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THE "TWO-WINE" THEORY.

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THE "OCCASION" FOR THIS INQUIRY.

The "occasion" for this inquiry is: 1st, That it seems to be a living, growing issue. The two leading and powerful temperance organizations in our land, "The Woman's Christian Temperance Union," and the "Anti-Saloon League," advocate the "two-wine" theory. The leaflets of the first organization (the "W. C. T. U."—for brevity's sake) are wedded to this theory, and are scattered with tireless industry and as thickly as the leaves of autumn through every section of the country. The Anti-Saloon League's "official organ," "The American Issue," in replying to a defence of the opposite, old and customary view, by one of our best known ministers, declares it to be a "defunct conception of the Scripture," that "it belongs to the Silurian age of fossiliferous theology." The "two-wine" theory is also a source of lively controversy in the secular press; the substitution of grape juice as a "wine" (under the constant encouragement of the two organizations above named), is becoming more and more common. It has even invaded some of the most conservative churches of the Presbyterian faith in the North, and several of the other leading Protestant denominations in the conservative South have almost wholly given way to it.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF PAUL.

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We are, at times, tempted to dwell upon our disappointments, in our own thoughts, at least, and to imagine that, if we had not been deprived of certain advantages and opportunities, our lives would have been much more successful and fruitful. We think, perhaps, that if we had been providentially placed in some line of progress, had enjoyed more robust health, had been furnished with more abundant means, we could have accomplished tenfold more than we have done. One of the best offsets to such fruitless re- pinings is to look at what must have been great disappointments and obstacles in the way of a man than whom no other has proba- bly done more for the betterment of the world. Many other dis- appointments were experienced by the Apostle Paul, but we may find abundance of instruction by turning our eyes to the one great disappointment he must have met in connection with Rome. In the great matter of giving the gospel to the nations of the then known world, he was, so far as we know, the greatest leader. Like all great leaders, he had a keen eye for strategic points, and we know, too, that he had divine guidance. Antioch was the first base of operations for reaching the nations. Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and then the splendid centre of Asian idolatry, Ephesus, were scenes of unremitting toil amid untold difficulties and dangers, but toil most richly rewarded in great results. In the midst of it all, we hear the utterance of his heart's desire, "I must see Rome also." This was the citadel of heathenism. Here was the pantheon of idolatry, here was the sink into which the foul streams of the world's wickedness flowed. This was the centre of that world which was at enmity with the kingdom of his Lord and Master.

He felt the necessity of going to Rome; for he does not use the words "I must see Rome" in the spirit of the modern sight-seer. "*It is necessary* for me to see Rome" is the more literal translation. Divine direction pointed out this as the great centre of the field of operations ("It is necessary for thee to bear witness at Rome also," Acts 23: 11.) to be approached as soon as other needful work was done.

Now, we cannot know exactly what Paul's anticipations in connection with this great enterprise were. He knew that a great work lay before him, and that he had divine guidance in undertaking it. He naturally looked forward to it as the crowning achievement of his life. He had said, in a spirit of exultation and exalted Christian courage, "I am not ashamed to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also," and armed with that mighty weapon which "is the power of God to every one that believeth," it is not difficult to believe that his heart swelled with "the joy of battle" in anticipation of the opening of the conflict to which the finger of his divine leader pointed him. But if the distant horizon was rose-tinted, the way to it was obstructed with well-nigh impassable obstacles and strewn with thorns. He probably had no intimation of this, at first receiving the command to go, unless that intimation was wrapped up in the word "bear witness." But as many a prospect which looks fair to us in the distance, on approach is found beset with difficulties and dangers, so Paul found, that in going to Rome, he had no primrose path to tread. He began to see this on his last journey to Jerusalem when he found that bonds and imprisonment awaited him there; but he could hardly, even then, imagine that a howling mob of his own countrymen would assault him with murderous intent at the very moment when, in the temple of the God for whose worship it was consecrated, he was engaged in those very religious rites which were thought best calculated to allay all feelings of antagonism between him and his fellow-countrymen. He could hardly have imagined that, here in Jerusalem, where he had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, the great Jewish teacher, more than forty of his Jewish brethren

would bind themselves under an oath neither to eat nor to drink till they should have assassinated him. He was saved providentially by the information given by his nephew to the commander of the Roman garrison in the castle of Antonia and sent under escort to Caesarea. Here this man, so full of energy and zeal, was caged in inactivity for more than two years. A Roman governor was deeply affected under his preaching of "temperance, righteousness and judgment to come"; but trembling gave place to cupidity, and Paul was left bound. How much he might have accomplished in this time in which he was doomed to inactivity! Yet, it may be, that but for this, the *gospel according to Luke* might never have been written, and who knows that the great anonymous epistle was not penned, in great part, in the Caesarean prison? Anonymously, because he wished to reach his brethren according to the flesh without the prejudice against the gospel which his name would have awakened.

Then came the unjust decision from which Paul was constrained to appeal. What fearful experiences now met him on that long voyage to Malta under the lashings of Euroclydon! Then Scylla and Charybdis were passed as the vessel with the sign of the twins sailed from Reggio by Messina, the scenes of the late great earthquake, out through the straits of whose horrors Homer sang. Then landing near the great Vesuvius, he made his way toward Rome. All roads led to Rome in those days, but the greatest of these, then as now, was the Appian Way, and Paul, landing at Puteoli, almost certainly passed over this to the goal of divine direction, and doubtless, of personal longing. But in what guise did he enter the Eternal city? Let Dr. Stalker tell us:

"His road lay along that very 'Sacred Way' which many a Roman general passed in triumph to the capitol, seated on a car of victory, followed by the prisoners and spoils of the enemy, and surrounded by the plaudits of rejoicing Rome. Paul looked little like such a hero. No car of victory carried him; he trod the cause-

¹This is a suggestion of Dr. S. S. Laws.

wayed road with way-worn foot. No medals or ornaments adorned his person; a chain of iron dangled from his wrist. No applauding crowds welcomed his approach; a few humble friends formed all his escort. Yet never did a more truly conquering footstep fall on the pavement of Rome or a heart more confident of victory pass beneath her gates. Meanwhile, however, it was not to the capitol his steps were bent, but to a prison."

All this must have been quite different from the picture his imagination had drawn when he was informed that he should bear witness in Rome. We are apt to lay out for ourselves a smooth and even way in the future, yet, when that future comes, God often leads us through a very rough and difficult one. But it is best. He knows.

Paul must have thought of his going to Rome as the greatest of opportunities which the whole world could offer, for here was its capital. Great things had been accomplished, in spite of great difficulties, by preaching the gospel in the provinces where long journeys had to be made from place to place. Here was a vast population in one place, and that place the very centre of influence for the world. From the golden milestone in the Forum, the Roman roads went in all directions, and influences flowed out to all nations. If he could but do a great work in Rome, what would it not mean for the whole world? And here he was in Rome at last. But alas! not a free and untrammelled evangelist to its teeming population, but a prisoner, bound with a chain, and "with a soldier that kept him."

Nevertheless, the word of God was not bound. Though Paul was bound, he did not despair of the great object of coming to Rome. He did not delay. Only three days passed before he summoned the chief of the Jews in Rome to a conference. "To the Jews first" was his rule here as elsewhere. After a preliminary interview they came by appointment "in great number." It was a notable conference. It lasted "from morning till evening," and he "expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets." Perhaps he had anticipated going to the various synagogues in the great city to preach to the multitudes of the

Jews in Rome. This being rendered impossible, he did not bewail his lack of opportunity and cease all efforts to bring them to Christ, but, though bound, endeavored to bring their leaders to understand and accept the gospel, that they might bring their brethren to him.

Perhaps the prospect of coming to preach the gospel in Rome included the gathering in various parts of the city of great assemblies to listen to the message of him who came to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles" as well as the glory of God's people Israel. But here he was, bound to one spot from which he could not stir. Yet believers came to him, and even through his bonds "waxed confident and were much more bold to speak the word without fear." We find in his epistles the names of many of these, and from his prison he directed their movements, not only in the great city, but in distant lands. What wonderful forces went forth from that chained prisoner where they received instruction, courage and devotion for the great work which he had at heart above all else. Thus, he could say to his beloved church at Philippi, where he brought the first soul to Christ on the continent of Europe: "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." That prison, instead of being a place of hopelessness and helplessness, through his disappointment, had become a great theological seminary and mission house in one—the greatest propaganda of the faith.

Each soldier after soldier of those that guarded him probably received the gospel from this soldier of the cross, so that there came to be Christians in the barracks of the Pretorian guard and even in Caesar's household, where these life-guards kept watch, as well as in the prisoner's cell. He could even rejoice that opposers and ill-wishers were stimulated to preach—imperfectly and faultily. it might be—but to preach *Christ*.

And then, who can estimate the influence—still widening and strengthening even in our day—of the prison epistles? Let us again heard Dr. Stalker: "Another man thus arrested and immured within prison walls might have allowed his mind to stagnate in sloth

and despair. But Paul behaved very differently. Availing himself of every possibility of the situation, he converted his one room into a centre of far-reaching activity and beneficence. On the few square feet of space allowed him he erected a fulcrum with which he moved the world, and established within the walls of Nero's capital a sovereignty more extensive than his own." ("Life of St. Paul," page 158.)

And he is still moving the world to-day.

But a more heart-breaking disappointment yet was in store for Paul. It looks as if he was released from imprisonment and then he resumed his missionary travels. His words to Phitemon (Eph. 5: 22) indicate that he had reason to expect liberation; and expressions in the pastoral epistles indicate that he visited various places not mentioned in the Acts as in the field of his evangelistic activities before his arrest. But, if so, he was arrested—possibly at the time of Nero's terrible persecution—and again imprisoned. Whether he was immured in the Mamertine, or some other prison, his sufferings were evidently increased. The cloak left with Carpus at Troas was needed to defend him against the cold and damp. But there was something far worse than physical discomfort which he was called to endure. That was the desertion (or what he considered the desertion) of his friends at the time of his sorest need. "At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." What a disappointment to one so dependent on the love of those whom he loved! But how wonderfully was this great lack supplied! "Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me!" And, after all, when he was ready to be offered and the time of his departure was at hand, a glorious prospect gladdened and sustained him: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

If we place Christ's cause so far above all personal considerations that, like Paul, we can rejoice in the fact that the things that happen to us, however seemingly adverse, "have rather fallen out to the furtherance of the gospel," our disappointments will end somewhat like his.

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