the heart of the observance, by the intention which created the day, our Lord would regulate the keeping of it. The spirit of the law must be satisfied. The day was appointed to promote the good of man, to be a pleasure and a boon, not a vexation and a burden. Whatever best promotes man's welfare, best satisfies the Sabbath law. Whatever most effectually sets him free from the oppression of the world, from the grinding toil and feverish anxieties of life, best fulfils the intention of God in appointing a weekly rest. Any thing which hinders or retards physical, mental, or spiritual welfare is a breach of the law.

In the Sabbath law as originally given no rules were laid down for its observance save that which enjoined abstinence from work. Israel was not commanded to spend the day in worship. And the only rule for the observance of the day is that it must be spent in frank fellowship with Him who gave it, and with a sincere desire to satisfy the *animus imponentis*. Accepting the day as God's gift and as the badge of our freedom as His children, seeking to enter into His intention in giving the day and remembering the kind of rest our Lord has opened to us by His rising from the dead on the first day of the week, we are not likely either to profane the day and abuse it, or to make it a burden by our Pharisaic scruples. It is not the day that is to be observed, but ourselves. The day cannot be harmed or benefited; it is we ourselves who may take injury or help out of its provision. It is only the means: our welfare is the end.

Another danger in outward observances is that they take the place of the permanent moral obligations. When certain performances are added to the moral law, so that those who rigorously attend to them are esteemed extra-religious, the tendency is to prefer these external observances to the moral law. These extras come to be considered the peculiar and distinguishing mark of a religious man, so that a per-

son's religious status or rank is measured by his observance of these, rather than by his adherence to justice, truth, charity, filial piety. A man is reckoned religious or irreligious according as certain external actions or habits appear or do not appear in his life; as that he has prayers in his family, that he is a regular Church-goer, that he supports religious schemes and so forth; and not as he is or is not honourable in business, sweet-tempered and patient in his family, helpful to his relatives, unworldly in his tastes, self-denying and merciful. This is the inevitable result of allowing ceremonial to rank with moral actions.

The demoralizing influence of allowing to ceremonial actions a place which belongs only to what is moral is illustrated and exposed by our Lord in His reply to the Jerusalem scribes and Pharisees who found fault with His disciples for neglecting to wash their hands before eating. As the Jews did not use forks or spoons, but carried their food to the mouth with the fingers, to wash the hands before eating was a seemly precaution. But it was not through any special love of cleanliness, but from fear of ceremonial defilement that this custom was encouraged by the Pharisees. To touch a Gentile or anything a Gentile had used, or to touch a dead body or a defiled person was enough to involve ceremonial defilement, and unless the hands were washed this defilement passed to the food and so to the man inextricably. The "elders" taught in so many words that he who ate with unwashed hands was as bad as a murderer or a fornicator.[1] Wetstein illustrates the stringency of this traditional law by an anecdote of Rabbi Akiba. While in prison he received daily from a friendly ministering Rabbi as much water as served for drinking and washing. On one occasion the gaoler spilt the half. Rabbi Akiba, notwithstanding the remonstrance

[1] Passages are cited in Wünsche's *Erläuterung aus Talmud und Midrasch*, pp. 180-1.

of his friend, used the remainder for washing his hands, because "he who eats with unwashed hands perpetrates a crime worthy of death; it is better that I die, than that I transgress the appointments of my forefathers." A trifling and purely external traditional custom had not only been raised to the level of the weightiest moral laws, but had thrust these laws aside. Under the guise of an extra-religiousness there were introduced flagrant transgressions of fundamental morality. "For the sake of your tradition ye make the commandment of God of none effect."

Dr. Bruce perfectly interprets our Lord's meaning in the following paraphrase: "Those washings may not seem seriously to conflict with the great matters of the law, but to be at most only trifling and contemptible. But the case is not so. To treat trifles as serious matters, as matters of conscience, is degrading and demoralizing. No man can do that without being or becoming a moral imbecile or a hypocrite; either one who is incapable of discerning what is vital and what not in morals; or one who finds his interest in getting trifles such as washing of hands, or paying tithe of herbs, to be accepted as the important matters, and the truly great things of the law—justice, mercy and faith—quietly pushed aside as if they were of no moment whatever."

That this was our Lord's meaning is shown by the instance which He Himself cites to illustrate His statement. Filial piety is not only an instinct of nature and a duty recognised as fundamental by all nations, but in the Mosaic law it held a conspicuous place. But even this law was set aside by the tradition of the Rabbis, who taught that a man had only to pronounce the word "korban" over any of his possessions, and from that moment his obligation to bestow it on his parents was disannulled. And the reasoning which led to this monstrous conclusion had a great appearance of religiousness. "Korban," meaning

"an offering," was the word employed by the Israelite when he devoted anything to God. After anything had been declared "korban" to a person, he could as little use it as he could take a sacred article and put it to a profane use. Thus if a person sees strangers eating figs which belong to him, and he says "These are a korban to you," the strangers cannot eat them.[1] So that an unfilial son had only to say to his father, 'Whatever thou mightest be profited by me is korban," and, according to the Rabbis, the father could no longer be supported by the son. This was all the more remarkable because in interpreting the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother," the doctors of the law held that by "honour" it was meant that the son must provide his father with food and raiment; and yet by the tradition of the elders, the son might absolve himself from all filial obligation by saying, "Korban is the food and raiment I ought to give you." And the significant feature of the transaction was that a word was used which gave the appearance of religion to the unfilial act. The first of human duties was evaded under the guise —the thinnest possible guise—of extra-devotion to God.

There is then always this double danger in ceremonial, that it depreciates and displaces the moral law, and that it tends to externalize religion. By erecting these ultra-moral obligations into a standard for the religious man, the Rabbis had at once undermined the moral law and given to the externals of religion an importance that threatened spiritual interests. As Dr. Wendt remarks: "It was inconceivable to Jesus that God would make His fellowship with man dependent upon any kind of merely external conditions." Religion is a spiritual affair. It is the fellowship of the Father of spirits with the spirits of His children. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit." Only in so far as the spirit

[1] See Ginsburg in the *Bible Educator*, i. 155.

is moved and aided by what is external are external rites and ceremonies legitimate. "There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile [or cleanse] him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man"; an utterance which, as Mark indicates, makes all meats clean, abolishes the distinction between clean and unclean meats and so annuls the ceremonial law.

But the guiding principle for the use of all outward observances is laid down in our Lord's reply to the question, Why do Thy disciples not fast? (Matt. ix. 14; Mark ii. 18; Luke v. 33). This reply enounces the great principle that all outward observances must be determined by the feeling of the worshipper, not by an external and uniform rubric. The question arose out of the feast given by Matthew on the occasion of his call. For our present purpose it does not matter whether the question was raised, as represented in the First Gospel, by the disciples of John or not. Nor does it matter whether the feast was made on one of the ordinary fast days. The Pharisees and the disciples of John agreed in thinking that the adoption of Matthew into the circle of the Messiah's disciples would have been more worthily celebrated by a fast than by a feast, and this brings up the whole question of fasting. Our Lord in His reply cuts to the root of the matter: "Can the bridegroom's friends fast while the bridegroom is with them?" Fasting is impossible in joyous circumstances. The language is strong in all three Gospels, but especially so in the Third: "Are ye able to make the children of the bridal chamber fast?" Propose to a marriage party that instead of feasting they should fast, and see what you will make of it. But we here are a marriage party. The most joyful, fruitful, and indissoluble of marriages is now being consummated. The Christ and His people are being united. Do you suppose that any one who unites himself to me and enters into the

significance of that union is in a mood to fast? It is out of the question. By not fasting we may be violating the Pharisaic ritual: but by fasting we should violate the spirit of the occasion. But fasting is not always inappropriate, and you may have no long time to wait before you see my followers fasting. "The bridegroom will be taken from them, and then shall they fast."

Fasting, then, if it is to be at all, must not be in conformity with an external rule or a fixed season, regardless of the state of feeling. It must be the expression of inward grief. There are occasions in life when we cannot eat. Some loss is so fresh and keenly felt, some sorrow so commanding, some anxiety so possessing, that food cannot be thought of: this is true fasting. The great religions, Judaism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and we may add Christianity, have enjoined fasting, and have commonly erred in appointing seasons during which fasting is obligatory irrespective of the feeling of the individual. In appointing a Fast for the people of Scotland, the "Superintendents, Ministers, and Commissioners of Churches reformed, within the realm" address to them a treatise on fasting (drawn up possibly by Knox and Craig) "lest that the Papists shall think that now we authorize and praise that which sometimes we have reproved and damned in them, or else that the ignorant, who know not the commodity of this godly exercise, shall contemn the same." In this treatise there is much that is wise, and sensible directions are given for the ordering both of private and of public fasting. But the one principle required for our guidance is certainly that laid down by our Lord that it is the feeling which must prompt the outward observance, not the outward observance which is to provoke the feeling.

One at least of the parables which our Lord appends to His reply directly concerns the point in hand. "No man putteth new wine into old wine-skins: else the wine will

burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins" (Mark ii. 22). The Pharisees and John's disciples virtually complained that the new spiritual life our Lord had quickened in Matthew had not found expression through the old established forms: that this new wine, in short, was not stored in the old wine-skins. Our Lord replies, Had this been done, both would have been spoiled. The jubilant feeling of Matthew, or of any one rejoicing in the new life, would be stifled and wasted, were you to attempt to confine it in forms that are sufficient to give expression to a hum-drum, Pharisaic, lifeless routine. Shut up this new joy of Matthew's in the old form of fasting, and you spoil both the feeling and the form. The feeling, finding no expression, will impart no impulse and will turn into pained disappointment: and the fast itself being compulsory and incongruous, will be hated by Matthew and will have associations attached to it which will make it hateful in all circumstances. Wine and wine-skins would alike be spoiled. But by allowing Matthew to feast, when feasting most naturally expressed his feeling, the new wine found room for itself in this new skin and both were preserved, while the old bottles of fasting fell into no discredit with him, but stood ready for use on any future occasion when his inward experience was congruous. And according to tradition, Matthew did afterwards become an ascetic living on nuts, berries, and vegetables.

Summing up, then, what we are able to gather from the Gospels regarding our Lord's attitude to the ceremonial law; keeping in view His zeal for the preservation of the Temple's sanctity, His observance of the Passover, His injunctions to His disciples regarding sacrifice and worship; and keeping in view also His clear enunciation of principles which explode ceremonialism, the principles of freedom from outward restraint and imposition, of the regulation of

outward religious exercises by the feeling of the worshipper and not by hard and fast rules, and of the seat and source of ethical distinctions being within and not without—keeping in view, that is to say, His respect for ceremonies established by divine law and His clear insight into their temporary character, we see that Jesus was aware that in His kingdom ceremonialism must come to an end, but that He was content to lay down the principles of this abolition and leave them in their own time to accomplish practically what they predicted. To quote Mr. Robert Mackintosh in his vigorous treatment of this subject: "Christ, while He not only respected the ceremonial law but was zealous for its honour, looked calmly forward to the destruction of its centre in the Temple, and omitted ceremony from His positive injunction, while in such diverse points as fasting, distinctions of meats and temple dues, He indicated its incongruence with the spirit of His kingdom." [1]

MARCUS DODS.

ST. PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

XVIII. CHRIST.

IT may appear a grave defect in our treatment of Paulinism that so important a theme as this should be taken up at so advanced a stage. Its postponement may be deemed the more reprehensible that there is nothing binding us to a particular order in the arrangement of topics, and that one might begin the presentation of the Pauline conception of Christianity with any of the great cardinal categories of the system, and therefore with the person of Christ.[2] But there

[1] I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Mackintosh's thorough treatment of this subject in his *Christ and the Jewish Law*.

[2] Weizsäcker remarks that, in endeavouring to present in a connected view the doctrinal utterances in St. Paul's epistles, "we can start just as well from