

Original Correspondence.

SIN AND SUFFERING IN THE UNIVERSE.

Letters addressed to the Hon. Gerritt Smith, of Peterboro, New York.

BY ALBERT BARNES.

LETTER II.

HON. GERRITT SMITH:

MY DEAR SIR:—In my former letter, in reference to the extract which you had quoted from me, as expressive of my difficulties respecting the existence of sin and suffering in the universe, I made two remarks: (1) That the facts cannot be called in question; and (2) That these facts have no necessary connexion with any theory of philosophy or religion.

I proceed now to say (3) That no sufficient or satisfactory solution of these facts had been presented to my mind.

(a.) It did not seem to me to be a sufficient explanation to refer these things to Chance. I believe in a God. Besides, there are too many marks of plan, of system, of design, in the arrangement, to make that explanation allowable. Moreover, there is a remedial system existing, which is not easily traceable to chance. The arrangements, for example, for healing diseases—lying at the foundation of the whole science of medicine, as well as the plan of redemption, seems to me to be anything rather than the production of chance.

(b.) In like manner it did not seem to me to be a proper and satisfactory explanation of these things to refer them to Fate. As in regard to the former solution, so it is in regard to this. I believe in a God, and the idea of a God is incompatible with the idea of Fate, as it is with the idea of Chance. Besides, there are evidences of human freedom or liberty in the world, which are not reconcilable with the notion of Fate, for nothing is plainer than that the state of things on earth is everywhere connected with voluntary human agency.

(c.) I could not find an explanation of these difficulties in the supposition that God could not prevent sin and suffering, or that he could not create an order of free agents so that they would not sin. I see no reason to doubt that he has done so in the case of unfallen angels, and I would hope and believe that he has done so in regard to the inhabitants of far distant worlds. I cannot believe that angelic beings are kept from sin by physical force, or that they are not properly free; can I doubt that the redeemed in heaven will be forever secure from all danger of apostasy, and that their security from sin will be in entire consistency with their freedom. I know not why the same thing might not occur on earth. At any rate, it cannot be denied or doubted, that God, when he made man, must have foreseen all that would occur, and must have known that if he created him, he would fall and would bring this woe, and ruin, and danger, into the world. But it must be admitted that there was no necessity laid on God to create at all, and therefore, no necessity for the introduction of sin and misery into the world. Yet, under these circumstances, God chose to create man with the certainty that he would fall into sin; that is, he chose to permit the introduction and prevalence of sin and woe on the earth, rather than not create at all.

(d.) The idea that God resolved to introduce sin and misery as a mere act of will and sovereignty, by an arbitrary decree—ordinating his own creatures to sorrow and death simply to show his power, and because he chose that it should be so, did not seem to me to be an admissible explanation. I am so made that I could not embrace such a view of God. I see nothing in the Bible to demand such a solution. I could not reconcile this with my ideas of God. I could see no explanation of the difficulty if this were so. I could see, I thought, that the real difficulty could be augmented by such a supposition, for such a God could be neither adored, honored, worshipped nor loved.

(e.) The theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good—a theory adopted by many—did not seem to me to remove the difficulty, nor to be true in itself. What good, if any, could come out of the permission of evil which could not have been secured in another manner, has never been shown. But if it be alleged that there have been displays of the divine character, as the result of sin, which could not otherwise have been made, still it is not easy to see how it was consistent with benevolence, or with any proper view of that character, to permit or to introduce the crimes and woes of this world and of the world to come, in order that that character should be displayed. It would be difficult, and I think impossible, to show that it would be proper for a sovereign to allow designedly the existence of murder, treason, and rebellion, with all the woes consequent on them, to spring up under his reign when he could easily have prevented them, in order that his own character might be displayed either in pardon or in punishment; still more difficult might it be to see how it would be proper for a father to allow his own child to fall into habits of vice or to experience suffering, in order the better to display his own character, either of clemency or of justice. It is easy, indeed, to understand how, when sin, treason, murder or rebellion have been committed, the character of a just and benevolent sovereign may be exhibited by the infliction of punishment or by an act of pardon; or how, when a fault has been committed by a child, the character of a parent may be displayed in a manner in which it could not have been, if no such fault had been committed, but the difficulty is to see how all this could have been permitted or introduced when it might have been easily prevented, or how arrangements could have been made for it as a part of a plan, in order that the character might thus be displayed.

(f.) I could not find an explanation of the difficulty on the supposition that this has been suffered to come into the system, because God prefers sin to holiness, evil to good, misery to happiness. I think that all men are so made that they cannot believe this. At least, I am so made, and there is evidence that this has been the general judgment of mankind. It is clear, moreover, that whatever might be the fact in such a case, even if it should be true that God

does prefer sin to holiness, man would not have been made with this conviction on his mind, and true also, that the world would not have been made as it has been—for there are innumerable proofs in the facts that are constantly occurring that God hates sin; that he seeks to check and restrain it; and that he intends to punish it, and not to bestow his favor on those who persevere in committing it. This theory, therefore, I think, no one could adopt. I am not aware that any class of men, however much perplexed they may have been on the subject, or however wicked they may have been, have in fact adopted it.

(g.) The theory that moral evil is inevitable from free agency, as friction is unavoidable in a machine, and that it is better to create a world of free agents, even with this inevitable result, than not to create a world at all—as it is better to make a watch, a locomotive, a steam engine, or a wagon, with this inevitable result, than not to make them at all, seems to me to be as little satisfactory in explaining the difficulty. I was aware, as you doubtless are, that this theory has been held, and that it has been most ingeniously defended by one, at least, of the master-minds of this country. Yet it is difficult, after all, to see how the divine power is necessarily limited in this manner. For there have been minds created, in great numbers, with great powers, and with perfect freedom, where this result did not follow, as the unfallen angels of light, and, as I believe, the inhabitants of far-distant worlds are; and it is not easy to see why this might not have occurred in our world as well as elsewhere, or why if this end could be attained so to speak, without friction in other worlds, it might not have been secured in our own. Besides, if a watch or locomotive cannot be made without friction, it does not follow that God could not make a mind that would not go wrong, and that without any violation of the principles of liberty.

(h.) In like manner, it did not appear to me that it furnished a solution of the difficulty, to refer it as you have done, to the free-will of man. I shall have occasion to allude to this again, when I come to examine the solution which you propose, and which you ask me to adopt. I need not say to you that this is neither a new nor a modern solution of the difficulty. It is found in all the old theological writings of a certain school, and enters largely into systems of modern philosophy and theology, and is probably that which is entertained by the mass of men, so far as they have any opinion on the subject. I need not remind you of the beautiful form in which it has been expressed by Milton:

"They, therefore, as to right belonged,
So were created; nor can justly accuse
Their maker, or their making or their fate,
As if predestination over-ruled
Their will disposed by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I, if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain beforehand.
So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass, authors to themselves in all
Both what they judge, and what they choose; for so
I formed them free: and free they remain,
Till they enthrall themselves; 'Tis thus they change
Their nature, and revoke the high decree,
Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
Their freedom; they themselves ordained their fall."
—Paradise Lost, Book Third.

It is sufficient now for my purpose to remark in regard to this solution, that it cannot be shown to be a necessary violation of freedom to exert such an influence as to keep beings thus endowed from sin; since there are numberless such beings who are thus preserved; and since such beings are entirely conscious of liberty, and the more so, the more holy they are. Moreover, unless we admit this principle, it is impossible to see how those who shall be saved can have any security of permanent happiness or holiness in heaven. If to restrain them there, so as to make it certain that they will not fall into sin, is necessarily a violation of freedom, it is impossible to conceive how there can be any security of holiness or happiness there, or how God can promise it to men. Besides, if the certainty that one will not sin is a violation of freedom, it is impossible to conceive that God himself can be free, for it must enter into all our conceptions of the divine character that he is unchangeably holy. Why may not creatures in this respect, as in other respects, be made in the "image of God?"

(i.) A solution of the difficulty is not to be found in the ancient Persian system of religion, subsequently assuming the form of Manichæism:—in the idea that there are two original and independent principles—good and evil—in the universe struggling with each other. This system was, as you know, at one time embraced by Augustine to relieve the difficulties in regard to the introduction of evil into the world, which pressed on his mind—the difficulties to which I have already referred, and which he felt, perhaps, as keenly as any man that has ever lived. I will confess to you that this system has more plausibility to my mind than most of those to which I have referred, and I have often looked at it in my perplexities, with anxious inquiry whether there might not be in it an element of truth, which might relieve the subject from embarrassment; and even now, if I were compelled to abandon the Bible and its teachings, I should be more likely to embrace this than any form of infidel philosophy to which my attention has been directed. I would embrace this system rather than that of Spinoza. I would sooner be a Manichæan than a Pantheist; I would sooner follow Zoroaster than Comte.

(j.) It remains to say that I have not been able to find a solution of my difficulties in the doctrine of Universal Salvation. I could not embrace that system, with my views of the proper rules of interpreting language, without giving up the Bible altogether. The Bible does not teach the doctrine of the salvation of all men. It can never be made to teach that doctrine by a proper interpretation of language. If the Bible teaches anything clearly; if words have any meaning; if there are any proper rules of interpreting language, the Bible teaches the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked, and it cannot be made to teach otherwise. You have referred to my creed, as if I held some peculiar views on the subject. But I have no peculiar creed. I hold just what the mass of men have held; what ninety-nine men out of every hundred have held; what all men—Christians and infidels—except the small class who call themselves Universalists, have held, that the

Bible teaches that the wicked will be punished forever in the future world. I take the liberty of saying that the doctrine of the future eternal punishment of the wicked is not expressed in stronger or plainer language in the creed to which I have expressed my assent, or any creed held by any Christian church, Catholic, Greek, or Protestant—in the Heidelberg catechism, in the Thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, in the Westminster Confession, or in any particular creed of any Congregational church, than it is in the Bible. Nay, in almost all these creeds, the doctrine is stated in the very words of the Bible; and if you could convince me that the doctrine is not taught in the Bible, you would at the same time, and by the very same process of reasoning, convince me that it is not taught in any creed in Christendom, and that it is in fact held by no class of mankind. If I were, therefore, to reject the doctrine of the future punishment of the wicked, I should not be a Universalist trying to hold on to the Bible. I should become, at once an honest infidel, and would reject the Bible altogether. The infidel is the only consistent man. I think in the view which I take of the fair interpretation of the Bible, that I see the reason why there are so few avowed Universalists, as compared with the actual number of infidels in our country, and why it is so difficult to keep up the system of Universalism as an organization. The number of persons in any community who can be made to believe that the Bible inculcates the doctrine of universal salvation, must always be small; the number of those who, for various causes, reject it altogether, may be and probably will be much larger. Of the two I would be one of the latter, and so the mass of men do judge, and always will judge. Whether I should obtain any relief in this respect, in such a course, or by adopting the views which you counsel me to embrace, may perhaps be seen in what I have yet to say.

Such were, and are, the difficulties in my mind on this great subject. In my next letter, I shall consider an explanation which you have offered in regard to these difficulties. I am, with great respect, truly yours,
ALBERT BARNES.

REV. GEORGE DUFFIELD, D.D.

BY REV. C. P. WING, D.D.
Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Carlisle, Pa.

In the death of Rev. George Duffield, D.D., of Detroit, our Church has lost another of her leading and representative men. The particulars of his decease have not yet reached us, but we are informed that he had just officiated in welcoming to his congregation and city the Convention of Christian Associations in the United States and Canada, and was finally struck down while taking part in its proceedings. It would scarcely be possible for him to have met death in circumstances more conformed to his own expressed wishes and fondest desires of his friends. A few weeks previously, almost in anticipation of such an event, he had visited the congregations to which his earlier labors had been given, delightfully and tenderly bidden farewell to numerous friends whose faces he had not seen for many years, and attended the meeting of the General Assembly over whose predecessor he had presided. He had reached the seventy-fifth year of his life, and the fifty-third of his ministry. His infirmities were just sufficient to remind him that his course was about to terminate, and yet were not so numerous or so painful as to give sorrow to himself or his friends. With peculiar fitness it could be said of him as a man and a minister: "Thou hast come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

The family to which he belonged has been distinguished for the number and the excellence of its ministers. It combines the blood of the Huguenots, the Covenanters and the German Protestants. As might be well anticipated it has sent forth no friends of arbitrary power in the State, or of exclusiveness and extreme conservatism in the Church. His grandfather, Rev. George Duffield, was a chaplain in the Colonial Congress, pastor of Pine St. Church, Philada., from 1771 to 1790, a zealous champion of liberty among the people, and prominent promoter of revivals and liberal principles in the early periods of the Church, and for a considerable time the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. His father was for a number of years the Register and Comptroller General of the State of Pennsylvania under the administration of Governor Thomas McKean. His early education he received in the University of Pennsylvania from which he graduated in 1811, and his theological studies were commenced during the autumn of the same year in the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reformed Church under Dr. John M. Mason. He was licensed to preach when he was about twenty-three years of age, by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and in July, 1815, was invited to preach in the Presbyterian church of Carlisle. The impression of his first discourse in that church was deep and lasting, and the two parties which had for some time been contending with much bitterness there, united soon after in calling him to be their pastor. He commenced his labors among that people in the following December, but so great was his hesitation on account of the inconsistency between his views of doctrine and ecclesiastical usage and those which had long prevailed among some of the ministers and Churches of that region that he deferred his ordination eight months. There was something in the freedom and universality with which he offered a Saviour to all men without condition or reserve, which seemed to many of his brethren novel and objectionable. In the controversial techniques of that day he claimed to be "a narrow man," that is, one whose views of the Gospel call were presented in a book then much discussed, called "The Marrow of Divinity." While it was admitted that he was in the habit of preaching the "Five points of Calvinism" in their sharpest and most offensive angles, he attempted to make these consistent with a perfect human accountability under the divine law and the full sufficiency of the Atonement of Christ. As he always denied that his views, on these subjects underwent any essential change during his subsequent ministry. We suppose we may discover what his preaching then was, from the "Statement of True Doctrines," adopted by the minority of the Assembly of 1837, of which he has the reputation of being the principal author. He however never hesitated to avow that "he

might more than once have changed his mode of presenting and illustrating the great truths of the Calvinistic system, inasmuch as he always preferred the language of common sense to that of technical and scholastic science, and carefully discriminated between Scriptural facts to be accredited and received by faith, and the philosophical theories by which men have endeavored to explain them."

There is no evidence that his brethren hesitated to receive and ordain him to the work of the ministry. It was not however until the following February that he became satisfied of his duty to settle, though he continued to labor zealously in Carlisle; and he was ordained and installed there, on the 25th of September, 1816. The struggle which he maintained for a number of years against worldly amusements, the manufacture and use of ardent spirits, the exclusive use of the psalms in public worship, and a general laxness in the administration of the sacraments, can hardly be appreciated at the present time, when the principles he advocated have so completely triumphed in our church. Sustained as he uniformly was by a devoted session, and accompanied by manifest tokens of the divine favor, his church increased under his labors and became one of the most influential in the Presbyterian connection of that day. During the eighteen years and a half in which he sustained the pastoral relation there, six hundred and ninety-seven persons were added to its communion by profession and two hundred by certificate, being an average of about forty persons each year. In the early part of 1831 eighty-four, and in 1834 seventy-eight, first professed their faith in Christ. The revivals through which the congregation passed were in every instance in connection with the ordinary means of grace. Sometimes the number of meetings was increased during the week as the state of public feeling called for them, and neighboring pastors were called in to his assistance. The individual to whom he more frequently applied than any other for such aid was the Rev. Dr. Dewitt of Harrisburg, who had studied theology under the same admired preceptor, had commenced preaching in a neighboring congregation near the same time, and now heartily co-operated with him in all his measures. Among the students connected with Dickinson College then principally under Presbyterian influence and patronage, more than forty-five were either converted or received their religious impressions from his preaching, and became ministers in the Presbyterian Church. Some of these were also partially instructed in theology, scriptural exposition and the Hebrew language, and are now among the most honored of the ministry in both branches of that Church.

It was in the year 1832 that he published his views of spiritual life in a volume upon "Regeneration." That every expression in that work would have been defended by its author, or his friends, in subsequent times, will not be maintained. He was accustomed to such peculiarities of religious thought and illustration that large classes of thinkers would not be likely to adopt his precise diction. And yet the general views he then professed, have been embraced by no small portion of his ministerial brethren. He was among the very first who had to endure the public opposition of a large party in the Presbyterian Church, and which finally resulted in his division. After a protracted and painful trial for heresy in his own congregation, by the Presbytery of which he was a member, it was decided that his book did indeed contain the errors charged against him, but that in view of the explanations which he gave of them, he ought not to be any further censured, than to warn him against such speculations and expressions as might impugn the doctrines of our Church. The Synod disapproved of this decision as inconsistent with itself, but nothing further was done against him in the ecclesiastical courts. In consequence, however, of disagreements and parties formed in his congregation, a second church was set off, in the year 1834, by Presbytery in Carlisle, which after 1837 adhered to the other branch of the Presbyterian Church. Although in the very midst of these agitations a powerful revival of religion was experienced, during which the largest accession ever made to the communion of that congregation was made, he appears to have felt inclined to remove to another pastoral charge. On an invitation to become the pastor of the Fifth Church of Philadelphia, his connection with the First Presbyterian Church of Carlisle was dissolved in March, 1835. After preaching there for a short time, he removed to New York City, to take charge of the Broadway Tabernacle. His residence, however, appears to have been short in both these cities, for near the year 1837 he found his last and longest pastorate in Detroit. The State in which he now took up his abode was then in its infancy, and he was called upon to have a large share in its ecclesiastical affairs. The church of which he then became pastor has since become "three bands," each as effective perhaps as the original body. Every year his influence in the Church has apparently increased, and even those who once thought it right to oppose him, bear testimony to the purity of his motives and the wisdom of many of his measures. His views on the "Prophecies of Scripture," and on the "Wine Question," have been of course subjects of honest controversy, but it is remarkable that he lived long enough to be appreciated in both branches of the Presbyterian Church. His peculiar character has been clearly impressed upon each of the congregations and even the district of country, in which he longest ministered; and none who knew him well would withhold from him the concession that he was a man of uncommon intellectual power, of remarkable theological acumen and historical learning, and of clear sagacity in ecclesiastical affairs. His preaching, especially in later years, was peculiarly evangelical and profoundly spiritual. He took great interest in the conversion and training of the young. His people were in the habit of saying that his special excellence could be seen only when his subject was the Person and Glory of Christ. He was a decided advocate of the Re-union movement just so far as he perceived that the two branches of the Church had confidence in each other. Every minister of the New School who lived in the time of the division, contended that there were no valid reasons for that separation, and of course he must believe that a re-union should take place the moment when our brethren who differ from us cease to suspect us of important errors and can live in peace with us. Without evidence of this change

in our relative position, those who went through the severe ordeals of 1837 can have no expectation of good results from our coming together. He was in the habit of saying that the answer to the whole question of Re-union depended upon this simple matter of fact.

May much of the spirit of these earlier men of God, now so speedily passing away, descend upon their successors! Never was it more needed, and we fear it is too little prayed for and cultivated. We look not that it should pursue the same modes of action or of thought, for each age must have its special peculiarities and duties, but our only hope for each generation is in the resurrection and continuance of the same general spirit.

Note from Rev. Dr. Helffenstein, of Germantown.

[As already stated, Dr. Duffield removed from Philadelphia to New York City, where he had charge of what was known as the Tabernacle Presbyterian (afterwards Congregational) Church. A stirring chapter in Dr. Duffield's history in connection with the commencing Anti-Slavery excitement of the time might be written. In regard to an interesting event of his pastoral life, at that time, Dr. Helffenstein writes as follows:]

GERMANTOWN, June 29, 1868.

REV. J. W. MEARS, D.D.: Dear Brother: In referring to my journal, I find that the union between the First Free Presbyterian Church, of which I then was pastor, and the Second Free Presbyterian, or Tabernacle Church, under the pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Duffield, was consummated on the 15th of April, 1838. The union had been preceded by a day of fasting and prayer, when the churches came together for the purpose of seeking divine direction in reference to the contemplated change. Its accomplishment was immediately followed by a protracted meeting, conducted by the pastors, with evident tokens of the Divine presence.

The seats in the Tabernacle were free, and the spacious building, accommodating above three thousand, was usually well filled. Services were held three times on the Sabbath, the pastors preaching alternately. The Lord's Supper was administered monthly, and scarcely a communion occurred, at which there were not large accessions. The failure of my health compelling me eventually to leave the city, my resignation was soon followed by the resignation of my esteemed colleague, to whose eminent ability and faithfulness as a servant of Christ it affords me great pleasure to bear testimony.

Yours truly,
J. HELFFENSTEIN.

REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTERS. VI.

Off the Golden Gate, May, 1868.

RELIGION ON THE VOYAGE.

The religion of Jesus is practical, at least in theory—an every-day business—in, and on, and about, its possessor; in no case is to be, nor can be separated from its professor. Beautiful this, but difficult in its workings. When on board, and off for a voyage of twenty-three days, I found myself in a mixed, condensed crowd of twelve hundred persons, of all characters, beliefs and unbeliefs. Hardly an error broached since the flood but had here its professor and advocate. Should an introduction be attempted, or wait for arrival on the Pacific coast to commence my proposed Mission labors? Not one on board had ever before been seen or known. None seemingly knew aught of myself. Alone in a crowd; the loneliest of all lonely places. As the most retired place in the world to live may be in the heart of a great city.

An entire day was thus spent alone and lonely; after which, a desire for acquaintance was felt, and an opportunity looked for to obtain the same. Standing on deck near a number of passengers, beside whom a squad of children were collected, a gentleman remarked to another, as he pointed to the children, "Bond, here is material for your Sabbath School efforts." "Yes, Hawley, fine field this; but who is to preach to us on the voyage; do you know any clergyman on board?" "Thanks, gentlemen, for these words!" at the same time giving them my name, profession, and ecclesiastical connection. Both these men are doing business in New York, and live in Connecticut, and go to California on business—one a Congregationalist the other a Methodist. We were presently as intimate as though our acquaintance had been from boyhood. Acquaintanceship extended fast. Not a few dear children of God have been found on various errands wending their way to the land of Gold.

The first and second Sabbaths of our voyage I conducted, unaided, public worship, in accordance with our simple Presbyterian formula—preached in the capacious cabin to a large, attentive and wonderfully mixed audience. On the third and last Sabbath I again preached at 10½ A. M. After service the Purser said to me, it was expected I would have read the Episcopal service; remarking very kindly, it was a rule of the Company it should be read once each Sabbath. My reply was that against the thing itself I had no special objections; but had the effort been made, in my awkwardness from inexperience, it would have been for edification neither to churchmen, dissenter or unbeliever. An expedient for an evening service, novel in its character, set the matter all right. Davenport, the Actor, on his way to San Francisco, to fill an engagement, read the service, only needing a little prompting here and there from the Purser, in order to find the various beginnings, middles and endings of the complicated service. When this was concluded, a missionary to Japan, from the General Assembly (O. S.) preached, and your correspondent closed the service. Strange combination in the public worship of God! The celebrated actor certainly read the service better than I had ever before heard it from lips of bishop or inferior clergy. If aught out of place appear in the matter, it must be laid to the charge of the Company's arrangements and the extra demands of the Prayer Book.

ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN.

A ministerial attainment in the fitting practice of which Paul was justified in boasting "I became all things to all men, if by any means I might gain some." The most difficult perhaps of all clerical attainments. On a long voyage and crowded crew is the best imaginable place