

Pastor and People.

ALL I CAN DO.

There is care in the heart of my loved one,
There is grief in her burdened soul;
I am far away from my dear to-day,
I cannot lift a stone from her way;
All I can do is to kneel and pray
That the Lord will make her whole.

All? But how much I am doing
When I plead for my friend at the Throne.
Asking the best, and leaving the rest,
Putting the strength of the heavens to test.
And bringing sweet heaven to be her guest,
When I pray to the Lord for his own!

Dear house in the distant country,
Dear voice that I cannot hear,
There's a tug at my heart, and the quick tears
start,
I am fain of your sorrows to bear a part,
Each ache of yours has for me a smart,
Yet I pray for you, void of fear.

I know that His swiftest angels
Will haste to you while I pray,
That whatever you need will be your meed,
That your faintest sigh the Lord will heed,
Your wish unspoken His grace will read,
In your dark and cloudy day.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

THE ATONEMENT.*

BY REV. W. G. JORDAN, B.A.

We welcome this volume from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Thompson, Sarnia, because it deals with a subject that is always appropriate, in a manner fitted to meet, in some measure, the needs of the present hour. The purpose of this book is, the author tells us, to emphasise the *objective atonement* of Christ in his work of saving sinners; and he sets this aim before him because "there has been, of late years, a tendency to minimise this aspect of our Saviour's mission and to dwell on the beauty of His life; the perfection of the example He set us; the reality of His brotherhood; how He enters into sympathy with us in all our toils and sorrows; and how, by moral influence, He, in this way, affects the minds and hearts of men." Dr. Thompson, just because he recognizes so fully the truth and beauty of all that can be said on this side of the question, is all the more competent to lay stress upon the expiatory element in the work of our Lord. He makes it perfectly clear that he does not oppose the "moral influence theories" on account of their positive contribution to the discussion of the subject but because they profess to be complete explanations of the deepest mystery, which grows out of the relationship of a sinful man to a Holy God. This is well expressed in the preface as follows: "We would not lessen by one word all that has been said on the *moral influence theory*, but we lay along side of this, or rather we put within it, as its very soul, this other and greater truth that He who knew no sin was made sin for us." All these quotations are taken from the preface and they might lead us to the conclusion that we are about to read an essay intended wholly or mainly for theological students. This, however, is not the case. This little book is meant for the ordinary reader, and is arranged in short chapters which will be specially suitable for those who have only a little time at their disposal. The headings of these chapters suggest topics suitable for private meditation or for brief communion addresses. Every book must be judged according to the purpose of its author, and so we must not look to this little volume for elaborate discussions of the various theories of the atonement but rather for an intelligent re-iteration of the fact that Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man. The present aim is to lead each one of us to say, with fresh gratitude to God, "This is a good saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The sacrifice of the cross is placed clearly before us. We are reminded that the need of man hangs for it, and inspired prophecy points to it,

but we are also assured that it comes into the life of the soul as a regenerative force and not merely as a mechanical expedient for getting rid of punishment. After a statement of the Christ's work as our substitute Dr. Thompson dwells most vigorously and emphatically upon the kingship of Christ as a real power in the present life of believing men. He says: "We have fine spun theories about the restoration of God's ancient people, but we are less concerned about our own restoration from vanity, worldliness, greed, evil speaking, deceit, uncleanness and uncouthness into all the nobility of a pure, rich, Christian life, owning allegiance to Christ as at once our Law-giver and our King." And in this connection he gives a strong warning against hankering after the visible presence of Christ in such a way as to undervalue the spiritual presence of the Saviour, in His Church, and to forget the gracious promise, "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world." We hope, then, that this book will have a wide circulation and that it may be the means of leading many souls to a child-like trust in the crucified Saviour.

This subject, whether it is presented practically or theoretically, must always be interesting to thoughtful Christian people. The power of the Christian religion is in the preaching of the Cross, and there is a sense in which we must know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The salvation of the individual soul is through an appropriation of the Saviour's sacrifice. That is the central point from which the Christian life begins but that does not exhaust the significance of Paul's great saying. Like him we must learn to look at all questions in the light of the Cross, and carry out into every sphere the principle of self-sacrifice. It is generally admitted that we are not saved by any theory of the Atonement but by the fact, or, in other words, by the ministry of the living, self-sacrificing Saviour. From this some would infer that we must not trouble ourselves about theories or explanations of the stupendous fact, but, as man has intellectual needs which Christianity does not stifle or ignore, it is good for men to brood reverently over this divine mystery. When Anselm had worked out his satisfaction theory—a theory which, while it contains much that we may find repellent, was a great advance on previous theological thinking on this subject—Abelard, his disciple, presented what we are tempted to call a free moral theory; and so the theories of men on this great theme check, correct and complement each other. While we remember that any theory may be pushed to an extreme that makes it false, we, at the same time, are thankful that the fact of the Atonement is often received with gratitude where very inadequate explanations are given of it. It may be, as Dr. Thompson suggests, that there is a tendency to ignore even the fact that the Son of Man gave His life a ransom for many. Such a tendency can only be regarded with regret, as, followed to its logical conclusion, it would radically change our conception of religion. To us religion is not a process of reforming or polishing or refining from without; it is a God-given life working from within. Those who make it simply a moral discipline or literary culture ignore the two truths which touch the soul most deeply, viz., the guilt and shame of sin, and the reality of a divine sacrifice. Without a recognition of these fundamental truths we cannot understand or explain Christian experience. Even some of those who claim to be reformers would explain a man's life altogether from the "environment" and tell us that certain vices are not sins but diseases. This is not the place for a lengthy discussion of the doctrine of sin (for the present, it is sufficient to refer, on the subject, to the 51st Psalm); but we cannot help pointing out that any lessening of the sense of personal responsibility and guilt must lessen also, in the thoughts of men, the need, value, and power of the Saviour's sacrifice. Much as we may wish to see social and

political life permeated with Christian ideas, no small social theories can take the place of the "message of the Cross."

The everlasting question is:

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that parlous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?"

If the answer is simply "Therein the patient must minister to himself" it is an answer of helplessness and hopelessness; the soul that has learned its own misery and shame cries out, "When my heart is overwhelmed lead me to the rock that is higher than I" and is thankful to look up to One who while He is the incarnation of gentleness is also "mighty to save."

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REV. PROF. ALEXANDER BAL-
MAIN BRUCE, D.D.

It is doubtful whether any contemporary writer is exercising so powerful an influence over the thinking of the younger ministers of the Free Church as the authors of *The Training of the Twelve*, *The Humiliation of Christ*, *The Parabolic Teaching of Christ*, *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*, *Apologetics*, *The Kingdom of God*, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, etc.

Professor Bruce's books have won him many friends and admirers throughout the world, but only those having the privilege of personal acquaintance know the full man—his kindly, genial spirit, his sympathetic nature, his large hearted catholicity, his receptiveness to truth whencesoever derived; his patience as a student, his thoroughness as worker, his exhaustive methods of inquiry, his impartiality as a witness; his clear thinking, his way of looking things squarely in the face without flinching and accepting the results of unprejudiced investigation whatever they involve, his entire freedom from the influence of mere sentiment or tradition; his mental vigor, his spiritual fervor; above and beyond all, his deep, passionate devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

His theological training he received in the Free Church College under Principal Cunningham and "Rabbi" Duncan. His first pastorate was at Cardross on the Clyde. The congregation being small left the minister leisure for reading, and being appreciative stimulated him to do his best. He pursued the studies begun at college, reading especially the Greek and Latin classics and much patristic literature, his desire being to intimately acquaint himself with the early part of the Christian era and the history of the Christian Church. This was the creative period of his life, when was laid the foundation of the great work since accomplished. During these nine years at Cardross he preached constantly on the gospels, the study of which had been the means of bringing him to religious decision and giving him clear faith in Christ. The literary product was *The Training of the Twelve*, Dr. Bruce's first, and in the estimation of some readers his best, published work. Then followed seven years of ministerial service and literary activity at Broughty Ferry, a residential suburb of Dundee. Mr. Bruce was appointed Cunningham lecturer at the Free Church College, Edinburgh, for 1874, the result being his work on *The Humiliation of Christ*, which is now in its fourth edition. His pre-eminent qualifications led, twenty years ago, to his being appointed to the chair of apologetics and New Testament exegesis in the Free Church College, and from the first he won the enthusiastic admiration of his students. Glasgow University conferred upon him the degree of D.D. in 1876.

The professor's home at the western end of Glasgow, near the university, is one of a terrace of those solidly built, roomy gray-stone houses peculiar to Scotland, and in some respects typical of Scottish character. On entering the study, one's first thought

is that it is essentially a workshop. The books are well worn through much handling, and the very chair and writing table, on which lies a pocket Bible brown with age and use, have a hard-wrought look.

At his desk the professor is intense and unrelaxing, working in the summer mornings from nine, sometimes from seven, to one, but when he comes out of his study he gives himself up heartily to recreation. He does not do much composition in the winter, as classes and other engagements then break up the day, and he can only work satisfactorily by going at it several hours without interruption. One corner of his library is sacred to the poets, and the face of my host, who unites the imagination of the poet with the exactitude of the exegete, lights up as he points out his favorites—Browning, Tennyson, Longfellow, etc.

When I asked Dr. Bruce about the development of his theological thinking, he replies: "My position as professor gave me occasion and made it my duty to keep myself abreast of the times in the two subjects for which I am responsible. Shortly after my appointment the Robertson Smith controversy arose, and without identifying myself with his opinions, I strongly contended for the legitimacy of critical inquiry and its probable ultimate benefit to the church. That gave me an impulse to the study of questions of Biblical criticism, and we have all felt more or less the influence of modern thought in compelling us to distinguish between what is essential in Christian doctrine and matters of minor import. As an apologist my habit is to fix attention chiefly, if not exclusively, upon the fundamentals of Christianity, and to leave open questions, such as Calvinism, on which the churches differ. In the department of New Testament exegesis my one aim as teacher and author is to show Christ to others as I have learned to see Him. Having re-discovered Christ for myself, I try to show to others what I have found. That is the key to all my literary activity. I have not been engaged in making books merely as a scholastic theologian; whatever the nature of the subject with which I have dealt, however abstruse and theological, my dominant purpose has been to preach Christ. Numerous personal testimonies induce me to believe that I have been helpful to students in removing their doubts and establishing them in the faith. I have tried to infuse life into the letter of the sections of the New Testament with which I have dealt by sympathetic presentation of the thoughts of the writers in the light of the situation in which they were written."

Defining his theological position, Dr. Bruce made this confession of faith to me: "I believe in Jesus Christ as a divine being and as one who came to the world to redeem men from sin. I feel that the church through its theology has impaired the presentation of the humanity of Christ by the zealous emphasizing of his divinity. While holding with the church the divinity, I have felt it my special duty to emphasize the reality of Christ's humanity as presented in the gospel. With regard to the doctrine of the atonement, I have tried to show in *The Humiliation of Christ* that the various conflicting theories contribute each a true element, whilst perhaps none cover the whole ground. Possibly we shall never succeed in finding a formula that will express the whole truth, which I regard as a many-colored mystery of God. The best we can do is to give full effect to the various modes in which the Bible presents the subject, no giving exclusive prominence to one presentation, such as that of the apostle Paul but allowing due value to other aspects, such as that presented in the epistle to the Hebrews."

"Do you consider Christianity is any thing more than an ethic?"

"O yes. I value Christianity because of the purity of its ethic, but still more a good news from God to man—as a religion which emphasizes the grace of God freely giving spiritual benefits. In the gospel

*"Jesus my Saviour," by Rev. John Thompson, D.D. Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company.