

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

opportunity of showing his dislike for people of whom he has heard vaguely, but about whose work he knows nothing, and has not thought it necessary to inquire. They seem to him to resemble Paul. In their inability to convert unbelievers, they try to pervert Christians; and so "Paul would have liked to convert the heathen, but he could not do it; he had not the faculty. He proposed it more than once, but there it all ended."

We should have expected that a writer about St. Paul, who adopts "the line of a novelist with some experience of life," would take some trouble to familiarise himself with the general facts and situation of the country where his scene lies. Mr. Baring Gould prefers to be ignorant of the modern facts, though he has certainly taken some trouble to acquaint himself with the ancient. But he can never free himself from a ruling prejudice against the method of "any Paul or Barnabas rushing about founding Churches" (p. 260).

W. M. RAMSAY.

1 CORINTHIANS VIII. 1-9. A SUGGESTION.

It is a natural and a common practice with letter-writers to catch up some phrase from their correspondent's letters and incorporate it with their own reply. The phrase is necessarily recognised at once by the correspondent at the time, and in modern days the use of inverted commas precludes all possibility of mistake, if the letter should be subsequently printed; but the ancients had not this advantage, and hence it becomes a question of critical instinct to see where a writer is doing this, and to distinguish between the quotation and the writer's own words; and the suggestion of this paper is, that in this section of the first Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul is quoting from the letter which

the Corinthians had written to him (vii. 1), and that to an extent which has scarcely been suspected before.¹

Before we examine the passage it is worth while to note that in 2 Corinthians we find a similar phenomenon. We have indeed no sufficient ground for assuming, as Dr. Lisco has lately done in Germany, that St. Paul is there quoting from a *written* attack upon himself, but it cannot be doubted that such phrases as those of 2 Corinthians x. 1, "I, who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage towards you"; and 2 Corinthians xii. 16, "being crafty, I caught you with guile," represent the substance, if not the actual words, of the taunts levelled in speech against St. Paul by his Jewish-Christian opponents at Corinth. It is again an interesting, though less convincing conjecture of Schmiedel, that when St. Paul calls himself "one born out of due time," τὸ ἔκτρωμα, the still-born child (1 Cor. xv. 8), he is adopting ironically the term of insult levelled at him by Judaizers: "the man who had been cast out of the Jewish synagogue, like the result of a miscarriage from the mother's womb."² Such an incorporation of taunt, objection, criticism, is eminently characteristic of St. Paul's vividly dramatic and controversial style. It underlies whole paragraphs, such as those in Romans iii. 1-9; vi., ix.-xi.; and as the first Epistle to the Corinthians is the only one in which he is confessedly answering a *letter*, it will be natural to find in it a similar method of incorporation of whole phrases or sections from the questions asked him and the reasons urged with respect to them in that letter.

I would propose, then, to print this paragraph in the following way:—

¹ I find that, in the main, my suggestion has been anticipated by Heinrici; but as mine differs from his in some details, I venture to put it forward.

² Cf. Euseb., *H. E.*, v. 1. for a similar Christian application: ἐν γίνετο πολλῆ χαρὰ τῇ παρθένῳ μητρὶ, οὗς ὡς νεκροῦς ἐξέτρωσε, τοῦτους ζῶντας ἀπολαμβάνουσα, of Christians who had at first denied and then confessed their faith.

“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, *“we know that we all have knowledge.”*”

Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know; but if any man loveth God, the same is known of Him.

Concerning therefore the eating of things sacrificed to idols, *“we know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth”* (as there are gods many and lords many), *“yet to us there is One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.”*

Howbeit in all men there is not that knowledge; but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled.

“But meat will not commend us to God; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse, nor, if we eat, are we the better.”

“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours becomes a stumbling-block to the weak.”

And I would paraphrase it somewhat thus:—

“I come now to answer the second question contained in your letter, about things sacrificed to idols. On this subject you plead that you have a right to eat them, because (you say) ‘we are quite sure that we Christians all have knowledge about the true nature of God and His relation to the idols.’ True, but remember knowledge only makes the individual conceited; it is love which builds up a Church. Besides, your boast of knowledge shows that it is not true knowledge; a man must have love and love of God, if he is to have true knowledge; then only does he know God, or, rather, is known by God.¹ I return, then,

¹ The suggestion of Canon Evans (*Speaker's Commentary, ad loc.*) that οἶδος

to the question you have asked me about eating things sacrificed to idols; you claim that you may do so, for (you say) 'we, as Christians, know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one. For though there are many objects of worship among our heathen neighbours whom they call gods, whether gods of Olympus or gods of the powers of earth.' (Yes, that is true; I see the worship of many here in Ephesus, and wherever I travel, and even Moses used language that implies many such gods and lords.¹) 'Yet to us Christians there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.'

"I reply that that also is quite true in theory; yet, as a matter of fact, all Christians have not this knowledge realized; but some having been used, up till their recent conversion, to believe an idol to have real existence and real power, eat of a thing so sacrificed with the feeling that it has been affected and polluted by the idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled.

"But you plead once more for liberty. You say, 'meat will not commend us to God; neither, if we eat not, are we conscious of being the worse, nor, if we eat, are we conscious of being the better; therefore we can do just as we like.' Quite true again in theory, yet take heed lest this liberty of yours about which you boast should become a stumbling-block to the weak."

takes up τὸν Θεόν and ἵπ' αὐτοῦ takes up εἰ τις, so that the meaning would be "God has at once been recognised in His true character by such a man," is very attractive in a context where the knowledge referred to is that of God and His relation to the idols; but the analogy in thought of Galatians iv. 9, and in structure of Romans viii. 9, εἰ δὲ τις Πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ, is strongly in favour of the old view.

¹ The commentators suppose an allusion to Deuteronomy x. 17, οὗτος Θεὸς τῶν θεῶν καὶ κύριος τῶν κυρίων. Probably, also, the language of Deuteronomy xxxii., which St. Paul adapts in x. 20, is already in his mind, especially vv. 17, 18, 31, 37.

It will no doubt be objected that much of the language here attributed to the Corinthian letter is Pauline (*e.g.*, οἶδαμεν, Rom. ii. 2, iii. 19, vii. 14, viii. 22, 28; 2 Cor. v. 1; 1 Tim. i. 8; παρίσταται, Rom. vi. 13, xiv. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 14, xi. 2; Col. i. 22, 28; 2 Tim. ii. 15); but this is no real objection. The history of most of the phrases would be this, that St. Paul had first used them in his preaching to the Corinthians; that then the Corinthians had taken them up, and applied them without due qualifications; that they had inserted them so in this letter; and that St. Paul takes them directly now from the letter. They are his phrases; he does not repudiate them; but he shows how they need adaptation to particular needs, and how they may not be pressed out of the original context in which they were used.

There are several considerations which seem to bear out this view.

1. It makes quite intelligible the apparent contradiction between *v.* 1, "We know that we all have knowledge," and *v.* 7, "Howbeit in all men there is not that knowledge." The former is the language of the Corinthians, the latter of St. Paul.

2. It explains the antithesis between "we" (*v.* 8) and "you" (*v.* 9). Throughout the whole passage the first person plural is the language of the Corinthians (οἶδαμεν, i. 4; ἡμῖν, ἡμεῖς, 6; ἡμας, 8); the second person in *vv.* 9-12 is in St. Paul's address to them.

3. It gives some point to the very difficult parenthesis in *v.* 5, "As there are gods many and lords many." It is hard to believe that St. Paul is here predicating the real existence of many gods, as though there were an antithesis between εἴπερ εἰσὶ λεγόμενοι and ὥσπερ εἰσὶ. It seems necessary to supply λεγόμενοι with both clauses; but, if so, the addition is so slight, if both are regarded as sayings of St. Paul, that it is hard to see why the parenthesis is added

at all; whereas if the latter is *his* confirmation of *their* statement—perhaps by a reference to his own experience, perhaps with a semi-quotation of the Old Testament—there is a real progress in the thought.

4. It has often been noticed how frequently St. Paul in this Epistle expresses himself surprised at the ignorance of the Corinthians. The surprised question, “Know ye not?” (*οὐκ οἴδατε*; or more strongly, *ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε*;) occurs ten times in this letter (iii. 16; v. 6; vi. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19; ix. 13, 24), only once (Rom. vi. 16) elsewhere. This is explicable enough in the face of the conceit of the Corinthian Church, but the satire of it is even more marked if twice in their recent letter they had used the boastful *οἴδαμεν*.

5. In a similar way the repeated stress on the privileges which *all* the Israelites enjoyed in the wilderness (*πάντες* five times in x. 1-4, cf. ix. 24-25) gains a fresh point if it is a reminiscence of this boast of universal knowledge in the Corinthian letter (*πάντες γινώσκω ἔχομεν*).

6. It is interesting to note that this great dogmatic statement of the unity of God and of Christ's work as the agent of creation, a statement which implies the fuller Christology of the Colossian letter, will thus be not only a part of St. Paul's teaching when he wrote this letter, but a part of the teaching as given when he first preached at Corinth, which was already treated by the Corinthians as a Christian, axiom, and as the basis for practical inferences.

7. It makes more clear the reason why St. Paul does not quote the decree of the Apostles at Jerusalem, “That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols” (Acts xv. 29). The circumstances had changed, and the point of view was entirely different. At that time Jewish Christians were trying to press the observance of the Mosaic law upon Gentile Christians; the Apostles decided that such observance was not to be imposed, but they requested the Gentile Christians to abstain from a few things which

would give special offence to the Jewish Christians, and would make the common social meal of Christians impossible.¹ Had a Gentile Christian at Antioch asked the question, "Why may I not eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols?" he would have received the reply, "Because the Mosaic law forbids it, and there are 'myriads' (Acts xxi. 20) of Christians who are observing the Mosaic law, and will be offended at your conduct." But at Corinth all was different. The question of Jewish scruples and of the Mosaic law was entirely absent, or rather was a subordinate element, lying quite in the background (*καὶ Ἰουδαίους*, x. 32 only). The prominent controversy lay between Gentile and Gentile. The stronger of them, boasting of their liberty and perilously self-confident, claimed that there were no restrictions for a Christian. The idol was nothing, and could not affect the meat. They might eat such meat, not only if they found it in the market, and cooked it at home; not only if they found it at dinner at a friend's house; but actually they might join their heathen neighbours in festivals in the heathen temples (*ἐν εἰδωλείῳ*, viii. 10), and eat it there. Against this the less strong Gentile Christians protested; they had been accustomed to the idol (viii. 7) as an object of worship so very recently (*ἕως ἄρτι*) that they dreaded association with it; it seemed to pollute the meat, and they touched it with a half-superstitious dread. Had one of their stronger neighbours asked them, Why may we not eat? they would not have alluded to the Mosaic law, but to the power of the heathen idol. Against this superstitious dread the stronger appealed to St. Paul: Ought not

¹ A deeper view of the purpose of these limitations will be found in Hort's *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 71. Dr. Hort regards them as meant to be "concrete indications of pure and true religion," *i.e.* as meant to inculcate moral holiness, whole-hearted worship of God, and reverence for all forms of life. But if this were so, would the latter restrictions upon blood and things strangled have ever fallen into disuse?

Christians to know better than this? Was it not too trifling? Surely any Christian might eat such meat anywhere?

St. Paul's answer is twofold. He is with the stronger brethren that essentially all things are God's, and that an idol cannot pollute it or take it out of God's control; but he is entirely with the weaker brethren, that it is wrong for any Christian to eat it in an idol temple. To go there at all is an act of idolatry; it brings into play all the feelings of worship, of communion with the object of worship; it is to run into the same peril as the Israelites ran into in the wilderness; it is to be partaker with devils (x. 1-22). On the other hand, in the simple matter of eating in a private house he is on the side of the stronger; they may eat; it is better not to ask questions; yet if some more scrupulous brother still regards it as having religious associations (*ἰερόθυτον*, x. 28, not *εἰδωλόθυτον*), it is well to regard such scruples and to abstain from eating out of considerateness.

The question of meat touched daily life, and was bound up with religion; hence many questions might arise about it, and it is necessary to distinguish them. At least three objections were raised and met within the times of the New Testament. The first was Jewish Christian: "the Mosaic law makes certain meats unclean, therefore a Christian may not eat them." The answer to this was, "The Mosaic law is not binding on Gentile Christians, but we ask them to abstain from meat offered to idols and from blood and from things strangled, lest they should give offence to Jewish Christians" (Acts xv.). The second was Gentile Christian: "The idols pollute meat offered to them, therefore a Christian may not eat them." The answer was, "The idols have no power; therefore a Christian may eat such meat (anywhere except where it will imply contact with heathen worship), but he had better abstain if he will give offence to his weaker brother or to

Jewish Christians" (1 Cor. viii.-x.). The last objection went deeper still: "meat is evil in itself, therefore Christians should abstain from all flesh." And the answer was, "Nothing is evil in itself; Christians are free to eat; yet once again let there be toleration and mutual consideration" (Rom. xiv.). The three positions might be summarized in language expanded from that of St. Paul: οὐδὲν κοινὸν διὰ τοῦ νόμου (Acts xv.), οὐδὲν κοινὸν διὰ τῶν εἰδώλων (1 Cor.), οὐδὲν κοινὸν δι' ἑαυτοῦ (Rom. xiv.).

To return to the chapter, with which this article deals, it would be too sanguine to hope that the suggestion here made will meet with universal acceptance; to many it will appear too artificial. It is, however, somewhat parallel to the way in which the writer of the Fourth Gospel passes from narrating words of our Lord or of other speakers into comments of his own, without any clear indication that he is doing so (*e.g.*, i. 15-18, iii. 16, iii. 31). It is even more parallel to the way in which Horace, in his *Ars Poetica*, itself a letter, seems at first to translate a fragment of his Greek original, then to add his comment upon the statement; again without any clear indication where the translation ends and the comment begins.¹ And even if in this particular passage of St. Paul's letter it may not be possible to draw the lines so sharply as has been done above, yet there can be little doubt that St. Paul's language is influenced to some extent by that of the Corinthian letter both here and elsewhere. It is very probable that the sentence of vii. 1, "it is good for a man not to touch a woman," appeared in that letter; very probable again that the phrase which is four times repeated, "All things are lawful" (vi. 12, x. 23), had been quoted by them to justify license in moral questions, and freedom in this special matter of meats. The same may be true of vi. 13, "meats for the belly, and the belly for meats"; x. 26, 27,

¹ Cf. Prof. H. Nettleship, *Essays in Latin Literature*, pp. 173-183.

“asking no questions for conscience sake”; x. 29, “why is my freedom judged by another conscience?”; and, *mutatis mutandis*, xi. 2, “you remember me in all things and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you.” This last statement it can scarcely be doubted, referred to some grateful expression of their loyalty which they had made, though in this case there is less reason for connecting it with the *letter*: it might have been reported to him by the household of Chloe. But in the eighth chapter we are in close touch with the letter itself (cf. vii. 1 *περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε* and viii. 1 *περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων*), and it is more justifiable to look for direct extracts from it.

WALTER LOCK.

SURVEY OF LITERATURE ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

INTRODUCTION.—The most important contribution recently made to this department of literature is the Second Part completing the First Volume of Prof. W. M. Ramsay’s great work on *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* (Clarendon Press). In the first part, published in 1895, the Lycos Valley and South-Western Phrygia were described: in the part now issued West and West-Central Phrygia receive similar treatment. Although the larger part of the territory remains to be dealt with, its treatment will probably not occupy so much space, because in Northern Phrygia there are fewer cities which will afford material for discussion. It is too late in the day to remark upon the indefatigable research, the scientific scholarship, the lively historical imagination, the insight which lend distinction and value to all Prof. Ramsay’s work. But it may be said that in nothing he has published are these qualities more in evidence, and in none of his previous works has he more effectively reproduced the past than in the volume now issued. The material alone out of which he has built his history, the inscriptions discovered and deciphered by himself and other scholars, and the allusions in rarely read authors, is of immense and permanent value: while his interpretation of this material, and his brilliant inferences from it furnish an instructive example