

Pastor and People.

PAUL'S SHARE IN THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND TO CHRISTIANITY.

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Britain by reason of its distance from the centre of the habitable world had no place in the annals of nations till the Christian era. Not because it was unknown; but its insular position rendered it more isolated and unapproachable. It was peopled by the descendants of Japheth, through Ashkenaz, who travelled westwards till the Atlantic set bounds to their dwellings. They brought with them the Patriarchal religion as it was when the sons of Noah began to overspread the earth. Though their religion degenerated into what afterwards named Druidism, yet it was not marked by such foul plots of cruelty, blood, vice, gross rites and customs, which characterized the idolatry of Chaldea, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. The druids or priests were skilled in astronomy, philosophy, geometry, mechanics, and rhetoric. They had no idols, nor were they polytheists, and in nature's temple worshipped the Supreme King. Some of the names by which he was known were "God;" "The Mysterious One;" "The Eternal;" "He that pervades all things;" "The Author of existence;" "The Ancient of days;" "Jesus." To Him were ascribed infinite life, love, knowledge, wisdom and power. The sacred oak they held in peculiar veneration, and called it "The curer of all our ills." Their religious worship consisted in songs of praise and thanksgiving, prayers and supplications, angury and divination. In offering sacrifices the priest prayed with his hand on the victim's head before it was slain. One rite, however, detracts from the simple primitive customs and comparative purity of their dogmas, and shows that even our ancestors needed the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus to make known "His saving health," and put a stop to those rites of horrid cruelty which brutalize the heathen.

The gospel was not long preached to the Gentiles till God took that land under his care. Having been little known for centuries, save to a few traders, there is scarcely any room for thinking that it contained a synagogue, in which the law and prophets were read, or any oratory by the "river side, where prayers was wont to be made." Nor is it likely that "devout men," dwellers in Britain, were included in the three thousand who heard the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and gladly received their word. Another process God adopted to bring the "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people," to those isles afar off, that hath not heard my fame nor seen my glory.

Parsons, a Jesuit, asserts that Peter preached the gospel in Britain. Simeon Metaphrastes, who lived about 900 A.D., says that the apostles ordained bishops, priests and deacons in that island. At the distance of nine or sixteen hundred years these writers could know no more about the matter than we ourselves. The most probable visit Peter made to Britain is the alleged appearance of the apostle, in a vision, to some one in the days of Edward the Confessor. Peter was the apostle of the circumcision, though by supernatural direction he gathered to the church the first fruits of the uncircumcision. It is also said that Joseph of Arimathea and Philip came to Britain, erected a church where Glastonbury now stands, and dedicated it to the virgin. A church dedicated to the virgin in the year 68 A.D. is beyond belief.

There is some show of reason to support the theory that Paul visited Britain, though the evidence is not all that could be desired. Down to the beginning of 68 A.D. Paul's labours when in prison and at liberty were confined to that part of the world between Palestine in the east and Rome in the west. His supposed journey to Britain must have been between his first and second imprisonments at Rome. In 57 A.D. he designed to visit Spain. At this date only a part of Britain was overrun by the Roman army, and the inhabitants were in a state of exasperation against their apparent conquerors. The visit to Spain was to have taken place after the feast of Pentecost in 58 A.D. He was to be in Jerusalem at that feast (Acts xix. 21); thence he was to visit Rome, but not by Asia and Macedonia (Acts xx. 34). Rome was to receive only a passing visit on his way to Spain (Rom. xv. 24). His reason for undertaking this proposed journey was, that as in Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia, the church was now established, and her courts in working order, there was no further need for his apostolic labours in the east. He had therefore made up his mind to visit the Roman provinces in the west "to preach where Christ was not named" lest he "should build upon another man's foundation." There were congregations of Christians in Rome, and doubtless in different cities in Italy, when Paul was apprehended in Jerusalem, but not in Spain and westwards. Paul's fellow-labourers when

he was in prison were either in Rome or eastwards in Asia, but not in the west. Nor is it likely that any of the other Apostles went to Spain during his imprisonment. Ancient historians assigned other parts of the world for them. After his release at the beginning of 68 A.D., he had time to visit Spain, as well as Phoenicia, at Colossae, (Phil. xiii.) Perhaps, also, he made glad a part of France and the south-east coast of England by the joyful tidings that the "Desire of all nations" had come.

Clomens Romanus, who was settled in Rome, and one of his co-labourers, asserts that "Paul preached righteousness throughout the world; and in doing this went to the utmost bounds of the west." This is the most trustworthy witness, as what others write is based on the records of others and not on personal knowledge. The expression, "the utmost bounds of the west," is viewed by some writers as indicating the western bounds of the known world; others limit it to Spain. Paul had time and opportunity to travel through Spain and France to Britain. The southern part of England was subdued two years before his liberation: available troops were continually pouring into the country, a highway was kept open, and safe from the centre to the western circumference of the empire. If that expression is to be viewed as an oratorical flourish, nothing is to be based upon it; if it is to be regarded as a matter of fact, we consider that it refers to Britain. The latter view is the one taken evidently all along. Tertullian, who wrote about one hundred years after the apostle's death, says that the gospel spread "in all boundaries of the Spaniards, all the different nations of Gaul, and those parts of Britain accessible to the Romans." Theodoret, about 428 A.D., says, "These our fishermen, and publicans, and tent makers, have propagated the gospel among all nations: not only among the Romans, but among . . . the Britons." The researches of Eusebius, an ancient church historian, on this point show that this island was visited by an apostle. If this country has been honoured with a personal visit from Paul, it must have been in the end of 68 or beginning of 64 A.D. His stay, also, must have been short, and confined to those places where the presence of an overwhelming military force commanded respect for the person of a Roman citizen. Beyond those he could not with safety have gone, else he would have rushed into the midst of an infuriated populace. On the whole, the probability of the Apostle's visit to Britain is greater than the evidence is decisive.

War and its cruelties are over-ruled by the Head of the Church for the good of both Church and State. By a way which they know not, and in paths which they had not trod, some natives of England were brought into contact with the gospel, and experienced its power over their heads. When Julius Cæsar made his second descent on Britain in 54 B.C., he took a number of British captives to Rome. For a considerable period we hear nothing more of it. In 48 A.D., a British refugee persuaded Claudius to send an army to subdue Britain. Yespasian and others with about 60,000 soldiers were commissioned for that purpose. Their landing was unopposed; and after several engagements they were under the necessity of sending for the Emperor and another army. They arrived, fought, and succeeded in overpowering the Britons. This happened about twelve years after the crucifixion, and when Paul was on his first missionary tour through Asia Minor. In 50 A.D., Caractacus, a Welsh prince, who for nine years kept the Roman power at bay, was taken prisoner. With his family and other captives he was sent to Rome, to grace the triumph of the Emperor. In 61 A.D., Boadicea tried to throw off the Roman yoke, but failed. Others were taken prisoners. As the war extended over a period of thirty-six years the principal prisoners would not have been retained in the country but sent to Rome. A way was thus opened up, between the army of occupation and headquarters, for the transmission of Britons, though as captives, from this heathen land to that city where Christ had followers whose "faith was spoken of throughout the world."

The names of but few of these captives are recorded; and these few are nobles. Caractacus, and his father, Bran, are among the number. Bran, it is said, was detained at Rome seven years as hostage for his son; that during that time he had become acquainted with the Christian faith; that he had been converted to it; and that on his liberation he returned to his own land, and "was the first who brought the faith of Christ to this island from Rome, where he was in prison through the treachery of Boadicea." Tacitus makes no mention of Bran's captivity. In the absence of well authenticated proof, we must view this assertion as based on uncertain tradition, which may or may not be true. If Bran was a prisoner in Rome owing to the defeat of his son, and seven years hostage for him, then he must have left in 58 A.D. This would be four years after Claudius "commanded all Jews to depart from Rome." During the previous three years he could have made but little progress in the knowledge of Christianity, especially he being a captive in prison, and the Christians few, principally Jews, and meeting in private houses. If he was in prison through the treachery of Boadicea, it would have been in the end of 61 A.D. In this case the probability of his conversion is greater. Being of the royal family his prison would have been near the palace, and he under the care of Prætorian guards. Or if, like Paul, he had been permitted to dwell in his own hired house, it would have been under conditions similar to those to which the Apostle was subject. In the end of 62 A.D., Paul was a prisoner near this palace, dwelling in his own hired house, but under the care of a soldier to whom his right hand was bound by a chain. This liberty was given to privileged prisoners, who sometimes were permitted, in charge of a military escort to visit their friends. Prisoners from different places in Europe, Asia, and Africa were in the same place, awaiting their trial, or undergoing a restricted punishment. By this means, companions in suffering had an opportunity of becoming

acquainted with each other, by either personal acquaintance, or conversations with soldiers to whom they were entrusted. Prisoners from Britain would be of special interest to the apostle. As Britain, long lain fallow, was being broken up by the keen-edged ploughshare of the sword, a new part of the world was in a state of preparation to receive the seed of the gospel. With a mind full of anxiety would he make enquiries at the soldiers about this new addition to Roman territory, and view it as a new territory to be brought under the tender and merciful yoke of Christ. As Paul could say, "My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places." It needs no great stretch of the imagination to see him making enquiries at the captives themselves. With what interest would he listen to the description of a race, not of naked, beastly savages as Cæsar described them, but intelligent, skilful, and war-like; so much so, that in military tactics they were so little behind the Romans themselves, that it required Rome's best disciplined troops to conquer and keep them in subjection! How would he make enquiries respecting the religion of the Britons;—of druidism, its dogmas, rites, and customs; its temples, priests, and victims;—and from the answers obtain a far more trustworthy account of the British race, religion, and customs, than he could have obtained from that legacy of information which Cæsar bequeathed to his countrymen!

Like a skilful strategist, the apostle, from his house-prison, would direct the movements of his fellow-labourers in Rome. Of these he had several, such as Aquilla and Priscilla, Andronicus and Junia, his relatives, and such companions as had preceded or followed him. Who can tell but that through their efforts the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls had brought into His fold more than one of our forefathers, that they might, like the Eunuch, understand the nature of that sacrifice offered up by Him who "was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth: in His humiliation His judgment was taken away, and who shall declare His generation!" Like him, too, they might have been sent home rejoicing in the God of their salvation; and, like David, led to say to their fellow-countrymen, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." It sometimes happens that prisoners of war are instrumental in transmitting the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus to their benighted countrymen. For instance efforts were made of late to circulate the Scriptures and preach the gospel among captives in Germany and other places. Here are two samples from the Franco-German war:

"The soldiers were generally accompanied by an escort. . . . and when I called to them from my window, they came up without troubling themselves about the soldiers that accompanied them. Thus I could often get into my room ten of these unknown soldiers. . . . with whom we passed happy moments."

"M. Lowitz held a service in Arabic lately, at the citadel. All the Turcos took part in it, and showed great attention. The religious openness of these Arabs is in general greater than is to be found among many so-called Christians."

God, no doubt, is working out His own gracious plans in and through these men; and, though they know it not, yet is planting the seeds of serving knowledge and true liberty in the soul, barren, cheerless, and bloated by Popish superstition or Mohammedan bigotry. These sown again and again may soon be the fulfilment of that prophecy, "For the Lord shall comfort him: he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord: joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody."\*

That Paul did come in contact with some prisoners from Britain is the assertion of several early writers. Nor is it unlikely. Some of the principal captives would often be in the vicinity of his house; and if not brought into personal contact with him, would doubtless hear of him through Burus or some of his subordinate officers. If in his lonely hours tears ran down the withered cheeks of "Paul the aged," at the painful intelligence of the backsliding of some hopeful convert, would not his heart burn within him to have the opportunity of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to those strangers from a far off land? It is not at all unlikely that Paul's crown of rejoicing is adorned with the first-fruits of the Britons, as well as the first-fruits of Achaia.

During his second imprisonment he writes to Timothy, "Eubulus, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia greet thee." This Claudia is thought by several learned authors to have been the daughter of Caractacus; others think that she was the daughter of Cogidunus, King of Chichester, who, for aid rendered to the Romans, was rewarded with certain territories in the south-east of England. From one ancient inscription we see that he adopted the name of Claudius, the Emperor. In that case she would have been called Claudia. The first Roman Governor of Britain was named Aulus Plautius, whose wife was Pomponia Græcina. It was he who Cogidunus aided; which aid was given between 48 and 52 A.D. Pomponia, on their arrival at Rome, was accused of having embraced a "foreign superstition," in other words, Christianity.

The most likely guardian in Rome of the daughter of Cogidunus, would be Aulus, the former friend and ally of her father. Being in his house she would be under the care of a Christian lady, and through her would meet with kindred spirits. This Claudia married a Roman Senator of noble birth, named Pudens. There is room, in the absence of direct proof, to doubt the identity of this Pudens and Claudia with those of the Apostle. Individuals, however, bearing the same name and bearing the same relationship to each other must have been confined to an exceedingly small circle in the higher ranks of life. We are told that one Timotheus, a son of Pudens a Roman Senator, was in Britain taking part in its conversion.

\* The lives of Capt. Hedley Viars and Duncan Matheson give very interesting accounts of Christian work among soldiers.

It is a fact worthy of being noticed among these remarks, that those whose names are recorded in connection with Paul, for the most part, either moved in the higher walks of life, or occupied responsible offices under government, or were in comfortable circumstances. Barnabas had an estate in Cyprus. Manens was foster-brother to Herod. Sergius Paulus was deputy in Cyprus. Lydia, who sold a rich, expensive cloth, provided accommodation for Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke, in addition to her own family. Dionysius, being an Arocapagite, moved in respectable society in Athens. Cripus was chief ruler in the synagogue at Ephesus, and Erastus was city chamberlain; and there were saints in Nero's household.

The seeds of some flowers and medicinal herbs forms the centre of so many balls of down. When shaken by the storm the plant parts with its produce, which borne by the wind to some barren waste brings beauty and health where it alights. The annals of the Burch are not without many instances of barren moral wastes having been beautified as the garden of the Lord with the Plant of renown, and its inhabitants healed through the medicinal qualities of the Balm of Gilead, whose seeds were wafted from other lands by the wild deadly blasts of war. To the Apostle his five years imprisonment must have been one of God's mysterious dealings. But it was wisely overruled. During that time he was brought into daily contact with soldiers. As war called these forth to different parts of the world so the seeds of the Gospel were being transported to other lands. Paul was not the one to neglect the opportunity given him to preach the Word and instruct his neighbours, whether in the school, the synagogue, the barracks, or the assemblies of Christians. He says of himself, "I am made all things unto all men that I might by all means save some, and this I do for the Gospel's sake." Following out this principle, he made himself a soldier that he might enlist the soldiers of Cæsar into the service of that other King, even Jesus. His epistles indicate that he paid attention to what he heard and saw among his military associates. He would admonish his military friends to "Put on the whole armour of God," to "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ," and to "Fight the good fight of faith."

Christianity soon spread in the Roman army. At the Apostle's death the Christians in Rome numbered thousands; nor would the army be without a fair proportion of disciples. No doubt other Apostles would have an influence over all to whom they preached, but from Paul's close connection with the military for 5 years, at the time, too, when Christianity flourished so much before Nero's persecution, and his being at Rome about the time available troops were sent to Britain, we are strongly of the opinion that the Gospel was planted in different parts of that island by converts of Paul,—soldiers akin in spirit to that of the centurion whose faith Christ found to be not equalled in Israel; or such as Cornelius, "a devout man and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." There have been many Hedley Viars, Sir Henry Havelock's and Sir James Outram's in the army,—soldiers who have been a blessing to their men and the people among whom they were located. Such as these co-operating with Britons, who probably had been brought under the influence of the Gospel in Rome and elsewhere, would in their own spheres and as opportunity presented itself stand shoulder to shoulder, fighting in the same ranks under "the banner given to be displayed because of the truth," whilst they endeavoured to subdue that land and make it tributary to Messiah, the Prince of Peace, who is King of nations as well as King and Head of the Church.

The Pardoned Sinner.

He easily looks down from on high on all the empty titles and false images of earthly happiness, and when he is bereaved of them all, yet, and beset on every side with what the world calls misfortunes and afflictions, ceases not to be happy. In sorrow he is joyful, in poverty rich, and in chains free; when he seems buried deep, so that not one ray of the sun can reach him, he is surrounded with radiant lustre; when overwhelmed with ignominy he glories; and in death itself he lives, he conquers, he triumphs. What can be heavy to that man who is eased of the intolerable burden of sin? How animated was that saying of Luther, "Smite, Lord, smite; for thou hast absolved from my sin!" Whose anger would he fear who knows that God is propitious to him, that supreme King, whose wrath is indeed the messenger of death, but the light of his countenance is life; who gladdens all by the rays of his favor, and by one smile disperses the darkest clouds, and calms the most turbulent tempest?

The Good Husband.

"Nothing," said a sweet, smiling, joyful woman, "adds so much to my happiness, as a kind word, a kind look, or a kind act from my husband. Oh, how charming, after a hard day's toil at the wash-tub, or in cooking over a hot fire for the harvest hands, or in the discharge of any other domestic duty, or after a sleepless night with a sick babe, is a kind word, a sweet kiss or a smile even, from the husband and father." Husbands, if you see in your wives defects, or things you wish were not so, try kindness, and see if that don't do them more good than all the unkind words and cross looks you ever gave them. "I often think," continued this happy wife, "I have the best husband in the world. He is good and kind to me in sickness and health, in joy and sorrow. We are happier than when we were married nearly twenty years ago. He never scolds me, nor brings a long catalogue of complaints against me, but comes in from his daily labour in good humor, with a smile on his lips and a sweet kiss, for me and says, 'Now, Susie, dear, you have done enough to-day; put up your work.' Then he seizes little Nancy with a shower of kisses, and we sit down side by side, and chat in the cool evening breeze." What woman in the world wouldn't make such a husband a good wife.

The Altered Motto.

BY PASTOR THEOPHORE MONOD.

Oh, the bitter shame and sorrow  
That a time could ever be  
When I let the Saviour's pity  
Plead in vain, and proudly answered.  
"All of self, and none of Thee!"  
But He found me. I beheld Him  
Bleeding on the accursed tree,  
Heard Him pray, "Forgive them, Father!  
And my wistful heart said faintly  
"Some of self, and some of Thee."  
Day by day His tender mercies,  
Healing, helping, full and free,  
Sweet and strong, and all so patient,  
Brought me low, while I whispered  
"Less of self, and more of Thee."  
Higher than the highest heavens,  
Deeper than the deepest sea  
Lord, thy love at last hath conquered:  
Grant me now my soul's desire—  
"None of self, and all of Thee."

Random Readings.

Is not that wisdom that leaves nothing for a dying hour?  
WHAT is the distance from earth to heaven, to the prayer of faith.  
He must be necessarily poor who receives all from another.  
THERE is in every ordinance of the Lord that which is peculiar to itself.  
THE way in which the Lord leads His people is always the right way—always.  
God being what He is, His church must be secure for time and for eternity.  
LOWLINESS of mind is not a flower that grows in the field of nature.—Boston.  
THEY are the wise whom God esteems wise. They are the wise whom God makes wise.  
THERE are many who know their own wisdom, but there are but few who know their own folly.  
THE wise are they who distinguish clearly between the law court and the equity court.  
ALL our evils are to be traced up to two things—high views of ourselves and low views of Jesus.  
CHRIST never took away an outward blessing but he gave a spiritual one instead of it.—Romans.  
HOLY personal conformity to the will of God is that without which neither you nor I can be saved.  
If there be tossing and doubting, beloved, it is the heaving of a ship at anchor—not the dashing on the rocks.  
I AM inclined to think that there is not one sin we ever commit but has its effects upon our souls in after years.  
THERE is not a trouble a Christian has, but if he lives by faith on Christ in it, it will turn to a blessing.—Romans.  
It is a glorious thing to see a spark in the midst of that ocean, and all the power of that ocean unable to extinguish it.  
"LET us love one another out of a pure heart fervently," bearing and forbearing, dealing tenderly with one another.  
PASTORS who wish to reach the masses should begin with their own people—heads of families with their own children.  
PRAY that you may find time for prayer; for rest assured, that if you restrain prayer, you will never be restrained from sin.  
In proportion as you have the love of Christ shed abroad in your heart, in that proportion shall you have the heart of a weaned child.  
To return to God is to come to him as a promising God, as a forgiving God, as a paternal God—as our God and Father in Jesus Christ.  
I SEE the tear that falls and the sigh that is heaved! Do I take from thee that beloved one? I will never leave thee! I am ever with thee.  
THERE is no burden that the Christian can have but the burden-bearer can enable him to rise above it, and walk happily with God under it.  
JERUSALEM, Jesus our Shepherd, careth for his feeble as well as for his strong ones, with all the sympathies of our nature and all the power of deity.  
NEVER begin with obedience—you will never attain it! Begin with faith, and upon faith found this—"He that loveth me, keepeth my commandments."  
A GRATEFUL acknowledgment of what God has done seems a graceful introduction to asking more, and I believe that if we were thankful for what we received we should have more.  
THE chief advantage of the summer freshets of the Jordan is that the waters then go forth far beyond the area of the shores which drink up the ordinary supplies. They run abroad over clapped and dusty plains. They bring forth verdure where death has reigned. They touch the mountains of heathen Moab. Let us ardently pray that there may be such a flood of the Jordan; that there may be rains which will come down abundantly upon Lebanon, and Carmel, and Hermon; and that they shall drop upon the hills and pastures of the great wildernesses, so that they too shall rejoice on every side.  
"EVERY one will get to heaven who could live there." This saying of an old divine was probably suggested by such Scripture truths as these: "There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth;" "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." If heaven were a Mohammedan paradise, then a voluptuary might enjoy it. If heaven were a region for digging and amassing gold and silver, a miser might enrich himself there. If heaven were an arena of contests for superiority an ambitious man might become great in it. If heaven's services consisted of showy externals a formalist would be an acceptable worshipper. But if heaven is unhabitable only by the pure in heart, the unregenerate, the unholy would never feel at home there. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."