

ARTICLE VIII.

NOTES.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF LOVE.

IN the twenty-first chapter of John's Gospel, in the conversation between Peter and Jesus there are two Greek words which are translated into English by the word "love." The two words have been frequently compared with each other, and some of the distinctions have been pointed out; but it does not seem to me that enough has been said concerning them. Even prominent and able expounders of Scripture have said that there is no difference between the two, and that we should not attempt to distinguish them, and that Jesus uses them strictly synonymously. Some also say that the conversation was originally in Aramaic, and does not have the words to make the distinction. Though it is not a settled matter as to which language they used in the conversation, there is no doubt but that the Aramaic is capable of making the distinction. There seems to be no doubt but that the one who wrote the account of the incident intended to make a distinction between the two words. The change from one word to another was evidently deliberate and intentional, and intended to express a different idea by the two words.

It is a little remarkable that the word *agape* is first found in the Septuagint, which would seem to indicate that it was not a word familiar to classical Greek writers. It is not only first found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament; but it is found very frequently there, as if those translators were already familiar with it when they made their translation, or at least regarded it as a word necessary to the translation. The Jews evidently had an ethical idea of love. They were familiar with the command "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and "shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This love is manifestly something that can be commanded. But the

Greeks had no such idea. With them love was an emotion spontaneous, not to be called up by an act of the will. Bringing these facts together, it seems to me necessary to suppose that not only was the idea borrowed by Greek users from the Hebrews, but that the word itself was borrowed with the idea. The Hebrew word is *ahab*; and in transferring it into Greek, not only are the vowels the same, but the consonants *h* and *b* very naturally become *g* and *p*. These same letters are used sometimes to transliterate the other two. So we may suppose the Greek *agape* is borrowed from the Hebrew *ahab*. Greek grammarians find themselves at a loss to account for the etymology of *agape*. The attempt is made to derive *agape* from *agamai*; but the idea and the root are too far fetched. We may admit a faint trace of relationship (such is often found in different languages no more nearly related than these two); but certainly there is no derivation. I think the ethical idea of the two words being the same in the two languages confirms the suggestion of the adoption of the word from the Hebrew, seeing especially that it cannot be accounted for otherwise. When large numbers of the Jews settled in Alexandria and its surroundings, they began to use the Greek language; and using it to express scriptural ideas they found it defective. So, naturally, to express the idea with which they were familiar, we may suppose that at first they used the word with which they were familiar. I have frequently heard Tamil people in using English, when they found difficulty in expressing themselves in an English word, use a Tamil word, Anglicizing it. Even when they did understand the English well enough, but when the Tamil word conveyed an idea that suited them and was not expressed in the English, they would use the Tamil word, putting it into English form. So we may suppose the Jews in Egypt frequently did. Instead of using pure Greek and saying, "Thou shalt have spontaneous emotion toward God," which would seem like a sort of absurdity, they might get into the habit of saying, "Thou shalt *agapa* thy Lord," attempting by that to convey the idea with which they were so familiar -- of will-controlled devotion.

Before the translation of the Septuagint was made we may suppose the Jews had become familiar with the new word, i.e. with the Grecized Hebrew word: so they used it naturally. The *b* which comes between the two *a*'s is softened so as to be equivalent to *p*, and the rough *h* can be better expressed by the *g* in Greek. We find cases of this transliteration, which shows it possible. But when the users of Greek were addressed by the apostles, they found it necessary to explain this unusual word. So Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, in his first epistle, took occasion to define the word. No doubt the new word had become somewhat familiar. The connection in which it was used would convey some sort of an idea, but it was a novel idea; not only because it was new to the Greeks, but also because Christianity added to the thought. Paul takes the chapter (1 Cor. xiii.) to make the new thought more clear. But John when he wrote his first epistle devoted nearly the whole letter to its fuller explanation. He finally gives a complete definition, which we in the Authorized Version miss altogether. In 1 John iii. 16 we should read, "Hereby know we love, because he gave his soul [or self] for us," implying that love (or *agapa*) was not known until Christ gave us this perfect example or illustration. John told us that the very essence of God himself is *agape*, and we could not know God except by what Christ did. And John's way of expressing it is very remarkable. He says, "He gave himself." Instead of saying, "God gave himself," or "his Son," he says "*he*," which is much more forcible. In John iii. 16 we read, "God gave his Son," evidently referring to the incarnation. In Romans v. 8 we read of God's showing his love by Christ dying for us, referring to his death on the cross. But here the expression "*he*" means more. Any one may know who is meant by "*he*." He gave himself includes his giving himself to become incarnate; and then in addition to this he gave himself to death. Paul describes these two steps in Philippians ii. 5-8: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be

grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." This was the first step: Jesus Christ gave himself. Then, as a second step by the God-man, "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." The second step is an important part of his giving himself. The translation is "gave his life for us"; but literally it would be "gave his soul for us," which in many places is to be translated "self" for the word "soul," which would seem more appropriate here. If we translate it "life," we would have to say, "We ought to give our life for the brethren."

But we are not usually called upon to give our lives for our brethren, but it gives good meaning to say that we ought to give ourselves for our brethren. If we say "He gave his life for us," it would refer to his death on the cross; but reading it "He gave himself for us," the meaning would be much fuller and include all that I have referred to — both the coming from heaven to earth and the dying on the cross. So *agape* means self-devotion as illustrated by Christ self-emptying and also by giving his life for us. There can be no conceivable greater self-devotion, no higher or deeper self-consecration, imaginable than this.

When Christ was laying the foundation of his church, and Peter was to be chief stone of the foundation next to himself, it was necessary to help him to understand the full meaning of this word, especially seeing that it was a more important word than any other. Peter needed a rebuke for his denial; but he had it by Jesus' look, and he wept bitterly. He evidently realized that he had been forgiven when the message "and Peter" was sent to him, and the risen Lord vouchsafed a special appearance to him alone; so we can hardly think that this conversation on the shore of Tiberias was chiefly for rebuke. It would seem to me to be more for emphasizing the meaning of the word *agapao*. Christ evidently referred to the triple denial; but no doubt had more meaning. He asked Peter, 'Do you have more devotion to me than these

others do?' implying, by the word, 'such devotion that you are ready to die for me, as you said you were ready to do, even though all the rest forsook me.' Peter replied, "Yea," implying that he thought he had devotion, yet he did not dare to assert it. He could confidently assert he had emotion, for he was conscious of that: devotion is proved not by consciousness but by deeds, and he realized that he had failed there. Again Jesus asked him, "*Agapas* me?" 'Have you devotion for me?' but not requiring him to make invidious or boastful comparison with the others. Again Peter answered in the same way, "Yea, Lord." "*Philo se*." 'I do not hesitate to assert that, and I hope the presence of the emotion of which I am surely conscious is an evidence of the devotion which I failed to manifest.' When Jesus in his third question changed his word, and used Peter's word, "*Phileis* me?" Peter was heart-broken, as if Jesus doubted not only whether Peter had devotion, which he hoped he had, (as he indicated by saying, "Yea, Lord,") but also whether he had even affection, of which he was so clearly conscious, and which he had not hesitated to affirm, and which the Knower of hearts could easily verify. This change of question, which cut Peter to the heart so deeply, not only made him realize more fully his base denial, but also taught him a lesson he could not in any other way so well have learned—as to the superiority of *agape* to *philos*.

It is not strange that it was difficult for the apostles to fully realize the significance of *agape*, when even Christians who have had all the teaching of the Bible often confuse the two ideas expressed by the two words. Poets are supposed to grasp noble ideas quicker than others. But even Shakespeare (who is a mirror of humanity, and who has more to say about love than almost any other writer and speaks of it hundreds of times) seems never to have got the true significance of *agape*, which we may call the Christian idea of love. With Shakespeare it was only emotion, but never devotion: the element of will is never involved. Love was not thought of as under the control of the will or of the reason. Shakespeare says:—

"Love's reason's without reason."

Cymbeline, iv. 2. 20.

"To be wise, and love,
Exceeds man's might."

Troilus and Cressida, iii. 2. 67.

"Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love."

Much Ado about Nothing, ii. 1. 182.

"It [to love] is to be all made of sighs and tears ;

It is to be all made of fantasy."

As You Like It, v. 2. 89.

"Lest it [love] should burn above the bounds of reason."

Two Gentlemen of Verona, ii. 7. 21.

"Love is a smoke rais'd with the fume of sighs."

Romeo and Juliet, i. 1. 196.

This noble poet seems to fail of reaching this Christian idea.
But Tennyson expresses it beautifully:—

"Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all its
chords with might ;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in
muscle out of sight."

Locksley Hall.

It seems a little strange that a Hindu poet has expressed it well: "The loveless are all for themselves, but those who have love regard their very self as belonging to others." It would seem as if the Hindu poet had received an inspiration from a higher source. But certainly with such inspiration as we have, we cannot fail of grasping the grand thought that true love is self-devotion but never selfishness.

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IS IT REASONABLE FOR THE MODERN MAN TO PRAY?

By prayer I do not mean expressions of reverence, adoration, and thanksgiving addressed to God. The worth of prayers of this kind as voicing man's deepest feelings is never called in question. What I mean by prayer in this note is

petition, the making of definite requests to God; and I ask, Is it reasonable for a modern man to expect answers to prayers of petition?

The modern man is modern, and not a man of antiquity or a medieval man, because of his belief in the universality of law; because of his belief that the world is not capricious, but understandable. The modern man is thoroughly convinced that for every event there is a cause, and that under like conditions like results will follow. A statement of how things work,—that unlike poles of a magnet attract, or that the earth rotates once in twenty-four hours—is what the modern man calls a law; and while science has only begun its conquests, the modern man by faith claims the universe as the promised land of law. The question Is it reasonable for the modern man to pray? becomes, therefore, Is it reasonable for a man who believes in the universality of law to offer petitions to God?

A suggestive answer of a negative tendency appears in a volume of sermons by Rev. Hastings Rashdall, an English clergyman. He says: "We know that it is God's will to govern the physical universe by general laws, . . . and if that is God's will, . . . we have no right to pray for exemptions to the general course of nature. . . . No modern Christian thinks it right to pray that the sun should stand still, or that it should rise earlier in the winter months to save the poor the expense of candle light. . . . And we now know what the wisest men did not always know, that the apparent irregularities of the weather are just as much due to fixed and ascertainable general laws as the rising of the sun, or the course of the tides."¹

The polemic of Mr. Rashdall is here directed only against prayers concerning the external world; but if he were more thoroughgoing in his application of the idea of law, his argument would put a taboo on all forms of petitional prayer. For law is not found alone in the out-of-doors. Moderns find law everywhere. They believe that law is as absolute in the mental

¹ *Christus in Ecclesia*, pp. 144-146.

world and in the world where mental and physical meet, as it is in the realm of the purely physical.

If, therefore, a man may not pray for the weather because the weather is subject to law, neither may he pray for recovery from sickness for sickness is subject to law; nor may he seek relief from melancholy in prayer, as he is taught to do in the Emmanuel clinics, for melancholy is also subject to law. In fact there is no form of petitional prayer which does not encounter law; and from this point of view it certainly looks as if the man who believes in the universality of law must cease to let his request be made known unto God.

The last word, however, has not been spoken. While the fact of the universality of law is not open to question, yet the significance of law has been immensely overestimated by those who argue against the rationality of prayer in a world of law.

What the real, subordinate significance of law is we can best see in our own lives. We ourselves live enmeshed in laws of every description — laws of brain action, laws of health, laws of climate. But we are not limited by these laws any more than a locomotive is limited by the complex of tracks in a freight-yard. The tracks afford the locomotive its only freedom; and it is through law, in like manner, that our personal initiative finds expression. Through law we can even transcend law. The aeroplane transcends the law of falling bodies; the electrolysis of water transcends the law of chemical affinity; and the law of antitoxin transcends the law of diphtheria.

It ought further to be noticed that the universality of law is no hindrance to our answering the requests of our fellows. What men claim it is unreasonable to ask God to do, they have no hesitation in asking man to do. For instance, it is urged that it is irrational to ask God for a change of weather. But when the weather is cold, men ask the janitor to kindle a fire in the furnace; and when the weather is warm, they ask the ice-man to fill the refrigerator, and the weather is changed locally.

As a matter of fact the question whether it is reasonable to pray depends upon the question whether God is personal or not. If the universe is nothing but a gigantic mechanism, then of course prayer is as irrational as a request to a phonograph would be. But if there is immanent in the world, as well as transcending it, a personal God; and if the laws of nature are his habits of action,— then it is quite as reasonable, to say the least, to pray to God as to make requests of men.

An adequate discussion of the personality of God would require an extended article. But the gist and drift of the discussion would be this: "He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" The universe as a whole must at least be equal to any of its parts. Since then we are persons, the infinite and eternal energy, the God of Herbert Spencer, must be at least as personal as we are, and presumably vastly more personal.

Personality is not a limitation. As we grow from birth to maturity, the more personal we become, and the larger becomes our freedom. But the very incompleteness of our largest personalities suggests, by contrast, how wonderful a perfect personality would be. Doubtless personality in God is as far above personality in man as man is above the sponges; but we must describe God by the highest we know, and the highest is not force but personality.

A world of persons — God alone truly personal, and men in various stages of developing personality depending upon him — that is our profoundest world-view. And in such a world prayer is as much a law as the laws of physics or biology; it is a law of relationship between man and God.

Prayer does not change any of God's fundamental purposes: but it makes it possible for God to do for man what he would otherwise have been unable to do, respecting our personalities as he does. Between the electric current in the wire and the lamp is a switch. Prayer is the turning of the switch between us and God. When man prays he opens a channel through which God can enter his life in blessing.

Professor Bosworth has somewhere pointed out that nine-

tenths of our prayers of petition can be answered if God has the power of putting a thought into our minds. For instance, as Professor Bosworth suggests, suppose that I pray to God for work; if God can put into my mind the thought of going to inquire of a certain man, and can put into his mind the thought of some work he needs to have done, every provision is made for answering my prayer. We can put thoughts into the minds of others; and what is easy for us ought not to be impossible for God.

There is a real difficulty connected with praying for rain; but it is not that the answer to such a prayer would involve a break in nature's laws. There is no more violation of law involved in God's answering our prayer for rain, than there is a violation of law involved when the gardener sprinkles the lawn in obedience to a request from his employer. The actual difficulty connected with praying for rain is that the answer would affect so many people that we must be always in grave doubt whether God, seeking the highest good of the largest number, can wisely grant our petition.

In the case of the other illustration used by Mr. Rashdall, the real difficulty is essentially the same as that already discussed. We do not refuse to pray for the sun to rise earlier, because we believe God is a prisoner and powerless in the midst of the laws of nature; but because we believe that there is no conceivable case when any particular human need should require the changing of the hour when the sun rises.

What I am concerned about is not especially prayers for rain; although, when the burden of drought rests heavy, I cannot see why it is not reasonable thus to pray. What I am concerned about is to make clear that the laws of nature are not a barrier to God's answering our prayers of petition. If we believe in the immanence of God, we cannot think of the laws of nature as something outside of God which control him. They are rather God's usual mode of activity and controlled by his purposes. Under the same conditions the laws of nature are unvarying, but under new conditions new laws come into operation. Now prayer is this new condition. In

target-shooting a person may change the direction of my aim by knocking up the barrel of the rifle or by telling me a child has wandered into range. In like manner the laws of the weather may be changed from without by the action of other laws or from within, in accordance with a change in the direction of God's unchanging purpose. Prayer seeks to produce this change from within.

Prayers of petition are, then, abundantly reasonable to a man who believes in the universality of law if he also believes in the personality of God. But to prove that a man may pray will not make him a man of prayer. The final test of prayer must be a pragmatic one. Let a man test prayer in the laboratory of his own experience until he gains the conviction that more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

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DARIUS THE MEDIAN.

MUCH of the mystery which surrounds the name of this most interesting character of Old Testament history is due to the fact that those who study the book of Daniel lose sight of the invariable custom followed by Old Testament writers of calling a grandson or a granddaughter simply "son" or "daughter," as the case may have been; for example, Jehu the son of Nimshi and Athaliah the daughter of Omri, instead of saying Jehu the grandson of Nimshi and Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri. The same is true of "Darius the son of Ahasuerus," a relation which only becomes intelligible to modern minds, when written Darius the *grandson* of Ahasuerus; or of Cyaxares, because Scaliger assures us that Cyaxares is the Greek for Ahasuerus.

Guided by this clue, we have only to consult Xenophon, Josephus, and Herodotus to fully determine his true place in history, which may be indicated as follows:—

AHASUERUS = CYAXARES I.

King of the Medes from B.C. 633 to 593.

—The Assuerus of Tobit xiv. 15.—

His son



ASTYAGES,

King of the Medes from B.C. 593 to 558.

Married Aryenis, in the year of the Eclipse B.C. 603.

(*Their daughter Mandané* was the mother of
Cyrus, king of Persia.)

Their son



AHASUERUS = CYAXARES II. = DARIUS.

Was born B.C. 600.

As king of Babylon he superseded Gobryas B.C. 538,
and reigned jointly with Cyrus until 536.

Was 62 years old when made king.

(Dan. v. 31.)

That Ahasuerus was one and the same individual as Darius we think is clearly shown by the following references:—

Kings of Persia. Canon of Ptolemy.	Ezra vi. 14, 15.	Ezra iv. 5, 6, 7, 24.
Cyrus [king of Persia] also, [king of Babylon].	"Cyrus."	"Cyrus."
Cambyses.	"DARIUS."	"AHASUERUS."
Darius Hystaspes.	"Artaxerxes."	"Artaxerxes."
	"Darius."	"Darius."

Darius the Median, therefore, was known by a variety of names; for example:—

Darius—Ahasuerus—Cyaxares, also Darius the Mede, and the choice rested with the nationality of the speaker. We find the same thing to have been true of the Assyrian king Pula,

Pul, Poros, Por, Tiglath-pileser IV. In fact no custom was more common in the East.

When Cyrus conquered Babylon, he appointed Gobryas his commander-in-chief as temporary governor; but, according to Xenophon, Cyrus at an early date arranged with his Uncle Darius to exercise royal authority. He also told him, "that there were domestics and *Palaces* set apart for him in Babylon, that when he came thither he might have what was his own to come to."

In the course of his administration, Darius handled the Emancipation Proclamation described in the first chapter of Ezra. This was a document of priceless value to the Jews; and, in order that no neglect or half-hearted execution should cripple their interests, a Heavenly Messenger was specially sent to Darius who "stood to confirm and strengthen him." The benign influence of that Messenger is shown in the fact that Darius did not deposit the original decree "in the King's Treasure House at Babylon," but carried it to Ectabana and placed it "in the Palace that is in the Province of the Medes," where, sixteen years later, it was found and ratified by the Persian King Darius Hystaspes. The joint rule of Cyrus and his uncle Darius seems to have terminated about B.C. 536, after which date Cyrus remained sole ruler of Babylon until his death in B. C. 529. With such a record, we are not surprised to read:—"So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius [2 years] and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian [7 years]." Thus, in the darkest hour of the Babylonian Captivity the nation had a friend at court in the person of Daniel the prophet, was subject to a king whose name has been well safeguarded, and at the King's side stood a Heavenly Messenger "to confirm and strengthen him." Surely all indications pointed to the coming dawn soon to be heralded by the Emancipation Proclamation of Cyrus king of Persia, the king whose name and mission had been the subject of Isaiah's prophecy, some two hundred years before the great event occurred.

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