COMMENTARIES
ON
THE EPISTLES TO
TIMOTHY, TITUS, AND PHILEMON
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TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN,
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the devil to be tormented, or to inflict on them other chastisements. Of this "power," Peter gave a display in Ananias and Sapphira, (Acts v. 1,) and Paul in the magician Bar-jesus. (Acts xiii. 6.) But, for my own part, I choose rather to explain it as relating to excommunication; for the opinion that the incestuous Corinthian received any other chastisement than excommunication is not supported by any probable conjecture. And, if by excommunicating him, Paul delivered him to Satan, why should not the same mode of expression have a similar import in this passage? Besides, it explains very well the force of excommunication; for, since in the Church Christ holds the seat of his kingdom, out of the Church there is nothing but the dominion of Satan. Accordingly, he who is cast out of the Church must be placed, for a time, under the tyranny of Satan, until, being reconciled to the Church, he return to Christ. I make one exception, that, on account of the enormity of the offence, he might have pronounced a sentence of perpetual excommunication against them; but on that point I would not venture to make a positive assertion.

That they may learn not to blaspheme. What is the meaning of this last clause? For one who has been cast out of the Church takes upon himself greater freedom of acting, because, being freed from the yoke of ordinary discipline, he breaks out into louder insolence. I reply, to whatever extent they may indulge in their wickedness, yet the gate will be shut against them, so that they shall not contaminate the flock; for the greatest injury done by wicked men is, when they mingle with others under the pretence of holding the same faith. The power of doing injury is taken from them, when they are branded with public infamy, so that none are so simple as not to know that these are irre­ligious and detestable men, and therefore their society is shunned by all. Sometimes, too, it happens that—being struck down by this mark of disgrace which has been put upon them—they become less daring and obstinate; and therefore, although this remedy sometimes renders them more wicked, yet it is not always ineffectual for subduing their fierceness.

CHAPTER II.

1. I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;
2. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.
3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;
4. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1. Adhortor igitur, ut ante omnia fiant deprecationes, obsecrations, interpellationes, gratiarum actuiones pro omnibus hominibus, ut regibus et omnibus in eminentia constitutis, ut placidam et quietam vitam degamus cum omni pietate et honestate.
3. Hoc enim bonum et acceptum coram Salvatore nostro Deo, qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri, et ad agnitionem veritatis venire.

1. I exhort therefore. These exercises of godliness maintain and even strengthen us in the sincere worship and fear of God, and cherish the good conscience of which he had spoken. Not inappropriately does he make use of the word therefore, to denote an inference; for those exhortations depend on the preceding commandment.

That, above all, prayers be made. First, he speaks of public prayers, which he enjoins to be offered, not only for believers, but for all mankind. Some might reason thus with themselves: "Why should we be anxious about the salvation of unbelievers, with whom we have no connexion? Is it not enough, if we, who are brethren, pray mutually for our brethren, and recommend to God the whole of his Church? for we have nothing to do with strangers." This perverse view Paul meets, and enjoins the Ephesians to include in their prayers all men, and not to limit them to the body of the Church.

What is the difference between three out of the four kinds which Paul enumerates, I own that I do not thoroughly understand. The view given by Augustine, who twists Paul's words so as to denote ceremonial observances customary at that time, is quite childish. A simpler exposition is given by those who think that "requests" are when we ask to be delivered from what is evil; "prayers," when we desire to obtain something profitable; and "supplications," when
we deplore before God injuries which we have endured. Yet for my own part, I do not draw the difference so ingeniously; or, at least, I prefer another way of distinguishing them.

Προσευχή is the Greek word for every kind of prayer; and δήσεως denotes those forms of petitions in which something definite is asked. In this way the two words agree with each other, as genus and species. 'Ερωτήσεως is the word commonly used by Paul to signify those prayers which we offer for one another. The word used for it in the Latin Translation is "intercessiones," intercessions. Yet Plato, in his second dialogue, styled Alcibiades, uses it in a different sense, to mean a definite petition offered by a person for himself; and in the very inscription of the book, and in many passages, he shows plainly, as I have said, that προσευχή is a general term.1

But not to dwell longer than is proper on a matter that is not essential, Paul, in my own opinion, simply enjoins that, whenever public prayers are offered, petitions and supplications should be made for all men, even for those who at present are not at all related to us. And yet this heaping up of words is not superfluous; but Paul appears to me purposely to join together three terms for the same purpose, in order to recommend more warmly, and urge more strongly, earnest and constant prayer. We know how sluggish we are in this religious duty; and therefore we need not wonder if, for the purpose of arousing us to it, the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Paul, employs various excitaments.

And thanksgivings. As to this term, there is no obstacle.

1 "Δήσις, if we attend to its etymological import, is derived ἀπὸ τοῦ διηθετοῦ, 'from being in want,' and is a petition for that ὑπὸ διηθήσεως, 'which we want.' It is very correctly defined by Gregory Nazianzen in his 18th Iambic Ode: Ἰρνεῖον τοῦ ὑποθετούσιον, 'consider that when you are in want of anything, your petition is δήσις.' If we attend again to the customary usage of the word, it signifies 'a petition for a benefit.' My opinion is, that the various names express one and the same thing, viewed under various aspects. Our prayers are called δήσεως, so far as by them we declare to God our need; for δήσίς is 'to be in need.' They are προσευχῶν, as they contain our wishes. They are εὐρωτήσεως, as they express petitions and desires. They are εὐροτήτως, as we are permitted by God to approach Him, not with timidity, but in a familiar manner; for εὐροτήτως is a familiar conversation and interview." — Witsius on the Lord's Prayer.
when every one obtains what is his own, and the violence of the more powerful is kept under restraint.

With all godliness and decency. The second fruit is the preservation of godliness, that is, when magistrates give themselves to promote religion, to maintain the worship of God, and to take care that sacred ordinances be observed with due reverence. The third fruit is the care of public decency; for it is also the business of magistrates to prevent men from abandoning themselves to brutal filthiness or flagitious conduct, but, on the contrary, to promote decency and moderation. If these three things are taken away, what will be the condition of human life? If, therefore, we are at all moved by solicitude about the peace of society, or godliness, or decency, let us remember that we ought also to be solicitous about those through whose agency we obtain such distinguished benefits.

Hence we conclude, that fanatics, who wish to have magistrates taken away, are destitute of all humanity, and breathe nothing but cruel barbarism. How different is it to say, that we ought to pray for kings, in order that justice and decency may prevail, and to say, that not only the name of kingly power, but all government, is opposed to religion! We have the Spirit of God for the Author of the former sentiment, and therefore the latter must be from the Devil.

If any one ask, Ought we to pray for kings, from whom we obtain none of these advantages? I answer, the object of our prayer is, that, guided by the Spirit of God, they may begin to impart to us those benefits of which they formerly deprived us. It is our duty, therefore, not only to pray for those who are already worthy, but we must pray to God that he may make bad men good. We must always hold by this principle, that magistrates were appointed by God for the protection of religion, as well as of the peace and decency of society, in exactly the same manner that the earth is appointed to produce food.

Accordingly, in like manner as, when we pray to God for our daily bread, we ask him to make the earth fertile by his blessing; so in those benefits of which we have already spoken, we ought to consider the ordinary means which he has appointed by his providence for bestowing them.

To this must be added, that, if we are deprived of those benefits the communication of which Paul assigns to magistrates, that is through our own fault. It is the wrath of God that renders magistrates useless to us, in the same manner that it renders the earth barren; and, therefore, we ought to pray for the removal of those chastisements which have been brought upon us by our sins.

On the other hand, princes, and all who hold the office of magistracy, are here reminded of their duty. It is not enough, if, by giving to every one what is due, they restrain all acts of violence, and maintain peace; but they must likewise endeavour to promote religion, and to regulate morals by wholesome discipline. The exhortation of David (Ps. ii. 12) to "kiss the Son," and the prophecy of Isaiah, that they shall be nursing-fathers of the Church, (Isa. xlii. 23,) are not without meaning; and, therefore, they have no right to flatter themselves, if they neglect to lend their assistance to maintain the worship of God.

3. For this is good and acceptable before God. After having taught that what he enjoined is useful, he now brings forward a stronger argument—that it pleases God; for when we know what is His will, this ought to have the force of all possible reasons. By good he means what is proper and lawful; and, since the will of God is the rule by which all our duties must be regulated, he proves that it is right because it pleases God.

This passage is highly worthy of observation; and, first, we draw from it the general doctrine, that the true rule for acting well and properly is to look to the will of God, and not to undertake anything but what he approves. Next, there is likewise laid down a rule for godly prayer, that we should follow God as our leader, and that all our prayers should be regulated by his will and command. If due force had been allowed to this argument, the prayers of Papists,
in the present day, would not have abounded with so many corruptions. For how will they prove that they have the authority of God for having recourse to dead men as their intercessors, or for praying for the dead? In short, in all their form of prayer, what can they point out that is pleasing to God?

4. Who wishes that all men may be saved. Here follows a confirmation of the second argument; and what is more reasonable than that all our prayers should be in conformity with this decree of God?

And may come to the acknowledgment of the truth. Lastly, he demonstrates that God has at heart the salvation of all, because he invites all to the acknowledgment of his truth. This belongs to that kind of argument in which the cause is proved from the effect; for, if “the gospel is the power of God for salvation to every one that believeth,” (Rom. i. 16,) it is certain that all those to whom the gospel is addressed are invited to the hope of eternal life. In short, as the calling is a proof of the secret election, so they whom God makes partakers of his gospel are admitted by him to possess salvation; because the gospel reveals to us the righteousness of God, which is a sure entrance into life.

Hence we see the childish folly of those who represent this passage to be opposed to predestination. “If God,” say they, “wishes all men indiscriminately to be saved, it is false that some are predestinated by his eternal purpose to salvation, and others to perdition.” They might have had some ground for saying this, if Paul were speaking here about individual men; although even then we should not have wanted the means of replying to their argument; for, although the will of God ought not to be judged from his secret decrees, when he reveals them to us by outward signs, yet it does not therefore follow that he has not determined with himself what he intends to do as to every individual man.

But I say nothing on that subject, because it has nothing to do with this passage; for the Apostle simply means, that there is no people and no rank in the world that is excluded from salvation; because God wishes that the gospel should be proclaimed to all without exception. Now the preaching of the gospel gives life; and hence he justly concludes that God invites all equally to partake salvation. But the present discourse relates to classes of men, and not to individual persons; for his sole object is, to include in this number princes and foreign nations. That God wishes the doctrine of salvation to be enjoyed by them as well as others, is evident from the passages already quoted, and from other passages of a similar nature. Not without good reason was it said, “Now, kings, understand,” and again, in the same Psalm, “I will give thee the Gentiles for an inheritance, and the ends of the earth for a possession.” (Ps. ii. 8, 10.)

In a word, Paul intended to show that it is our duty to consider, not what kind of persons the princes at that time were, but what God wished them to be. Now the duty arising out of that love which we owe to our neighbour is, to be solicitous and to do our endeavour for the salvation of all whom God includes in his calling, and to testify this by godly prayers.

With the same view does he call God our Saviour; for whence do we obtain salvation but from the undeserved kindness of God? Now the same God who has already made us partakers of salvation may sometime extend his grace to them also. He who hath already drawn us to him may draw them along with us. The Apostle takes for granted that God will do so, because it had been thus foretold by the predictions of the prophets, concerning all ranks and all nations.

5. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

7. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

5. Unus enim Deus, unus et Mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus, Qui dedit semetipsum pretium redemptionis pro omnibus, (ut esset) testimonium temporibus suis, Quod posuit sum prece et Apostolus: veritatem dico in Christo, non mentior, Doctor Gentium in fide et veritate.

5. For there is one God. This argument might, at first sight, appear to be not very strong, that God wishes all men