

do not know how to write. When a traveller is also a writer there is no kind of book that sells more rapidly. David Livingstone is the great example, although no doubt he had the conspicuous addition to his accomplishments that he was a missionary.

There is a volume entitled *In the Guiana Forest*, by Mr. James Rodway, F.L.S. (Fisher Unwin; 7s. 6d. net), which has reached its second edition this year and has been enlarged. It is not the contents of a traveller's diary turned out upon the bookseller's shelf. It is a book well arranged and well written. The author has a feeling for style as well as some consideration for the intelligence of

his readers. It is not only a traveller's book, however; it is the book of a naturalist. Mr. Rodway has little to say about man's religion, little about man himself, except as he is swept into the swirl of the struggle for existence. His interest is in the beasts and the birds and the plants, and in the fight they have for life.

The greatest thinker that Denmark has produced was Kierkegaard. A simple and sufficient introduction to Kierkegaard, both his life and his teaching, has been written by the Rev. F. W. Fulford. The title is simply *Sören Abaye Kierkegaard* (Cambridge: Wallis; 1s).

## Christ's Teaching regarding Divorce.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. ROBERT LAW, D.D., TORONTO.

THE article on Christ's teaching regarding Divorce, contributed by Archdeacon Allen to the August number of this magazine, tempts one to further discussion. Recent opinion tends to seek a solution of the perplexities of the subject in the fact that our Lord was not a legislator issuing a new moral code, and that His absolute prohibition of divorce (assuming it to have been verbally so) is to be understood, not as the language of rigid statutory enactment, but as the assertion of an ideal. Let this be admitted to the full. Jesus was no legislator in the Mosaic sense; to give a new version of the ancient Law was foreign to His aims and methods. And here, as everywhere, His chief concern was to give men a new and deeper intuition of the will of God, to reveal afresh that Divine conception by the light of which all thought and action regarding marriage and divorce ought to be governed, rather than to hedge the institution about with definite regulations—to fix the principle rather than to register possible exceptions or enter into the casuistry of the matter. Even so, the question whether or not marriage is such a union that it is *ipso facto* dissolved by unchastity is scarcely one of casuistry. It seems fundamental enough; and one can scarcely suppose that, if occasion arose, our Lord would fail to pronounce Himself regarding it. It is something more than a literary problem that is pre-

sented in the parallel passages (Mk 10<sup>2-9</sup> and Mt 19<sup>3-9</sup>).

In each of these passages the Pharisees put a question to Jesus 'tempting him,' and Jesus answers them, the form of the answer varying according to the form of the question. In Mark the question as to the legitimacy of divorce is put absolutely—Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? and the answer is also given absolutely—What God joined, let not man put asunder. In Matthew the question is whether divorce is legitimate for every sort of reason (*κατὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν*); and the answer is that it is not legitimate except for unchastity (*μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ*). And naturally the first question to be considered is, Which of the two accounts has the greater historical probability?

If Mark's account stood alone, there could scarcely be a doubt either as to the motive of the Pharisees' question, or as to the purport of our Lord's reply. They asked the question 'tempting him,' desiring and hoping to obtain an answer which would bring Him into direct collision with the Law of Moses, and thus furnish ground of accusation against Him. In this they were entirely successful. Our Lord did not tacitly ignore the traditional law, but first elicited a statement of it (Mk 10<sup>3</sup>), then deliberately set it aside as a merely provisional concession to the unlightened conscience and rude insensibility of a

dark age, and, finally, took His stand upon the original Divine ideal of marriage—the indissoluble union of husband and wife into one flesh.

Regarding this account of the conversation, two points need to be emphasized. It is incredible except on one supposition; and on another supposition it is the only account which is credible. 1. It is incredible except on the supposition that the Pharisees had reason *beforehand* to believe that our Lord held the unique doctrine of marriage and divorce which they now 'tempted' Him to announce. Whether divorce was legitimate at all, even on the ground of unchastity, no Jew, no Gentile, had ever dreamed of questioning; and it is inconceivable that the Pharisees, even for the sake of provoking an argument or procuring a ground of indictment, should have raised such an issue, unless the report of some earlier utterance of our Lord, enunciating this unheard-of doctrine, had reached their ears. That this was the case one can neither affirm nor deny. The isolated saying (Lk 16<sup>18</sup>) furnishes no chronological datum; nor does Mt 5<sup>32</sup>, which, moreover, as it stands in the text of the Gospel, supports the opposite view of our Lord's teaching. 2. On the other hand, if we understand the words 'tempting him' as implying all that Archdeacon Allen and others find in them—a deliberate purpose to entrap our Lord into a position of explicit antagonism to the Mosaic sanction of divorce, which might prove useful as a ground of accusation against Him—we seem shut up to Mark's account as against Matthew's; for the question as put in Matthew would not lend itself to such a purpose. But whether so definite a motive is required either by the words *πειράζοντες αὐτόν*, or by the circumstances of the case, is open to question.

In the entirely similar incident (Mt 22<sup>23-33</sup>), where the Sadducees lay before Jesus the problem of the seven times married woman, there could be no such definitely hostile purpose; there was only the more or less malicious desire to experiment upon Him with one of the ingenious stock conundrums of their school. Is it necessary to ascribe a more deep-laid plot to the Pharisees? It is true that the word 'tempt' is not used in the account of the Sadducean episode. Let us look, therefore, at the passages in which it is used. Only in one of these does the word suggest the definite idea which is read into it here. When the Pharisees question our Lord as to the lawfulness of paying

tribute to Cæsar, Jesus 'perceiving their malice' said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Here there clearly was a deliberate endeavour to entrap Him into a declaration which necessarily would be offensive either to the civil or to the ecclesiastical authorities; but it may be observed that in explaining this intention the Evangelist does not say 'tempting him,' but uses the much stronger expression, 'that they might ensnare him in his speech' (*ὄπως αὐτόν παγιδεύσωσιν ἐν λόγῳ*). Other cases in which *πειράζειν* is used to describe the motive of those who approached our Lord with questions or demands are the inquiry of the lawyer regarding the greatest commandment (Mt 22<sup>36ff.</sup>) and the demand of the Pharisees and Sadducees that He would show a sign from heaven (Mt 16<sup>1</sup>); and in neither does the word connote more than an unfriendly desire to place Him in a difficult situation, and an unfriendly interest in observing what He might say or do therein. I take it, therefore, that nothing more is *necessarily* implied in the passage presently under consideration.

Thus on both points affecting the historical probability of Mark's account, as against Matthew's, the verdict must be *non liquet*. The hypothesis of previous unorthodox utterance by our Lord on the subject of divorce, which alone makes Mark's account credible, is unverifiable. Equally so is the hypothesis of a plot to lead our Lord into a position of express antagonism to the Jewish Law, which would necessitate the accuracy of Mark's account. It gives a possible but not the inevitable explanation of the incident.

Turning now to Matthew's report we find that, except for the two clauses, *κατὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν* in the question, and *μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ* in the answer, the course which the conversation takes is substantially the same as in Mark's—in both our Lord goes back from the legislation of Dt 24<sup>1</sup> to the more primitive revelation of the Divine will in Gn 1<sup>27</sup> and 2<sup>24</sup>. And, again, it may be said of Matthew's account that, if it stood alone, it would commend itself as a perfectly intelligible and self-consistent record of what actually took place. The dispute as to the legitimate grounds of divorce was one of long standing among Jewish lawyers, and one regarding which the Pharisees might from various motives desire to draw Jesus into controversy. It is contended, indeed, that the course of the argument is, in Matthew's version of it, confused

and inconsistent—that Jesus first impugns the Mosaic Law, then appeals to the earlier and higher law which is implied in the Creation narrative, and then ends by tacitly reaffirming the Mosaic Law as it was interpreted by the stricter Rabbinical school. But it may be safely said that, but for the comparison with Mark, no such inconsistency would have been discovered. And substantially there is none; for it is plain that in the view of the Evangelist—of Jesus as represented by the Evangelist—the laxer interpretation put upon the Deuteronomic law by the school of Hillel was the natural and proper, as doubtless it was the generally accepted, interpretation; and the law thus interpreted our Lord decisively sets aside.

Upon the whole, then, it would seem that as regards historical probability the balance is very evenly prized between the two narratives. It remains, therefore, to discover whether any more decisive result can be reached by investigating the literary problem presented by the discrepancies of the two narratives. Of these discrepancies three possible explanations suggest themselves—separate traditions, illegitimate interpolation, legitimate interpretation. The first of these is mentioned only to be set aside. The relation of the two narratives is such, the literary derivation of one of them from the other, or of both from a common source, is so evident, as to preclude the idea that they represent independent strains of tradition.

If with the majority of modern critics we regard Mark's account as the more original, and explain the added clauses in Matthew as having been interpolated with the object of *modifying* the sense, the question at once arises, to what motive their interpolation can have been due. (a) It has been ascribed to the Jewish-Christian proclivities of the Evangelist, who desired as far as possible to obliterate all traces of disharmony between the Master's teaching and the ancient Law of Israel. But this supposition does not meet the facts of the case. In Matthew's version, just as distinctly as in Mark's, the Mosaic law of divorce is declared to have been merely a temporary expedient, the best, probably, that a people at a low stage of moral development was capable of receiving, but falling far short of the Divine ideal. (b) Archdeacon Allen, while still maintaining that the clauses are interpolated with misleading effect, now admits, and indeed contends, that they may

represent authentic utterances of Jesus, which Matthew may have found in Q or in some other source. In the material conclusion which he thus reaches I wholly concur; but I am unable to reconcile the view that the additional clauses in Matthew represent what was authentic teaching of Jesus, with the other view that Mark's account, just because of their omission, is the more historical. Let one try to realize the circumstances. The Pharisees are laying a trap for our Lord, eager to exhibit Him as a propagator of heresy; and quite gratuitously He walks into the trap by expressing Himself more absolutely than He had done on other occasions, more absolutely than His real position either required or warranted. This would have been unlike Him. The more characteristic would it have been to offer to His interrogators the other horn of the dilemma, by asking them how they proposed to reconcile the law in Deuteronomy with the principle implied in Genesis (cf. Mt 21<sup>24-27</sup> 22<sup>43-45</sup>). (c) It remains that we must regard the interpolations as a concession to the weakness of human nature and the practical exigencies of society, as modifying and mollifying a law which others as well as the Twelve (Mt 19<sup>10</sup>) felt to be excessively severe. This surely is a last resort. That an evangelist could deliberately manipulate the text found in his source, and that for the purpose of altering the moral standard held up by the Master to His followers, is a supposition which one does not willingly entertain.

The third possibility, legitimate interpretation, remains to be considered. May it not be that the modifying clauses in Matthew have been inserted in the more original account, with the object not of altering, but of elucidating its real significance? All parties were agreed, Shammai as well as Hillel, that unchastity was a valid ground for divorce; and since this was simply axiomatic, since difference of opinion regarding it was unimaginable, is it not a natural supposition that the remaining question, the only question at issue, might be stated broadly as the whole question—Is divorce lawful? Or, to put the case from a slightly different angle, it is tolerably certain (although I am not aware that definite information exists upon the point) that the laxer interpretation of the Mosaic Law was the one which was popularly accepted and acted upon. And if this was the case, is it not likely enough that when the question of divorce was spoken of without further definition, the reference intended

would be to the law of divorce as commonly understood and practised? (One can easily imagine a modern parallel, say in Dacotah or Kansas.)

This would be still more probable if, as is quite possible, the discussion was prompted by some contemporary *cause célèbre* in which the Hillelite interpretation of the law had been carried to an extreme. It seems to me, therefore, no incredible hypothesis that, even if the question as verbally put was—Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? what it meant was—Is this lawful for every kind of reason? And, of course, the sense in which the question was put would determine the sense in which the answer was given. If the question was whether divorce is lawful for every reason, the answer meant that it is not lawful for every reason, but only for unchastity.

Assuming that Matthew here derives from Mark, I suggest that the later evangelist, deeming the earlier account liable to be misunderstood, supplemented it by the explicative clauses. To do so would be quite in accordance with Matthew's 'interpretative' habit. It is also possible, though

less probable, that both evangelists are here dependent on a common source, and that Mark abbreviated, thinking it sufficient, since the real question at issue could not be mistaken, to state it more generally.

The view here suggested of the mutual relation of the two records is no new one; but it seems to have been somewhat lost sight of in recent discussion of the subject. It may not be free from difficulty, but it does seem to me to offer the least difficult solution of a difficult problem, and the most natural explanation of the facts of the case, both historical and literary. In a full discussion, wider considerations than these would have to be taken into account. Where the documentary evidence of the teaching of Jesus upon such a subject is ambiguous, the moral elements involved must be the final criticism. But into this field of inquiry I do not now enter. The purpose of this paper is simply to offer as worthy of reconsideration the view that, if Mark's account is here verbally the more original, Matthew's was intended to give, and gives, the true interpretation.

---

## The Idea underlying the Eschatological Discourses of our Lord.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR DAKIN, B.D., D.TH., MANCHESTER.

ESCHATOLOGY has its psychology. All its devotees have been unique personalities. They have been men possessed by one idea, which has regulated their whole life and coloured all their thought. A superficial study finds that idea to be the imminent end of the world, but a more careful consideration shows that that is but a deduction from another idea, which latter is to be regarded as really characteristic of the thinker. The same deduction has been drawn from entirely different predominating ideas. The idea underlying such eschatological thought has usually been theological. But it is by no means absurd to imagine a scientific eschatology, which would predict the end of all things on the basis of some proposition of science. What idea was it that lay behind the eschatological discourses of Jesus? To what conviction of His

do such utterances bear witness? That is the question this paper essays to answer.

In His eschatology as in His work, our Lord had a forerunner, and the above principle becomes clear when we examine the message of John the Baptist. For John the day of judgment was near. The Kingdom of God was at hand, and that meant to the Baptist that the axe was already laid at the root of the tree, the one with the fan in his hand was already present. There is yet time to repent, but not much. The atmosphere here is clearly that of haste and fear, almost of panic. Now obviously what fills the eye of the Baptist is the sinfulness of his countrymen. They who had sheltered themselves behind the thought that judgment would come for the nations, but not for themselves, are warned that it is now at their