

streets save for little black specks, like drifting grains of sand. From the *Tour* can be seen that other *Tour* twenty-one miles distant; that of Mont Chéry, which rears on its conical hill, and is associated with a famous mediæval battle. On its top was once a telegraph, where on the swinging arms of the old machine depended the fate of armies and of stocks. The elder Dumas tells a story of how the man on Mont Chéry, was bribed to put up the wrong pulley, so that a financier dependent on foreign news made millions by the trick. One other time Mont Chéry was in a fog and there was no news at all?

*Nous avons changé tout cela!*

M. A. B.

### A LAYMAN'S VIEWS ON THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS—II.

CONCEIVE it is not necessary that a layman immersed in worldly affairs should apologize for turning aside for a moment into the domain of Theology, which could never have been intended to be above the understanding of ordinary men. Every man must be his own theologian. Nor will, I hope, to write on a subject intended to interest sinners be construed as making a profession of which one may feel quite unworthy. More people than are members of churches are influenced by, and see the value of, Christianity; and the facility of doubt and even dogmatic denial of its truth so frequently witnessed on the part of people who have never seriously examined the evidence for themselves may well shock an ordinary thoughtful mind. There is however a class who think in a way and readily form conclusions in regard to certain Christian doctrines on grounds of what seem to them inherent improbabilities, though in regard to questions of the kind we are, as Butler shows, in no position to say what is or what is not improbable.

The preacher of the future who shall move mankind and restore to Christianity its pristine power will take the New Testament in one hand, and Science in the other, convinced that science is, too, a revelation of God, and that if He has made a revelation regarding man's relations to Himself, there can be no conflict between the two. He will have applied to spiritual phenomena the same patience and method which men have in recent centuries applied with such signal success to physical enquiry. Law must rule throughout the universe, in the spiritual as well as in the material world. A contrary proposition would be inconsistent alike with science, and a just conception of the perfection and omnipotence of God. Material life abounds on all sides undiscernible by the senses by reason of size, and life may, and no doubt does, abound full of power and intelligence transcending man's, unnoted by us, because eye and tympanum and touch are only adapted to the needs of our little being and its purpose whatever this may be; and we are forced to infer that if creation on the one hand stretches away into the minute it also reaches up in gradations of superior beings to God the uncreated. The great laws which govern man's moral structure, must apply to this unseen world of higher beings, as for instance that it is more blessed to give than to receive, that self-sacrifice is more conducive to happiness than selfishness.

There is a striking correspondence between what the vision said to Ananias at Damascus (Acts ix. 10-16) and not merely what Paul did during his life, but what his writings have effected since. Be the sect what it may, Christianity is Pauline Christianity. Whatever theory may be adopted regarding inspiration it is clear the genius and education of the prophet or apostle were not repressed but used. Therefore we should bear in mind the eager temperament, the vivid and dominating imagination as well as the Jewish education of Paul. If he had any Greek training it was very slight. His gifts and education and limitations must be held to have fitted in with the purpose revealed in the story of his conversion. It could never therefore have been designed that men should argue from the figurative phrases of this warm-hearted man as if they were scientific definitions.

Throughout his letters the greatest prominence is given to the idea of Christ's death as a sacrifice for the sins of men. I venture to say all or most of the difficulties which some have found in accepting this doctrine are in great part the creation of the theologians.

Paul never presents salvation in the sense of being secured a place in a happy region of the universe apart from character. The broadness of the man is seen in his greatest epistle, that to the Romans, a work which combines close reasoning, made sometimes difficult to follow by his involved impulsive style, with the terror of an Æschylean tragedy. There he lays it down that the evidences of God's existence and character are found in creation, including of course man himself; His purposes also. He declares that the revelation of Him was not confined to any particular nation (Rom. i., 18-23). In the succeeding verses he uses a verb he might or might not have used had his training been Greek, but it is naturally used by a man who had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Because men would not act in accordance with the knowledge of God, derived from His works (verse 21) he says God "gave them up in the lusts of their heart," and in (verse 24) "gave them up" is a good translation of *παρέδωκεν*. Yet we can never believe there was any design on God's part that this Gentile world should commit the awful crimes he catalogues, by the side of which more profligacy is pure. It was a natural law that the worship of beasts should lead to bestiality, and He left them to its operation, not wholly perhaps with a passive sentiment but with a divine anger, and an infinite despair. This language has nothing in it. For as God could not prevent a heavy substance thrown into the air from falling to the earth without suspending or counter-

acting the law of gravitation, so he could not prevent the perversions of man from working out their natural results unless he were to destroy the laws that govern his being.

I repeat, the word salvation is always used in the sense of deliverance from a condition of character. While the reasoning in the second chapter of Romans shows an extraordinary emancipation from Judaic ideas, that in the eleventh chapter is very Jewish. Yet here he emphatically connects salvation with character, and denies that the Jews stumbled that they might fall. Great error has arisen from the misconception of the meaning of "works" in the third chapter. Paul is not speaking of "good works," but of the ceremonial acts on which the Jew rested. In this chapter we have the words "redemption," "propitiation," "remission of sins" ("passing over of the sins" in the Revised Version). Elsewhere we have "atonement," "forgiveness," "deliverance," "reconciliation," "justification." All these are figurative expressions which describe rather than define the result of the work of Christ co-operating with man's, or the *means*, by which the result is gained. There are other words used in Theology, and which most think are found in the Bible, such as "expiation," "substitution," and "satisfaction." This last was first used by Tertullian, and was no doubt borrowed from Roman law.

I have already (in a previous article) dwelt on the fact that man was made in the image of God. Wholly apart from the first chapter of Genesis this is an irresistible inference, judging from the identity in the general plan of the whole animal creation and the *a priori* probability that in creating a moral being God would fashion him on the highest model, and this proposition remains, whether you accept evolution or believe with Guizot that man must have commenced with a pair made in full development. Perhaps it is demonstrable, that no moral and intellectual being could be created except after the "image" and "likeness" in which man was made.

It would, therefore, not be improbable, but in the highest degree the reverse, that in the process of reconciling himself to God (1) man would have to do something or get something done for him having regard to God, as well as (2) be the subject of a transforming process himself. If we are offended or offend another, a letter or apology is sometimes the means of getting rid of the sense of offence. The offence may, in its magnitude, overshadow the apology, but the apology is an acknowledgment of wrong doing and the expression of a desire for forgiveness. The means used to conciliate will be important in proportion to the consciousness of the magnitude of the wrong done. The subsequent conduct of the man after we forgive him is the best test of his sincerity and gratitude. It is very difficult for the kindest man to wholly pass over an offence without something like an act of reparation, nor would it be a good thing for the offender it should be done. Note the way we treat children. The above remarks without amplification will indicate what I think the purpose the sacrifice of animals may have subserved when men were children in thought as compared with what we are to-day; and, in my opinion, the work of Christ is ennobled, made rational, ceases to be a stumblingblock to an enlightened intellect, if we avoid the dull error of reading figurative language literally and see, in His life and death, the working of moral and spiritual laws with which our daily experience makes us familiar. Sin itself, as well as redemption from sin, may be found to be in accordance with fixed spiritual laws working to greater beneficent ends in long lapsing epochs of eternity. One idea strongly expressed in the New Testament is that the blessedness of the redeemed in heaven can know no relapse. This must be because they had been sinners. For Adam, made sinless, fell, and the angels kept not their first estate.

The word translated "forgiveness" in the New Testament (always *ἀφίημι*, or *ἄφεσις*, save in Matt. xviii. 27 and in Luke vi. 37, where we have *ἀπολύω*) means to let one go without the idea of any payment; *ἄφεσις* is translated "deliverance" in the Authorized Version (Luke iv. 18); "release" in the Revised Version. See, moreover, Deut. xv. 3; Genesis xviii. 26; Luke xvii.; Lev. iv. 20; v. 18; Ps. xxiv. 18; Matt. vii. iv.; xxvii. 49. In classical Greek, as well as in the Scriptures, *ἀφίημι* is applied to the remission of debts. See Col. ii. 13, where again the idea is of forgiving a debt without any compensation. In Acts xiii. 38, 39 the same idea is expressed, though the forgiveness is "through this man" proclaimed. Here, in one of Paul's earliest sermons, we get a clear glimpse of the view that Christ was to be the sacrifice henceforth for man, and the meaning of the phrase, "Believe in Christ," would seem, certainly in the Pauline theology, to include the adoption of His life and death as our apology or sacrifice to God, the effectiveness of which implies a complete change in man as well as in God's sentiments towards him.

Reconciliation (*καταλλαγή*), is a change from enmity to friendship. Now, if we are made in the image of God, He could not be fully reconciled without some atonement, some (*εἰλασμός*) reconciliation, for there is nothing in the New Testament to justify the mercantile view of the atonement, which has been such a stone of stumbling and rock of offence; nothing to support the view that so much has been paid that so much may be forgiven; nor anything to warrant the deduction that as Christ paid the debt for the race no part of that debt can be justly claimed; for in every utterance on the subject of the atonement, I think without an exception, the redemption of the man is connected with the idea of his deliverance from sin; *καταλλαγή* is once translated in the authorized version by atonement—more properly there at-one-ment. The primary idea is change (*ἄλλος*); *ἰλασμός*, properly translated atonement, is an act looking towards the state of reconciliation (*καταλλαγή*).

*Λύτρωσις* (redemption) means, in classical Greek, the act of being redeemed (from *λυτρώω*, from *λύω*, which means to release—pay the price, and thus release), but in the New Testament the effect, or state of being redeemed. It is applied to pardon (Eph. i. 17); to sanctification (1 Pet. i. 18); to resurrection (Rom. viii. 23); to completed salvation (Eph. i. 14). The Hebrew word which is translated redemption in the Old Testament meant to bring back what has been sold by paying the price (Lev. xxv. 25), or to redeem what has been devoted to God by giving a substitute. Here we get the idea of "substitution," but this word does not occur in the Bible. There are passages, however, in the New Testament in which Christ is said to have been made a curse for man, to have given Himself a sacrifice for his sins (*ὑπερ*), to have given His life for his life.

Clearly these expressions are not used with scientific precision, but are the means whereby a man of fervent spirit and warm imagination emphasizes the work that Christ did for mankind. That work cannot, in my opinion, be taken to pieces and put together as you would a puzzle, nor can His death be separated from His life. It is not a subject for analysis, but for perception and emotion. Read the lives of truly religious people, and you find that they have been redeemed from sin not by Christ's death alone, but also by the influence of His words and character as given and depicted in those wonderful little histories which, without art, attain a result beyond the highest art, and whose silence is one of the most remarkable things about them. They tell you only one circumstance about the childhood of the "Son of Man;" nothing about His early manhood; nothing about his personal appearance. Yet in a few pages they depict a character which fascinates the heart, inspires love; full of purity and tenderness, which places itself against the whole world, yet is gentler than the gentlest woman; with severe lines, yet so social that He is described by his enemies as a wine-bibber, a tippler and a friend of outcasts; deeply sensitive to love, yet, though capable of being tempted, above passion, like some rock-founded tower on whose base stormy seas beat in vain; His life and death pointing the lesson so comforting for a world where most fall in the strife, and rebuking the vile idolatry of material success which has characterized all times, but especially our own, where wealth can cover infamy, and where men only differ from Israel in the desert in that they worship not the golden calf, but the calf with gold; the world of fashion, in its rage for money, suggesting a comparison with one of the most revolting scenes in Apuleius; the lesson that Socrates' life had taught before Him, that the martyrs of religion and science and human progress have illuminated, namely, that the greatest fail, as men count failure and success, and that the only true greatness is moral greatness, which is independent of mobs, and smiles with equal serenity at the trumpet of fame and the cobwebs of oblivion. It is the transforming power of love for a new object, "the expulsive power of a new affection," that has done the work, and the wonderful adaptability of the few facts we have in Christ's life, of His teaching and His death, to stir emotion—all that is touching, combined with the highest moral severity—and this again without a tinge of asceticism or a trace of the aberrations of the fanatic, constitute, as it seems to me, stronger "evidence" than all the miracles; while again it illustrates the existence and dominating power of law for which I contend, that a man may appreciate all this moral and spiritual beauty and be yet unable to step inside the circle of its influence; the hand, so to speak, withered by his side, which should seize the beautiful reward he sees. The world, the present love of power, sensuous beauty's enthrall, or doubt's chilling shadow sends down the thermometer of the heart.

If salvation is regarded as it should be and is in the New Testament always, as a great moral and spiritual change which brings the man in harmony with moral and spiritual laws pervading the universe of mental and moral being, laws many of which are known just as we know the laws of gravitation; then salvation through a knowledge of Christ (*i.e.*, his character, and teaching, and work) can easily be understood to be a higher salvation than the salvation of those who preceded his advent, or the salvation of those living since his advent who may have never heard his name, but who yet came within the category mentioned by Paul in the first chapter of Romans.

The common view of salvation is that of certain psychological phenomena, beginning in great depression, consciousness of guilt, re-acting in a sense of deliverance, and attended by new and good resolves, which place the subject of them within a ring of heavenly favouritism. Once there, according to the High Calvinist, he cannot ultimately even though he should lapse into a habit (I do not speak of single impulsive acts like that of David which gave the world the 51st Psalm, the poetic outburst of a beautiful and gracious spirit stung by remorse) of vicious living, be lost; and once there, according to most sects, he is a Christian if he goes to church regularly, and his life is not stained by any of the eye-striking weaknesses to which humanity is liable, even though the noble tide of feeling having flowed in with ever-lessening volume has at last ceased to recur, and greed, uncharitableness, envy, unfair dealing, scamped-workmanship, false pretences in merchandise, equivocation, the *suppressio veri*, and the *suggestio falsi* may be his fruits.

The notion that heaven is a place dominates the theological thinking of most, and they fancy they are all right if they have a ticket of admission. But the "open sesame" can be no ticket, or uniform, or badge. Law, we may be sure, rules there as in other parts of the universe. Be fit—"saved"—and the gates fly wide; be unfit, and I say it with reverence, omnipotence cannot lift the bars.

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