

LECTURES

ON

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

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CHIEFLY EXPOSITORY

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ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

TO

THE PHILIPPIANS.

With Notes and Illustrations.

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STOKE-ON-TRENT

TENTMAKER PUBLICATIONS

2007



Tentmaker Publications
121 Hartshill Road
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffs. UK
ST4 7LU
www.tentmaker.org.uk

ISBN 1 901670 43 0

Originally published by
T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1887

This reprint 2007

“ Οὔτε γὰρ ἐγὼ οὔτε ἄλλος ὅμοιος ἐμοὶ δύναται κατακολουθῆσαι τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ μακαρίου καὶ ἐνδόξου Παύλου, ὃς γενόμενος ἐν ὑμῖν κατὰ πρόσωπον τῶν τότε ἀνθρώπων ἐδίδαξεν ἀκριβῶς καὶ βεβαίως τὸν περὶ ἀληθείας λόγον, ὃς καὶ ἀπὸν ὑμῖν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολὰς, εἰς αἷς ἐὰν ἐγκύπτητε, δυναθήσεσθε οἰκοδομῆσθαι εἰς τὴν δοθεῖσαν ὑμῖν πίστιν· ἣτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ πάντων ἡμῶν, ἐπακολουθούσης τῆς ἐλπίδας, προαγωγούσης τῆς ἀγάπης τῆς εἰς Θεὸν καὶ Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὸν πλησίον. ἐὰν γὰρ τις τούτων ἐντὸς ᾗ, πεπλήρωκεν ἐντολὴν δικαιοσύνης· ὁ γὰρ ἔχων ἀγάπην μακρὰν ἐστὶν πάσης ἀμαρτίας.”—POLYCARP, *Epist. ad Philipp.* c. iii.

PREFACE.



ENCOURAGED by the favourable reception given to previous volumes on Our Lord's Messages to the Seven Churches of Asia, and on St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, I now publish these Lectures on the Epistle to the Philippians.

Like its predecessors, the book is chiefly expository. It is indeed more strictly so than they. While, however, as distinguished from a mere series of pulpit homilies, it professes to be a commentary, it is one in which the course of the apostle's thought is not only carefully traced, but also to a certain extent applied. This mode of treatment adapts itself more readily to this Epistle than to any other. In the study of none of Paul's Epistles is it more needful to remember the oft-repeated saying of Melanchthon, "*Pectus est quod theologum facit.*" The apostle's own heart in all its varying moods is felt throughout this informal and friendly Epistle, and those who would rightly understand its teaching must have their hearts open to its loving appeals.

While, therefore, I have endeavoured to expound it

as the words must have been understood by its first readers, I have sought also to bear in mind what Bacon has said, that “the Scriptures, being written to the thoughts of man, and to the succession of all ages, are not to be interpreted only according to the latitude of the proper sense of the place, and respectively towards that present occasion whereupon the words were uttered; but have infinite springs and streams of doctrine to water the Church in every part.”

The difficulties besetting the exegesis of this Epistle are greater and more numerous than at first sight appear. Emotion mingles so largely with the thought, that the sudden transitions, and the subtle links of connection, as well as the delicate shades of meaning, at times almost baffle investigation.

The study none the less, indeed all the more, is attractive and instructive. The apostle stands out before the reader with special distinctness, as he felt, and thought, and acted, when his mission was drawing near its close.

What Isaac Taylor has so well said of the Pauline Epistles as a whole, holds good pre-eminently of this Epistle to the Philippians: “Everything is concrete, personal, local, exact; there is all that precise collocation of phrases and allusions to the particular proprieties of the occasion on which he was writing, which is characteristic of an active, energetic, and cultivated mind;—nothing is vague, nothing unfixed;

each arrow has its aim;—if Paul contended in the Christian warfare, ‘not as one who beateth the air,’ so he writes not as one who brandishes a pen without a specific object. He ever labours to produce a definite and premeditated effect upon the minds of such and such individuals, with whose circumstances, feelings, prejudices, faults, and virtues he is accurately acquainted, and which, amid all the heat of his feelings and the rapidity of his eloquence, he never for a moment forgets:—again and again inserting some allusion, some abrupt but significant phrase, which at once grapples his argument upon the personal feelings of those to whom he writes, and proves that he is himself never unmindful of their particular welfare.” (*The Process of Historical Proof*, chap. xii.)

I have made use of most of the commentaries which English and German exegetical literature supply. These are for the most part specified, either in the Lectures or in the Notes. I am indebted to those of Hölemann and Weiss in particular. The former is a thesaurus of the different views which commentators have advanced; the latter is valuable for its historical survey of the exposition of the Epistle.

The notes and illustrations appended may prove interesting and suggestive to fellow-students.

In one or two passages, where almost the same ground is traversed as in First and Second Thessalonians, I have not thought it necessary entirely to avoid repetition. To ensure something of complete-

ness, I have chosen to repeat rather than merely to refer to another work.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my friends, the Rev. George B. Carr, Edinburgh, and the Rev. D. W. Forrest, M.A., Hamilton, for careful revision of proof-sheets, and not a few valuable hints.

My brother, the Rev. M. B. Hutchison, M.A., of Lincoln College, Oxford, Examining chaplain to the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, has, as on previous occasions, effectively rendered me similar service. I appreciate his aid all the more that his communion is different from my own.

AFTON LODGE, BONNINGTON,
1st December 1886.

LECTURE I.

"Nulla alioquin Paulina epistola perinde pathetica est paternisque affectibus referta, ut hæc ipsa."—CASTALIO.

"Est hæc epistola, quamquam in vinculis scripta, lætior, alacrior, et blandior cæteris."—GROTIUS.

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."
—PHIL. i. 1.

IN the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Acts we learn that Paul, with his travelling companions, was directed away from Asia to the Macedonian city of Philippi. On their arriving there, they repaired to the oratory "by the river-side," where a few women were in the habit on the Sabbath day of worshipping the true God. It was thus not in a synagogue, as in the case of the founding of the sister Church of Thessalonica, but under the free air of heaven, that the gospel message was here first proclaimed. It was during this apostolic visit of "certain days" extent that this earliest European Church was formed. It has often been noticed that as this city was more than usually representative of varied nationalities and modes of life, so was the infant Church which arose within its walls. We are familiar with the first three outstanding converts. Lydia, the seller of purple, whose business had brought her into Macedonia from her native city of Thyatira, heard the apostle's message, and the Lord opened her heart to receive it. She believed, and was baptized, and her household. Turning away in heart from her costly

merchandise, she now rejoiced in the assurance which Paul Gerhardt's hymn so beautifully represents—

“When I into Thy kingdom come,
And taste the sacred rest,
Thy blood shall be my purple robe,
In it alone I'm dressed.”

Alongside of this Asiatic convert there stands conspicuous the Greek female slave,—the girl with the Pytho-spirit, herself superstitious, and ministering, under avaricious masters, to the degrading superstition of others,—she too, cleansed and in her right mind, became henceforth a willing servant of Christ Jesus. Once more, we see the Roman jailor, bearing, doubtless, in his character and conduct all the marks of pride of race and supercilious contempt of others, it may be, hardened by official duties, and utterly unspiritual in his personal thoughts and actions, brought suddenly to exclaim, “What must I do to be saved?” and in the heart-acceptance of the answer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house,” at length rejoicing,—“believing in God with all his house.” When we contemplate these three converts, so different in nationality, in social position, in the occupations of daily life, in mental training, henceforth one in sentiment and work, we see even thus early in the progress of Christianity its adaptation to universal needs, and its claim to universal dominion. The Church, whose beginnings we can so clearly trace, grew and multiplied, and mightily prevailed. Almost at once, at least long before this Epistle was addressed to it, it had become a vigorous, because a united company—a visible corporation, completely equipped and organized. “In brotherhood they met, the natural birth and kindred of each forgotten, the baptism alone remem-