The Vicarious Sacrifice \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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THE

VICARIOUS SACRIFICE,

GROUNDED IN PRINCIPLES

OF

UNIVERSAL OBLIGATION:

BY

HORACE BUSHNELL.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT will commonly be found that half the merit of an argument lies in

the genuineness of its aim, or object. If it is a campaign raised

against some principle or doctrine established by the general consent

of ages, there will always be a certain lightness in the matter of it

that amounts to a doom of failure. If it is, instead, a contribution

rather of such help as may forward the settlement of a doctrine never

yet fully matured, or at least not supposed to be, the genuineness of

the purpose may be taken as a weighty pledge for the solidity of the

material. Nothing, meantime, steadies the vigor and fixes the tenacity

of an argument, like that real insight which distinguishes accurately

the present stage of the question, and the issue that begins already to

be dimly foretokened. It quiets, too, in like manner, the confidence of

the public addressed, and steadies the patience of their judgments, if

they can discover beforehand, that it is no mere innovator that asks

their attention, but one who is trying, in good faith, to make up some

deficit, more or less consciously felt by every body, and bring on just

that stage of progress in the truth, which its own past ages of history

have been steadily preparing and asking for. No investigator appears,

in this view, to be quite fair to himself, who does not somehow raise

the suspicion, beforehand, that a hasty judgment allowed against him

may be a real injustice to the truth.

Under impressions like these, I undertook, at first, to pre pare, and

actually prepared for the treatise that follows, a long, carefully

studied, historical chapter, showing, as accurately as I was able, the

precise point of progress at which we have now arrived, as regards the

subject of it. In this investigation, I was able, as I believe, to make

out these two very important conclusions:

(1.) That no doctrine of the atonement or reconciling work of Christ,

has ever yet been developed, that can be said to have received the

consent of the Christian world.

(2.) That attempts have been made, in all ages, and continually

renewed, in spite of continually successive failures, to assert, in one

form or another, what is called "the moral view" of the atonement, and

resolve it by the power it wields in human character; and that

Christian expectation just now presses in this direction more strongly

than ever; raising a clear presumption, that the final doctrine of the

subject will emerge at this point and be concluded in this form.

Probably it may be so enlarged and qualified as to practically include

much that is valued in current modes of belief supposed to be the true

orthodoxy, but the grand ruling conception finally established will be,

that Christ, by his suffering life and ministry, becomes a reconciling

power in character, the power of God unto salvation. Or if it should

still be said that he reconciles God to men by his death, that kind of

declaration will be taken as being only a more popular, objective way

of saying, that God is in him, reconciling men to Himself.

Having shown the steadily converging movement of history on this point,

I was promising myself, as an advantage thus gained, that I should be

regarded, in the treatise that follows, rather as fulfilling the

history, than as raising a conflict with it. And yet, on further

reflection, I have concluded to sur. render so great a hope of

advantage and sacrifice the labor I had thus expended. I do it because

the history made out, however satisfactorily to myself, is likely to be

controverted by others--as what matter of dogmatic history is not?--and

then I shall only have it upon me, before the public, to maintain a

double issue, first of history, and then of truth; when I should evince

a confidence worthier of the truth, in staking every thing on this

issue by itself. The result of such a canvassing of history was just

now indicated, and that must be enough. Relinquishing thus every

adventitious help beyond this mere suggestion, I consent to let the

doctrine I may offer stand by its own inherent merits.

At the same time it will be so convenient, in the course of my

argument, to refer occasionally to Anselm's really wonderful treatise,

Cur Deus Homo, that I am tempted briefly to review the doctrine he

gives. This treatise was the first of all the deliberately attempted

expositions of the work of Christ. It is the seed view, in a sense, of

the almost annual harvest that has followed; and as all choice

seedlings are apt to degenerate in their successive propagations, we

are obliged to admit that this original, first form of the doctrine was

incomparably better than almost any of the revisions, or enlarged

expositions of it since given.

It is a great deal better, too, than the multitude of these theologic

revisions and dogmatic expositions ever conceive it to be. No writer

was ever more unfortunate than Anselm is, in the feeble, undiscerning

constructions put upon his argument, by the immense following that has

accepted his mastership. They take what he says of debt, as if it were

a matter of book-account that Christ has come to settle; or what he

says of justice, as if he were engaged to even up the score of penalty;

or, what he says of pay, as if he had come to bring in some

compensative quantity of suffering valuable for the total amount, and

not in any sense valuable for the quality or expression, by which it

may restore the honors of God infringed by disobedience. His obedience,

too, is taken as if it were a satisfaction, not because of the

righteousness declared, but on account of the pains contributed in it.

Passing by matters of subordinate consequence, the scheme of his

doctrine is briefly this. Considering what sin is, he finds it to be

"nothing else than not to render God his due. The will of every

rational creature ought to be subject completely to the will of God.

This is the debt [debitum] which both angels and men owe to God, and

none who pays this debt commits sin. This is justice, [justitia] or

rectitude of will, which makes a being just or upright; and this is the

sole and total debt of honor which we owe to God, and which God demands

of us. He who does not render God this honor due [debitum] robs God of

his own, and dishonors him." --(Lib. i. Cap. xi.)

How then is the grand necessity to be met. Sin has desecrated God

before the world, taken down his public honor as a father and

magistrate, weakened his authority, robbed him of his just reverence.

What is wanted, then, is that the original debt or due of obedience be

made good; that some equal compensation be offered to God or God's

magistracy, for the loss of that honor which has been taken away. "For

God's mere compassion to let go sins, without any payment of the honor

taken away, does not become Him. Thus to let go sin is the same as not

to punish it. Not to punish is to let it go unsubjected to order,

[inordinatum] and it does not become God to let any thing in his

kingdom go unsubjected. Therefore it is unbecoming for God to let sin

go thus unpunished. There is another thing which follows, if sin be

allowed to go unpunished; with God there will be no difference between

the guilty and the not guilty, which also is unbecoming to God.

Besides, if sin is neither paid for nor punished, it is really kept

subject to no law. Injustice, [unrighteousness] if mere compassion lets

go sin, is more free than justice, [righteousness] which is very

inconsistent."--(Lib. i. Cap. xii.) Every thing turns here, it will be

seen, upon the consideration of what is "becoming," or "consistent" in

God as a ruler; what is due to his authority and public standing, not

upon the ground of some absolute principle called justice in His moral

nature, which obliges Him, leaving no right of option, to punish wrong

by the infliction of vindicatory-pains. There is no semblance of such

an idea to be found in His language. On the contrary, he maintains, by

a carefully framed argument, that God has a perfect "liberty," or right

of option, as regards the matter of forgiveness, restricted only by the

consideration of what is becoming, or fitting, or against his dignity,

or due to his magisterial position. Thus, when it is argued that even

we are required by God himself to forgive our enemies without

satisfaction, which makes it appear strange, or inconsistent, that He

also may not do it, the reply is, in effect, that God is a magistrate,

as we are not. "There is no inconsistency in God's commanding us not to

take upon ourselves what belongs to Him alone; for to execute vengeance

belongs to none but Him who is Lord of all; [Dominus omnium] for when

earthly potentates do this with right, God himself does it, by whom

they are ordained. What you say of God's liberty, and choice, and

compassion, is true; but we ought so to interpret these things as that

they need not interfere with His dignity [magisterial or personal.] For

there is no liberty, except as regards what is best, or fitting; nor

should that be called mercy which operates any consequence unbecoming

to God." He does not throw himself upon some principle of absolute

philosophy, which leaves no option with God as regards the matter of

punishment, no counsel or deliberative reason; but there is a why in

the question, he conceives. "Observe why it is not fitting for God to

do this. There is nothing less to be endured than that the creature

should take away the honor due the Creator and not restore what he has

taken away. Therefore the honor taken away must be repaid or punishment

must follow; otherwise, either God will not be just to himself, or He

will be weak in respect to both parties, and this it is impious even to

think of."--(Lib. i. Cap. xii and xiii.) The whole question it will

thus be seen, is to Anselm, a question of consequences, turning on the

consideration of what is "becoming," "due to God's honor," necessary to

save him from a position of magisterial "weakness."

Holding this view of the satisfaction needed, no inference follows that

Christ will make the satisfaction by his own punishment or penal

suffering. Nothing is wanted, according to Anselm's statement, but some

fit compensation made to God's honor, such as would be obtained by

punishment, for punishment, he argues, honors God as being an

assertion, by force, of his violated lordship. "For either man renders

due submission to God of his own will, by avoiding sin or making

payment, or else God subjects him to himself by torments even against

man's will, and thus shows that he is Lord of man, though man refuses

to acknowledge it. \* \* Deprived of happiness and every good, on account

of his sin, he repays from his own inheritance, what he has stolen,

though he repay it against his will."--(Lib. i. Cap. xiv.) What is

wanted then is the equivalent of this punishment, or what will yield an

equivalent honor. But it does not follow that it must be by

punishment--enough that it confers upon God's public attitude, by

whatever method, as great honor and authority. Indeed the language

employed supposes an alternative between satisfaction and punishment,

and not a satisfaction by punishment. "Does it seem to you that he

wholly preserves his honor if he allows himself to be so defrauded of

it as that he should neither receive satisfaction nor

punishment?"--(Lib. i. Cap. xiii.)

The word "justice" [justitia] does indeed recur many times in this

connection, but never as denoting retributive justice under the

offended wrath-principle of God's nature. It means simply right, or

righteousness. As the argument goes, justice comes into view as

recalling the principle of rectitude. It does not speak of what is due

to wrong retributively considered, but of what is due to God as the

being wronged, what is needed to restore his violated honor. Indeed the

idea of a penal suffering in Christ, and a satisfaction made thereby to

retributive justice, is expressly rejected as a thing too revolting to

be thought of. "Where is the justice [righteousness] of delivering to

death for a sinner, a man most just of all men? What man would not be

condemned himself who should condemn the innocent to free the

guilty?"--(Lib. i. Cap. viii.) It is not clear that the word justice

[justitia] is used by Anselm in a single instance with a penal

significance, or in the sense of retributive justice. It might seem to

be so used, when it is asked--"If he allowed himself to be slain for

the sake of justice, [propter' justitiam] did he not give his life for

the honor of God"--(Lib. ii. Cap. xviii., b.) But he means here only

what he has before expressed, when saying that Christ "suffered death

of his own will, on account of his obedience in maintaining [justitia]

righteousness."--(Lib. i. Cap. ix.) In the next following chapter,

(Cap. x.) he does once employ the word poenam, when speaking of the

death of Christ, but he plainly enough means by it, not punishment, but

simply bad or suffering liability, and that he came into such liability

there is no doubt. Besides, it may be seen how profoundly revolting

this idea of punishment, laid upon the Son, is to him, when he

exclaims, in this same chapter --"Strange thing is it, if God is so

delighted with, or so hungers after, the blood of the innocent, that,

without his death, he will not, or can not, spare the guilty!"

Retributive justice then, or penal suffering, has nothing to do with

the supposed satisfaction. But the satisfaction to God's honor turns

wholly, we shall see, on the matter of Christ's obedience--obedience

unto death. The conception is that he comes into the world, not simply

to be murdered, or as being commanded of the Father to die, but that,

having a specially right work laid upon him by the Father, he is able

rather to die for it than to renounce it; conferring thus upon the

Father a superlative honor, according to the righteous tenacity of his

sacrifice. The point is stated carefully by Anselm, who says (Lib. i.

Cap. ix.) "we must distinguish between what he did, obedience requiring

it, and what he suffered, obedience not requiring it, because he

adhered to obedience"--that is to the principle of right or well-doing,

which is fundamental with God in all things. Hence the great honor of

such obedience. "God did not therefore compel Christ to die, but he

suffered death of his own accord, not yielding up his life as an act of

obedience to the Father, but on account of his obedience [to first

principle,] in maintaining right [justitia;] for he held out so

persistently, that he met death on account of it."--(Lib. i. Cap. ix.)

The immense value then of his death, or the satisfaction made to God's

honor, consists in the luster of his righteousness, [justitia] showing

all created minds what homage even the uncreated Son bears to the

sovereign law-principle violated by transgression.

At points farther on, this very simple and beautiful account of the

supposed satisfaction appears to be a little clouded or obscured. It

appears to be said that the satisfaction turns more on the death, and

less on the obedience. But here it will be seen, he is only saying that

simple obedience, so as to be in God's will, is not enough; it must be

such a volunteering in Christ, or obedience carried to such a point of

sacrifice, that he dies, when nowise subject to death on his own

account. "If we say that he will give himself to God by obedience, so

as, by steadily maintaining right, [justitia] to render himself subject

to His will, this will not be giving what God does not require of him,

for every rational creature owes this obedience to God. Therefore it

must be in some other way that he gives himself, or something from

himself to God. Let us see whether it may not perchance be the laying

down of his life, or the delivering up of himself to death for God's

honor. For this God will not require of him as a debt, for since he is

no sinner he is not bound to die. Let us see how this accords with

reason. If man sinned with sweet facility, is it not fitting that he

make satisfaction with difficulty? If he is so easily vanquished by the

devil, that, by sinning, he robs God of his honor, is it not right

that, in satisfying God for his sin, he overcome the devil for God's

honor, with as great difficulty? Now nothing can be more difficult for

man to do for God's honor, than to suffer death voluntarily, when not

bound by obligation."--(Lib. ii. Cap. xi.) Is it then the difficulty,

the expense, the death, that satisfies God's honor? No; but it is the

sublime rectitude of the Son, displayed and proved by so great

pertinacity. Mere difficulties borne do not help God's honor, but the

principle of devotion for which they are borne does help it. Besides,

Christ did not come into the world, according to Anselm in passages

already cited, just to suffer and die, but only to be in the work for

which, or on account of which, he should die. If then the dying itself,

as many say, makes the satisfaction, it becomes a clear inference that

he did not come to make the satisfaction but to do the work, and that

what is taken so often to be the main point accomplished is only an

accident, after all, of his mission.

Again, two chapters farther on, where it is considered how great value

the satisfaction offered has, he ceases to speak of the death and

begins to dwell on the person. No man, he conceives, would knowingly

kill that person to preserve the whole creation of God. "He is far more

a good, therefore, [since he outweighs the creation of God] than sins

are evils. And do you not think that so great a good, in itself so

lovely, can avail to pay for the sins of the world? Yes, it has even

infinite value."--(Lib. ii. Cap. xiv.) As if it were the person given

up to God that paid for the sins. Whereas he only means, by the so

great person, the death of the person, and then again, by the death of

the person, that obedience which was proved by his death, and confers

the tribute of honor that is needed to resanctify the violated honor of

God.

The construction I have given to Anselm's doctrine, in this general

outline, I am happy to add, has the sanction of a scholar in as high

authority as Neander. He says, "Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction

certainly included in it the idea of a satisfactio activa, the idea of

a perfect obedience, which was required in order to satisfaction for

sin. To the significance of Christ's offering in the sight of God,

necessarily belongs also the moral worth of the same. Far from Anselm,

however, was the idea of passive obedience, the idea of a satisfaction

by suffering, of an expiation by assuming the punishment of mankind;

for the satisfaction which Christ afforded by what he did, was

certainly, according to Anselm's doctrine, to be the restoration of

God's honor violated by sin, and by just this satisfaction, afforded to

God for mankind, was the remission of sin to be made

possible."--(History, Vol. iv. p. 500.)

It is certainly most remarkable, and most honorable to the Christian

sagacity of this ancient father of the church, that he was able, as a

pioneer of doctrine concerning this profoundly difficult subject, to

make out an account of it which shocks no moral sentiment, and violates

no principle of natural reason, as almost all the doctors and

dogmatizing teachers have been doing ever since. We may think what we

please of his argument, as a true and sufficient account of the subject

matter, but we can not be revolted by it.

It was the principal misfortune of Anselm, that he was too much afraid

of looking on the Gospel of the incarnation as having its value, or

saving efficacy, under laws of expression. The fact-form pictures of

the life and suffering of Christ were good enough symbols to him,

doubtless, of God and his love, but the pictures wanted something more

solid back of them, he conceived, to support them--"for no one paints

in water or in air, because no traces of the picture remain in them.

Therefore the rational existence of the truth must first be shown--I

mean the necessity which proves that God ought to, or could have,

condescended to those things which we affirm. Afterwards to make the

body of the truth, so to speak, shine forth more clearly, these

portrait figures which are pictures in a sense of truth's body, are to

be displayed."--(Lib. i. Cap. iv.) He has no conception that expression

is its own evidence. He must make a "solid foundation" by something

schemed and reasoned, else there is nothing to authenticate the gospel

facts, and show how it is that men's hearts are at all authorized to be

affected by them, as the express images and true revelations of God. He

had no esthetic, or esthetically perceptive culture. Truth did not lie

in what he might perceive, but in what he might conclude by some

process of deduction. Cribbed in thus, and cramped by the inexorable

bars of his over-logical training, he could not think of a gospel

operating simply by the expression of God, and being only what is

expressed by the shining tokens of love and sacrifice; it must be

something more scientific, something to be stiffly reasoned under the

categories and by the closely defined methods. The result was that his

truly great soul was rather narrowed than widened into his subject, and

his subject narrowed, in turn, to the closely-stinted measures of his

method.

For this indeed is the inevitable fruit and doom of all attempts to

logically reduce and dogmatize spiritual subjects--the method itself is

only a way of finding how great truths may be made small enough to be

easily handled. The definitions operate astringently, taking some one

incident or quality, for many and various, and so getting the matters

defined into such thimbles of meaning as can be confidently managed.

Accordingly it will be always seen, that one who leads in a dogmatic,

or closely defined exposition of some doctrine, is gathering his mind,

as it were, into a precinct within itself, and that, while he is

putting every thing, as he conceives, into the solid, scientific form,

he is all the while giving indications, in the manner and matter of his

argument, of an immense outside wealth of sentiment and perception,

nowise reducible under the scheme of his dogma.

Thus, whoever reads the arguments of Athanasius for his doctrine of

Trinity, will see that his mind is touching something, every moment,

outside of his doctrine; some figure, image, symbol, analogy,

comparison, which is, after all, to him, the truth of his truth, and

wider, and richer, and more vital than his defined statement. And so it

is with Anselm in the present instance. He speaks, for example, at the

opening of his subject, (Lib. i. Cap i. and ii.) as if it were the

great matter of the Gospel that Christ has "restored life to the

world;" "assumed the littleness and weakness of human nature for the

sake of its renewal." And, beyond a question, this restoring, this

renewal of life, was to him the main purpose and point of the Gospel.

But he makes out still a theory, or dogmatized scheme of the incarnate

life and passion, that carries nothing to that point. Every thing might

be done that he describes for the restoration of God's honor, and the

matter of "restored life" or the "renewal of human nature," be still

untouched; nay, for aught that appears, it might be quite impossible.

Indeed it may even yet be a question, whether Christ is to be any

actual deliverer and regenerator at all.

But the most remarkable instance of all, to illustrate the detaining

and restrictive power of a dogmatizing effort, will be found in the

fact that Anselm, so many times over in the course of his argument,

strikes the really grand, all-containing matter of the gospel and falls

directly back as often, into his theory; only half perceiving,

apparently, the immense significance of what he had touched. Thus he

brings out his argument upon the very chilling and meager conclusion,

that inasmuch as Christ has paid to God, in his death, what was not due

on his own account, God must needs give him a reward for the overplus;

and then, as he can not do any thing with his reward personally, by

reason of his infinite sufficiency, he may very naturally ask the

reward to be put upon somebody else, and why not upon the sinners of

mankind. "Upon whom would be more properly bestowed the reward accruing

from his death, than upon those for whose salvation, as right reason

teaches, he became man, and for whose sake, as we have already said, he

left an example of suffering death, to preserve holiness. For surely in

vain will men imitate him, if they be not also partakers of his reward.

Or whom could he more justly make heirs of the inheritance which he

does not need, and of the superfluity of his possessions, than his

parents and brethren?"--(Lib. ii. Cap. xix.)

What a conception of the self-sacrificing love of Christ that, after

all, he quite "properly" passes over to sinners "the superfluity" of

his rewards! And yet the worthy father was looking at the time

distinctly on the way Christ will get hold of transgressors to

regenerate their nature, after he has evened their account with God.

This mighty something, this all-quickening life, which an apostle calls

"the power of God unto salvation," and evidently thinks to be the very

matter of the Gospel--he is feeling after it, we can plainly enough

see, but his dogmatizing effort holds him in so stringently that,

instead of launching out into the grand, all-significant, moral view of

Christ, as being come into the world to be the power of God on souls,

and so the Quickener of their life, puts forward only these two very

thin, but painfully suggestive words, "example" and "imitation," and is

by these exhausted!

Again, twice before, he had been coasting round this point, as if some

loadstone drew his vessel thither. Thus, when showing how Christ paid

God's violated "honor," by his death, because he died as being under no

debt of obligation on his own account, he goes on to add, what has no

connection whatever with his point--"Do you not perceive that, when he

bore, with gentle patience, the insults put upon him, violence and even

crucifixion among thieves, that he might maintain strict holiness, by

this he set men an example, that they should never turn aside from the

holiness due to God, on account of personal sacrifice? But how could he

have done this, had he, as he might have done, avoided the death

Drought upon him for such a reason?"--(Lib. ii. Cap. xxiii.)

In the other instance referred to, he seems just upon the verge of

breaking out through the shell of his dogma and his speculated reasons,

into the broad open field of what is called "the moral view" of the

subject, to see in Christ what is more than "example," the transforming

efficacy of God. Thus he testifies again--"There are also many other

reasons why it is peculiarly fitting for that man [Christ] to enter

into the common intercourse of men, and maintain a likeness to them,

only without sin. And these things are more easily and clearly manifest

in his life and actions than they can possibly be, by mere reason

without experience. For who can say how necessary and wise a thing it

was for him who was to redeem mankind, and lead them back by his

teaching from the way of death and destruction into the path of life

and eternal happiness, when he conversed with men, and when he taught

them by personal intercourse, to set them an example himself of the way

in which they ought to live? But how could he have given this example

to weak and dying men, that they should not deviate from holiness

because of injuries, or scorn, or tortures, or even death, had they not

been able to recognize all these virtues in himself."--(Lib. ii. Cap.

xi.)

It is difficult not to be greatly affected by this almost discovery of

Anselm; for his mind, as we can plainly see, labors here with a

suspicion that there is a practical something "in the life and actions"

of Christ that is not comprehensible by "reason," or by the logical

methods of theory apart from experience; and "who," he asks, "can say

how necessary" this divine something is in restoring men to God? How

very near to another, less speculative, and more complete solution of

the Cur Deus Homo, did this great father of the church here come! The

gate stood ajar and he looked in through the opening, but could not

enter.

It should justly be said for him, however, that there is nothing very

peculiar in the detention he suffers at this point. In one way, or

another, the gospel teachers appear to have been trying every where and

in all the past ages, if not consciously, yet unconsciously, to get

beyond their own doctrine, and bring out some practically moral-power

view of the cross, more fruitful and sanctifying, than by their own

particular doctrine, it possibly can be. Occasionally the attempt has

purposely and consciously been to adjust something, or make out some

formal account of Christ, that would turn the whole significance of his

incarnate mission upon the power to be exerted in character; showing

directly how, or by what means, it was to be and is that power. The

very coarse, and, to us, wild looking doctrine that Anselm exploded,

and that held the church for so many ages before his time, representing

Christ as dying in a conflict for us with the devil, or as a ransom

paid to the devil, was probably nothing but a running down into

literality and effoeteness of meaning, of those flaming conceptions,

under which Christ's power over evil in our fallen nature, was

originally asserted. Faith began to glory in the casting down of the

devil by the cross. This was gradually converted by repetition into a

doctrine of the understanding. Then, by the unthinkingness of that and

reiterations continued, the dogmatic crudity was consummated and Christ

became a ransom paid to the devil. After Anselm also comes a long roll

of teachers, reaching down to our own time, who have it as their

endeavor, more or less distinctly, to unfold some conception of the

cross, that will make it a salvation by its power on life and

character. In this line we have Abelard, Hugo of St. Victor, Robert

Pulleyn, Peter Lombard, Wycliffe, and Wessel, and Tauler; and, closer

to our own time, John Locke, and Dr. I. Taylor, Kant, De Wette,

Schleiermacher, and others, too numerous to mention--all strangely

unlike in their conceptions, and as unequal as possible in their title

to success.

But the most impressive thing of all, in the history of this subject,

is the fact to which I just now alluded; viz., the manifest difficulty

experienced by the adherents of judicial satisfaction under any form,

whether of Anselm, or of the Protestant confessions, or even of the

Romish, in keeping themselves practically in, or under, their doctrine.

Maintaining it most stringently, or even with a bigot zeal, they still

can not practically stay in it, but they turn away, as often as they

can, to preach, or fondle themselves in, the dear luxury of texts

outside of their confession; such as "The love of Christ constraineth

us," "God commendeth his love," "The serpent lifted up," "Beholding as

in a glass," "Christ liveth in me," and a hundred others; traveling

over, in this manner, as it were, another and really better gospel than

that of their confession; quite unconscious of the immense wealth they

are finding that is wholly ignored by it. Even when they preach, in

ruggedest argument, their doctrine of penal sacrifice and satisfaction,

asserting the wrath that burns inextinguishably till it finds a victim,

they will not be satisfied till they have gotten some kind of

soul-power either out of their doctrine, or most likely from beyond it.

Tacitly they do all hold to the fact that Christ is here to be, and

ought to be, and can be duly honored only when he is made to be, a

softening, illuminating, convincing, or somehow transforming and

sanctifying power. After all, the great toil of their ministry is so to

conceive Christ as to speak worthily of him in the matter of his life,

and get the blessing out of him for lost men that is so richly garnered

in him. The confession is universally, that whatever preacher fails in

this, fails utterly.

But why is this? If Christ has simply died to even up a score of

penalty, if the total import of his cross is that God's wrath is

satisfied, and the books made square, there is certainly no beauty in

that to charm a new feeling into life; on the contrary there is much to

revolt the soul, at least in God's attitude and even to raise a chill

of revulsion. It will not pacify the conscience of transgression;

first, because there is no justice in such kind of suffering; and next,

because, if there were, such a death of such a being would only harrow

the guilty soul with a sense of condemnation more awful. It might be

imagined that such a transaction would make a strong appeal of

gratitude, and exert great power in that manner over character, and yet

gratitude is precisely that, which souls under sin are least capable

of, and especially when the claim is grounded in reasons so spiritual

and so galling, every way, in the form. No, the power which is so

continually sought after in the unfolding and preaching of the

cross--that which, to every really Christian preacher, is the principal

thing--is not in, or of, any consideration of a penal sacrifice, but is

wholly extraneous; a Christ outside of the doctrine, dwelling

altogether in the sublime facts of his person, his miracles and his

passion.

And here precisely is the reason why there is so little content in the

dogmatic solutions of penal atonement; why also the attempts to present

the gospel on its moral side, by a partially defined statement, or

theory, seem to fall short and yield in general so little satisfaction.

It is just because the whole Christ, taken as he is, makes up the

gospel, fills out the power, and that no summary more comprehensive can

do more than hint the purpose and manner of it. There is no example of

mortal conceit more astounding, if we could only see the matter with a

proper intelligence, than the assumption that the import of Christ's

mission can be fairly and sufficiently stated in a dogma of three

lines. The real gospel is the Incarnate Biography itself, making its

impression and working its effect as a biography--a total life with all

its acts, and facts, and words, and feelings, and principles of good,

grouped in the light and shade of their own supernatural unfolding. The

art of God could reach its mark of benefit, only by so vast a

combination of matters so transcendent for dignity and expression.

Whereupon the scientific wordsman, coming after, undertakes to

adequately tell what the grand biography is, or amounts to, in three or

four lines of dry abstractive statement! Or we may compare the gospel

as a power to the impressive grouping, action, suffering and sentiment

of a picture; for, taken as a medium of divine expression, it comes

under the same general law; what figure then would any critic expect to

make who should undertake to give the picture by a scientific formula?

Or, again, we may conceive the gospel to be a grand supernatural

tragedy in the world, designed to work on human hearts by all the

matter of loving, doing, suffering, all the scenes of craft, and

stratagem, and hate, all the touching, and tender, and heart-breaking,

and divinely great expression crowded into the four-years plot of it.

Will then some one undertake to give us Othello by dogmatic article?

or, if not, will it be more easy to give us the tragedy of Jesus?

It will be understood, of course, that I do not propose to establish

any article whatever in this treatise, but only to exhibit, if

possible, the Christ whom so many centuries of discipleship have so

visibly been longing and groping after; viz., the loving, helping,

transforming, sanctifying Christ, the true soul-bread from heaven, the

quickening Life, the Power of God unto Salvation. If for convenience

sake I speak of maintaining "the moral view" of the cross, or, what is

more distinct, "the moral-power view," it will not be understood that I

am proposing an article, but only that I hint, in this general way, a

conception of the gospel whose reality and staple value are in the

facts that embody its power. Perhaps it will sometime be judged that I

have labored the vast, uncomprehended complexity, and incomprehensible

mystery of the matter, as carefully, and conscientiously, and perhaps

also with as true justice, as if I had assumed the power to scheme it

in a proposition.

I have called the treatise by a name or title that more nearly

describes it than any other. It conceives the work of Christ as

beginning at the point of sacrifice, "Vicarious Sacrifice;" ending at

the same, and being just this all through--so a power of salvation for

the world. And yet it endeavors to bring this sacrifice only so much

closer to our feeling and perception, in the fact that it makes the

sacrifice and cross of Christ his simple duty, and not any superlative,

optional kind of good, outside of all the common principles of virtue.

"Grounded," I have said, "in principles of duty and right that are

universal." It is not goodness over good, and yielding a surplus of

merit in that manner for us, but it is only just as good as it ought to

be, or the highest law of right required it to be; a model, in that

view for us, and a power, if we can suffer it, of ingenerated life in

us. I probably do not use the term "vicarious sacrifice" in the

commonly accepted meaning of the church confessions, and if any one

should blame the assumption of the title, I may well enough agree with

him, only holding him responsible for some other and better name that

more closely accords with the Scripture uses, or more exactly

represents the distinctive matter of the treatise.

I ought perhaps to say that the view here presented, was sketched, and,

for the most part publicly taught, more than ten years ago. It will

probably be remembered, by some, that sentiments which I published

about fourteen years ago on this subject, raised a good deal of

agitation, and a considerable impeachment of heresy. Whether what I now

publish agrees, in every particular, with what I published then, I have

not inquired and do not care to know. I can only say that I am not

aware of any disagreement, and have never been led to regret any thing

in the view then presented, except a certain immaturity and partiality

of conception, which it can not be amiss to supplement by a doctrine

that more sufficiently covers the whole ground of the subject.

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PART I.

NOTHING SUPERLATIVE IN VICARIOUS SACRIFICE, OR ABOVE THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES OF

RIGHT AND DUTY.

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CHAPTER I.

THE MEANING OF VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.

IT is a matter of sorrowful indication, that the thing most wanting to

be cleared in Christianity is still, as it ever has been, the principal

thing; viz., the meaning and method of reconciliation itself, or of

what is commonly called the vicarious sacrifice. This fact would even

be itself a considerable evidence against the gospel, were it not that

the subject matter--so vast in the reach of its complications, and so

nearly transcendent in the height of its reasons--yields up easily to

faith its practical significance, when refusing to be theoretically

mastered, as yet, by the understanding.

There has been a litigation of the sacrifice going on for these

eighteen hundred years, and especially for the last eight hundred; yet

still it remains an open question with many, whether any such thing as

vicarious sacrifice pertains to the work of salvation Christ has

accomplished. On one side the fact is abjured as irrational and

revolting. On the other it is affirmed as a principal fact of the

Christian salvation; though I feel obliged to confess that it is too

commonly maintained under definitions and forms of argument that make

it revolting. And which of the two is the greater wrong and most to be

deplored, that by which the fact itself is rejected, or that by which

it is made fit to be rejected, I will not stay to discuss. Enough that

Christianity, in either way, suffers incalculable loss; or must, if

there be any such principal matter in it, as I most certainly believe

that there is.

Assuming now, for the subject of this treatise, the main question

stated, our first point must be to settle What is to be understood by

vicarious sacrifice. a just and true conception of vicarious sacrifice,

or of what is the real undertaking of Christ in the matter of such

sacrifice. For in all such matters, the main issue is commonly decided

by adjusting other and better conceptions of the question itself, and

not by forcing old ones through into victory, by the artillery practice

of better contrived arguments.

This word vicarious, that has made so conspicuous a figure in the

debates of theology, it must be admitted is no word of the Scripture.

The same is true, however, of free agency, character, theology, and of

many other terms which the conveniences of use have made common. If a

word appears to be wanted in Christian discussions or teachings, the

fact that it is not found in the Scripture is no objection to it; we

have only to be sure that we understand what we mean by it. In the

case, too, of this particular word vicarious, a special care is needed,

lest we enter something into the meaning, from ourselves, which is not

included in the large variety of Scripture terms and expressions the

word is set to represent.

Thus we have--"made a curse for us"--"bare our sins"--"hath laid on him

the iniquity of us all"--"made to be sin for us"--"offered to bear the

sins of many"--"borne our griefs and carried our sorrows"--"wounded for

our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities"--"tasted death for

every man." The whole Gospel is a texture, thus of vicarious

conceptions, in which Christ is represented, in one way or another, as

coming into our place, substituted in our stead, bearing our burdens,

answering for us, and standing in a kind of suffering sponsorship for

the race.

Now the word vicarious is chosen to represent, and gather up into

itself all these varieties of expression. It is the same word, in the

root, as the word vice in vicegerent, viceroy, vicar, vicar-general,

vice-president, and the like. It is a word that carries always a face

of substitution, indicating that one person comes in place, somehow, of

another. Thus a vice-president is one who is to act in certain

contingencies, as and for the president; a viceroy, for the king. The

ecclesiastical vicar too, was a vicar as being sent to act for the

monastic body, whose duties were laid as a charge upon him; and the

pope is called the vicar of Christ, in the same way, as being

authorized to fill Christ's place. Any person acts vicariously, in this

view, just so far as he comes in place of another. The commercial

agent, the trustee, the attorney, are examples of vicarious action at

common law.

Then if we speak of "sacrifice," any person acts in a way of "vicarious

sacrifice," not when he burns upon an altar in some other's place, but

when he makes loss for him, even as he would make loss for himself, in

the offering of a sacrifice for his sin. The expression is a figure,

representing that the party making such sacrifice for another, comes

into burden, pain, weariness, or even to the yielding up of life for

his sake. The word "vicarious" does not say all, nor the word

"sacrifice," but the two together make out the true figure of Christ

and his Gospel.

In this sense it is that Christianity or the Christian salvation is a

vicarious sacrifice. It does not mean What vicarious sacrifice does not

mean. simply that Christ puts himself into the case of man as a helper;

one man helps another without any vicarious relationship implied or

supposed. Neither does it mean that Christ undertakes for man in a way

of influence; one man tries to influence another, without coming at all

into his place. Neither does the vicarious sacrifice imply that he

simply comes under common liabilities with us, as when every citizen

suffers for the wrongs and general misconduct and consequent

misgovernment of the community to which he belongs. Nor that he simply

comes into the track of those penal retributions which outrun the

wrongs they chastise, passing over upon the innocent, as the sins of

fathers propagate their evils in the generations of their children

coming after. The idea of Christ's vicarious sacrifice is not matched

by any of these lighter examples, though it has something in common

with them all, and is therefore just so much likelier to be confounded

with them by a lighter and really sophistical interpretation.

On the other hand, we are not to hold the Scripture terms of vicarious

sacrifice, as importing a literal substitution of places, by which

Christ becomes a sinner for sinners, or penally subject to our deserved

penalties. That is a kind of substitution that offends every strongest

sentiment of our nature. He can not become guilty for us. Neither, as

God is a just being, can he be any how punishable in our place--all

God's moral sentiments would be revolted by that. And if Christ should

himself consent to such punishment, he would only ask to have all the

most immovable convictions, both of God's moral nature and our own,

confounded, or eternally put by.

Excluding now all these under-stated and over-stated explanations we

come to the true conception, which is that Christ, in what is called

his vicarious The positive conception. sacrifice, simply engages, at

the expense of great suffering and even of death itself, to bring us

out of our sins themselves and so out of their penalties; being himself

profoundly identified with us in our fallen state, and burdened in

feeling with our evils. Nor is there any thing so remote, or difficult,

or violent, in this vicarious relation, assumed by Christ as many

appear to suppose. It would rather be a wonder if, being what he is, he

did not assume it. For we are to see and make our due account of this

one fact, that a good being is, by the supposition, ready, just

according to his goodness, to act vicariously in behalf of any bad, or

miserable being, whose condition he is able to restore. For a good

being is not simply one who gives bounties and favors, but one who is

in the principle of love; and it is the nature of love, universally, to

insert itself into the miseries, and take upon its feeling the burdens

of others. Love does not consider the ill desert of the subject; he may

even be a cruel and relentless enemy. It does not consider the expense

of toil, and sacrifice, and suffering the intervention may cost. It

stops at nothing but the known impossibility of relief, or benefit;

asks for nothing as inducement, but the opportunity Love a vicarious

principle. of success. Love is a principle essentially vicarious in its

own nature, identifying the subject with others, so as to suffer their

adversities and pains, and taking on itself the burden of their evils.

It does not come in officiously and abruptly, and propose to be

substituted in some formal and literal way that overturns all the moral

relations of law and desert, but it clings to the evil and lost man as

in feeling, afflicted for him, burdened by his ill deserts,

incapacities and pains, encountering gladly any loss or suffering for

his sake. Approving nothing wrong in him, but faithfully reproving and

condemning him in all sin, it is yet made sin--plunged, so to speak,

into all the fortunes of sin, by its friendly sympathy. In this manner

it is entered vicariously into sacrifice on his account. So naturally

and easily does the vicarious sacrifice commend itself to our

intelligence, by the stock ideas and feelings out of which it grows.

How it was with Christ, and how he bore our sins, we can see exactly,

from a very impressive and remarkable passage in Matthew's Gospel,

where he conceives that Christ is entered vicariously into Usus

loquendi in the sacrificial terms. men's diseases, just as he is

elsewhere shown to bear, and to be vicariously entered into, the burden

of their sins. produce the passage, at this early point in the

discussion, because of the very great and decisive importance it has;

for it is remarkable as being the one Scripture citation, that gives,

beyond a question, the exact usus loquendi of all the vicarious and

sacrificial language of the New Testament.

Christ has been pouring out his sympathies, all day, in acts of

healing, run down, as it were, by the wretched multitudes crowding

about him and imploring his pity. No humblest, most repulsive creature

is neglected or fails to receive his tenderest, most brotherly

consideration. His heart accepts each one as a burden upon its feeling,

and by that feeling he is inserted into the lot, the pain, the

sickness, the sorrow of each. And so the evangelist, having, as we see,

no reference whatever to the substitution for sin, says--"That it might

be fulfilled, which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying--Himself

took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.'" [1] And the text is the

more remarkable that the passage he cites from Isaiah, is from his liii

chapter, which is, in fact, a kind of stock chapter, whence all the

most vicarious language of the New Testament is drawn. Besides the word

bare occurs in the citation; a word that is based on the very same

figure of carrying as that which is used in the expression, "bare our

sins," "bare the sins of many," and is moreover precisely the same word

which is used by the Apostle when he says [Bastazete] "bear ye one

another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." If then we desire

to know exactly what the substitution of Christ for sin was, and how

far it went--what it means for example that he bare our sin--we have

only to revert back to what is here said of his relation to sicknesses,

and our question is resolved.

What then does it mean that Christ "bare our sicknesses?" Does it mean

that he literally had our sicknesses transferred to him, and so taken

off from us? Does it mean that he became blind for the blind, lame for

the lame, a leper for the lepers, suffering in himself all the fevers

and pains he took away from others? No one had ever such a thought. How

then did he bear our sicknesses, or in what sense? In the sense that he

took them on his feeling, had his heart burdened by the sense of them,

bore the disgusts of their loathsome decays, felt their pains over

again, in the tenderness of his more than human sensibility. Thus

manifestly it was that he bare our sicknesses--his very love to us put

him, so far, in a vicarious relation to them, and made him, so far, a

partaker in them. [2]

Here then we have the true law of interpretation, when the vicarious

relation of Christ to our sins comes into view. It does not mean that

he takes them literally upon him, as some of the old theologians and a

very few moderns appear to believe; it does not mean that he took their

ill desert upon him by some mysterious act of imputation, or had their

punishment transferred How Christ takes our sins upon him. to his

person. A sickness might possibly be transferred, but a sin can not by

any rational possibility. It does not mean that he literally came into

the hell of our retributive evils under sin, and satisfied, by his own

suffering, the violated justice of God; for that kind of penal

suffering would satisfy nothing but the very worst injustice. No, but

the bearing of our sins does mean, that Christ bore them on his

feeling, became inserted into their bad lot by his sympathy as a

friend, yielded up himself and his life, even, to an effort of

restoring mercy; in a word that he bore our sins in just the same sense

that he bore our sicknesses. Understand that love itself is an

essentially vicarious principle, and the solution is no longer

difficult.

See how it is with love in the case of a mother. She loves her child,

and it comes out in that fact, or from it, Motherhood friendship.

Patriotism vicarious. that she watches for the child, bears all its

pains and sicknesses on her own feeling, and when it is wronged, is

stung herself, by the wrong put upon it, more bitterly far than the

child. She takes every chance of sacrifice for it, as her own

opportunity. She creates, in fact, imaginary ills for it, because she

has not opportunities enough of sacrifice. In the same manner a friend

that is real and true takes all the sufferings, losses, wrongs,

indignities, of a friend on his own feeling, and will sometimes suffer

even more for him than he does for himself. So also with the patriot or

citizen who truly loves his country, even though that love is mixed

with many false fires that are only fires of ambition or revenge--how

does it wrench his feeling, what a burden does it lay upon his concern,

by day and by night, when that country, so dear to him, is being torn

by faction, and the fate of its laws and liberties is thrown upon the

chances of an armed rebellion. Then you will see how many thousands of

citizens, who never knew before what sacrifices it was in the power of

their love to make for their country's welfare, rushing to the field

and throwing their bodies and dear lives on the battle's edge to save

it!

Thus it is that every sort of love is found twining its feeling always

into the feeling, and loss, and want, and woe, of whatever people, or

person, or even enemy, it loves; thus that God himself takes our

sinning enmity upon his heart, painfully burdened by our broken state,

and travailing, in all the deepest feeling of his nature, to recover us

to himself. And this it is which the cross and vicarious sacrifice of

Jesus signify to us, or outwardly express. Such a God in love, must be

such a Saviour in suffering--he could not well be other or less. There

is a Gethsemane hid in all love, and when the fit occasion comes, no

matter how great and high the subject may be, its heavy groaning will

be heard--even as it was in Christ. He was in an agony, exceeding

sorrowful even unto death. By that sign it was that God's love broke

into the world, and Christianity was born!

Here, then, as I conceive, is the true seed principle of the Christian

salvation. What we call the vicarious sacrifice of Christ is nothing

strange as regards the Nothing superlative in the principle of the

cross. principle of it, no superlative, unexampled, and therefore

unintelligible grace. It only does and suffers, and comes into

substitution for, just what any and all love will, according to its

degree. And, in this view, it is not something higher in principle than

our human virtue knows, and which we ourselves are never to copy or

receive, but it is to be understood by what we know already, and is to

be more fully understood by what we are to know hereafter, when we are

complete in Christ. Nothing is wanting to resolve the vicarious

sacrifice of Jesus, but the commonly known, always familiar principle

of love, accepted as the fundamental law of duty, even by mankind.

Given the universality of love, the universality of vicarious sacrifice

is given also. Here is the center and deepest spot of good, or

goodness, conceivable. At this point we look into heaven's eye itself,

and read the meaning of all heavenly grace.

How much to be regretted then is it, that Christianity has been made so

great an offense, to so many ingenuous and genuinely thoughtful souls,

at just this point of vicarious The great offense of the cross a

contribution of theology. sacrifice, where it is noblest to thought,

and grandest, and most impressive to feeling. There ought never to be a

question over its reality and truth to nature, more than over a

mother's watch and waiting for her child. And yet there has been kept

up, for centuries, what a strain of logical, or theological

endeavor--shall I call it high, or shall I call it weak and low--to

make out some formal, legal, literal account of substitution and

vicarious sacrifice, in which all God's quickening motivity and power

are taken away from the feeling, and nothing left but a sapless wood,

or dry stubble of reason, for a mortal sinner's faith to cling to.

Nothing is so simple, and beautiful, and true, and close to feeling, as

this same blessed truth--Jesus the Lord in vicarious sacrifice; and yet

there is made of it, I know not what, or how many riddles, which to

solve, were it possible, were only to miss of its power; much more

which to miss of solving, is only to be lost in mazes and desert

windings where even faith itself is only turned to jangling. How often

has the innate sense of justice in men been mocked by the speculated

satisfactions of justice, or schemes of satisfaction, made up for God;

how often has the human feeling that would have been attracted and

melted, by the gracious love of Jesus, coming to assume our nature and

bear our sin, been chilled, or revolted, by some account of his death,

that turns it to a theologic fiction, by contriving how he literally

had our sin upon him, and was therefore held to die retributively on

account of it.

At the same time, there have been thrown off into antagonism, a great

many times, whole sects of disciples, who could see no way to escape No

vitality in a Gospel without vicarious sacrifice. the revolting

theories of vicarious sacrifice, but to formally deny the fact; and

then what evidence have they given of the fact, as a distinctive

integral element of Christianity, by their utter inability, in the way

of denial, to maintain the vitality and propagating power of Christian

society with. out it. If God's love has no vicarious element, theirs of

course will have as little; if he simply stands by law and retribution,

if he never enters himself into human evils and sins, so as to be

burdened by them, never identifies himself with souls under evil, to

bear them--enemies and outcasts though they be--then it will be seen

that they, as believers, are never in affliction for the sin of others,

never burdened as intercessors for them; for there was in fact no such

mind in Christ Jesus himself. On the contrary, as God stands off,

waiting only by the laws of duty and abstract justice, moved

vicariously to no intervention, so will they lose out the soul-bond of

unity and religious fellowship with their kind, dropping asunder into

atoms of righteous individuality, and counting it even a kind of

undignified officiousness to be overmuch concerned for others.

Christian society is by that time gone. The sense of God, translating

himself into the evils and fallen fortunes of souls, in the vicarious

love and passion of his Son, was the root of it; and that being gone,

the divine life takes no headship in them, they no membership of unity

with each other. They are only incommunicable monads--the Christian

koinonia is lost or abolished. "I will take care of myself, answer for

myself, and let every other do the same"--that is the Christianity

left--it is duty, self-care, right living atomically held before moral

standards. As to the church, or the church life, it no longer exists;

Christ is the head of nothing, because he has never come into the

cause, or feeling, or life of any, by coming into their lot. So

necessary is the faith of a vicarious sacrifice to the maintenance of

any genuine Christian life and society. Without and apart from it

individualties are never bridged, never made coalescent, or common to

each other. The chill that follows must in due time be fatal. No such

mode of necessary unfellowship can live.

By this experimental proof, it can be clearly seen how necessary to the

living Gospel and church of Christ is the faith, in some true sense, of

a vicarious sacrifice. And what that sense may be it is not difficult,

I think, to find. We have already found that love itself contains the

fact and is the sufficient and easy solution.

But there is an objection to be encountered even here, before the

solution will be satisfactory to some; it is that if love, love in God,

and love in all Objection that God must be unhappy in love. beings

created and uncreated, is an essentially vicarious element or

principle; if it moves to the certain identification of the loving

party with evil minds and their pains, and the assuming of them, to be

a burden on its feeling, or even a possible agony in it; then, as long

as there is any such thing as evil and death, love must be a cause of

unhappiness, a lot of suffering and sorrow. In one view it must, in

another it will be joy itself, the fullest, and profoundest, and

sublimest joy conceivable. There was never a being on earth so deep in

his peace and so essentially blessed as Jesus Christ. Even his agony

itself is scarcely an exception. There is no joy so grand as that which

has a form of tragedy, and there is besides, in a soul given up to loss

and pain for love's sake, such a consciousness of good--it is so far

ennobled by its own great feeling--that it rises in the sense of

magnitude, and majesty, and Godlikeness, and has thoughts breaking out

in it as the sound of many waters, joys that are full as the sea. And

this, too, corresponds exactly with our human experience. We are never

so happy, so essentially blessed as when we suffer well, wearing out

our life in sympathies spent on the evil and undeserving, burdened

heavily in our prayers, struggling on through secret Gethsemanes and

groaning before God in groanings audible to God alone, for those who

have no mercy on themselves. What man of the race ever finds that in

such love as this he has been made unhappy? As Christ himself

bequeathed his joy to such, so has he found it to be a most real and

dear bequest, and that when he has been able, after Christ's example,

to bear most and be deepest in sacrifice for others--even painful

sacrifice--then has he been raised to the highest pitch of beatitude.

The compensations of such a life transcend, how sublimely, the losses.

As they did with Christ, so they do with us, so they will in all beings

and worlds. Therefore when we say that love is a principle of vicarious

sacrifice, how far off are we from casting any shade of gloom on the

possibilities and fortunes of this love. We only magnify its joy and

brighten its prospect.

Thus we take our beginning for this great subject, the grace of the

cross, and the Christian salvation. As yet we have scarcely passed the

gate, but the gate is open. This one thing is clear, that love is a

vicarious principle, bound by its own nature itself to take upon its

feeling, and care, and sympathy, those who are down under evil and its

penalties. Thus it is that Jesus takes our nature upon him, to be made

a curse for us and to bear our sin. Holding such a view of vicarious

sacrifice, we must find it belonging to the essential nature of all

holy virtue. We are also required, All good beings in the principle of

vicarious sacrifice. of course, to go forward and show how it pertains

to all other good beings, as truly as to Christ himself in the

flesh--how the eternal Father before Christ, and the Holy Spirit coming

after, and the good angels both before and after, all alike have borne

the burdens, struggled in the pains of their vi. carious feeling for

men; and then, at last, how Christianity comes to its issue, in

begetting in us the same vicarious love that reigns in all the

glorified and good minds of the heavenly kingdom; gathering us in after

Christ our Master, as they that have learned to bear his cross, and be

with him in his passion. Then having seen how Christ, as a power on

character and life, renews us in this love, we shall be able to

consider the very greatly inferior question, how far and in what manner

he becomes our substitute, before the law violated by our

transgression.

I should scarcely be justified in concluding this chapter, if I did not

first suggest, for the benefit of some, who may recoil from this

profoundly earnest truth of sacrifice, as one that rather shocks, than

approves itself to, their feeling, that it is a kind of truth not

likely to be realized, without experience. It will seem to be a

Experience wanted to know this truth of sacrifice. truth overdrawn,

unless it is drawn out of the soul's own consciousness, at least in

some elementary degree. Some theologians, I fear, will not be taken by

it, because it has never sufficiently taken hold of them. Mere

understanding is an element too sterile and dry to know this kind of

truth--it seems to be no truth at all, but a pietistic straining rather

after something better than anybody can solidly know.

Let me stop then here, upon the margin of the subject, and without any

thought of preaching to my reader who parts company with me thus early,

put him on a practical experiment that will let him a great way farther

into this first chapter of divine knowledge, than, as yet, he thinks it

possible to go. The problem I would give you is this; viz., that you

find how to practically bear an enemy, or a person whom you dislike, so

as to be exactly satisfied and happy in your relationship. If you can

stand off in disgust, or set yourself squarely against him in hatred,

or revenge, then do it and bless yourself in it. If that is impossible,

try indifference, turn your back and say, "let him go and fare as his

deserts will help him." If there is no sweetness in this, as there

certainly is none, then begin to pray for him, that he may have a

better mind and that you may be duly patient with him. This will be

softer, and you may begin to feel that you are a good deal Christian or

Christian-like, towards him. And yet there will be a certain dryness in

your feeling, as if you had only come into the formality of good. Then

go just one step farther--take the man upon your love, bear him and his

wrong as a mind's burden, undertake for him, study by what means and by

what help obtained from God, you can get him out of his evils, and make

a friend of him--God's friend and yours--do this and see if it does not

open to you a very great and wonderful discovery--the sublime reality

and solidly grand significance of vicarious sacrifice. Christ will be

no more any stone of stumbling in it, the truth itself no more an

offense, or extravagance; for you now have in your heart, what is no

stone at all, but a living and self-evidencing grace by which to solve

it. The offense of the cross--how surely is it ended, when once you

have learned the way in which God bears an enemy! The quarrels of the

head will be smoothed away how soon, by the simple methods of a wise

and loving heart. The recoil you were in is over. In the problem how to

bear an enemy you have found your Gethsemane and sounded for yourself

the tragic depths of good--depths of joyful as of sorrow-burdened

feeling--and so you understand how easily, believe in what glorious

evidence, the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus for the sins of the world.

CHAPTER II.

THE ETERNAL FATHER IN VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.

IT has been a fatal source of. difficulty and mental confusion, as

regards the vicarious sacrifice and saving work of Christ, that it has

been taken to be a superlative kind of goodness; a matter of sacrifice

outside of all the common terms and principles of duty or holy

obligation; an act, or enterprise of self-sacrifice, not provided for

in the universal statutes and standards of moral perfection. The

assumption has been that Christ went out of obligation, out of law and

beyond, to do the sacrifice, and was just so much better than perfect

in good, because he would have been perfect in good, if he had declined

the undertaking. Thus it has been a formally asserted point of

theology, that his undertaking was "optional;" that which he might, or

might not assume, and which, if he had chosen to decline, would have

raised no sense of defect before his own standards of excellence. This

too has been taken for a point fundamental, as regards the satisfaction

for sins accomplished in his death, that he raised a superlative merit

in it to be set to our account, only by doing optionally what he was

under no obligation, on his own account, to do. What he ought to do for

himself, or in his own obligation, could not avail for us, but only for

himself. What he did, or suffered beyond this, was a merit in excess,

that could be and was accepted for our justification, or the

substitution of our just punishment.

Every such attempt to scheme the work of Christ, and put him in the

terms of the understanding, begins, we ought easily to see, by removing

The fiction of a superlative merit. him beyond all terms of

understanding. Hence the painful confusion of ideas, the artificial

mock speculations, the conclusions that are shocking to all natural

sentiments of right and justice--the imputations that are figments, of

merits that are inconceivable, accomplishing satisfactions with God

that are as far as possible from satisfying men--all which have

infested, for so many centuries, the history of this great subject.

Plainly enough we can mean nothing, by a merit that is outside of all

our standards of merit. If Christ was consenting, optionally, to what

he might as well have declined; if he was just so much better than he

ought to be on his own account; then the surplus over is any thing, or

nothing; we may call it merit, but we do not know what it is; we may

balance it against the sins of the world, but we can not be sure of a

grain's weight in it. What can we think, or know, of a goodness over

and above all standards of good? We might as well talk of extensions

beyond space, or truths beyond the true. Goodness, holy virtue, is the

same in all worlds and beings, measured by the same universal and

eternal standards; else it is nothing to us. Defect is sin; overplus is

impossible. God himself is not any better than he ought to be, and the

very essence and glory of his perfection is, that he is just as good as

he ought to be. Nay it is the glory of our standards of goodness

themselves, that they are able to fashion, or construct, all that is

included in the complete beauty of God.

Here then is our first point, when we attempt the cross and sacrifice

of Christ; we must bring every thing back under the common standards of

eternal virtue, and we must find Christ doing and suffering just what

he ought, or felt that he ought, neither more nor less. That which is

to be intelligible must be found within the bounds of intelligence. If

we can not find a Saviour under just our laws of good, we shall find

him nowhere. Looking for him here, we shall not fail to find him.

Do we then assume that Christ, in his vicarious sacrifice, was under

obligation to do and suffer just what he did? Christ fulfilling

standard obligations. Exactly this. Not that he was under obligations

to another, but to himself. He was God, fulfilling the obligations of

God; just those obligations in the eternal fulfillment of which God's

perfections and beatitudes are eternally fashioned. We transgressors

had no claims upon him, more than our enemies have upon us; there was

none above him to enforce such obligations. All that he endures in

feeling under them, he endures freely, and this it is that constitutes

both his greatness and joy. There is an eternal cross in his virtue

itself, and the cross that he endures in Christ only reveals what is in

those common standards of good, which are also eternally his.

I shall discuss this matter more fully, at a more advanced stage in the

argument. For the present I prefer to handle the subject in a manner

less speculative showing that, as Christ is here discovered All good

beings in this law of sacrifice. in vicarious sacrifice, so all good

beings, God in the Old Testament before Christ, the Holy Spirit in the

times after Christ, and the good created minds both before and after,

are and are to be, in one accord with Christ, enduring the same kind of

sacrifice. It will seem, it may be, that I am going a long way round in

such a canvassing, but the result will be that a platform is gained,

where the sacrifice of Christ is at once less peculiar and far more

intelligible. Indeed when it is made plain, as a fact of holy Scripture

slumbering hitherto in its bosom and hidden from adequate discovery,

that vicarious sacrifice is the common property of holy virtue in all

minds, uncreated or created, the problem of such sacrifice will be

effectually changed, and most of the questions in issue will be

superseded, or already settled. This present and the two succeeding

chapters will accordingly be occupied with a Scripture review, as in

reference to the point stated.

If it be true that love is a principle of vicarious sacrifice, then it

will be so, not in Christ only, but as truly in God the Supreme, or the

God of revelation The Supreme Father in vicarious sacrifice. previous

to Christ's coming. I say "as truly" it will be observed, not of course

that he will have done, or endured, the same things. Not even Christ

did the same things in his first year as in his last, and yet he was

just as truly burdened with our evils and suffering in our lot; for the

main suffering of Jesus was not, as many coarsely imagine, in the pangs

of his body and cross, but in the burdens that came on his mind. In

these burdens God, as the Eternal Father, suffered before him. He had

his times and eras appointed, his conditions of preparation, his modes

of progress, and the incarnate work was to be done only in the

incarnate era; but the design was nevertheless one and the same

throughout, and was carried on in the same deep feeling and suffering

sympathy, from the first. In the ante-Christian era, it may even have

been one of the heaviest points of sacrifice, that there must be so

long a detention, and that so great love must be unexpressed, till the

fullness of time was come. So that, when Christ came it was even a kind

of release, that the letting forth of so great love into healing, and

sympathy, and cross, and passion, was now at last permitted.

A great many persons have forced themselves into a false antagonism, by

the contrast they have undertaken to raise between the Old Testament

and God the same in the Old and New Testaments. the New. And yet even

such will agree, returning so far to the just opinion, that God is God

every where, one and the same in all ages and proceedings, instigated

by the same impulses, clothed in the same sympathies, maintaining the

same patience, under the same burdens of love; acting, of course, in

the Old Testament history, for the same ends of goodness that are

sought in the New. They will formally disclaim, too, the opinion that

trinity supposes a distinction of characters in God, maintaining his

strict homogeneity as pertaining to his strict unity. They go farther,

they assert, as regards the infinite character, that God is love, that

Christ came into the world, because God loved the world. Still further,

when it is objected to their schemes of atonement, that they seem to

imply an opinion that God is made gentler and more gracious by the

sacrifice of Christ, they disclaim any such thought as that God is ever

mitigated in his dispotions--the change, they say, is wrought in us, or

in the conditions of public justice, by which God's pardons were

restricted.

And yet the false antagonism just referred to remains. After all such

disclaimers, it has power to feed and keep in vogue a whole set of

false impressions, or prejudices, by which the God of the Old Testament

becomes another and virtually different being from the Saviour of the

New; a kind of Nemesis that needs to be propitiated by suffering, and

is far as possible, in himself, from being in any relation of vicarious

and burdened feeling for mankind. After the point of difficulty has

been turned in their schemes of atonement, by the protestations

referred to, they go their way, as if said protestations had no meaning

at all, giving in to a kind of partisanship for one Testament against

the other, and for one God against the other God. As some disciples

took to Paul, and some to Apollos, so they take to Christ, and are much

less drawn to the God of the law. There is no comfort in such a

prejudice; they are consciously troubled by it. They have a certain

sense of something unworthy and false in the preference. It offends

their reverence, it raises the suspicion of some latent superstition in

their modes of thought and belief. And so it damages, not their peace

only, but their piety itself. They never can think worthily of God, or

serve him evenly and with satisfaction, as long as they regard his

personal manifestations, with predilections that set him in virtual

disagreement with himself.

All such predilections it will easily be seen are without foundation.

On first principles they are and must No progress in God. be

fictitious; for there is and can be no such thing as internal progress

in God, that is in his character; he was never inferior to what he now

is, and will never be superior--never worthier, greater, more happy, or

more to be admired and loved. And yet there is certainly a considerable

contrast in the ways of God, as presented in the Old Testament and in

the Gospel of Christ. There he maintains a government more nearly

political and earthly; here more spiritual and heavenly. There he calls

himself a man of war; here he shows himself a prince of peace. There he

is more legal, appealing to interest in the terms of this life; here he

moves on the affections and covers the ground of eternity. There he

maintains a drill of observances; here he substitutes the inspirations

of liberty and the law written on the heart. There he operates oftener

by force and by mighty judgments; here by the suffering patience of a

cross.

Laying hold of this contrast, and quite willing to sharpen it by

exaggerations, a great many, taking on the airs of philosophy, turn it,

without any scruple of reverence, to the disadvantage, or discredit of

revelation. Affecting great admiration of Christianity, they declare

that the God of the Old Testament is a lower being and not the same; a

barbarian's God, a figment evidently of barbarism itself. And of those

who class as believers, it results, in a different way already

described, that many are afflicted in the feeling, that the God of the

law is a God in justice and retributive will--doubtless good in some

sense, but less amiable--and that Christ presents a better side of

deity, to which they must instinctively cling, in a preference not to

be restrained. They will even profess sometimes to find shelter in one,

against the stormy judgments of the other.

What now shall we say to this? If God is one, a strict unity, always in

the same perfect character and feeling, what account shall we make of

this contrast? And by what method shall we make it appear that he is

still the same, bearing the same relation of feeling to men's evils and

sins, working in the same great principle of love and sacrifice?

The solution is not difficult, if only we make due account of the fact

that, while there is no progress, or improvement, in God, there is and

should But the government of God makes progress. be a progress in his

government of the world. Taken as a plan of redemption and spiritual

restoration, it must be historical and must be unfolded in and by a

progressive revelation. Beginning at a point where men's ideas are low

and their spiritual apprehensions coarse, it must take hold of them, at

the first, in such a way as they are capable of being taken hold of.

What is political and legal, what appeals to interest and operates by

stormy judgments. impressing God's reality by authority, and force, and

fear, working chiefly on the outward state--breaking into the soul by

breaking into the senses--will be most appropriate; nothing else in

fact will get fit apprehension. There will not even be a language, at

first, for the higher ideas of God and religion; such a language must

be formed historically, under a growth of uses, generating gradually a

growth of ideas. Thus if we conceive that holy virtue is constituted by

a free obedience to law, the law will have to be set in first, by a

drill of observances, and then, when it has been long enough enforced

by a restrictive method, ideas may rise, inspirations come, and the

soul may pass on to seize in liberty, what it has bowed to in fear.

This holds true of every man, and, in a certain broader sense,

historically, of a people or a world. The day of ideas, thoughts,

sentiments, words quickened to a spiritual meaning, must of necessity

come after, and be prepared by a long and weary drill in rites,

institutions, legalities and heavy laden centuries of public

discipline. But God will be the same in this day as in that, in that as

in this, cherishing the same purpose, moving on the senses, out of the

same feeling, in the schoolmastering era of law, as in the grace of the

cross itself. Becoming, at the first, in a certain sense, a barbarian

people's God, he only submits to conditions of necessity by which he is

confronted, in preparing to be known, as the God of love and sacrifice,

and Saviour of the world. Neither is it any discredit to him that the

subjects of his goodness must be manipulated outwardly and roughly, and

brought on thus historically, till some higher capabilities of feeling

and perception are developed.

To simplify the general subject as far as possible, take, for example,

the single point in which the hasty and shallow thinkers of the

unbelieving world Partisanship of the old religion. have been most

commonly scandalized; viz., the exclusiveness of the old religion. God,

they insist, is the Creator, Lord, and Father of all men--not of any

one people; but this old religion holds him forth in promise as the God

of a chosen people, taking them as clients in specialty, apart from,

and, in some sense,. against the whole world beside. How very unlike to

the God of Christianity, erecting a kingdom of universal love and

suffering sacrifice. And yet plainly there was no other way to get hold

of the low sentiment of the world and raise it, but to begin thus with

a partisan, chosen people's mercy, and get himself revealed by light

and shade, as between his people and others; creating a religion that

is next thing to a prejudice. He could not be revealed, as any one may

see, in his own measures, but only in such measures as he found

prepared. To bolt himself into men's thoughts, when they had no

thoughts, was impossible. He could only come into such thoughts and

sentiments as there were. The little, darkened, partisan soul must know

him as it can, and not as he is. The nations, too, of that day boasted

each a god of their own, whom they took and praised, for what he could

do for them, and against the gods of the other nations. A god was no

god who could not perch on their banners, and fight out their wars,

trampling all other gods by his power. Hence the necessity that Jehovah

should choose him a people. And so it was that by overtopping all other

deities, in his glorious protectorship, he finally made himself known

as God over all--the true Supreme and Saviour of all.

If he had announced himself, at the very first, as the God alike and

Saviour of all men, if he had been forthwith incarnate and had shown

himself in Moses' day, by the suffering life and death of his Son, the

history would have been a barren riddle only. They were not equal to

the conceiving of any such disinterested sacrifice; and the fact that

it proposed. a salvation for all men would have been enough, by itself,

to quite turn away their faith. I verily believe that Jesus, coming,

thus and then, would not even have been remembered in history. And yet

there was a promise, long before, of which nobody took the meaning,

that, in this one people, somehow, all nations should be eventually

blessed; and the prophets, too, as the religious sense grew more

enlarged, finally began to break out in bold and strong visions of a

universal kingdom and glory; in which it may be seen that God was

preparing, even from the first, to be finally known as the Lord and

Saviour of the whole world.

Does he then, by condescending to the lowness of barbarous mind, and

consenting to begin with a religion of prejudice, when there was no

higher sentiment to begin with, or be revealed in--does God's love

suffers by detention. he by choosing out one people, in this manner,

show that his character is equal to nothing higher? Ah, what struggles

of suffering patience had he rather to endure, in these long ages of

training, under such narrow and meager possibilities! Nowhere else, it

seems to me, not even in the cross of Jesus itself, does he reveal more

wonderfully the greatness and self-sacrificing patience of his feeling.

And the fact breaks out, all along down the course of the

history--appearing and reappearing, by how many affecting

declarations--that he is waiting for a better possibility, waiting to

open his whole heart's love, and be known by what he can bear and do

for the world of mankind. Nor was there any moment of relief to him so

blessed probably, as when he came to Mary with his "all hail," and

broke into the world as God with us; God now come at last, to disburden

his heart by sacrifice. The retention before was a greater burden on

his feeling, we may well believe, than his glorious outbirth into loss

and suffering now.

Taking now this very crowded, God in sacrifice by Scripture testimony.

insufficiently stated solution of his relation to the times of the Old

Testament, you will find it borne out, in every point, by a careful

review of the whole Scripture; and that Christ, in his vicarious

sacrifice, only represents the feeling of God in all the preceding

ages.

The principle of love, as we have already seen, is itself a principle

of vicarious sacrifice, causing every one that is in it to be entered

into the want, woe, loss, and even ill-desert of every other; bearing

even adversaries and enemies, just as Christ bore his. But God is love

and is so declared in every part of the Scripture; and what have we in

this, but the discovery that he is a being, in just such a relation of

sympathy and burdened feeling for men, as Christ was. He did not show

it by the same outward signs, and therefore could not so powerfully and

transformingly impress the fact; and yet he was in the same precise

love, waiting, as we just now said, to find relief in a more adequate

expression. Yet how often, how affectingly, did he express, in words,

the painful sympathy and deep burden of his feeling. As when the

prophet says--"In their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of

his presence saved them; in his love and pity, he redeemed them, and

bare and carried them, all the days of old." How tenderly does he watch

the turning of the ages--"grieved forty years" for his people in the

wilderness--"rising betimes" to send his messengers--protesting that he

is "weary"--that he is "broken with their whorish heart"--"that he is

filled with repentings"--calling also to his people to, see how "the

Lord their God bare them as a man doth bear his son"--apostrophizing

them, as it were, in a feeling quite broken, "Oh, that there were such

a heart in them, that they would hear me and keep my

commandments"--"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim, how shall I deliver

thee, Israel?"--and again, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting

love, and with loving kindness have I drawn thee." It is as if there

were a cross unseen, standing on its undiscovered hill, far back in the

ages, out of which were sounding always, just the same deep voice of

suffering love and patience, that was heard by mortal ears from the

sacred hill of Calvary.

And then, when Christ himself arrives, what does he say but that, "God

so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son?"--not that he

came to obtain God's love, but that God's love sent him and was here to

be magnified, in the sacrifice of life he would make. And who is Christ

but God manifest in the flesh, reconciling the world unto himself; the

express image and word of God; that is God expressed as he is, so that

he that hath seen him hath seen the Father; working always for, and to

declare, the God that sent him. Neither does he conceive, that he is

introducing a new kingdom and order, that is worthier of God, and in

better feeling. He declares that he came not to destroy the old system,

or law, but only to fulfill it and carry it on to the glorious

realization of its ends, opening things that have been kept secret, but

have all the time been working, from the foundation of the world; nay,

that his kingdom is a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the

world; prepared that is in God's love, fixed in his purpose, working in

his counsels. What then was Christ in his vicarious feeling and

sacrifice, what in his Gethsemane, but a revelation in time, of just

that love that had been struggling always in God's bosom; watching

wearily for the world and with inward groanings unheard by mortal ears.

But there is, after all, some one will say, a something in Christ that

is more gentle and better to feeling--less Christ not better, but more

adequately expressed. severity, kinder, softer terms of good. There

certainly is a fuller, more adequate, expression of God's love; and so

a greater power of attraction, thus of salvation. And yet there are

denunciations of future evil in his teachings, that, taken as they

stand, are as much more fearful than any which are found in the Old

Testament, as they relate to what is more future and of longer

duration. I will not here discuss them, I only say that, take what view

of them is possible, it does not appear that Christ, in bearing the

world's evil, does at all consent to the possible immunity of

transgression. If he might consent to that, then he might well enough

consent to the continuance of transgression also, and so be excused

from the sacrifice of the cross altogether.

God then is such a being from eternity as must, by the supposition, be

entered, even as Christ was, into all God then is just what Christ

shows him to be. that belongs to love; entered into patience, long

suffering, and sacrifice; burdened in heart for the good of enemies;

taking on his feeling the wants and woes of enemies. This is no new

thought, no optional, superlative goodness taken up by Christ in the

year One, of the Christian era; but the whole deity is in it, in it

from eternity. And the short account of all is--"For God so loved the

world."

Holding now this view of God--the same which the Psalmist boasts when

he sings, "For God is my king of old, working salvation in the midst of

the Current misconceptions. earth"--we encounter a large body of

current misconceptions, mostly under Gospel terms of expression, which

require to be modified if we are to hold the truth understandingly.

Thus we speak of Christ as a mediator, and as doing a work of

mediation; which is Scriptural, but we often conceive that he is

literally a third being, Mediation. coming in between us and God to

compose our difficulty with him, by gaining him as it were to softer

terms. But he is no such mediator at all, nor any mediator, such as

does not leave him to be God manifest in all God's proper feeling. No,

he is a mediator only in the sense that, as being in humanity, he is a

medium of God to us; such a medium that, when we cling to him in faith,

we take hold of God's own life and feeling as the Infinite Unseen, and

are taken hold of by Him, reconciled, and knit everlastingly to him, by

what we receive.

We call Christ our intercessor, too, and conceive that we are saved by

his intercession. Does he then intercede for us in the sense that he

goes before God Intercession. in a plea to gain him over to us, showing

God his wounds, and the print of his nails, to soften him towards us.

Far from that as possible; nothing could be more unworthy. Intercession

means literally intervention, that is a coming between; and it is not

God that wants to be softened, or made better; for Christ himself is

only the incarnate love and sacrificing patience of God; but the stress

of the intercession is with us and in our hearts' feeling--all which we

simply figure, objectively, when we conceive him as the priest that

liveth ever to make intercession for us. We set him before God's altar,

in a figure of eternal sponsorship, urging the suit of peace; though

the peace he obtains by the suit of his sacrifice, comes, in fact, from

our mitigation, not from the mitigation of God.

Other modes of speaking, supposed to be understood in their Scriptural

meaning, will not be accommodated by the conception that unites the God

of Pacification. the old time and the Christ of the new, in the same

vicarious feeling, but will require to have their colors softened by

similar explanations. And it will not be difficult, I rejoice to

believe, for any genuinely thoughtful, right-feeling soul, to lay hold

of the possibility thus offered, of a conception of God that does not

mock his attributes, or set them at war with each other. How

distracting and painful, how dreadfully appalling is the faith that we

have a God, back of the worlds, whose indignations overtop his mercies,

and who will not be satisfied, save as he is appeased by some other,

who is in a better and milder feeling. We might easily fear him, but

how shall we love him; and where, meantime shall we find that glorious,

all-centering unity in the good, which our sufficiently distracted soul

longs for in the God of its worship? What can we do as sinners, torn

already by our own evils, with two Gods, a less good, and a

better--this latter, suffering and even dying to compose and sweeten

the other? Where shall our heart rest when our thought itself is bent

hither and thither, and torn by a God in no unity with Himself?

Here then I think we may rest in the full and carefully tested

discovery, that whatever we may say, or hold, or believe, concerning

the vicarious A cross in God's perfections from eternity. sacrifice of

Christ, we are to affirm in the same manner of God. The whole deity is

in it, in it from eternity and will to eternity be. We are not to

conceive that our blessed Saviour is some other and better side of

deity, a God composing and satisfying God; but that all there is in him

expresses God, even as he is, and has been of old--such a being in his

love that he must needs take our evils on his feeling, and bear the

burden of our sin. Nay, there is a cross in God before the wood is seen

upon Calvary; hid in God's own virtue itself, struggling on heavily in

burdened feeling through all the previous ages, and struggling as

heavily now even in the throne of the worlds. This, too, exactly, is

the cross that our Christ crucified reveals and sets before us. Let us

come then not to the wood alone, not to the nails, not to the vinegar

and the gall, not to the writhing body of Jesus, but to the very

feeling of our God and there take shelter. Seeing how God bears an

enemy--has borne or carried enemies all the days of old--we say "Herein

is Love," and in this grand koinonia--this fellowship of the Father and

his Son, Jesus Christ--our very unworthy and very distracting

preferences are forever merged and lost.

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[1] Matth. vii, 17.

[2] This most natural and certainly great and worthy meaning for the

passage from Matthew is so far off from the dogmatic and prosy

literalism of many, that they are able to see scarcely any thing in it.

Bishop Pearce, just because the passage does not meet his notion of

Isaiah's famous Christological chapter, and does not signify any thing

true enough in itself, imagines that it must be an interpolation! Dr.

Magee (Vol. I., pp. 313-355) expends more than forty pages of learning

on it, contriving how he may get the Prophet and Evangelist together,

in some meaning that will make room for a more literal and penal

bearing of sins than there can be of sicknesses. By a heavy practice on

the Hebrew verb in the first clause, and the Hebrew noun in the second,

he gets the "took" converted into "took away" and the sicknesses into

"sorrows;" reading thus--"Himself took away our infirmities and bare

our sorrows." But it happens most unfortunately that the Greek word of

the evangelist [elabe] will not bear any such meaning as "took away,"

but insists on signifying only that kind of taking which appropriates,

or receives, or even seizes by robbery; and the Greek word [nosos]

never means any thing but "sickness;" save when it is used as an

epithet in speaking figuratively of the "diseases of the mind." The

fact is that the evangelist translates the prophet well, and the

English version translates the evangelist well, and the vicariousness

resulting is a grand, living idea, such as meets the highest

intelligence, and yields an impression that accords with the best

revelations of consciousness, in the state of love. Every true

Christian knows what it is to bear the sins of wrongdoers and enemies

in this manner, and loves to imagine that, in doing it, he learns from

the cross of his Master--being almost raised into the plane of divinity

himself, by a participation so exalted. There was never a case of

construction more simple and plain than this, and it has the merit, if

we receive it, of carrying us completely clear, at once, of all the

fearful stumbling blocks which a crude, over-literal interpretation has

been piling about the cross for so many centuries. There is no stranger

freak of dullness in all the literary history of the world, and nothing

that is going to make a more curious chapter for the ages to come, than

the constructions raised on these vicarious forms of Scripture, and the

immense torment of learning and theologic debate that has occupied a

whole millenium in consequence. The long period, preceding, when Christ

was regarded as a ransom paid to the devil, will be more easily

qualified by allowances that save it in respect.

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CHAPTER III

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.

HAVING showed, in my last chapter, that the Creator and God of the

former dispensation, sometimes called the Father in that relation, was

inserted into our human conditions, in just the same vicarious feeling

as Christ was in his incarnate suffering, and bore our sins as truly,

and wrestled for us in the same tender burdens of love, I now undertake

to show the same in respect to the Holy Spirit after Christ; that he

works in love as Christ did, and suffers all the incidents of

love--compassion, wounded feeling, sorrow, concern, burdened sympathy,

violated patience--taking men upon him, to bear them and their sins,

precisely as Christ himself did in his sacrifice. He is, in fact, a

Christ continued, in all that distinguishes the offering and priesthood

of Christ, and is fitly represented in the same way, under a priestly

figure, as our intercessor.

I am well aware how very distant all such conceptions are from the

commonly received impressions of the The Holy Spirit in personal

feeling and character. Holy Spirit. For it is a remarkable fact, apart

from all conceptions of a properly vicarious sacrifice in his ministry,

that even where his personality is much insisted on, almost nothing is

left him commonly in the matter of feeling and character, that belongs

to personality. Probably enough the reason may be that when we pray, as

we familiarly do, that God will send, or give, the Holy Spirit; or shed

down, or shed abroad, or pour out, or breathe the Holy Spirit; we allow

such figures to carry their meaning too literally, and so fall into the

way of regarding him, unwittingly, as a mere influence; some invisible

missive, or fluid, or magnetic force, traversing unseen, the hidden

depths of souls, to work God's purpose in them. However this may be, it

certainly comes to pass, somehow, that we practically lose out the

conception of a genuinely personal character and life, as pertaining to

the Holy Spirit. And, in this view, it becomes a matter of great

spiritual consequence, apart from the particular subject I have in

hand, to restore a juster and more vital conception of the Spirit, such

as I am undertaking now to assert. I begin then by a distinct

recognition--

1. Of the personality of the Spirit, insisting that, if it be asserted

at all, as it certainly should be, it must be asserted with a meaning

and not without. Personality that makes no true person. It is very true

that the word Spirit [pneuma,] is a neuter noun, drawing after it the

neuter pronoun it. But this is only because the natural symbol resorted

to, viz., breath, happened to be a neuter word. Still there are other

terms applied to the Spirit, which bear the very highest character of

personality. Thus he is promised as being even Christ himself--"I will

come to you;" and is called, with Christ, Paraclete, Advocate,

Comforter, another Comforter--and the personal pronoun he is applied to

him, just as it is to the Father and the Son. I raise no question here

upon the nature of this personality. I only say that he is a person, in

just the same personal proper. ties of feeling, love, sacrifice, as the

Father and the Son, and that, being perfect in character, he must have

exactly the same character. Besides, according to all right conceptions

of trinity, God is still a strict unity, or undivided substance, not

three substances; and so, on the score of unity, as before on the score

of personality, the Holy Spirit must be more than a divine somewhat,

emptied of all divine graces and perfections--the full and perfect God,

even as that same fullness dwelt in Jesus bodily. The Holy Spirit works

thus in a ministry of love precisely as Jesus did, end the love is just

the same kind of love, burdened for men, burdened for enemies, heaving

in silent agonies of passion to recover and save; fulfilling in every

particular the Christly terms of sacrifice. Again--

2. It requires, every one may easily perceive, quite as much suffering

patience, and affliction of feeling, or The work of the Spirit is in

sacrifice. even of what is called passion, to carry on the work of the

Spirit, as it did to fulfill the ministry and bear the cross of Jesus.

In the first place, the work of the Spirit covers the whole ground of

human life, broad as the world is, and continues through all the untold

generations of time. And in this world-wide operation he is enduring,

not Pilate, and the soldiers, and a few Jewish priests, but the

contradiction of all sinners that live. He is betrayed by more then

Judas, denied by more than Peter; struggling on, from age to age, with

all the falsities, and treasons, and corruptions, all the unspeakable

disgusts, of all bosom perversity; acting, and suffering, not before

them indeed as Christ did, but as it were in perpetual contact with

them.

Neither let us imagine, as too many do, in their superficial haste,

that the principal suffering and sacrifice of Christ consisted in the

pains he bore in his body. The pains of his moral sensibility, the

burdens that oppressed his vicarious feeling, cost him more than his

cross, as any one may see who takes the meaning of his Gethsemane.

Indeed this one look down into the depth of his divine feeling seems to

have been permitted us, that our mind might be taken away from the

foolish opinion that his principal sacrifice lay in the pangs of a few

hours' bodily suffering. Indeed these bodily pains of Christ on the

cross appear to be a kind of condescension rather to our coarseness,

that he might raise an outward flag of distress for our dull sensuous

nature to look upon; while to him, the principal woe is that which, as

incarnate love, he bore all through his ministry, in his griefs,

disgusts, and wounded sensibilities; that which once or twice he barely

speaks of, as when he says "now is my soul troubled;" that which made

him, to his friends, "a man of sorrows;" that which, in the garden,

took hold of him, even as an agony, the most appalling scene of tragedy

ever beheld in our world. In a quiet, silent hour, when his person is

threatened by no appearance of danger, the wail of his burdened heart

breaks out in a way of intensity that is even terrible; while in his

trial and mockery, and the bodily torture of his death, his serenity is

more remarkable even than his distress. Perceiving thus how the real

pain of Jesus, that which constituted the principal cost of his

sacrifice, was the burden that lay upon his feeling, baffled and

wronged as that feeling ever was, we are let into the precise

conception of that equally heavy burden that is borne by the Spirit

always. And this long, weary draft upon his patience, his disgusts, and

wounded sensibilities--this it is that makes his intercession. We pass

now--

3. To that which is to be more decisive than our own thoughts or

constructive endeavors, viz., to the direct Scripture representations.

exhibitions of the Scripture itself. And here, since I must abridge the

review as much as possible, I will pass all the more casual

notifications of the Spirit which speak of doing him "despite," of his

being "grieved," and "vexed," and "lied unto," and "resisted;" that

show the eminently Christly "gifts of healing" ministered by him,

allowing it also to be said of him as of Christ--"Himself took our

infirmities and bare our sicknesses;" that call him "Christ," and "the

Spirit of Christ," and "Christ dwelling in us," and "Christ living in

us"--in all which it is made clear that he has all the sentiment, and

sensibility, and even wounded sensibility, of Christ himself--Christ's

equivalent in short, abiding in the heart.

Having merely alluded to these very significant tokens, I go on to

notice three principal conceptions under which the intercessory

character and feeling of the Spirit are specially displayed.

Thus, first of all, he goes into the ministry of Christ with him and

upon him, as the qualifying impulse, in some sense, of his work;

resting upon With Christ in his ministry. him as a dove in his baptism;

leading him into and through the great soul-struggle of the temptation;

bestowed upon him "without measure" in his doctrine; travailing with

him, last of all, in his Gethsemane and his cross; so that we may say,

when all is done, "who through the eternal Spirit offered himself

without spot to God." Instigator thus, and upholder of Jesus, in all

his ministry and sacrifice, how strange is the inversion we make, when

we allow ourselves to think of him as being only a bare impersonal

force or influence!

A second and partly reverse, though really agreeing conception of the

Spirit is met, in his appointed vicarship, or substituted ministry,

acting in Takes Christ's place and continues his work. the place of

Christ himself. Thus Christ declaring to his disciples, "it is

expedient for you that I go away," promises the Spirit as "another

Comforter" in his place. And the reason of the substitution is not

difficult. Having brought on his outwardly historic work to a close,

Christ perceives that his permanent, or protracted stay in the flesh

and before the senses, would be rather a hindrance than a help to

farther progress. If it were possible for him, as a visible Saviour and

resident, to win disciples all over the world and in all ages, they

would yet be disciples not of faith, but of the eyes; aching still to

see him, more than to be like him; thronging on to his seat as pilgrims

over continents and seas; yet not one in a hundred of them ever getting

near enough to speak with him; wanting all, of course, a visible

kingdom since they have a visible king. Therefore he declares a change

of administration--that the Christ of the eye is to be withdrawn, and

the Spirit, an invisible, diffusive, pervasive, every where present,

always abiding, Christ substituted--a Christ whom no distance can

remove, whom the sick man can have in his chamber, the prisoner in his

dungeon, the exile in his place of banishment, the martyr in his fires;

present to the heart, more present than looks, or words; present where

the eye is blind and can not see him, and the ear is deaf and can not

hear him speak. And yet he is to be the consciously felt Christ. "The

world seeth me not but ye see me." "At that day ye shall know that I am

in my Father and ye in me and I in you." In him, as their living

interpreter, present to consciousness in all the sentiment, love,

sacrifice, of the Father and the Son, the disciples are always to know

the ascended Lord of their hearts, and be kept in the sense of his

society and even of his burdened sympathy itself.

This brings us to a third Scripture conception of the Spirit, where the

vicarious working is even more formally Has his Gethsemane. displayed

[3] --"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know

not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh

intercession for us with groanings that can not be uttered. And he that

searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because

he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Our translators appear to have looked upon it as a thing quite

unsupposable, that any priestly and vicarious working pertains to the

ministry of the Spirit, and have cast the words of their version

accordingly, so as to make it a great deal less distinctly vicarious

than the original. Besides it would be nearly impossible to so

translate the passage as to give it, in English, the full vicarious

typology and substitutive import of the original Greek version. Thus

our English word helpeth--["helpeth our infirmities"]--represents a

long Greek word compounded of two prepositions and a verb; the

preposition with indicating a conjunction of sympathy, the preposition

instead of, indicating substitution, and the verb taking hold of as in

participation; [4] precisely the same verb in precisely the same phrase

which is translated, "took our infirmities,"Matth. viii, 17 in the

remarkable passage that declares the vicarious assumption of our bodily

infirmities and evils by Christ; only there the verb is not intensified

by the prepositions here compounded with it. Are we then to judge that

a much stronger word of vicarious assumption is here to be emptied of

every such import, and translated simply "helpeth" because it refers to

the Holy Spirit?

Again it is to be specially noted that the Holy Spirit is twice

represented in this passage under the priestly figure of making

intercession; the same which is applied to Christ in but a single

instance, and becomes, The priestly conception of his work. in the

estimation of many teachers, the crowning doctrine of his mediatorship.

Precisely how much, or what is to be understood by this intercession,

as affirmed of Christ, it may be difficult to settle. The word means

literally to intervene for, as when a friend intervenes between a

superior and an inferior, to obtain some act of forgiveness, or help

from the former. There is somewhat of a mediatorial character in the

intervention, somewhat also of a vicarious character, inasmuch as the

intervening or interceding party is supposed to have the case of the

humbler and more dejected one upon his own feeling, and to be a

volunteer bearer of his burden for him. In the case of the Spirit the

vicarious, substitutive character of the intervention or intercession

is grammatically intensified, when compared with the intercession

ascribed to Christ, by the doubling of the preposition for, compounding

it, first with the verb, and then placing it again before the noun or

subject. [5] The intercession ascribed to Christ--"able to save them to

the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to

make intercession for them"--plainly enough represents the reconciling

work he is able to do in souls, under the objective and priestly figure

of a perpetual offering to God, for the propitiation of God to them.

The intercession of the Spirit on the other hand is subjectively

conceived and not otherwise, for his ministry is only subjective in

men's hearts; it is the wrestling within of his own divine sympathy and

suffering love, to raise them into accord with God's mind and the

secret motions of his goodness; thus to give insight and power to their

prayers, and draw them into all the secret helpings of God in a state

of reconciliation.

All which he is said to do "with groanings which can not be

uttered"--better "with groanings unuttered;" that is, with strivings of

concern or burdened feeling, that are the silent Gethsemane of his

ministry. The groanings of Christ are audible and so might the

groanings of the Spirit be, if he had the vocal organs of a body

connected with his feeling. Enough that one, as truly as the other, and

both in exact conformity, fulfill the natural pathology of love and

sacrifice; Christ when he throws himself upon the ground, groaning

aloud for the mere burden he has upon his feeling, and without any

other kind of distress; and the Spirit when he enters into the

struggles of our disorder and weakness with so great concern, groaning

inaudibly in us and heaving out our soul in sighs and prayers.

It is no small confirmation of the view thus given, that when it is

carried forward into the latter of the: two verses, all that

awkwardness which the commentators appear to have felt, in assigning to

it any precise meaning, is completely removed. Omitting the words "will

of," which are not in the original, we read--"And he that [sought unto

by prayer] searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit

[the mind which the Spirit is working in us] because he [the Spirit]

maketh intercession for the saints [preparing a mind in them] according

to God"--working that is from and toward just that counsel of vicarious

love which has dwelt in the Godhead from eternity. God he infers--this

is the strain of his argument--must certainly be in the secret of what

proceeds from himself, and when fallen souls are wrought into that same

mind by the Spirit, their prayers must be accepted and their footing of

reconciliation established. In this manner do the Scriptures represent

the Holy Spirit, in his vicarious work and office of

intercession--bathing us inwardly in all Christly sympathy, bearing our

burdens of weakness, and sin, and groaning, as it were, his own

longings for us into our prayers. At the same time it is to be admitted

that there is a good deal of language applied to Christ and his work in

the Scriptures which is not applied to the Holy Spirit; which also it

is no part of my present subject to explain. I only say that it

contemplates a difference in the offices of Christ and the Spirit, and

their modes and kinds of operation. My present concern is simply to

show that the Holy Spirit works in the same feeling as Christ did,

bears the same burdens on his love, suffers the same wounded

sensibility, encounters loss and sacrifice under the same vicarious

impulse. I do not undertake to identify Christ and the Spirit in such a

sense as to make them do the same things, or work by the same method.

One operates outwardly, the other inwardly; one before the

understanding, the other in it; one making impressions by what is acted

before the senses and addressed to thought, the other by groanings and

throbs of divine feeling back of thought. This much, however, I will

say, that if the sacrifices of the much enduring, agonizing spirit,

were acted before the senses, in the manner of the incarnate life of

Jesus, he would seem to make the world itself a kind of Calvary from

age to age, and would just as impressively sanctify the law, by the

perennial obedience of his sacrifices, as Christ did by the casual

sacrifice of his cross. And this brings me to add--

4. That the reason why the Holy Spirit is regarded so much less

tenderly by us than Christ, or even as having no particular title to

our love, is Only does not meet us in the senses. that we are creatures

in the senses, carnalized also and blinded, as regards all spiritual

perceptions, by the sensuous habit of our sin, and that Christ meeting

us in the senses, speaking to us with a man's voice, enduring toil and

contempt for us, joining himself to us in all our external adversities,

looking on us with a face gloomed by sorrow, or bathed in the sweat of

agony, or stained by the blood of his thorny crown and cross--meeting

us in this way, having a human person for his organ, Christ lays hold

of our feeling, by his address to the senses, and we begin to imagine

some special tenderness and fellow sensibility in him, awakened by his

human relationship itself, and dating after that relationship begun.

Whereas he has only come into humanity because the feeling was in him

before, and has taken up the human nature, that he might have an organ

of what before was hid, unexpressed, in his divine feeling. And so the

Holy Spirit, coming after, comes in that same feeling, tempered to just

the same pitch of vicarious sacrifice for men. Jesus is not better than

the Father, nor better than the Spirit, his substitute. We think so, if

at all, only because we see him with our eyes; and he is put before our

eyes, in the flesh, for the very purpose of expressing to us adequately

what is in the Everlasting Godhead, unvoiced to feeling in us hitherto,

unexpressed by look, or form, or act, or agony. Could we make the still

small voice of the Spirit audible, could we bring into sound the

groanings unuttered, could we invest the Spirit in our hearts with a

look that is the fit expression of his sensibility, and feel the tears

of his divine pity dropping on the face of our sin, how evident would

it be made to us, that we have, in him, the true Christ-passion, living

always in the secret center of our life; the very same that we had

visibly before us, in the tender ministries and suffering graces of the

Son of Mary.

Perhaps it may be necessary to add, that the Holy Spirit in such a

ministry of sacrifice and burdened feeling, Works in authority also.

holds the magisterial key of divinity still, and makes it none the less

a piercing and strong ministry. He is just like Christ in this respect.

The tenderness and self-sacrificing love of Christ never subsided into

softness, or a look of weakness. Authority goes with him. He lays

himself upon the proud, the plunderers of the poor, the pretenders and

hypocrites in religion, in words of fearful severity. He is kingly even

in his passion. And in just the same manner the Spirit has thunders for

guilty consciences, none the less terrible, that, like his groanings,

they are inaudible; scourges of rods to lay upon the backs of all

defiant sins; fiery-pointed arrows of conviction to hurl among the

drowsy fears, and awake them out of their sleep. He sharpens the soul's

hunger, stirs it up to self-disgust, kindles aspiration, strikes the

bell of time and makes it ring the note of flying years. A faithful and

strong Spirit, he can also be a piercing and severe Spirit. The

vicarious love makes him none the less a king, and the kingdom of God

he establishes within none the less truly a kingdom. In a word, he

bears the whole divine character into his ministry; and brings it in

upon our hearts' presence as a revelation there of God's full majesty.

Adding this for safeguard, our conclusion is that the ministry of the

Holy Spirit is as truly a ministry of suffering and vicarious sacrifice

as that of Christ himself.

I can not drop the subject in hand without adverting to a great and

very hurtful misconception of the Gospel plan itself, that connects

with this same misconception of the Holy Spirit which I am here trying

to correct. Thus how very commonly is it given as a true summation of

the Gospel, that Christ, by his death and A mechanical Gospel which is

not the true. sacrifice, prepares a ground of forgiveness or

justification, and then that the Holy Spirit is sent by a kind of

immediate, or efficient agency, to renew the soul in a forgivable

state. Christ works before the law, and the Holy Spirit works in the

soul; one to open a gate of mercy, the other to lead into that gate. As

if Christ, in his agony, and cross, and all the feeling of his most

feeling and beautiful ministry, were not engaged to be a reconciling

power in souls, at all, but only to set himself before God's justice,

and his just retributions, buying their silence by his pains; whereupon

the Holy Spirit, a very good being doubt. less, though doing nothing

specially here by goodness, is sent forth, in adequate force, to be the

great Regenerator. The regeneration accordingly is not a point won by

any Gospel siege of love and sacrifice, but carried by mighty

impressment rather, much as if by some unseen hydrostatic pressure, or

some silent gun-shot stroke of omnipotence. These sapless timbers!

these fleshless, nerveless bones! how sad a figure do they make of the

Gospel, where the true Christ and Spirit come together, in love and

sacrifice, to beget us in holiness, by the longings felt of their joint

passion in our hearts.

It results, of course, under such a conception of the Gospel plan, that

we are drawn to no very close personal union either with Christ, or the

Spirit, and just that is missed which, in God's view, is the principal

aim of all; viz., the power to be exerted in us by the feeling

expressed to us. For if Christ, in what is called his vicarious

sacrifice, is wholly withdrawn from us, and is only doing a work before

justice and the law, in some court of reckoning we know not where, he

is plainly doing nothing to win a place in our consciousness, or to

produce a Christly consciousness in us. He does not move upon us, but

upon the books, thinking only of the credit to be gained for us there

by the contribution of his pains. How then is he going to be formed in

us? And by what conceivable method are we to have him inwardly

revealed, and to say, as the conscious witness of our hearts, Christ

liveth in us? However good and great the work he is doing among the

retributive economies for us, he is not here for the doing specially of

any thing in us.

Meantime the Spirit is reduced to an attitude where we are unlikely as

may be, to conceive any such thing as the greatness and blessedness of

a conscious, The Spirit our invisible friend. everlastingly established

friendship with him. He is not here, to reach us, in any sense, by the

divine feeling. He is not Christ taken out of form and locality, to be

present everywhere and be revealed, unseen, as a Christ living in all

hearts. But he is thought of more as an efficient divine operator in

souls; doing a work of repair in them, or, at most, a work of moral

suasion before their choices; neither of which is very much related to

our personal sentiments and the engagement of our love to his

character. We think of him as of some impersonal force, some hidden

fire, some holy gale, not as a friend present in sympathy, or wounded

feeling, to every throb of our hearts; disgusted by sensuality and

passion, pained by vanity, offended by pride, grieved by neglect, hurt

by unbelief and all worldly inclinings; our eternal counselor, guide,

helper, stay; such a Spirit as, living in us, keeps the sensibilities

even of Gethsemane and the passion in immediate contact with our inmost

life. How great value and power there might be in such a conception is

obvious. What mindfulness. what delicate reverences and exact loyalty

of living would it require, and how dear the confidence it would

support. Whether it be a relation more fearful or tender, more humble

or lofty, more careful or inspiring, I hardly know; it is every thing

great, beautiful, tender, holy, powerful. Losing the sense of such a

Spirit and of such a personal friendship with him, we seem to lose

every thing. He is our other Comforter, our second Christ; and when we

lose our faith in him, or hold him but dimly, we are just so far

reduced to an experience that is orphanage--even as Christ himself

conceived when he said, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to

you."

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[3] Rom. viii, 26-7.

[4] sunantilambanetai.

[5] huperentunchanei huper hemon

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CHAPTER IV.

THE GOOD ANGELS IN VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.

IT has been a great hindrance, we have seen, to all right conceptions

of what is called the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, that the

attempt has been kept up, so persistently, to solve it as a matter one

side of all the common principles of duty--a superlative goodness, too

good to be obligatory on Christ, or any one else; an optional

sacrifice, when undertaken by him, that overtops all requirement and

makes a virtue better than even perfect law can frame a notion of. And

so, by a kind of prodigious goodness above his obligation, Christ

raises a fund of surplus merit, to even the account of all the world's

wrong doing under obligation. There ought to be some difficulty in

getting well through any such kind of solution; for after all the

principles of duty, or virtue, have been thrown into confusion, no rule

is left to work by, in the settlement of any thing.

In this view, or on this account, I have undertaken to show the

universality of just what we discover most distinctly in the work and

sacrifice of Christ; that every good being, just according to his

degree in good, will bear evil beings and suffer in feeling for them

and take, as it were, their bad lot on himself; that, as Christ did it,

so did the Father before Christ in the dispensation of the Old

Testament; also that the Holy Spirit, after Christ, is continually

doing it, in his continued work of intercession. Vicarious action,

feeling, suffering, therefore, is not peculiar to the Son, but is even

from eternity in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in one as truly as in

the others.

What I now propose is to carry the same conclusion a degree farther, or

to bring it a step nearer down to All good intelligences in vicarious

sacrifice. us; viz., to show that all holy beings created are in

exactly the same vicarious spirit and suffering way of love as Christ

was, only not doing and suffering exactly the same things. This may

seem, in one view, to signify little as regards the extension of my

subject; for if the uncreated three are in the very same love as Christ

from eternity, bearing for love's sake all the burdens of all enemies,

and suffering a Gethsemane in feeling on their account, it of course

adds nothing as regards authority, to show, that all created subjects,

the glorified men, the angels and seraphim of the heavenly worlds, are

also in the same. But we are looking, it must be observed, not after

authority, but after commonness, or a common platform of principles in

vicarious sacrifice; and therefore it signifies even the more to find

all the holy intelligences of God's empire in it, with Him, and with

Christ; for it brings the Christly sacrifice down just so much closer

to our human ranges of life and character, and our common obligations

of duty and sacrifice. It shows, in fact, that Christ's vicarious

action is no prodigious matter, no monstrosity of goodness, but that

all created holy beings have their perfection and blessedness in the

same.

On this point we have several distinct modes of evidence.

1. A negative evidence, created by the impossibility of assuming the

contrary. Nothing would more certainly shock our conceptions of

glorified Shocking to think otherwise. minds, or of what is proper to

their holy character, than to hear it affirmed that they are ignorant

of sacrifice, never afflicted for the want, or woe, or fall of others;

that, in fact, they would never think of being burdened with concern

for an enemy, or of bearing any loss or sacrifice for his sake. Is that

the kind of virtue, or character, that distinguishes the glorified

state? Is it by such minds, in such a spirit, that Christ is to be

appreciated, and is it such that are to have their joy in society with

him?

2. It is agreed that angels and all glorified minds are in the

principle and life of love; and love in angels works according to its

own nature, as Their love puts them in a way of sacrifice. truly as it

does in God or in Christ; for it is a power universally that takes hold

of its objects and of all their woes, wants, wrongs and even enmities,

to bear them as a weight on its afflicted sympathies. As certainly,

therefore, as the angels and good minds of the upper world are fixed in

the sway of love, they will run out their sympathies to others and will

burden their hearts with concern for the un. worthy and the wicked;

ministering unseen, where they may, in warnings and secret guidances.

If they are in Christ's love, they will have a Gethsemane and a cross

in that love, and will be fulfilling their unseen mini3try in the same

key with his.

3. It signifies much that they are drawn to Christ with such evident

sympathy, and are with him so Their sympathy with Christ shows them to

be. constantly, at every stage, and in every principal crisis of his

work. The interest they have in him is visibly toned and tempered, by

their common interest with him in his objects. Ages before his coming,

they are moved with mighty expectation, "desiring to look into these

things." "Highly favored! blessed among women!" is the eager and

strongly reverent salutation they bring to Mary's mortal womanhood.

When the child is born, they break into the sky, filling it full of

heavenly hymn--"Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace." In his

temptation, they crowd about him to support him by their ministry. In

his agony, one comes to strengthen him. In his trial, he is sure that

he can have twelve legions to help him. They watch by the tomb where he

sleeps; they roll away the stone when he wakes; and sitting there, one

at the head and another at the feet, in forms more glorious than

sculptured stones, they mark the now vacant place of his rest. With a

delicate reverence, they tenderly fold the bloody napkin up and the

bloody linen clothes, and lay them apart by themselves; and they say to

Mary, with what tenderness, and, as it were tearful homage, "Come see

the place where the Lord lay." Almost, of course, they are with him in

his ascension, when his work of sacrifice is done, and he goes up in

the train of their innumerable company.

All these, now, as I readily admit, are rather indications than

positive proofs. And yet there is such a zeal in their sympathy as

indicates no partial accord, but a thoroughly complete oneness with

him. Appearing most punctually when he sinks lowest in sacrifice,

flocking to him in his agony and always when his soul is troubled, what

can we imagine but that they suffer with him; pained for his enemies

even as he is, and bearing the same burdens for them? Otherwise their

sympathy itself could be scarcely better than an offense to his

feeling. But there is a more direct kind of evidence--

4. In the ministry they maintain themselves; for they have a ministry,

side by side with that of Jesus, in which we may see distinctly what

Their ministry is in Christ's way of sacrifice. and how much of

sacrifice they are able to bear, and do in fact bear, for mankind. I am

well aware of the general unbelief or practical Sadduceeism, as regards

"angel and spirit," that is likely to impose a look of myth or hollow

fantasy, on any thing which can be said of the angelic ministries of

the Scripture. Any appeal made to them in a matter of argument is

likely to bear a specially unsolid, or even flighty and visionary

character, in the estimation of such as mean to believe in them, and

would even be offended by the intimation that they really do not. I can

not stop to argue the question of such ministries. I will only suggest

that I am discussing a purely Scriptural matter, on grounds of

Scripture evidence, and that such ministries are not heartily believed,

probably because the supposed visitants are taken to be only phantasms,

or apparitions, and not real beings. For if there be any thing in our

doctrine of immortality, there ought to be a world of real

intelligences and glorified minds outside of this; beings that have a

character, as truly as we ourselves expect to have, and that, having a

character, will have sympathies and a disposition to be occupied in

good works; beings, many of them, who have gone out from our own human

society, and are bound to it by the dearest affinities of love and

customary friendship, and will want to be engaged, if possible, in

ministries of good to others left behind. Let it also be noted, that

they are represented as ministering only to the heirs of salvation;

that is to such as are fenced away from their invisible access by no

contrary affinities; for it may be that all good minds have immediate

access to such as are good, and that no conditions of sense, or walls

of distance, ever shut apart, or in the nature of things can, such as,

in God's love, are made inherently common to each other. Besides, how

completely will it take away the fantastic look of these celestial

brethren and their visitations, just to conceive them as coming into

the world, because they are pressed by the same love as Christ was, and

drawn, by the sublime necessity of their own perfect character, to bear

our lot of shame and loss, in a similar extension of their suffering

sympathy.

This now we shall find is the exact conception held of them at all

points in the representations of Scripture. Some of them we are

expressly taught, The Scripture shows them as in sacrifice. and we know

not how many, are men, or the spirits of men, once living on earth;

just as soundly real as they ever were, or as we ourselves are to day.

And what is more they are only acting in character, precisely the same

kind of character which they lived in as members of our race. They were

men who bore great burdens of toil and suffering for the people of

their times, and only learned to bear them in that manner for the

people of all times. They found a cross in their virtue itself, even as

Christ did, and all that we discover, in their ministries among us now,

is that they have not forgotten their cross, or grown tired of it.

Thus we are expressly informed that the angels of the transfiguration

are Moses and Elias; and they spake with him, most naturally, of his

decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. By which we are to

understand, not that they informed him of his crucifixion, for that he

knew already, but they joined their feeling to his, and comforted him

by their suffering sympathy, and the assured sympathy of the heavenly

worlds. For which, too, they had been effectually trained by their own

former trials and burdens of love on earth; Moses when he cried,

sinking under such burdens, "I can not bear this people," and Elias

when he groaned underground in his cave, "I have been very jealous for

the Lord of Hosts." And who was that angel in John's vision who said,

"I am of thy brethren the prophets?" Was it Daniel who fasted in such

broken plaints of sorrow for his people and country? or was it Jeremiah

who cried, "O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of

tears?" All these, and other such holy men of old, had borne the cross

of love in their time, and have not forgotten it, now that they are

classed as angels. The ministries they fulfill are only their old

ministries enlarged and made perfect. They lived in vicarious sacrifice

before they went up, and the tragic joy they had in it draws them to it

now.

Meantime we shall find that, in all which is told us of these angelic

ministries, they are set in close analogy with the ministry of Christ

himself. They are with Hagar by the fountain of the wilderness, as

Christ with the woman at Jacob's well. They are with Elijah the

starving prophet in his sleep under the juniper tree, offering him

their cake which they have baked upon the coals, even as Christ

prepared his fire of coals, and the fish and the bread, that his hungry

friends, on landing from their boats, might receive the token of his

divine hospitality. They had such a feeling of tender sympathy for

innocent children, coming forth into a rough world of sin and sorrow,

that they took hold, every one, of some one child, or more than one, to

become their unseen guardians--"Verily I say unto you their angels do

always behold the face of my father"--even as the incarnate Lord

himself clave to the children everywhere, and laid his hands and his

dear blessing on them, saying--"of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

How deeply their feeling is entered into the great tragedy of sin, and

all the lost conditions of the fallen state under sin, we may see, on a

large Concerned for sin as God is. scale, when they are shown, before

the great salvation promised has arrived; "desiring to look into these

things," and breaking out afterwards when it is complete--ten thousand

times ten thousand and thousands of thousands--in the song of their own

deep, always suffering love, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Also

in what Christ says himself, testifying--"Verily I say unto you there

is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that

repenteth." Which joy he still further explains by showing how it

springs up with his own, growing on the same root of care, concern and

suffering sympathy; how they rejoice with him, because, with him, they

are looking always after lost men, even as a shepherd after his one

lost sheep, or a housekeeper looking after her one lost piece of money;

and therefore, he and they together, when they have found their lost

one, have their burden of sorrow, as he represents, fall off, in a

blessed and rebounding joy.

It is worthy, too, of special remark that Christ conceives them coming

to men, in a ministry Concerned for the sick and poor as Christ was. to

the body strikingly correspondent with his own--restrained by no

fastidious disgusts, averted by no disrespect of the humble and

dejected lot of the poor. They do not spurn, they can not even neglect,

the dying beggar at the rich man's gate. No matter whether it be a

story of fact, or only a parable, the figure they make will be in

character, in one as truly as in the other, and the picture he gives

will, in either case, reveal them in a manner worthy of our study. The

beggar is in a most sorry plight. He wants a nurse, a physician, and

friends, and withal, a place in which to die. But of all his kinsmen,

if he has any, there is none that will be charged with a care so

unwelcome and loathsome. He goes a begging thus at the street corners

and elsewhere, till finally having reached the shelter of a rich man's

gateway, or the arched corridor of stone leading into the court of his

house, his round is ended, and he lies down there, till the round of

life also may be finished. He asks the pity of a few crumbs for his

famishing body. Perhaps he gets them, and perhaps he does not. This at

least he does not get; viz., that tender human sympathy which every

humblest creature wants in his last hours.

Thus he fared with men; but there were two classes of beings, in a

different key, who came to his help in their wonted acts of

ministry--the dogs, I mean, and the angels--the dogs from below,

esteeming him to be another and superior kind of creature; the angels

from above, rating his significance and dignity as much higher, as

their mind was capable of higher thoughts. Behold them here at hand,

the dogs and the angels together, in a strange companionship of

ministry, round the flinty bed of the poor abject and son of sorrow;

they dispensing their low natural surgery on his ulcerated body, and

these, beholding in him an heir of glory and a future peer with them in

their heavenly dignities; watching by him as volunteer nurses,

strengthening him inwardly by the touch of their own brave hearts, and

waiting, as the pulse beats low and the breath slackens to a full stop,

to hail him as a brother made free, and convoy him home. Wonderful

picture in the light and shade of it, signifying much, not only as

regards the tender fidelity of their ministry to the bodily condition

of men, but a great deal more as a revelation of the fact, that they

are able to encounter so much necessary revulsion of feeling and really

painful sympathy, in doing their works of mercy. No one looking on the

picture can fail to be struck by the very close analogy between their

way and that of Christ himself. Neither they nor he can perform such

works of sympathy on the loathsome subjects of bodily disease, without

a great expenditure of suffering. The very pity that draws them to such

works is itself a heavy load to bear, and is just as much heavier as

their love is stronger, their sympathy closer, and their feeling more

delicate.

See how it was with Christ, in that most tender, but strangely

compounded and really fearful scene, the raising of Lazarus. Death, who

took him on his way foul days ago, is to be called back and required to

let him forth alive. Jesus struggles, we can see, with great emotions,

partly tender, partly painful. He weeps, he groans in spirit, and is

troubled. It is as if his feeling were in contact all through with

death's foul work, as well as with the griefs of the friends--glad, for

the disciples' sakes, to the intent they may believe, and yet scarcely

able to meet the ghastly appearing of the dead brother whom he will

evoke by his call. Indeed, if we carefully study the pathology of this

scene we shall see the feeling of Jesus struggling in it, with surges

of painful commotion, scarcely less proper to be called suffering, than

the agony itself.

So when the angels of God come to help the poor forlorn beggar off, in

his release to life. That fastidious feeling which might torture us, in

coming to a fellow mortal in such loathsome plight, they make nothing

of; it will not trouble them, for they suffer no false disgusts. But

that purity which has put them so far aloof from sin, and from all its

foul incidents, their finer tastes, their more delicate, celestial

sensibilities--all these are yet present to him, body and soul, not

without pain, and lifting, as it were in sympathy with him, to bear him

out of his foul cave and start him on his flight. So the beggar dies

and is carried up, escorted home to Abraham's bosom, as the Saviour

represents, by their angelic company. Christ bore him in his passion,

and they, too, have borne him in their passion, now no longer a burden

either on his feeling or on theirs. I will only add--

5. That the Scriptures speak of these angelic ministries, in terms that

indicate an impression of sacrifice Conceived in the priestly

character. in them, and a vicarious engagement of their suffering love.

The very word minister--"ministering spirits sent forth to

minister"--has a Christly meaning, as if they were on a mission of

service, and sacrifice, and holy pains-taking, like that of Christ the

Lamb; enduring contradiction, wounded feeling, heaviness of heart, and

struggling on, through rains of love, to accomplish their charge of

guardianship. They are also spoken of in terms that bear a priestly

character as being intercessors for men. Such terms are figures, of

course, and objective representations, even as they are when applied to

Christ himself. Thus we find that, as Christ is called our Advocate

with the Father, a priest that liveth ever to make intercession, so

Christ testifies concerning these angels standing in their

ministries--"they do always behold the face of my Father which is in

heaven." To behold the face of God, in this manner, is to have a

priestly access, and be able to maintain a priestly intercession, even

as the high priest enters the holy of holies, to make answer and suit

for the people. So when Christ declares--"there is joy in the presence

of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," he means by "the

presence of the angels of God," the presence of God made glorious by

the priestly retinue of his angels, and these electrified with joy,

that the labor of their heart is crowned, and their suit of

reconciliation is triumphant.

We have it then as a point established by Scripture evidence, that the

glorified spirits, or angels of God, being in the love of God, are also

in that The vicarious principle to be universal. kind of sacrifice, or

vicarious engagement, which love, in its own nature, supposes. And so

the gulf between sacrifice in uncreated and created minds is

effectually bridged. Make as much as we will, or possibly can, of the

vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and, as being the incarnate presence and

ministry of God himself, too much can not be made of it, still there is

no superlative, over-good, kind of goodness in it. Calling it good by

the only standard of goodness, perceiving distinctly that love, in any

and every moral being, will burden itself for all sin and suffering,

and hasten, by its own everlasting impulse, to take the woes of others

on its feeling, we at once have Christ made intelligible and yet as

sublimely pre�minent, as the stature of his person, and the

transcendent power of his divine ministry and suffering require him to

be. What we call his merit will not be diminished, but it will be no

such merit as exceeds the standards of character. It will not be a

something which theology has found, to fill out a theologic and

contrived exigency, but it will be a divine; patience and sorrow,

revealing God's love to our hearts; a grace, because it is the grace of

a character; a salvation, because it is a power of salvation.

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CHAPTER V.

ALL SOULS REDEEMED, TO BE IN VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.

IN what is called his vicarious sacrifice, Christ, as we have seen,

simply fulfills what belongs universally to love; doing neither more

nor less than what the common standard of holiness and right requires.

And then since there can be no other standard, and no perfect world, or

society can be constituted under a different, or lower kind of

excellence, it follows incontestably that the restoration of mankind,

as a fallen race, must restore them to a love that works vicariously,

and conforms, in all respects, to the work and passion of Christ

himself. Vicarious sacrifice then will not be a point where he is

distinguished from his followers, but the very life to which he

restores them, in restoring them to God. What we call his redemption of

mankind must bring them to the common standard. Executed by vicarious

sacrifice in himself, it must also be issued in vicarious sacrifice in

them.

The common impression, I am sorry to believe, is different. It belongs,

indeed, to the staple matter of our theologic teaching on this subject,

that, Vicarious sacrifice belongs to men. while we are to follow

Christ, and copy him, and aspire to be like him, we are never to

presume, and can not without great irreverence imagine, that we are to

have any part with him in his vicarious sacrifice. We can not atone, it

is said, or offer any satisfaction for the sin of the world; we are too

little, and low, and deep in sin ourselves, and nothing but a being

infinitely great and perfect, by an optional suffering that exceeds all

terms of obligation on himself, can avail to smooth God's indignations,

and so far even our debt, as to make forgiveness possible. Therefore we

are to understand, as a first principle of the Christian salvation,

that Christ, in the matter of his vicarious sacrifice, is a being by

himself and is not to be followed, in any sense, by us, though followed

carefully in every thing else. In this very great mistake are included

three or four subordinate mistakes, that required to be specially

noted, and corrected by the necessary explanations.

1. That Christ, in all that pertains to his work as vicarious, acts

officially, or fulfills an atoning office Christ atones not by office,

but by character. wholly one side of his character as a perfect

character. He does not execute what belongs to the simple perfection of

his love as a character fulfilling standard obligation, but performs a

volunteer office in our behalf, over and above all that is obligatory

on his own account. And so, the vicarious sacrifice, being a matter

pertaining wholly to his office, and not to his character, we of course

can have no part in it, because we have no part in his office, and can

have as little in the official merit by which God's account is

satisfied. Now the obvious fact, that which we have seen developed in

the careful illustrations of the previous chapters, is that vicarious

sacrifice belongs to no office, or undertaking outside of holy

character, but to holy character itself. Such is love that it must

insert itself into the conditions, burden itself with the wants, and

woes, and losses, and even wrongs of others. It waits for no atoning

office, or any other kind of office. It undertakes because it is love,

not because a project is raised, or an office appointed. It goes into

suffering and labor, and painful sympathy, because its own everlasting

instinct runs that way. There can be no greater mistake, in this view,

than to imagine that Christ has the matter of vicarious sacrifice

wholly to himself, because he suffers officially, or as having

undertaken it for his office to supply so much suffering. He suffered

simply what was incidental to his love, and the works to which love

prompted, just as any missionary suffers what belongs to the work of

love he is in. It was vicarious suffering in no way peculiar to him,

save in degree.

No further qualification is needed, unless it be to say, that effects

will follow his vicarious sacrifice, that can not follow such kind of

sacrifice in men. Sacrifice in us carries humbler effects. And the

difference will be so great, that he will have accomplished all that

can be fitly included in the redemption of the world, while the same

kind of sacrifice, morally speaking, in men, will accomplish only some

very inferior and partial benefits. A proportion stated between the

incarnate Son of God and his infinitely perfect beauty on the one hand,

and the very limited and sadly mixed virtue of a human person on the

other, will represent as accurately as may be the comparative results

of the same kind of sacrifice in both.

2. It is another of the mistakes referred to that, when vicarious

sacrifice is restricted wholly to Christ, and considered The fellowship

of his sufferings. wholly beyond the pale of human virtue, the

restriction supposes a kind of vicarious intervention for sin that is

artificial, and has no root in moral obligation. Either exceeding the

law of love, or else falling short of it, he fulfills a kind of

substitution that we can not share, because it is not in the range of

our possible sentiment, or even intelligence. There is no koinonia for

us, no "fellowship in his sufferings," because he suffers outside of

all known terms of moral obligation. Whereas we may and must have

fellowship, and be conformable even unto his death, because he is

himself conformed in it to the one, universal, common, standard of

love. The true and simple account of his suffering is, that he had such

a heart as would not suffer him to be turned away from us, and that he

suffered for us even as love must willingly suffer for its enemy. The

beauty and power of his sacrifice is, that he suffers morally and

because of his simple excellence, and not to fill a contrived place in

a scheme of legal justification. He scarcely minds how much he suffers,

or how, if only he can do love's work. He does not propose to be

over-good, and to suffer optionally a certain modicum beyond what

perfect excellence requires, that it may go to men's account. He

undertakes to furnish no superlative merit above all standard

obligation, which, for just that reason, can have no perceived quality

of merit. He is only just as good as he ought to be, and suffers what

he ought to suffer, and has no thought of doing an artificial somewhat,

in a scheme of artificial compensations, where he can be actuated by no

assignable motive within the possible range of moral ideas. How far off

do we place him, how poorly conceive him, when we put him thus away,

and compel him to die for ends contrived, apart from all behests of

character. All that is most central in his mission--the love of God in

tears and deep groanings--is dried away and lost to feeling, in the

sterile and dry figment we require it to be, as a mere quantitative

sufficiency of pain, contributed under no assignable principle, and

having no moral quality whatever.

3. Another mistake that follows, when vicarious sacrifice is restricted

to Christ alone, is yet more lamentable because it corrupts the idea of

sacrifice The idea of Christian sacrifice how corrupted. itself, when

imposed as a condition of human discipleship. We insist, abundantly, on

the necessary law of self-denial and self-sacrifice. We quote the

Master's words requiring us to follow him and bear the cross with him,

or after him. There must be sacrifice we say, every Christian comes

into a life of sacrifice--only not into vicarious sacrifice; that

belongs to Christ alone, suffering no participation of mortals. A

qualification, or salvo, that very nearly unchristianizes Christianity

itself. What is the sacrifice that must not be vicarious sacrifice, but

a virtue that has even lost connection with Christian ideas? It is mere

self-abnegation, a loss made for the simple sake of losing, and no such

practical loss as love encounters, in gaining or serving an enemy. It

has the same relation to vicarious sacrifice that penance has to

repentance. It is itself a kind of penance, or torment, submitted to by

the will. It does not appear to be even suspected that such kind of

sacrifice is a mode of asceticism, substituted for the sacrifice of the

Gospel, and yet it can be nothing else, for the simple reason that it

is required not to be vicarious. Sacrifice out of love, or because a

full heart naturally and freely takes on itself the burdens and woes of

others, has a positive character, and is itself the most intensely

positive exercise that can be conceived. The other kind of sacrifice,

that which must not work vicariously, is naked self-suppression, a

merely dry and negative operation, in which the soul willfully chokes

itself and gets no return, but a sense of being famished for its pains.

And how much of what is so persistently taught concerning self-denial,

sacrifice, taking up the cross, is, in just this manner, a departure

from all Christian ideas; a wearisome, unblessed, and forced virtue,

that belongs to the false gospel of asceticism. Happily the evil is

mitigated by the fact that, when we go into sacrifice and suffering for

others, we break away from such asceticism, without knowing it, and

come into the genuine, positive kind of sacrifice with Christ himself.

4. Still another and different kind of misconception is included in the

denial of vicarious sacrifice to men, in the fact that it forbids us.

to think of reciprocating, in any sense, the sacrifice of Christ for

us, and takes away, in that manner, one of the dearest, most softening

and soul-renewing exercises. What should the true love in us do so

naturally, and with an To be afflicted with Christ reciprocally.

instinct so free, as to take all Christ's feeling on its feeling; to

suffer with him in his suffering of all kinds; to burden itself in all

his burdens; to be afflicted in all the losses, apostasies, and

dishonors that shame his saving work; because they wound so deeply his

divine sensibility. As Christ became a suffering Saviour for our sake,

so the love he begets in us will take every wrong done him as done to

itself, and will gladly suffer also for his sake. Whether in fact we

take it or not as a thing permitted us, to be entered into his burden

as he into ours, we shall as certainly do it as we love him. Only it

makes a very great difference whether we do it against some speculated

doctrine of substitution that gives only him the right to act

vicariously, or do it as the natural privilege and inborn right of our

love. In one case, we do it feebly, or even cringingly, lest we venture

too far and do some presumptuous thing; in the other we say "Let me do

it, I must have it for my privilege. If Christ is afflicted for me, or

in me, shall I not be afflicted for his affliction? If he is wounded by

his friends, or his enemies, shall I not be wounded for his wounds? If

he says, my yoke,' shall I not take that yoke upon me for his sake?

Grant me this, O Saviour and Lord, to bear thy load with thee, as thou

hast borne the load of my sins; to feel thy feeling, suffer in thy

suffering; and, to crown all, as thou didst bear witness to the truth

in thy death, let me not shrink from even dying to bear witness for

thee." Just this feeling it is that has animated and armed the host of

Christian martyrs in all the past ages. Called to die, as they

believed, for Christ's sake, that has been enough. And how blessed and

divine a thing is it always for the otherwise weak, distracted heart of

a sinner, to come to the great world-containing heart of its Redeemer

and have its opportunity in suffering with him! Nor is it any thing to

object, that there is a genuine reality in his vicarious suffering,

because, in taking our evils, he takes them off from us, while we, in

taking his, remove no burden from him. Is he not as truly a sacrifice

then for those who will die in their sins, as for those who take the

saving benefit he brings? Besides, how does it appear that our bearing

of his burdens with him takes off nothing from the weight of his

burdens? When is any great benefactor more strengthened and comforted

in his pains of sacrifice, than when some most dejected, weakest child

of sorrow comes to bless him and asks to suffer with him? What again do

we see, but that Christ himself, as in the scene of his agony, turns

wistfully to his disciples, craving just this kind of sympathy and

chiding them in wounded feeling that he has it not--"Tarry ye here and

watch with me--could ye not watch with me one hour?" And as then he

turned imploringly to his friends and besought them to watch with him,

will it not be a cordial now to his often wounded compassions, when the

little ones of the earth are for love's sake wounded with him?

In these specifications, or specified corrections, we have seen exactly

what and how much is implied in the position, that we, as a race, in

being restored to God, are to be perfected in the common, universal

standard of goodness, and so to be established with Christ in the same

way of sacrifice. We are thus prepared to open the Scriptures, and take

their declarations in their true meaning. To them, accordingly, I now

appeal; for it is a question resting on their simple authority, and no

other.

I begin with the explicit declarations of Jesus himself. Thus,

considering his own life as a ransom for sin, in the sacrifice to be

made of it, he lays it Christ calls his followers to follow him. on his

disciples to follow him and be, if they may, the ransom purchase of

others, saying--"even as the Son of Man came, not to be ministered

unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Again, citing his own cross, when, as yet, nobody understands what it

means, least of all that God's own love supports a cross of patience

even from eternity, he says--"And he that taketh not up his cross and

followeth after me is not worthy of me." He does not mean by this that

he is under a cross of abnegation, but only that he is going to be

crucified for love's sake. For love's sake and work, therefore, they

are to suffer with him, and bear a cross after him.

He calls us in the same way to bear his "yoke" and "learn of him" in

doing it; for there is a way, as he will teach, to bear love's burdens

joyfully. They shall not be dry penances or heavy laden drudgeries, he

testifies, but only such sacrifices of joy as love itself will assume

for its objects--"the yoke, therefore, is easy and the burden light."

His death is to be the crowning fact of his sacrifice, as all agree,

and yet, he does not claim any exclusive right to die in this manner,

but even lays it down as the universal test of love and

discipleship--"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and

mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his

own life also, he can not be my disciple." Obedience unto death is to

be a law for them as truly as for him.

He contrives furthermore a scene, at the close of his ministry, where

the great main truth is to be acted and so made visible--I refer to the

scene of washing the disciples' feet--where his language, most

carefully measured, and his action, most deliberately formal, quite

exceed the supposition of many, that he is only teaching, in this way,

tile single grace of humility. Neither, at this solemn, almost parting

hour, can it be imagined, that he is laboring any such limited and

subordinate matter. Rather is he condensing all the matter of his

humiliated suffering life of sacrifice, into a single scene, or

picture, or parabolic action, that he may impress it in a total

application on his disciples. And so he says at the end--"Know ye what

I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so

I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also

ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that

ye should do as I have done to you." In one word, for that is what he

means, "as I have stood back from no sacrifice, or shame, for you, at

the low point of your sin, so are you to seek and serve, all pride

apart, the perishing brothers of your race."

Again, if we imagine something official in his mission of sacrifice, we

find him consecrating his disciples, in his last prayer, to the same

mission and in fact the same office--"As thou hast sent me into the

world, even so have I sent them into the world. And for their sakes I

sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through [literally in

or upon] the truth." However true the doctrine for which this is

commonly cited as a proof text, nothing could be farther from any

thought of his on the present occasion, than to be discoursing on the

truth as a means of sanctification. He obviously means to say--"And for

their sakes I consecrate myself as an offering, that they also may be

consecrated and offered, in like manner, in the service, or upon the

dying testimony, of the truth. So he says, "for their sakes," as if he

had come into his sacrifice, in part, that he may put them in the

same--so to send them into the world, even as he was sent into the

world.

Now the impressive matter, in all these citations, which might be

indefinitely extended, is that Christ expects his followers to be with

him at the very point of his sacrifice; just where it is even commonly

assumed that we can, of course, have no part with him, and where it

would even be a kind of insufferable presumption for a mortal to think

of it.

We pass now to a different and more interiorly related class of

citations; in which it will be seen, that the whole economy itself of

Christian virtue is based in the principle, and flavored by the spirit

of vicarious. sacrifice.

Thus it will be noted in the very first discourse of Jesus, his sermon

on the mount, that he can not even Sacrifice the economic law of

discipleship. get through the beatitudes, and scarcely into them,

without opening to view, and turning round for inspection, this grand

first principle of devotement and unselfish love. Blessed are the poor

in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, the merciful--these to him are

the candidates for beatitude; and we see, from his subdued and tender

manner, that he is thinking of his own sacrifice and beatitude. And

thus it is that he goes directly on, to tell his friends how they will

be reviled and persecuted by those whom they serve, and for his sake,

adding--"Blessed are ye. Resist not evil. Smitten upon the right cheek

turn the left. Robbed of your coat give up your cloak. Love your

enemies, bless them which curse you, do good to them that hate you, and

pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that (this

is the argument, and how high does it reach) ye may be the children of

your Father in heaven. Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in

heaven is perfect." There has been much debate over this language. It

means simply this; that we are to have one standard even with God, and

that, a law of sacrifice and suffering patience--the same which Christ

himself fulfills.

What the feeling of Christ is respecting the participation of his

sacrifice by his followers, comes out even more strikingly, on a

certain occasion, from the fact that he is drawn away to it, by his

associations, without apparently any previous intention. He is led to

speak of his death, and of the general principle that the good must

die, in order to be fruitful--"Except a corn of wheat fall into the

ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much

fruit." And then, as if drawn along to think by degrees of others, and

finally of none but others, he adds--"He that loveth his life shall

lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto

life eternal. If any man serve me let him follow me." How close the

relation between him and his disciples, when he calls them, in this

manner, into his very death itself, and commands them to be with him,

in all the sublime economy of sacrifice by which he is reconciling the

world.

His apostles, accordingly, follow after, teaching, all, the same great

law of sacrifice, and presenting a gospel packed with symbols of

sacrifice in The apostles follow their Master. every part. This word

sacrifice they apply to men as freely as to Christ himself; Paul

exhorting, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,

that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." "Let no man seek his

own." "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in

the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant, and became

obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" Peter, when he

writes, "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults,

ye take it patiently, but if, when ye do well, ye take it patiently,

this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because

Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should

follow his steps." "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are made partakers of

Christ's sufferings." "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be

ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf;" John, also, when he

writes, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his

life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

In these and other like passages which might be cited, from Christ and

his three apostles, it is very commonly not discovered, I admit, that

any such thing as a vicarious element is included in the Christian

virtue. Every such conception is excluded by the reverently meant, but

most injuriously false and really irreverent assumption, that nothing

vicarious, whether in spirit or mode of life, is possible to a merely

human being. Christ takes this whole field, it is believed, to himself,

let no sinning mortal intrude! And yet, when Mock sentiment. this

vicarious meaning, or element is excluded from the passages referred

to, they become passages of mock sentiment only; words that have a

sound, but no deep, earnest meaning. Their real and truly magnificent

import is, that it lies in the very scheme and economy of the gospel,

to regenerate a Christly virtue in men, a character that bears the type

of Gethsemane and the cross.

Again we discover a closer, in some respects even more convincing kind

of evidence, in the testimony given by one of Christ's disciples out of

his own human consciousness; I speak of the apostle The Pauline

consciousness. Paul. The same is discoverable in others, only in a

manner less striking. In later times, for example in George Fox, the

Christly consciousness is revealed in a manner almost equally sublime.

Now Paul is but a man, and yet he is a man so Christed, or possessed by

Christ, that the very sacrifice of Christ is consciously and even

visibly in him. As regards mental suffering, it is not to be supposed,

of course, that Paul had any sensibility capable of as intense feeling;

or any love to mankind capable of being as heavily burdened, as Christ

is seen to be in what is called his agony; but in respect of mere

physical suffering, I see no reason to judge that Christ made a heavier

sacrifice, in his three years' ministry and death, than his servant

did, in his long, laborious, always imperiled, persecuted life and

martyrdom. So deep was he in the spirit of his Master, so heartily

entered with him into the burdens of love. He can not even hide it from

himself that he is in his Master's sacrifice--"Always bearing about,"

he says, "in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also

of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we, which live, are

alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus

might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." He dares even to conceive

that his suffering life is somehow complementary to that of his

Master-- "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that

which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his

body's sake, which is the church. Under the heading--"as workers

together with him,"2 Cor. vi. he goes on to catalogue, in almost a

whole chapter, these Christly losses, works, and pains, that he is

bearing with Christ and for his sake. Nor is it mere bodily hardship

and peril that he undergoes; we find him, at times and according to his

measure, in a kind of mental Gethsemane, for the burden of love, and

care, and grief for others, which has come upon him; as when he

writes--"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart; for I

could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my

kinsmen, according to the flesh." There has been much debate over these

words; but a soul that is really under Christ's yoke, and bearing his

burdens, will be deep enough in the struggle of vicarious sacrifice, to

know what they mean. Furthermore, it is remarkable, that Paul has

reached no such point of theologic scruple, that he can not freely

apply to his own life just the same sacrificial terms that he applies

to Christ himself" I am now ready to be offered." "Yea, and if I be

offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice

with you all." He goes still farther, exhorting all Christians to be

offered willingly in sacrifice like their Master--"And walk in love, as

Christ, also hath loved us, and given himself for an offering and a

sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor."

This now is the true Christian consciousness, in all of the best and

noblest human examples. The gospel of life takes hold of a man all

selfish, a fiery and proud persecutor, and it so changes all his inward

aims and feelings, that he lives no more for himself, but for others;

encountering perils, pains, privations, indignities for his whole life

long on their account; so burdened for them in feeling, at times, that

he could even find relief in the imprecation that he might be accursed

from Christ for their sake. So clearly is the Christian believer

entered himself, as a matter of fact, into the vicarious sacrifice of

Jesus. This is the new character it undertakes to beget in him, and the

exact amount he has of Christian evidence is graduated by the amount of

this new character found in his life.

I have given this large review of the Scripture citations on this

subject, that it may be seen how freely, variously, constantly, they

consent in the testimony, that Christianity begets, and, is to beget,

in human character, the same kind of sacrifice that is found, or

revealed in Christ. I have selected only a few of the passages that

persist most undivertibly in this kind of testimony. It is not then by

any speculation, or undue pressure on. words, that I gain this

conclusion. Nothing but a theologic pressure, kept up for ages, has

availed to empty the Scripture of a truth that is so plainly taught,

under so great a multitude of forms, and is set even in the foreground

of the Christian plan.

Arresting my argument here, I still can not close the chapter, without

calling my reader's attention to the immense loss Christianity has

suffered, and is now suffering, in losing out the faith that Christ is

to be really followed by his followers. There is little importance in

The immense damage suffered here. these discussions, if they do not

help the gospel to assert its true idea, and exert that practical power

it has undertaken to exert on the world. And whatever hinders, or

weakens that power, even though it take the name of Christian doctrine

and is fairly meant as such, is about the greatest wrong that can be

committed against both Christ and mankind. What then shall we think of

any theologic doctrine or dictum, that makes a blank space at the very

heart of the gospel, or which raises fences of obstruction, to keep men

off from just that common standard of the heavenly virtue, in which all

perfect minds are to meet; which breaks down the fact of community

between Christ and his disciples; which says, this kind is for Christ,

another for mankind; which gives him love in its genuine power, and

gives them love in a sense so qualified, that all his most living and

life-giving sacrifices would be stifled under it. The supreme art of

the devil never invented a greater mischief to be done, or a theft more

nearly amounting to the stealing of the cross itself, than the filching

away thus, from the followers of Christ, the conviction that they are

thoroughly to partake the sacrifice of their master. Such words I know

sound harshly, but they are not harshly meant. I raise no accusation in

them; for I do not, for a moment, imagine that perversity, or art, or

any malign purpose has ever been concerned in the mischief referred to.

I only use strong language to express my own strong convictions; taking

this very deplorable matter simply as an example of the immense, and

fearfully desolating wrong that may be done to God's truth and the

world, by t e well meant, but misguided, speculations and schemings of

men, whose theories unwittingly reduce the gospel to their own

measures. Having found a necessity that God's justice should be

satisfied by some given quantum of suffering, and that Christ, in his

death, made the contribution for us of that suffering, and that in this

fact is contained all that belongs to his vicarious sacrifice, what

should they infer but that we, in following Christ, are excluded, of

course, from any such kind of sacrifice? All which is done with the

better feeling of reverence, that it puts the Saviour in a figure of

merit so superlative!

The effect that follows is such as only can. It is as if the gift of

the incarnation had been half taken back again. A wide hiatus still

yawns Effects of the hiatus between us and Christ. between even the

ideal of our virtue, and that of our Christ. Nor is it any thing to

say, that whatever he does vicariously belongs to his office, and that

we have no such office. It belongs, we have already seen, not to his

office, but to his character; that is to his love, which is the spring

of his character; the same, which is the root of all goodness in all

good beings, drawing them as good to such as are evil, and putting them

in a way of tender self-identification, that virtually assumes and

bears the bad and shameful lot it compassionates. Without this

vicarious property, love is not love. Pity there may be, philanthropic

benevolence, esteem, approbation, admiration, but the vital distinction

of love is wanting. It is very true that we are not to set ourselves up

as Redeemers of the world. Our petty measures of quantity and character

forbid such a thought; just as any feeble and low man would be only

absurd, in attempting what is given to some most qualified and

strongest man of his own species. Still any such feeble and low man is

to be, and may truly be, in the same kind of love with one who is most

qualified and strongest. Nay, if this latter has been suffering and

painfully watching for him, it will even be a chief point of his

benefit and the raising of his life, that he so loves the person of his

benefactor as to suffer his suffering. And just so it is that Christ,

in his suffering love--always a fact, and only a fact revealed in his

agony and passion--gets never the just degree of power in our feeling,

till we are able to love his love and suffer with him in his suffering.

Here only it is that he touches us at the quick, and becomes the soul

renewing power of God. Vicarious love in him answered by vicarious love

in us, tiny and weak though it be, as an insect life fluttering

responsively to the sun--this is the only footing of grace, in which

Christ is truly received, and according to his glorious power. Hence,

in no small degree, the amazing dullness of the gospel to men's

feeling, and even in men's feeling after they seem to have believed--we

wonder often how it is ourselves. It is because there is no common

footing between them and their Lord; because, in his superlative merit

and suffering, he takes a different plane, from which they are

excluded. They are shut away, thus, from exactly what is most vital and

most quickening in his passion. The cord of sympathy is cut, at just

the point where it was to have the closest tension, and be most

stringently effective.

Doubtless it will be said, in reply, that such kind of criticism is

unjust. While it is very true that we exclude ourselves from any part

with Christ in what is vicarious, do we not always insist that men are

to follow Christ, to bear the cross, to deny themselves, to suffer

wrong, to love and bless even their enemies? Undoubtedly, but how

blurred, how sadly miscolored are all such teachings, when the huge

exception we speak of is added. They are now to follow Christ in just

that limited kind of sacrifice which he knew nothing of. They are to

bear the cross for the discipline, and not for what love sees to be won

by a cross. They are to deny themselves because it is good to put

themselves under negation, or self-suppression--even as the monasteries

kill out selfishness by the wearisome and dry torment of ascetic

practices--not to deny themselves in love's own suffering, but joyful

and free ministry. They are to suffer wrong even as Christ did, only

they are to do it in no such feeling as he did, when he bore the lot of

transgression. They are to love and bless enemies, because it will

school them in patience and humility, not as Christ bore enemies out of

pure devotement to them; or they are to exercise themselves in acts of

benevolence towards enemies, towards the impenitent, towards the

heathen, in the name of love, when confessedly they are excluded from

any such tender identification with their bad lot as Christ, for love's

sake, took upon him when he bore their sins.

And so it results that our discipleship, so called, is a discipleship

fallen half way out of Christianity, even as our theology of the cross

becomes a dry, stunted, half conception of it; reducing Christ to a

mere book-account factor of compensation by suffering, and making

nothing of him as the revelation of vicarious sacrifice in God; that

which is the supreme fact and glory of his incarnate mission. Did we

see this glory upon him, did we look upon him as sent into the world to

beget us in the same character, and enter us into the same kind of

life, how different our conceptions of his doctrine, how different the

whole manner and power of our discipleship. The scheme, and scale, and

meaning, of the gospel, as a grace related to our feeling and life, is

no more the same. And the world, having such a grace installed in it,

would begin, how soon, to glow, and burn, and tingle with new life in

every part.

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PART II.

THE LIFE AND SACRIFICE OF CHRIST IS WHAT HE DOES TO BECOME A RENOVATING AND

SAVING POWER.

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CHAPTER I.

USES AND RELATIONS OF THE HEALING MINISTRY.

ALL the perplexed questions growing out of substitutions, imputations,

legal satisfactions, and penal equivalents, have thus far been avoided.

There has been no delving in our exposition, but we have been moving

easily rather, along open ranges of thought, where nothing too

abstruse, or difficult to serve a merely practical interest, has come

in our way. In this manner, we have gone over a considerable tract of

our field, meeting scarcely a point of debate, in the subject as

commonly handled. We have discovered a meaning, not difficult, for the

vicarious sacrifice, and for all the Scripture phraseology relating to

the same. We have seen it to be grounded in principles of universal

obligation, acknowledged, or to be acknowledged, by all good minds,

uncreated and created, in all worlds and ages of time.

Having reached this point, we now pass to another general department of

the subject; where, continuing still in this rather untrodden, some

will think, too easy level of movement, we undertake to settle a Second

stage of the argument. true conception of what Christ is doing in his

sacrifice; viz., the end he will accomplish, the power by which he will

accomplish it, and the course of life and benefaction by which he will

obtain that power.

When this also is done, as I think it may be with the same facility and

avoidance of perplexed questions, we may well enough comfort ourselves

in the conclusion, that, if by and by, or from that point onward,' we

are obliged to go to sea in questions more perplexed and laborious, we

have a considerable continent already gained behind us, where we shall

have large enough room, and ranges wide enough in the truth, to afford

a worthy, or even sufficient gospel by itself.

According to a current conception, Christ came into the world for the

very purpose of the sacrifice, and not Christ not here to die, but dies

because he is here. for ends beyond, in which the stress of his mission

lay. The problem being to contribute so much of pain, or judicial

suffering, as may be needed to square the account of sin, the

conclusion naturally follows, when that view is taken, that he is here

for the very purpose of the bleeding; that is to be substituted in our

place, and take, or somehow compensate for, the release of our

punishment. This, and not any thing different, is the coarsely

conceived, legally quantitative vicariousness ascribed to him. We, on

the other hand, regard the vicariousness in which he comes, only as the

mode, or instinct of his love, when doing a work in the recovery and

reconciliation of men. He was in vicarious sacrifice before he came

into the world, having the world upon his feeling as truly as now, and

only made the fact-form sacrifice, because he had the burden of it on

him already. The sacrifice, taken as a fact in time, was not set before

him as the end, or object of his ministry--that would make it a mere

pageant of suffering, without rational dignity, or character--but, when

it came, it was simply the bad fortune such a work, prosecuted with

such devotion, must encounter on its way. The missionary, going out to

spend his days among a heathen people, does not go to make so much of

sacrifice, including even that perhaps of life itself--that being his

purpose he might better stay at home-but he makes the sacrifice when

the fit hour comes, because he is in a work, and because the work

requires it of him. Christ, then, we must believe, is here to do

something--some great and mighty work--not to make up a necessary

quantum of pain, for the compensation of God's justice. The sacrifice

he makes, in becoming a man of sorrows, and dying a malefactor's death,

will be suffered under his work, and only for his work's sake. He was

not ignorant, of course, that he would suffer. He expected that, dying

for his work would give eloquence and power to his mission; just

because, not coming here to die, he would have it put upon him as the

cost of his fidelity. Even as Anselm carefully and rightly

distinguishes, when he says--"he suffered death of his own accord, not

as an act of obedience, but on account of his obedience in maintaining

right; for he held out so persistently, that he met death on account of

it." [6]

What then is the end or object he is here to accomplish? By the

supposition he is not here to square up the account of our sin, or to

satisfy the divine justice for us. Neither is it any principal thing

that he is here to What he undertakes to accomplish. prepare a

possibility of forgiveness for sin. That is, if any thing, a secondary

and subordinate matter, as will be discovered hereafter, in the Third

Part of my argument. The true end, or object, of the sacrifice we shall

find is very simple, though presented in the New Testament under

manifold varieties of statement; for, widely different as the varieties

are, they are all in radical agreement with each other. Taking our clue

from one of the simplest and tenderest in beauty of them all--"The Son

of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost;" or from one

that is widest in range and contains the highest summation of all--"To

wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;" or from

one most formally put, and, in a certain intellectual sense, the

deepest of all--"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into

the world, that I might bear witness to the truth"--taking hold of

these and all such varieties of Scripture, we conceive a transaction

moving on character in souls; a regenerative, saving, truth-subjecting,

all-restoring, inward change of the life--in one word the establishing

of the kingdom of God, or of heaven, among men, and the gathering

finally of a newborn world into it.

But the farther unfolding of this central idea we shall find requires

us, for convenience sake, to make a fourfold distribution of the field

or subject matter. First, we shall naturally give attention directly to

Christ's Healing Ministry, and the large indication there made of what

he is doing and to do, in his sacrifice elsewhere. Then we shall

endeavor to show more exactly in another chapter, what work he

undertakes or proposes to do in souls, by his sacrifice. In another and

third chapter it will be shown that, for that work's sake, he

undertakes to be, and in the New Testament writings is conceived as

being, the Great Moral Power of God, for its accomplishment. And then,

fourthly, a chapter will be added to show how he becomes that power.

It is by no accident that Christ, not trained as a physician, and, as

far as we can discover, never before exercised in matters of concern

for the No accident that Christ is occupied with healings. sick, opens

out the grand public ministry of his Messiahship directly into an

office of healing, turning the main stress of it, we may almost say,

down upon the healing of bodies, from that time onward. Hence it is the

more remarkable, that, when so much is made, in the formulas, of his

threefold function under the titles of Prophet, Priest, and King, he

still makes no figure in them at all as a Physician or Healer. This

latter he is in the literal fact of history, and a great part of his

outward life is in this particular kind of engagement. The others he

is, or is only to be, in some tropical, accommodated sense, where

language helps its poverty by a figure more or less determinate. We

discover, meantime, that while he does not disown, or repel these

figures, permitting himself to be called a prophet, accepted as a

priest, and exalted as a king, or Messiah, in his Kingdom, he does not

conceive that he is specially distinguished in his lifetime, at least,

in these characters; but assumes that he is to be known as the expected

man of prophecy, even from the first, by the works of his Healing

Ministry. Thus when John sends messengers to inquire--"Art thou he that

should come or look we for another?" he sends back word in the

affirmative, saying--"Yes I am the expected Healer." "Go tell John what

things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk,

the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the

poor the gospel is preached." The plain inference is that however much,

or little, may be meant by the three particular figures above named, he

is, at any rate, in literal and solid fact of history, a healer--the

Great expected Healer of mankind.

I do not call him the Physician, but the Healer, it may be observed;

not because we need scruple to apply that name, but simply to call

attention to the fact that the older designation, Healer, is the one

always applied Disease goes with sin, Healing with salvation. to him in

the New Testament, and has, in strict construction, a quite different

meaning. There appears to be a deep seated, original conviction among

men, that diseases are from God, or the gods--tokens of displeasure on

account of sin. The bad consciousness of sin volunteers this appalling

construction of them, and the sufferer hopes to recover, only by some

mitigation of the powers he has offended. Hence the need of a Healer;

one who shall have skill, or faith, or some kind of access to the

retributive causes punishing the body, with power to abate their

action, and accomplish the release of their victim. Thus also we find

that, in almost all the savage races of the world, even now, the Healer

is their Holy man, or Prophet, though in fact their conjurer only, or

magician. The Physician, on the other hand, is one who deals in physic,

one who cures the disorder of nature, by natural ingredients, working

by their natural power. He and his work, and his means, are all in the

plane of nature, (Phusis) and hence, from the days of Hippocrates

downward, and perhaps in Egypt before that time, he is called a

Physician. In that sense Christ was never a proper physician, for his

cures were not wrought by prescription, but by the immediate extension,

somehow, to the patient, of a divine, or supernatural power. He

fulfilled, in this view, as probably it was never done before, the true

idea of the Healer. The healing processes before resorted' to had been

of a mixed nature, more or less corrupted by superstition; operated,

here and there by prescriptions obtained through oracles, or by

application to prophets; sometimes seconded by appeal to God, in

prayers and sacrifices offered by the priest. In the case of poison

from the bite of serpents, incantations were specially resorted to.

Diviners and magicians were often called in. If there was a pool,

supposed to be stirred up, at certain hours, by an angel, the waters

would be thought to have a special virtue. Now, at last, the Healer has

come who can heal, and the true religious idea of the office is

fulfilled in his person.

Why now this very remarkable devotion to the healing of bodies? Coming

into the world, as we all agree, His object in the healing of bodies.

for ends so intensely spiritual--to be a deliverer of souls, and to

become the Head of a universal kingdom gathered in his own glorious

likeness and beatitude--why does he strike directly into this low level

of labor, and concern himself in this large degree, with the diseases

and disabilities of men's bodies?

It is a very common answer made to this question, that he does it from

a wise consideration of the advantage he will gain by it, in men's

prejudices, or the power he will thus obtain over them, in the separate

matter of their spiritual choices and affections. On the same

principle, we, it will be urged, are to go directly down into the

economic struggles and physical pains of men, ministering to their

needs and the terrible woes of their vices, taking them, in that

manner, at a wise advantage, and not shoving them away from us, by

endeavoring to bolt in spiritual lessons upon them, without any care

for their bodily wants and ailments.

There can be no doubt of this as far as we are concerned, in our own

human charities. Neither is there any room to doubt, that Christ's

whole ministry and life change look, because of his healings, and the

very systematic and tender care he has of men's bodies. Omitting these,

or conceiving these very practical mercies never to have been shown,

his teachings would be only lectures, and the whole work of his

ministry, comparatively speaking, flashy and thin. Every thing now is

in a robust and rounded figure, just because these practical works in

bodies keep away the look of theory and Targum, giving us a Saviour to

worship and not a Rabbi to hear.

But that Christ really put himself to his works of healing for this

purpose, we shall not be satisfied, after all, to believe. He has too

much heart in His incarnation connects him with the fortunes of bodies.

these works, to permit a thought that he is in them prudentially, or to

gain some ulterior and remote advantage. No, there is a deeper reason.

He is here as the incarnate Lord of the worlds, and he could not even

be thought in that character, if, being flesh, he did not turn himself

to all he meets in the flesh. And so much is there in this, that any

one having deep enough insight to read such a matter beforehand, would

say that if the Word is to be incarnate, then he will assuredly appear

to bodies, minister to bodies, claim the kindship of bodies, by a

tender sympathy for their pains and a healing touch upon their

diseases. Being, in this manner, Son of Man, he is brought close to

man, upon his human level. He has come to be with him in that

level--touched with the feeling, not of his mental, or more respectable

infirmities, but of those which are lowest and most loathsome. What

could a fastidious Saviour do here? one who is too delicate and

spiritual, to concern himself with the disagreeable and often revolting

conditions of bodies?

Besides, he is here in God's own love, and what shall that love grapple

with, when it comes, but precisely that which is deepest in the

consciousness of suffering?

No matter if he has come to be a Redeemer of souls. Souls and bodies

are not so far apart as many try to Souls and bodies not far apart in

their fall. believe. Where are the pains of bodies felt but in their

souls? and where go the disorder and breakage of souls but directly

into their bodies? How sovereign is the action of souls! how inevitable

the reaction of bodies! And how nearly common are the fortunes of both!

The fall of sin carries down body and soul together, and the quickening

of the Spirit quickens, not the soul only, but the mortal body with it.

We sometimes think the body is in health, when the soul is not; and the

soul in health, when the body is not; but a great many diseases work

latently, a long time, before they break out, and the returning of

health is often working latently, a long time, before we discover it.

After all, how nearly divine a thing is health, be it in the soul, or

in the body; and as the fibres of both are intertwined, with such

marvelous cunning, all through, how shall either fall out of God's

order alone, or come back into it alone?

The whole man quivers in the shock of sin. The crystalline order of

soul and body is shivered by the same blow. Diseases consequent are

nothing, after that, but the fact, that the harmonic condition of

health is broken--nothing fitly joined together, nothing compacted by

what every joint supplieth, nothing vitalized by the effectual and

measurely working of all parts for each other. Why then should the

Great Healer think to pass by bodies, when he comes for the healing of

souls? And as all men know it, when their bodies are sick, and are

ready enough to be healed--ignorant meantime altogether of the disorder

in their souls, and wanting no help there--why should not the Healing

Mercy apply itself, at once, where it is wanted, and not throw itself

away on souls, in the attempting of a benefaction sure, at first, to be

repelled?

Furthermore, if we are to understand this matter, we must carefully

observe what opinion Christ himself had of men's diseases and the bad

implications whence they come. How large a part of his cures Discovers

in diseases the virus of sin. are wrought on persons whom foul

spirits--just now unwontedly "tormented" and stirred up to a special

activity--have taken possession of. How often does he say, "go in

peace, thy sins are forgiven thee;" though perhaps nothing has been

said of their sins before, and possibly nothing more is meant than that

they are cured of their malady. To the simply inoffensive broken

invalid, whom he found at the pool of Siloam and healed, he says--"Sin

no more lest a worse thing befall thee." Over a poor disabled woman

doubled by disease, he says, in softest pity, "whom Satan has bound

these eighteen years." In this manner he associates disease, even

habitually, with malign causes, and very nearly identifies the burden

of it with the curse and burden of sin itself. Over the young man,

blind from his birth, he does indeed say that "neither he nor his

parents have sinned, that he was born blind," but he only means in this

to repel the odious and half-superstitious impeachment, that was

charging the very special suffering of the case, to some special

criminality in the house. Had the impeachment been, that all the

disabilities, and diseases, and the generally disordered health of

men's bodies are due to the great public fact of sin, and the

retributive causes loosened by it, his profoundly accordant conviction

is proved by his mission itself. Accordingly all his healings in

bodies, were but so many types of the healing virtue he was dispensing,

in the higher nature itself. Indeed the whole purpose of his life,

comprehensively taken, was, in his own view, to work a healing general

of the subject, a restoration thus to complete health and the crystal

unity of heaven's vital order. Sometimes he appears to have operated

for the soul, through the body; and sometimes for the body through the

soul, contriving in what manner to elicit faith before the cure and

assuming, evidently, the fact of a reciprocal action and reaction,

operating naturally between them--the healing of the body helped by the

faith of the soul and the faith of the soul by the healing of the body.

In the large view, his operation is but one, and life, complete life,

is or is to be the result.

If now any one should ask what is the particular import, or importance,

of this healing work of Christ in His healings incompatible with penal

substitution. bodies, that it should even occupy a chapter in the

doctrine of his sacrifice, the very simple and sufficient answer is,

that it is a matter quite decisive, in respect to the nature of that

substitutive office, which Christ undertook to fulfill. If we want to

know in what sense, or manner, he suffered for the sins of mankind, his

immense expenditure of toil, and feeling, and disgustful sympathy, and

the murderous jealousy to be encountered in healing the diseases of

mankind, will furnish the exact explanation required. Indeed, if he

came simply to be the manifested love of God, and to be lifted up as

the brazen serpent in the wilderness, for the healing of guilty souls,

nothing could be more natural, in that love, having that sublime

healing purpose in view, than that he should go directly into the

healing of bodies, in the manner described by the evangelists. But if

he came to satisfy God's justice, or pacify God's wrath against sin, so

to prepare a ground of forgiveness for sin, there is a very palpable

two-fold incongruity between his healings and such a work. First,

between offering mere pain, or suffering to God, and a general

operation of body-cure on mankind, there is no more real agreement, or

consent of meaning, than between doing the same and building a college,

or endowing a school of surgery. And secondly, since all diseases are

but issues of penal consequence, under the retributive laws God has

incorporated in our human nature for the redress of our sin, what is

Christ doing, in his mighty works of healing, but simply blocking, or

defeating the ordinances of justice, whose wrath he has come to

satisfy, and whose rule to propitiate? The disagreement is radical and

total, between being man's substitute under God's penalties maintained,

and being man's Healer under the same discontinued, or pushed by. The

question how shall two walk together unless they be agreed? was never

more apposite. The inference indeed is absolute, one way or the other,

either that Christ engaged in no such work of healing, or that he came

to fulfill no such office of suffering.

Meantime, the agreement between his healing ministry and the kind of

vicarious action I have ascribed to Gloriously compatible with the

healing of souls. him is complete. Nay, he could not come into the

world, in that office, without undertaking one kind of ministry as

naturally as the other; or, in fact, without feeling both to be one.

In this connection, therefore, that very important text which we have

already cited comes back upon us, to magnify still farther its almost

imperial authority--"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by

Esaias the prophet, saying,' Himself took our infirmities and bare our

sicknesses.'" Here is a passage quoted directly from that stock-fund

chapter of vicarious language, the liii of Isaiah. The New Testament

expression, "took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses," represents

"hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," in that chapter; where

immediately follow words like these--"Yet we did esteem him stricken,

smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our

transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of

our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

Now it will be seen that, in this passage, we have the stiffest looking

terms of penal substitution any where to be found, and yet that we have

also a clause at the beginning, and a clause at the end, determining

the usus loquendi of all these terms, and showing, beyond a question,

that their meaning is exhausted by the labors, and suffering

sympathies, and wrongs of bitter violence Christ endured, as the bodily

and spiritual Healer of mankind, For when it is said, "he hath borne

our griefs and carried our sorrows," it is no more possible to

understand that he is literally substituted in our griefs and sorrows;

for the language has been applied to Christ's healings, and is even

declared to be fulfilled in the fact, that he there, "took our

infirmities and bare our sicknesses." For he took them not literally

upon him, but only assumed them to bear in a way of pains-taking labor,

and exhaustive sympathy, and disgustful attention, coupled with much

abuse and little gratitude. And then again, when he is said, in so many

strong terms, to have been wounded and bruised for us, put in

chastisement and stripes, how suddenly and even totally does the

substitution change look, when the terminal aim, or end, or idea

appears. The wounding and bruising, the chastisement and stripes, do

not bring us out as we should expect, on the satisfaction of God's

justice, but we read, instead--"with his stripes we are healed;" or, as

in Peter's version--"by whose stripes ye were healed." And so, taking

all Christ's ministry, from his beginning to the hour of his death, it

turns out that he is in a grand work of healing for body and soul,

charging on his burdened feeling all our sicknesses and pains, all the

disorder of our transgressions and sins, weary, disgustful, deep in

sorrow, circumvented, hated, persecuted and smitten, as it were, of

God, yet persisting even unto death; and all this for our peace, or,

what is nowise different, for our healing, or complete health. What a

profound reality, and depth, and rationality, is there in such a

vicariousness! Nobody is offended by it, and where is the heart it will

not soften? Health, too, this divine health! typified by the cooling of

so many fevers, the seeing of so many blind eyes, the leaping of so

many crippled limbs, the leprous skin blushing into color, the weakness

bounding into pulse, the tingling of new life where life was ebbing

low, and, above all, the sense harmonically tuned to wind, and sky, and

weather--take all this for sign, without, of that sublimer healing in

the soul's disorders within, following it upward into the state of

complete life, and purity, and harmony with God, how great a matter is

it, and how fit to occupy the burdened heart, the crucified fidelity,

and all the suffering years of the Son of God! Is there any

substitution worthier to be borne by him, or more to be admired, and

glorified by us?

In this general view, it is hardly possible to overmagnify the

importance of Christ's healings, taken in Practical value of these

analogies. their spiritual uses, and their connections with the

preaching of his gospel afterwards. In them are provided the finest and

most quickening analogies; so that every story of healing is, in fact,

a sermon, yielding its own particular lesson of prayer and importunity,

of holy conviction, of divine sympathy and strength-giving, of trust,

of co�perative action, of public confession and devoted following. When

rightly handled, there is a wonderful felicity in such lessons. No

logical processes, or refinements are wanted to set them forth. They

make their address directly to the sentiments, and get themselves

interpreted by the practical wants and troubles of experience. Sin,

too, is so very like to disease and so closely yoked with it, that it

takes to itself, with quick facility, whatever is said, or done, for

disease. Talking of blindness the sinner scarcely counts it a figure to

say that his soul is blind. The being held by demons gets, how often, a

ready interpretation from the terrible storms of the mind, and the

unsubduable fires of hate and demonized passion! How easily, too, will

the soul that is shamed and utterly broken, by guilty and remorseful

convictions, take every thing said and done for a poor leper, as being

wonderfully true for it! The healings, in this view, belong to the very

staple matter of the gospel. Without them, it would be a soul without a

body; for a gospel wants a body, as truly as a man, or a seed; and, as

every seed hath its own body, so the outward facts of Christ's healings

are the very particular and proper body, of the mightier and diviner

healings he has undertaken to work in character and the inner man of

the spirit.

Besides, it is another very important office of these works on the

body, that they emphasize the whole manner and working of Christ. We

want, as sinners, a supernatural salvation if any, one that has power

to turn back all the currents and causalities of retributive disorder

in our sin. We are under sin, and a power is wanted that can draw us

out and bring us clear Types and proofs of a supernatural salvation. of

it. How much then does it signify that our Saviour was a Healer. Going

along with him in his ministry, and seeing how he works; always

competent to the thing he undertakes, unsealing eyes born blind,

banishing foul spirits, commanding the white skin of lepers to redden

into health, hearing every forlorn sufferer's prayer, unable to be even

touched in the hem of his garment without sending out some healing

virtue; we have the feeling produced that we, too, can be healed, that

the grip of retribution fastened upon us by our sin, all the bad

causalities of our inward disorder, can be loosened. In the salvation

offered us, there is a look of capacity; we feel that God is in our

case, able to undertake, and carry, and complete, the work of our

deliverance--able to save unto the uttermost. In this profoundly

necessary impression, the other miracles also concur; but if these

mighty works had not been wrought, nothing else that Christ could have

done, in the sphere of truth and the spirit, would have had the

necessary energy of a gospel. Not even his cross would have signified

much beyond the proof of his weakness. It is only when the Great Healer

dies, that we look to find his cross a deed of power.

After what was said, in the next previous chapter, of the recovery of

men to a participation with Christ in his sacrifice, it may occur to

some one to ask, whether it can be imagined, that his healings are to

be thus participated? To which I answer that, in some very important

degree, they probably are. And Partaking in the sacrifice, shall we

also in the healings? here I will say nothing of the "gift of healing,"

so-called, which many are quite positive is discontinued--showing still

no Scripture for the fact; for if it were in still undisputed exercise,

it would pertain only to such as are put in the gift, and not to the

general condition of discipleship. We are looking here for that only in

which the followers of their Master are to follow; that which belongs

to their unity of spirit and object with him. Here we find them called

to look on the things of others, even as he did, and to have the same

mind with him in his condescension to the broken lot of mankind. And

this includes, of course, a large, and full, and free sympathy with all

suffering; a capacity of being burdened for the sick, and sometimes a

necessary, knowing consent to exposure from contagious maladies, that

involves the greatest peril to life. The ministry of love--no Christian

can withhold himself from this, whether it relate to mind, or body, or

sin, or sickness. Hence the expectation, apart from any gift of

healing, that all disciples, in all grades and positions, will have

their prayers burdened heavily, often, for the sick, and will sometimes

prevail before God in suit for their recovery--this apart from any

thought of miracle, and by virtue of the merely Christian efficacy of

prayer, as affirmed by the doctrine of prayer itself.

Hence that remarkable passage in the close of the epistle of James,

affirming the efficacy of prayer for the sick, and by the interjection

of some vicarious image, or term, in almost every verse, giving it the

very cast of the Christly sacrifice. It opens by permitting every sick

person to send for the elders of the church, and laying it on them, as

a charge belonging to their office, to pray over the sick, and help

their own faith in doing it, by the ancient solemnity of a ritual

anointing. Then it passes on to what is more general, belonging, not to

church officers, but to the common efficacy of prayer itself; where the

declaration is, that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick;" that

the Lord--not the disciple--will raise him up, and that his sins shall

be forgiven him, as they were forgiven by Christ in his healings. It

will not be understood, of course, that the prayer of faith is pledged

to restore all sick, but only that it will restore as many sick as can

have the prayer of faith given, or allowed; for God will not help any

one to pray in faith for such as he will not restore. In the next

verse, the subject is enlarged, and all Christian friends are put in a

kind of vicarious relation to each other, in respect to their faults

and maladies of soul. "Confess your faults one to another"--ask

sympathy, that is, in a free statement of your inward troubles--"and

pray for one another that ye may be healed;" as if the matter wanted

were a cure of inbred disorder. Then follows an appeal to the example,

or instance of Elijah's prayers; and the matter is put in a form to cut

off forever the idea that such kind of prayer is, or ever can be,

antiquated; for Elijah's prayers we are told were not specially a

prophet's, or an angel's, but only a man's, and that "man subject to

like passions as we are"--just as weak, and cloudy, and hard of faith

as a proper human creature will be. Finally he goes on to speak of the

care every brother will have for every brother, when he falls; how he

will fly to the rescue, and turn him back, and be a Saviour to him,

like his Master, only in a lower, less complete sense, proper to his

own human weakness. Have it as a fact always in your feeling, he says,

that "he which converteth a sinner [that is, a fallen brother] from the

error of his way shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of

sins." It is all along we shall perceive, in this passage, as if the

Master were calling the disciple to have a close, dear part with him,

in his healing and saving work. And, what is most of all impressive, he

gives in that word "hide," a part with him, so to speak, in his very

work of reconciliation. The Old Testament word translated atonement,

reconciliation, literally means to hide, or cover--"Thou hast covered

all their sin"--"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and

whose sins are covered." As the Master has this power, and stands in

this high honor, so the follower shall follow, and shall even hope,

when he pities the fall of his brother, and prays him back, with many

tears and tender watchings thereunto, that he also may be the minister

of healing and a justifying peace, and may hide a multitude of sins.

Speaking thus of prayer and of works by prayer accomplished, not to put

down, in connection, the remarkable promise of Christ, so often

debated, and so difficult, as many think, to be rationally qualified,

might even be a criminal omission--"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He

that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also, and greater

works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father. And

whatsoever ye shall ask, in my name, that will I do, that the Father

may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name I

will do it." This huge over-promise of the Saviour--what shall we make

of it? how, and how far, shall we qualify it?

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[6] Cur Deus Homo--Lib. i Cap. ix.

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CHAPTER II.

CHRIST'S OBJECT IS THE HEALING OF SOULS.

THE healings of Christ in bodies, we have just seen, are in fact an

outward type of the more radical and sublime cure he undertakes, by his

sacrifice, to work in fallen character. In this cure, we have the

principal aim and object of his mission. We may sum up thus all that he

taught, and did, and suffered, in the industry of his life and the

pangs of his cross, and say that the one, comprehensive, all-inclusive

aim, that draws him on, is the change he will operate in the spiritual

habit and future well-being of souls. In this fact it is, and only in

this, that he becomes a Redeemer. He is here in vicarious sacrifice,

not for something else, but for this.

In the unfolding of this general conception, my present chapter will be

occupied. It is very commonly assumed that Christ is here for another

and different main object; viz., to suffer before God's justice, and

prepare, in the satisfying of that, a way of possible forgiveness for

men. From this I must dissent, though without proposing here any

controversy, farther than may be implied in the maintenance and due

illustration of my proposition above stated. What was necessary to be

done for the preparation of forgiveness will be considered, at a more

advanced stage of the discussion, I only say, for the present, that

this is no principal matter in his work, the principal matter being to

inaugurate a grand, restorative, new-creating movement on

character--the reconciliation, that is, of men to God. The other, the

preparation of forgiveness, take what view of it we may, unless we make

forgiveness the same thing as reconciliation, can be only a secondary

and subordinate matter, the principal work and wonder of all being what

Christ undertakes and is able to do, in the bad mind's healing and

recovery to God.

That some very great and wonderful change, or recasting of soul is, in

some way, necessary--as well as to Christ is our Regenerator. provide

the forgiveness of sins--is generally admitted and asserted with

abundant emphasis; but it is not as generally perceived that Christ has

any particular agency in it. It is not denied that his teachings have

great value, or that what is called his expiatory suffering for sin is

effective in a degree, on men's feeling, as well as efficacious in the

satisfaction of justice; and it is continually put to his credit, in

this same suffering and satisfaction, that he has purchased the Holy.

Spirit, and sends him forth to work the needed change in souls. In this

way, some compensation is made for the loss that accrues by a failure

to conceive the immediate and really immense agency of Christ in such

changes; still there is a loss. No conception of Christ really meets

the true significance of his mission, that does not find him working

centrally in the great Soul-Healing himself; related presently to it,

in all the matter of his suffering and sacrifice. It is not his simply

to forgive, or obtain the forgiveness of sin, in the lowest and most

nearly negative sense of remission; his great and vastly more

significant endeavor is, to make the sin itself let go of the sinner,

and so deliver him inwardly that he shall be clear of it. And to

accomplish this requires an almost recomposition of the man; the

removal of all his breakage, and disorder, and derangement, and the

crystalization over again, if I may so speak, of all his shattered

affinities, in God's own harmony and law. And, in order to this result,

whatever agencies beside concur in it, three things, included in the

sacrifice and suffering of Jesus, appear to be specially needed.

1. There is a want of something done, or shown, to preengage the

feeling, or raise a favoring prejudice in it; so that, when advance is

made, on God's Pre-engages the feeling. part, in a call to repentance,

the subject may not be repelled, but drawn rather. Otherwise it is like

to be as it was in the garden, when the culprit hearing God calling

after him, fled and hid himself. No bad soul likes to meet the Holy

one, but recoils painfully, shivers with dread, and turns away. But the

foremost thing we see in Christ is not the infinite holiness, or

sovereign purity; he takes us, first, on the side of our natural

feeling; showing his compassions there, passing before us visaged in

sorrow, groaning in distressful concern for us, dying even the

bitterest conceivable death, because the love he bears to us can not

let go of us. In a word we see him entered so deeply into our lot, that

we are softened and drawn by him, and even begin to want him entered

more deeply, that we may feel him more constrainingly. In this way a

great point is turned in our recovery. Our heart is engaged before it

is broken. We like the Friend before we love the Saviour.

2. It is another point of consequence, in the matter of our recovery,

that we have some better, more tender, and so more piercing, conviction

of sin, than we get from our natural remorse, or even from the rugged

Awakens the conscience. and blunt sentence of law. It is well, indeed,

to be shot through with fiery bolts from Sinai, but these hard, dry

wounds, these lacerations of truth, want searching and wounding over

again, by the gentle surgery of love, before we are in a way to be

healed. In this more subduing, and more nearly irresistible convincing,

we have, in part, the peculiar efficacy of the cross. We look on him

whom we have pierced, and are pierced ourselves. Through the mighty

bosom struggle of the agony and death, we look down, softened, into the

bosom wars and woes Christ pities and dies for in us. And when we hear

him say--"Of sin because ye believe not on me"--we are not chilled, or

repelled, as by the icy baptism of fear and remorse, but we welcome the

pain. As Simeon himself declared, "he is set for the fall," as well as

"for the rising again;" and we even bless the fall that so tenderly

prepares the rising.

In this manner it was, that the conversion of Paul began at the point

of that piercing word--"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."

Penetrated and felled by that arrow of the divine love, his

"exceedingly mad" feeling dies, and his resistance, from that moment,

is gone.

3. There greatly needs to be, and therefore, in Christ, is given, a

type of the new feeling and life to be restored. Abstract descriptions

given of holiness or holy virtue, do not signify much to those who

Stands for the exemplar. never knew them inwardly by their effects. To

conceive a really divine character by specification, or receive it by

inventory is, in fact, impossible. No language can give the

specification, and no mind could take the meaning of it accurately, if

it were given. Hence the necessity that we have some exposition that is

practical and personal. We want no theologic definition of God's

perfections; but we want a friend, whom we can feel as a man, and whom

it will be sufficiently accurate for us to accept and love. Let him

come so nigh, if possible, let him be so deeply inserted into our lot

and our feeling, that we can bury ourselves in him and the fortunes of

his burdened life, and then it will be wonderful, if having God's own

type in his life, we do not catch the true impress from it in

ourselves.

In these three points, we perceive, that the suffering life and death

of Jesus are the appropriate and even necessary equipment of his doing

force, in what he undertakes for character. Observe now what this doing

includes, and in how many ways and forms it is set forth. Thus he

quickens--"and The Scriptures make him a renewing power. you hath he

quickened." He gives life--"that he should give eternal life." He

liberates the bondage of souls--"If the Son shall make you free." He

new-creates--"new-created in Christ Jesus." He begets--"hath begotten

us again to a lively hope." He raises from the state of spiritual

death--"and hath raised us up together." He converts--"turning away

every one of you from his iniquities." He is the captain, or bringer

on, of salvation--"bringing many sons unto glory." He reconciles, or

changes to conformity of life with God--"to wit that God was in Christ

reconciling the world unto himself." He redeems--"made unto us

redemption." In the same way he is called "the light of the world,"

"the day-star," "the truth," "the water of life," "the bread of life,"

the mirror of God's glory, before which "we are changed from glory to

glory." In short there is no end to the images that spring up, at every

turn of the New Testament writings, to express the operative purpose

and manner of Christ's soul-renewing work-presenting it continually as

the something he is doing upon us, or to revolutionize and restore our

character. This would be more impressively shown, if we could pause on

all these various expressions, such as I have briefly cited by catch

words, and unfold them by a deliberate exposition of their meaning.

But instead of this, I will recall, in this manner, a single

expression, or figure, as directly referred to him as any of the

others, and commonly overlooked as having any such reference at

all--the figure I mean of birth, or regeneration. It is even commonly

taught that Christ is not immediately concerned in the change called

regeneration, but only in the preparation of forgiveness for it, when

the change is wrought by the Holy Spirit, in the office that belongs to

him. What then signify such examples as these? "But as many as received

him [Christ] to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to

them that believe in his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of

the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" [i. e. of

God as in Christ.] Again--"Every one that doeth righteousness is born

of him," [Christ.] And again--"Being born again, not of corruptible

seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, [the Logos] that liveth

and abideth forever."

This matter of regeneration is referred also to the Holy Spirit, it is

true; but not in any such exclusive sense that it is not referred with

equal None the less a Regenerator that the Spirit is also. truth to

Christ; for it is even declared to be the office of the Spirit to

glorify Christ in the soul. Christ is a power to the soul before its

thought, and by that which is given to thought in his person. The

Spirit is a power back of thought, opening thought as a receptivity

towards him, and, in that manner, setting the subject under the

impression of Christ's life, and death, and character. "He shall

glorify me," says the Saviour, "for he shall receive of mine, and shall

show it unto you." In Paul's view conversion is to be described

accordingly as the inward discovery of Christ. "When it pleased God,"

he says, "to reveal his Son in me," giving that as the account of his

conversion. Christ then is, or is to be, an operative power on men, in

the sense that they are to be regenerated in holiness by him. In a

remoter and equally true sense, they are regenerated by the Spirit; in

a closer and more proximate sense by Christ, as the moral image and

love of God, set forth to engage their love and renew them in

character. The work required is no such work as can be summarily struck

out, by the mere efficiency, or force-principle of God. It requires all

there is of God, in the incarnate life of Jesus, in his feeling, in his

Gethsemane, in his death; a brooding of the whole deific mercy, and

truth, and patience, and holiness, over the inthrallment and death-like

chill of the soul. Even as Paul testifies again--"But ye are washed,

but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord

Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Such is the kind of efficacy which the Scriptures attribute to Christ,

and for this kind of efficacy in human character they conceive him to

be sent into the world. And, by this kind of efficacy, too, we shall

see that he The Christed consciousness in all disciples. is revealed in

the consciousness of his disciples. It is not the account of their

Christian experience, and of the gospel as related thereto, that Christ

has done something before God's throne, and wholly apart from all

effect in them, to make their acceptance possible; and then that the

Holy Spirit, by a divine efficiency in them, changes their hearts. No

such theologic gospel of dry wood and hay is the gospel of the

apostles. They find every thing, in their human nature, penetrated by

the sense, and savor, and beauty, and glory of Christ. Their whole

consciousness is a Christ-consciousness--every thing good and strong in

them is Christ within. Worsted in all their struggles of will-work and

self-regeneration, they still chant their liberty in Christ and

say--"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me

free." Their joy is to be consciously Christed, fully possessed by

Christ; to have him dwell in them, and spread himself over and through

all the senses and sentiments, and willings, and works of their life.

This is Paul, for example, a man transformed, all through, by Christ

living in him; consciously weak and little and low in himself, and

possible to be lifted only in the hope that, as Christ hath risen from

the dead, he may also rise with him, to walk in newness of life. Not

that he was captivated simply by his life. He was even more profoundly

captivated by his death, and found, in fact, his deepest inspirations

there; desiring ever to be with him in the fellowship of his

sufferings, and to be made conformable to his mighty sacrifice in them.

In that sacrifice it was that he most felt his working. That broke his

heart, and there he took the saintly fire that burned so brightly in

him. It is as if the Paul-soul were all wrapped in by the Christ-soul,

and he only speaks aloud what he feels within, when he says--"Yet not

I, but Christ liveth in me."

It is also a singular confirmation of this kind of evidence, that all

living disciples of our own time give the same kind of testimony from

their experience, This same view is virtually accepted by those who

deny it. when, by their doctrine, they have no right to it. They have

no such view, it may be, of Christ, as that he is sent to be a

regenerative power on character; the lean kine of judicial satisfaction

have devoured the good kine of God's regenerative bounty, and yet they

cling to Christ for a wonderful and blessed something still, which he

puts in their feeling, and call him lovingly their life. Sometimes they

look after a reason why they are so much bound up in him, and imagine

that it is their sense of gratitude to Christ for the squaring of their

account with God, by his sufferings; as if they could have him in so

great endearment for what he has suffered before God, apart from all

that he is and pleads before us. No, this working grace of Jesus goes

before all gratitude, to beget us in a spirit of gratitude, when we

have none; it is not the satisfaction of our debt, but it is the noble

sympathy in which he draws himself to us, the agony of his concern for

us, the lifting up of his cross, in which he proves his faithfulness

even unto death--by these it is that he installs himself in so tender a

devotion, in all believers' hearts. Thus it is that he gets into their

prayers, into their sense of liberty, into their good conscience,

bathing them all over in the glorious confidence and bliss of his

consciously participated life. They sigh after him with Thomas a

Kempis, rest in him with Brainard, sing him as the mighty power with

Wesley, even though they know him in their doctrine, only as a

sacrifice before God's justice.

Indeed it will be observed that all effective preachers of Christ under

the penal satisfaction doctrine, quit their base in it instinctively,

when they undertake the capture of the heart--falling, at once, into

modes of appeal that make him God's Regenerative Argument. They show

how he loves the world, and testify "the love of Christ constraineth

us." They magnify the tenderness of his healing ministry. They picture

the cross to human sensibility, as if they really believed that Christ

was lifted up to draw men to himself. They can not sufficiently praise

the beauty of his wonderful character. If they think of God's wrath

that could be assuaged only by his blood, no present feeling of

consistency forbids their seeing God's patience in him, and the

sacrifice he will make for his enemies. So they preach him directly to

men's hearts, in all the most winning, and subduing, and tenderest

things they can say of him; as if he were really incarnated in the

world for that kind of use. Meantime they call it preaching Christ,

only when they preach the satisfaction, and complain, it may be with

real sadness, that now-a-days, there is so little preaching of Christ;

understanding in particular, that kind of preaching. When alas! the

poorest, most repelling thing done is precisely that; and so little of

that is done, just because the poverty and repulsiveness of it are

silently and irresistibly felt. In general harmony with these appeals

to fact and living evidence, it becomes a considerable and sad part

Reclamations of lost Scripture. of my duty, in this chapter, to reclaim

the lost proof texts, which have been carried over to the side of the

satisfaction theory, and away from their very obvious natural meaning.

I do not charge it as a fraud, that so much of Scripture has been

stolen away from its rightful use and import--every mistaken theory or

doctrine of religion, which obtains long use, gradually and

unconsciously, or by fixed necessity, converts the Scripture symbols to

itself and makes them its proselytes. Take for example the texts that

follow.

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." [7] It

is not said that he taketh away the punishments of the world, but "the

sins"--just that which was signified by the sacrifices of the altar and

the scapegoat sent away into the wilderness. The lamb was not punished,

neither was the goat. The very thing signified was the removal, or

deportation of the sin. "In this was manifested the love of God toward

us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we

might live through him." [8] "That we might live" gets to mean that we

might have our penal liability released and nothing more. A previous

verse in the epistle--"For the Life was manifested, and we have seen

it, and bear witness and show unto you that Eternal Life which was with

the Father and was manifested unto us"--raises no barrier against a

construction so frigid, even though it tells us expressly that Christ

was incarnated to be the manifested Life, the same that was with the

Father and is to beget, or be, eternal life in us.

"Who his own self bare our sins, in his own body on the tree, that we,

being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye

were healed." [9] This passage is used very much as if the "bearing of

the sins," and the "stripes" spoken of, were the whole matter;

whereupon the judicial substitution theory has nothing to do but to

assign its own construction and take the text into its own particular

service. Meantime the very bearing of sins has its end, or aim, plainly

declared and is itself to be qualified by its aim--it is that we may

"live unto righteousness;" being, as we see, an appeal of suffering for

us, to work a change inwardly in our life, and beget us anew in

righteousness. And so of the "stripes;" they are not penal stripes,

inflicted for God's satisfaction, but such kind of suffering as works a

divine healing in us--"By whose stripes ye were healed."

"For Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that

he might bring us unto God." [10] As if this suffering, the just for

the unjust, must, of course, mean a suffering of penalty for the

unjust, when it is even declared, as the object of the suffering

ministry and mission--"that he might bring us unto God."

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this

present evil world." [11] It is not from God's justice, not from any

future wrath, that Christ will deliver, when he gives himself for our

sins--no compensation to God's law is even thought of--but he gives

himself to deliver us from a state of evil now present; from corrupt

custom, the law of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the

children of disobedience.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse

for us. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through

Jesus Christ." [12] Probably the expression "being made a curse for

us," does imply that he somehow comes under the retributive

consequences of our sin--in what manner will hereafter be

explained--but that will not justify the conclusion that Christ's chief

errand is to satisfy God's justice, and so to prepare the forgiveness

of sin. Is not the object plainly declared, viz., "that the blessing of

Abraham might come on the Gentiles?" Is it then the blessing of

Abraham, that God is satisfied in him, and forgiveness of sins obtained

by him? or is it rather that the Gentiles might come as near to God as

Abraham was, and be so wrought in as to be also friends of God with

him?'

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things

are passed away, behold all things are become new. And all things are

of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. [13] How much

do we hear of the reconciliation of God by Christ! and yet the very

word is a word of transformation wholly inapplicable to God; and what

is more, it is here even formally applied to us--"hath reconciled us."

Besides the "all things" which are said to come of God, in this

reconciliation, are precisely the new things before comprehended in the

becoming "a new creature." It would seem to be even impossible to get

these words into the use they have so commonly been made to serve. And

then how much more, when it follows immediately as a whole description

or summation of the gospel itself--"to wit, that God was in Christ

reconciling the world unto himself." It is one thing to reconcile the

world, and a very different to reconcile God.

"That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things

pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to

succor them that are tempted." [14] Here we have the priestly figure,

and the "reconciliation" is a different word, derived from the

atonement service of the altar; and it is a reconciliation not of man,

but "for sins;" all which appears to favor, in a certain degree, the

satisfaction theory which it is continually cited to support. And yet

the object specified in the words that follow turns back, how plainly,

all such constructions, showing, at the same time, how easy it is to

miss the genuine import of this kind of figure, by taking it too

closely and with too little range of liberty. For, in that he himself

hath suffered, in his great trial and sacrifice, says our apostle, he

has brought us succor in our trial, so that he, by that succor, is

truly our priest, as he undertook to be, and becomes the soul-help in

his sacrifice that takes away our sin. Every thing turns after all, in

these high figures of the altar, and is meant to turn, on the nearness

into which he is brought, and the dear sympathy proved by his

sacrifice.

I will not go on to cite other texts that have shared the same hard

fortune, but will only say, in general, that a numerous and very

important class, which represent the lustral figures of the Old

Testament, and speak of Christ in one way or another as having

"washed," or "purged," or "cleansed," or "sprinkled," the soul, are

systematically converted from that natural and easy signification, to

denote a clearance before the law, now satisfied; when there is, in

fact, no cleansing wrought in the defilement that was created by

disobedience to it. Whereas it is the very purpose of these lustral

transactions, or rites--that for which they were specially prepared of

old--first, by a kind of implicit force, or power of religious

association, to push the mind of a crude age forward into a cleanness

it could not think; and then, afterwards, to be a symbol under Christ

of that spiritual cleansing otherwise difficult to be expressed. Thus

when the argument is, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the

ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the

purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who,

through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge

your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" [15] --what

can be more plain than that the cleansing here spoken of is no mere

change in the soul's legal possibilities, but a lustration of "the

conscience" itself, and a turning of the soul inwardly, away from sin,

to the service and obedience of God? So of all the like figures--they

have no reference whatever to the matter of a judicial satisfaction,

but simply to sanctification of character.

If now all these reclamations of Scripture were made, there would be

very little left to give a complexion of authority to any other

conclusion, than that Christ is here for what he can do in the

restoration of character. To prove a negative so wide is difficult, and

therefore only do I withhold from saying that nothing will be left.

Still, if I am able to show, in the next chapter, that he is

represented as having come, first of all, and above all things beside,

to be a power on character, which power he became in the vicarious

suffering of his life and death, it will amount, as nearly as possible

to the same thing.

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[7] John i. 29.

[8] 1 John iv. 9.

[9] 1 Peter ii. 24.

[10] 1 Peter iii. 18.

[11] Gal. i. 4.

[12] Gal. iii. 13-14.

[13] 2 Cor. v. 17-18.

[14] Heb. 17-18.

[15] Heb. ix, 13, 14.

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CHAPTER III.

HE IS TO BE GOD'S POWER IN WORKING SUCH RECOVERY.

IN ordinary cases where a work is undertaken, it signifies nothing more

to say that the doer undertakes to be a power to that effect; for

whatever is to be done, by action, supposes, of course, a power acting.

But where there is something to be done, not by action, but by quality

of being, or by the worth, and beauty, and divine greatness of a

character, the action is nothing and the power to be effective thus, in

simply being what it is, every thing. Therefore, when we say, and show

that Christ is here to new-create, or regenerate, fallen character, it

is not insignificant to add that he is here to be, or become, so great

a power. For the new creation we speak of is not a work to be carried

by any kind of doing, or efficient activity, or even by the fiat-force

of omnipotence itself, but only by such higher kind of potency, as can

do so great a thing, through our consent, and without infringing our

liberty; do it, that is, Two kinds of power. by the felt quality of

being, or holy impulsion of worth and beauty it embodies. How far it

may be the way of the Holy Spirit to operate in the regeneration of

character by action, or the doing method, we do not know; doubtless God

will do for us by the force-principle all that may be done by it; but

the force-principle is not related plainly to the doing of all which

requires to be done in the matter of so great a change, unless it be in

ways circuitous, and one remove distant from the will; for to operate

this change, by any method that overrides, or even omits our concurrent

choice, is not to change our character, but to demolish our

personality. A great power then is wanted, which can pierce, and press,

and draw, and sway, and, as it were, new crystalize the soul, which

still is not any kind of force. And considering what the change is

which the Scripture itself proposes, we even look to see some

different, higher kind of power brought into the field, and magnified

as the hope of our salvation. In Christ, accordingly, we find this

higher power so magnified--a power that we may call the Moral Power of

God. And the representation is that Christ, by his incarnate Christ in

his sacrifice becomes the moral power of God. life and passion, becomes

that higher kind of power--executing, in that manner, or by virtue of

that kind of power, the internal new creation, for which, as was shown

in the last chapter, he came into the world.

My present chapter, accordingly, will be occupied with the fact that

Christ's saving mission turns upon his having become such a power. And

then my next will show how he becomes such a power in the facts of his

personal history.

In pursuing the subject assigned, a first matter will be to distinguish

accurately what we are to understand, by the supposed moral power.

Is it then that Christ is to be such a kind of power as we mean when we

speak of example? Certainly not, His moral power is not the power of

example. if we take the word example, in its most proper and common

signification. An example, we conceive, is a model that we copy, and

set ourselves, by our own will, to reproduce in ourselves. Many

teachers have been rising up, in all the past ages, and propounding it

as the true theory of the gospel, that Christ came forth to be a

Redeemer, in the way of being an example. But no theory of the kind has

ever been able, under the very meager and restricted word example, to

get any show of general acceptance. For the truth is that we

consciously want something better than a model to be copied; some

vehicle of God to the soul, that is able to copy God into it. Something

is wanted that shall go before and beget, in us, the disposition to

copy an example.

Sometimes the example theory has been stated broadly enough to include

the demonstration of the divine love in Christ's life. Sometimes, Not

by the revelation merely of God's love. also, this demonstration of the

divine love, apart from any thing said of example, has been put forward

as the object of his mission; love being regarded as the sufficient

reconciling power of God on human character. But no such view has ever

gained a wide acceptance; not for the reason, I must think, that God's

love is not a great power on the feeling of mankind, or that, when it

is revealed in Christ, it does not go far to make up the requisite

power; but that consciously we need other and sturdier elements to

produce impressions, equal to the change proposed in our spiritual

transformation. Mere love, as we commonly conceive the word, suffers

disrespect. We need somehow to feel that the love is a principled love,

grounded in immovable convictions of right. There is no so very intense

power in love, when descending even to the greatest possible sacrifice,

if we are allowed to think of it as being only a mood of natural

softness, or merely instinctive sympathy. Many animals will rush after

one of their kind in distress, and pitch themselves into the toils of

their captors, by mere sympathy of kind. To magnify love therefore,

even the love of the cross, as being itself the new-creating power of

God, would be a very great mistake, if the righteous rule of God is not

somehow included. When Jesus in his sacrifice takes our lot upon his

feeling, and goes even to the cross for us, we need also to conceive

that he does this for the right, and because the everlasting word of

righteousness commands him. Not all that belongs to this matter can be

said as effectively here as it may be, when we come, in the Third Part,

to consider the relations of the sacrifice to law. So much is added

here only to fasten, or sufficiently affirm, the conviction, that no

purely favoring, sympathetic kind of intervention, however

self-sacrificing, can be any sufficient power on character to be a

salvation.

By the moral power of God, or of Christ as the manifested reality of

God, we understand, comprehensively the power of all God's moral

perfections, in one word, of his greatness. And by greatness we mean

greatness The moral power of God is the greatness of God. of character;

for there is no greatness in force, no greatness in quantity, or

height, or antiquity of being, no greatness any where but in character.

In this it is that so great moral power is conceived to be developed,

in the self-devoting sacrifice of Christ's life and death.

It would even be a kind of irreverence, not to assume that God is

mightiest, and capable of doing the most difficult things, even as

great men are, by his moral power. Alexander, for example, leads the

tramp of force and victory across resisting empires, finally to be

vanquished, in turn, by the fascinations of a woman, and to die, a

second time vanquished by his appetites, in a fit of debauch. But those

great souls of his countrymen who rose into power by their virtues, and

died for their virtue's sake, such as Aristides and Socrates--why they

keep on vanquishing the world and binding it to the sway of their

character, and will as long as it exists. The power of Napoleon is, in

the same way, force; that of Washington, character. One is the terror

of his time, and when his time is over, is no more any thing but a

prodigy of force remembered. The other holds the spell of a morally

great, ever-increasing name, felt by all rulers of men both good and

bad, penetrating more and more resistlessly the revolutions, and laws,

and legislations of all proudest empires, and newest commonwealths of

the globe; more to be felt than now, just in proportion as the world

grows older, and is more advanced in good. So also it is that God is

doing always, and to do, what is most difficult and nearest to being

impossible, not by his omnipotence, The greatest power of God. but by

his great character and feeling. When he commands--"Let there be

light"--and the new sprung day flashes athwart all orbs and skies, it

is indeed a mighty and sublime power that he wields, but his great

character in good, what he is, and loves to do, and is willing to

suffer, as discovered in the incarnate mission of Jesus--how much

vaster, and nobler, and more sovereign, is the power, new-creating all

the fallen sentiments, affinities and choices of souls. It did not

burst fiat-like on the world, six thousand years ago, and stop, but it

flows out continuously, as a river of great sentiment, bathing men's

feeling as a power of life, raising their conceptions of good and of

God, and dissolving their bad will into conscious affinity with His.

Doing this from age to age, it will finally transform, we can easily

believe, the general apostasy and corruption of mankind. Now that

Christ came into the world to be this kind of power, was most evidently

the impression that he had of himself. Thus it is to this very point

that he is brought, in his remarkable discourse on re-generation, where

he passes on to say--"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the

wilderness, Christ has this conception himself. even so must the Son of

man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,

but have eternal life." According to the analogy of the figure referred

to, he is here, and is in fact to be lifted up, that he may be a

quickening, healing power--"eternal life"--in men's hearts. The

representation is that he will be the regenerator of souls, not by

action upon them, but by what he is to sight. There shall be that in

him, that quality of good and glory, which, being fixedly beheld, shall

go through all inmost distemper and subtilty of sin, as a power of

immortal healing.

It comes to very nearly the same thing when he says--"And I, if I be

lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The supposition is, we perceive,

that he is going to the cross for men, and that by that powerful

argument he will draw them, as by new-born affinities, away from their

sin, to a lasting and fixed unity with his person.

We distinguish the same thing under a different version, where he gives

it so expressly as the meaning of his errand, that he is come to be the

king of truth, and sway men's hearts by the truth-power of his life.

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that

I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth

heareth my voice." In a very important sense, he is to be the truth;

for all that is most quickening in God's feeling and beauty, all that

is most powerful to sway the convictions and constrain the free

allegiance of souls, is to be shown, not in his doctrine only, but more

mightily far in his healing ministry and death of sorrow. And so he is

to gain subjects for his kingdom, not so much by any direct doing in

them, or action upon them, but by the sublime royalties of his

character.

Beginning thus at the conception Christ has of himself we should

naturally look to find expectations going before, and impressions of

witnesses coming after, holding a perceptible agreement The ancient

Scriptures have this conception of the Messiah. with him. Thus we have

a picture given of his coming in the stately Messianic Psalm--"He shall

come down, like rain upon the mown grass, like showers that water the

earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace

so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion from sea to sea,

and from the rivers to the ends of the earth." Being thus like rain, or

like showers, he will quicken men's hearts by absorption, as it were,

of his fertilizing properties, and so take "dominion" from within.

So the famous vicarious prophecy of Isaiah is a prophecy, in fact, of

power. He shall heal by the "stripes" of his patience. He shall even be

a great conqueror--not by his prowess, but by his suffering death.

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall

divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul

unto death." To the same general effect is the prophet's word, when he

writes--"Who is this that cometh from Edom, and with dyed garments from

Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel traveling in the greatness

of his strength? I that speak in righteousness mighty to save." There

is a mixture of suffering and power, crowding each the other, as it

were, all through the picture. His apparel is "red" with stains of

blood, and yet it is "glorious apparel." He "treads the wine-press

alone," yet "travels in the greatness of his strength." Finding "none

to help or uphold," he is none the less "mighty to save." And what is

the solution but that power is to be the fruit of his suffering?

It is generally understood that Ezekiel's rill, flowing out from under

the threshhold of the temple, widening into a river in its flow, and

pouring on through desert regions, "healing the fishes," and causing

"every thing to live, where it cometh," fringing also its border all

the way with trees whose "fruit shall be for meat and leaf for

medicine," is a picture of that originally despised but ever increasing

power, by which Christ will renovate and restore the world. It will be

that kind of power which is at once silent and sovereign, moving by no

shock, but only as health, when it creeps in after, and along the

subtle paths of disease.

With these more ancient prophecies and expectations the contemporaneous

impressions of John correspond. He announces a great king at hand, who

shall be so transcendent in dignity, that he himself shall not be

worthy even to untie his sandals--"He must increase, but I must

decrease." Some of the imagery he employs is energetic and almost

violent; but when the Great Expected appears, what but this is the

greeting he offers--"Behold the Lamb of God!"

In this manner we are prepared, when we come to the apostles and first

preachers after Christ, to hear them break into expression, by some

word more adequate and thought more definite. And therefore we are not

surprised, when they put down their testimony, in the word power. And

this we shall find is their impression of the gospel and of Christ as

the His apostles coming after have the same. sum of it. They have

other, more circuitous and tropical expressions, but when they come

directly to the matter as it is, they say Power--"declared to be the

Son of God with power"--"to us who are saved the power of God"--"the

power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Of these three several testimonies, the first is connected with the

fact of the resurrection. "Declared to be the Son of God with power, by

the resurrection from the dead;" with which another expression

corresponds; viz., "That I may know him and the power of his

resurrection." The impression is not that there is any such renewing

power in Christ's resurrection itself, but that in the fact of his

resurrection comes out the real height of his person, and that so the

moral wonder of his sacrifice is there, for the first time, discovered.

Before in his death he was but a man, a defeated and prostrate man,

covered with unutterable ignominy; but when he rises, the fact of some

transcendent nature is discovered in him, and a great revision follows

in the impressions had of his person. He becomes, at once, a wholly

different being, whose life and death take, both, a wholly different

meaning. In respect of the flesh, he was the seed of David; now he is

the Son of God with power, according to the higher divine Spirit

working in his person.

In the second passage cited, the preaching of the cross is the subject,

and any kind of preaching, which undertakes to catch men by fine words,

and tricks of philosophic subtilty, is deprecated, because it makes

"the preaching of the cross of none effect." All genuine effect, the

apostle is showing, comes of the power of the cross itself. This to us

who are saved is even the power of God; or, as he says again shortly

after, unable to get away from the ruling thought of his

ministry--"Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Again, in the third passage, the apostle is giving his deliberate

account of the gospel, that which constitutes the essential meaning and

operative value of the gift--"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of

Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that

believeth." Therefore he was always sighing--"that the power of Christ

may rest on me." I know not how it is, but this word power appears to

pass for nothing in common use, and the passage is apparently

understood as if it read only--"the way of God unto salvation"--the

understanding had of it being, that Christ has purchased forgiveness

for us and made salvation possible and nothing more. Whereas it was the

particular intent of the apostle to give his deliberate summation of

the gospel in this very word power, and to magnify Christ in it, as

being the new-creating life of God in souls--in that sense and no other

a salvation. And if any one still doubts, whether he has any so

stringent and decisive meaning in this word, imagining that he does not

think, after all, of asserting any thing in that precise way, but only

throws in the word for declamation's sake, as a word of emphasis, or

enhancement, it will be found that he uses the word again in a

connection that shows him to be thinking specially of the moral

efficacy of Christ, and also with a predicate of degree that fixes the

meaning. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness

[saying, "Let there be light"] hath shined [with a like moral

sovereignty] in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the

glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in

earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and

not of us" [as if vessels of power in ourselves.] If he means, after

all, to only magnify the gospel in a declamatory way by this word

power, why does he fasten our attention down upon the degree of its

efficacy by this predicate of "excellency?"

Thus far we appeal to Paul. Peter also expresses the same conception of

the gospel, only less vigorously, when he says--"According as his

divine power hath given us all things pertaining to life and godliness,

through the knowledge of him [Christ] that hath called us by glory and

virtue;" that is, by the manifested glory and excellence of his life.

The English translation, "called us to glory and virtue" it is

generally agreed is mistaken.

John again expresses the same thing in many ways, as when he says--"the

blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;" or again when

he says--"Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins." To

cleanse us from all sin, to take it away, by force of what is

manifested in him, is the same thing as to be the moral power which

masters the soul's inward disorder, and renews it in holiness of life.

I will not go on to multiply citations, but, lest it should seem that

we are obliged to glean for them, I will simply say that this moral

power of God in Christ bears The apostles make use of all most violent

figures when they speak of it. such immense sway, in the feeling of all

the New Testament writers, that they are continually seizing on this or

that image, or fact of physical power in the world, to give their

impression. Even the most forcefully violent and terrible images are

laid hold of--any thing to represent the all-subduing, all-

transforming, inwardly renewing, outwardly dominating, efficacy of

Christ and the kingdom of God, revealed in his Messiahship.

They conceive him as a wondrously detergent power in souls, "washing

and making white," "cleansing from sin," "purging the conscience."

They conceive him going through the sick, disordered mind, even as some

healing medicine, or miracle, goes through the hidden maladies of

bodies, to search out and expel disease.

They call him a power of leaven, brought into the world to work;

heaving in the general mass and willful stupor of it, till all is

leavened.

They call him the day-star, because he heralds the mind's day and the

expulsion of its dreadful night; and the light, because the instant

flash of that element strikes farthest into God's physical empire, and

changes most the face of it; and the sun, because the exhaustless heat

of that central fire in the sky, has power to keep the planet in

habitable order, and even to vivify the otherwise dead matter of it in

processes of growth.

They call him Life itself, because the quickening spell of it, among

the world's dead atoms, carpets the ground with beauty and fills the

air itself with hovering motion.

They conceive him as a fire that is already kindled, in the rubbish of

the world's prescriptive falsities and wrongs, whose burning nothing

can stop.

His kingdom and the resistless moral power of his gospel, they resemble

to lightning, darting from east to west, and flashing across all

boundaries.

His word they compare to the swing of an earthquake, "shaking not the

earth only but also heaven"--shaking down, that is, all stoutest

fabrics of error and prescriptive wrong, and leaving nothing to stand,

but that immortal truth and good that can not be shaken. [16]

They describe him in his cross as an immense, world-compelling

attraction, moving such control in the once dead feelings and

convictions of sin as will "draw all men unto him," even as the

whirlpool draws all drifting objects and even passing ships into its

vortex.

He is even to be a chariot of thunder in the clouds--"coming in the

clouds of heaven in power and great glory"--by that oriental sign of

royal majesty, showing that the kingdom of God is come with power.

It is, in short, as if some new, great power had broken, or was

breaking into the world, in the life and cross of Jesus, which all the

known causations of the land, and sea, and air, and sky, can but feebly

represent. The difficulty appears to be that no force-figures can be

forcible enough, to express the wondrously divine, all-renovating,

all-revolutionizing, moral power of God in the gospel of his Son.

I have only to add, as a considerable argument for the moral view of

Christ and his sacrifice, in distinction The day of his coming

coincides. from all others, that the time of his coming coincides with

this only. Had he come, having it for his principal object to satisfy

God's justice and be substituted, in that manner, for the release of

transgression, there appears to be no reason why he should have delayed

his coming for so many ages. If the effect was to be on God, God was

just as capable, at the very first, of feeling the worth of his

sacrifice, as at any time afterward; and, if this was to be the

salvation, why should the salvation be delayed? But if lie came to be

the moral power of God on men, nothing is so difficult as the due

development of any such moral power; because the capacity, or necessary

receptivity for it, has itself to be prepared. Thus, if Christ had come

to the monster age before the flood, when raw force was every thing,

and moral greatness nothing, his death and passion, all the

significance of his suffering and sacrifice, would have been lost, and

probably would not even have been preserved in the remembrance of

history. The world was too coarse, and too deep in the force-principle

of violence, to apprehend a visitation so thoughtful and deep in the

merit of character. There was no room or receptivity, as yet, for

Christ in the world. A long drawn scheme of economy is previously

needed, to prepare that receptivity; a drill of outward sacrifice and

ceremony, a providential milling of captivities, deliverances, wars,

plagues, and other public judgments; commemorated in hymns, interpreted

and set home by the preaching of a prophet ministry; till finally there

is a culture of mind, or of moral perception produced, that is

sufficiently advanced, to receive the meaning of Christ in his

sacrifice, and allow him to get an accepted place in the moral

impressions of mankind. Conceiving, in this manner, that he came to be

the moral power of God on character, there is good and sufficient

reason for his delay. He came as soon as he could, or, as the Scripture

says, "in the fullness of time;" came in fact, at the very earliest

moment, when it was possible to get hold of history.

Indeed, so very slow is the world in getting ready for the due

impression of what lies in moral power, that only a very partial

opening to it is prepared even now. The world is still too coarse, too

deep in sense and the force-principle, to feel, in any but a very small

degree, the moral power of God in the Christian history. Slowly and

sluggishly this higher sense is unfolding, but there is a perceptible

advance, and we may anticipate the day, when there will be a sense

opened wide enough for Christ, in his true power, to enter; thus to

fill, and new-create in good, all souls that live. Then, and not till

then, will it be known how grand a fact the moral power of God in the

person of his Son may be.

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[16] The passage referred to (Heb. xii, 36-7) is commonly interpreted

as relating to the second coming of Christ, and perhaps it is partly so

used by the apostle, but the promise cited from Haggai (ii, 6) plainly

relates to his first coming, in which view the things shaken are the

old religion; those which remain and can not be shaken, the gospel.

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CHAPTER IV.

HOW HE BECOMES SO GREAT A POWER.

IN his descent to the flesh, we might naturally expect that Christ

would bring all deific perfections with him, and have them expressed in

his person. And this, indeed, is true; but with the large qualification

that they will be expressed only by degrees, and under conditions of

time; that is, under such laws of expression as pertain to humanity. In

one view, God is emptied of his perfections in becoming incarnate, and

has them all to acquire and bring into evidence, by the same process of

right living that obtains character and weight for men. Otherwise the

incarnation would be no real fact. It must be with Christ as with men,

and moral power, as we commonly use the term, among men, is the power

that a man finally gets, by the courses and achievements of a great and

worthy life, to impress and sway other men. The subject may be dead, or

he may be still alive; his name awakens homage, inspires, becomes an

argument in itself, by which opposition is concluded, or assent

determined; all because of some great virtue, or victory, or

championship of right and beneficence, accomplished in his life. It is

a power cumulative in its very nature. Once the man had it not; as

regards any such thing, he was virtually nobody. But the process of his

life was such that Moral power is cumulative. power grew up with it,

rolled up into volume and majesty, in the facts and doings of it. If he

was a benefactor, like Howard, his name became a power, through the

trains of good, led on by his works and sacrifices. If he was a saint,

like Savonarola or George Fox, his inspirations obtained for him the

homage due to God's oracle. If he was a preacher, like Whitfield, the

immense crowds, conquered by his words, prepared other and greater

crowds, to be half-conquered even before he spoke. If he was a hero,

proved by many righteous victories, his soldiers went to the fight,

with victory perched on their banners beforehand. In all such examples,

we perceive that moral power is a growth, and the result of a process.

It is what a man once had not, but now has. It was not in his nature,

as a child, or a youth, or even as a man; but it has been conquered, or

obtained by the conduct of his life. We sometimes say that it is

contributed by the admiration of men, but it is not contributed gratis;

it is won by deeds and represented by facts.

And this, exactly, is what we are to understand by the moral power of

God in the gospel of his Son. It Attribute power is different. is a new

kind of power--the greatest and most sovereign power we know--which God

undertakes to have by obtaining it, under the human laws and methods.

Hence the incarnation. God had a certain kind of power before; viz.,

that which may be called attribute power. By attributes we mean what we

attribute to God, when we think God, or unfold our idea of God as the

Absolute Being. As being infinite and absolute, we ascribe to him

certain attributes, or perfections. Such attributes, or perfections,

are a kind of abstract excellence, such as we bring out, or generate,

by our own intellectual refinements on the idea of God, to answer to

our own intellectual demands. Still, as God is infinite, the

perfections are distant. We hardly dare think them, if we could, into

our finite molds. We almost reason them away. Thus God, we say, is

omnipotent, therefore he will bring to pass exactly all that he

desires; and does, in fact, desire nothing but what comes to pass.

Again, God is eternally sovereign; therefore he regrets nothing, as we

do; for what he wills he does. Again, God is omniscient, knowing every

thing beforehand; therefore every thing is immovably fixed beforehand.

Still again, God is infinitely happy; therefore he is impassible and

can not suffer in feeling any way. Yet once more, God is immutably

just; and must therefore have his justice satisfied by the necessary

quantum of suffering. And so it turns out that, in making up an

attribute power, we very nearly think away, or annihilate, all that

creates an effective impress on our sentiment and character We make him

great, but we also make him thin and cold. We feel him as a platitude,

more than as a person. His great attributes became dry words; a kind of

milky-way over our heads; vast enough in the matter of extension, but

evanescently dim to our feeling.

This result had been mitigated, somewhat, by his works and word and

Providence, before the coming of Christ. But the tendency still was to

carry back all the more genial impressions thus unfolded, and merge

them in the attribute-power, by which, as an unseen, infinite being, we

had before contrived to think and to Christ incarnated to obtain moral

power. measure his character. Till, finally, in the fullness of time,

he is constrained to institute a new movement on the world, in the

incarnation of his Son. The undertaking is to obtain, through him, and

the facts and processes of his life, a new kind of power; viz., moral

power; the same that is obtained by human conduct under human methods.

It will be divine power still, only it will not be attribute power.

That is the power of his idea. This new power is to be the power

cumulative, gained by Him among men, as truly as they gain it with each

other. Only it will turn out, in the end, to be the grandest, closest

to feeling, most impressive, most soul-renovating, and spiritually

sublime power that was ever obtained in this or any other world.

Hence that peculiar and continually recurring set of expressions in the

New Testament which appear, in one form or another, to attribute so

much to the name of Jesus. For if we can rightly distinguish between a

name and a fame, if we can exclude the airy fictions of repute and

coveted applause, conceiving that the name obtained by Jesus signifies

the condensed reality of all that he is, no power will be so genuine,

or vital, or so like a sun-rising on transgression.

There will, accordingly, be distinguished, more or less clearly, in all

the varied uses referred to, some notion or associated impression of

power; The "name" of Jesus is the power he obtains. as if there were

embodied, somehow, in this name Jesus, a fund of universal soul-help;

or as if, being in this name were the same as to be in a really divine

element of good. This too, for the manifest reason, that the whole

personal life-history of Jesus, all that he was, felt, suffered, and

did, is gathered into it, and was originally designed to be, that he

might be the new moral power of God. Thus, to glorify this name and

make it such a power is seen to be God's purpose from the first. Which

purpose glimmers dimly in the direction, "they shall call his name

Jesus;" for it is to be a saving name. And again it appears more

visibly afterwards, when he answers the prayer of Jesus, "Father

glorify [in me] thy name," by a voice out of heaven, saying--"I have

both glorified it and will glorify it again." And again, at a still

later period, when his work is complete, and he gives it to his apostle

to say, magnifying both the power and the name together--"showing us

the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, by setting

him [in our mortal apprehension] above all principalities, and powers,

and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this

world, but in that which is to come."

Christ, also, we can easily perceive, has a like impression of God's

purpose in his life; as when speaking of, or to, or before, his

disciples, he says--"gathered in my name;" "ask in my name;" "cast out

devils in my name;" "a chosen vessel in my name;" "I have manifested

thy name."

The apostles coming after are even more explicit, as we should expect

them to be. They even dare to How the apostles do every thing in this

name. speak of this great name as a name obtained--"Being made so much

better in this name. than the angels, as he hath, for his heritage,

obtained a more excellent name than they." They are "baptized" in it.

They are "justified in" it. They "do all for" it. They "are reproached

for" it. They "teach in his name." They "preach it boldly." They

promise salvation to such as "believe in it." They "have life through"

it. They work miracles and say, "by the name of Jesus this man is made

whole." Having it consciously upon them, in their inmost feeling, they

"hold it fast," and are "hated of all men for" it. Every one "that

nameth it" they conceive must "depart from all iniquity." And, last of

all, they read this name "in the forehead" of the glorified. How could

it be otherwise when God Himself comes into human life, and makes

himself a name there, by human acts, in human molds of conduct, that

represents even the pleroma of his divine perfections?

Accordingly when, Peter, another apostle, declares that "there is none

other name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved," we

shall not take the "name whereby" as a cold, theoretic, far-off method

of reference, to some theologic matter of judicial satisfaction, but as

meaning just what the language implies; viz., power--the power of God

unto salvation. We only recognize in his language the fact, so

abundantly testified in all the other terms referred to, that the

incarnate ministry and life of Christ are designed of God, to obtain,

and have, in fact, obtained a new moral power for the regeneration of

lost men. What we say, at this point, is not theory but is constantly

affirmed by the New Testament Scriptures.

Assuming, now, this view of Christ and his gospel, it remains to go

forward and trace the process of his life; showing how, and by what

methods, and stages, this grand, cumulative, power is rolled up into

the requisite body and volume.

Of course, it will be understood, that Christ is not aiming directly at

the. obtaining of such a name, or such a power of impression. He can

not, How he obtains the name. of course, be ignorant of the result to

be perfected thus in his life. Not even a man of ordinary intelligence

will be ignorant of the respect and homage that must be obtained, by

what is morally great and good in action. But that is not the motive

for such action. It was not with Christ. As some great hero thinks of

his country, when he takes the field to serve his country, so Christ

thought of the world to be saved, when he came to save the world. He

came with the lost world upon his feeling, gave himself to it in

sacrifice, bore it in vicarious sacrifice, plead with it, suffered for

it, made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant

and a servant's labor; whereupon God hath highly exalted him and given

him a name that is above every name, a power that is itself salvation.

The moral power obtained is a result and not any direct motive.

How then does it come?--let us see if we can trace the process. When

the holy child is born, he has no Nothing in his name at the first.

moral power at all. The halo which the painters show about his head is

not there. He is simply the child of two very humble people, in a very

mean provincial town. There was a good deal more circumstance and

prospect in Washington's infancy than in his; and yet the moral power

of that little one's name, George, had nothing of the ring that a great

life and history will afterwards give it. Nor is it any thing if the

name is called Immanuel; nobody will see any meaning in that, at

present. The meaning itself is yet to be obtained.

There had been some remarkable prophecies over the child, not much

regarded, of course, till afterwards. A few very pleasant facts are

given concerning his childhood and youth, which will signify a great

deal more, as recollections, than they do to present observation. His

look and manner, as he grows up, are winning to every body. He is

subject to his parents and a model of filial duty. His custom is to be

always at the synagogue worship. On a certain occasion, when he is but

twelve years old, he astonishes the doctors of the temple, by his

wonderful questions; and there it is that he drops the remarkable

intimation, specially noted by his mother, that he "must be about his

Father's business;" in which, as we can see, he already begins to be a

little conscious of his great calling, which makes it all the more

remarkable, that he still struggles on eighteen years longer, hurried

by no forwardness, or impatience, till the full idea of his great

ministry takes possession of his life. During this whole period, he

confesses no sin, and, as far as we can judge, rectifies no mistake;

and, if these negative facts had been noted by any body, as plainly

they could not be, his piety would certainly have been seen to be of a

most singular and even superhuman order.

On the whole, it does not appear that, previous to entering on his

public ministry, when he was thirty years old, he has done any thing

more The name is not obtained before his ministry. than to beautifully

and exactly fulfill his duties. His name is good, true, lovely; but as

far as possible from being a name above every name. A certain moral

power is felt in him, of course, by those who are with him, but. what

he is to be, in this respect, is, as yet, quite hidden from discovery.

But the time has now come for his great ministry to begin. The dim

presentiment of his work, which he called his "Father's business" opens

into a definite, settled, consciousness of his call. As it were by the

revelation of the Spirit, he clearly perceives what he is to do, and

what to suffer; that he is to go down into the hell of the world's

corporate evil, to be wounded and galled by the world's malice, and

bear the burden of the world's undoing as a charge upon his love; and

so, by agonies of sacrifice, including a most bitter death, to

reconcile men to God and establish the eternal kingdom of God in their

hearts. The work attracts him, and yet his soul, or at least his

natural human feeling, recoils. Smitten, as it were, by a kind of

horror, he is hurried off into the wilderness, to wrestle with his

temptations; groaning there alone, under the heavy load he is to bear,

and bowing his reluctant humanity to the call, by the discipline of

fasting. He comes out victorious, but as a victor spent. The angels of

God recruit him by their tender and cheering ministry, and he goes to

his work.

No man of the race, it is quite safe to say, ever went to the calling

of his life against impediments of natural sensibility so appalling.

Men do often make great and heroic sacrifices in a cause already

undertaken, but he undertakes the forlornest, most appalling sacrifice,

fully perceiving what it is to be beforehand. Men have the brave will

raised in them afterwards, by the heat of encounter; he has his victory

at the beginning, alone, in a desert, where only love and God, in the

moods of silence, come to his aid. In this simple beginning of Christ,

there is character enough to create a moral power never before

conceived, never since realized. But it does not appear that even the

facts of his temptation were made known, till some time after--when, or

how, we can only guess. He goes into his work, therefore, as a merely

common man, a Nazarene carpenter, respected for nothing, save as he

compels respect by ]his works and his words.

Meantime John has been testifying, as a prophet, of another, who is to

come, or is even now at hand, whose shoes even he is not worthy to

untie, and by whom the kingdom of heaven is to be set up on earth. And

this other, viz., Jesus, comes to him shortly after to be baptized;

when he breaks out, in prophetic vision, as soon as he perceives him

coming--"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the

world." The consecrating dove lights upon him in his baptism, and a

voice out of heaven declares--"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well

pleased." And yet even John is so little impressed, or so little

believes in what he hears, shortly after, of his miracles and his

doctrine, that he sends to inquire, as if he might still be only an

ordinary man, possibly an impostor, "art thou he that should come, or

look we for another?" As yet he has not made impression enough for

God's love and power by his ministry, beautiful and wonderful as it is,

to even hold a prophet's opinion of him up to the pitch of his own

prophetic testimony!

But he goes on with his ministry for three years; traveling on foot,

sleeping in desert places and upon the mountain tops, associating

mostly with How the ministry goes on. the poor and humble, who have

scarcely cultivation enough to yield him any fit return of sympathy, or

even to be duly impressed by his miracles. The learned and select are

alienated from him, partly for this reason. They deny his miracles, or

they charge them openly to his conspiracy with devils.

His doctrine is wonderful to every body--what can be more wonderful

than his sermon on the mount? The people were astonished and rightly;

for there was never any such utterance in the world before. There was

no learning, no cabalistic juggle in his words; he taught them "as one

having authority and not as the scribes." This kind of impression was

always made by him, and the puzzle was that a man who had never

learned--the son of a mean provincial, in a mean provincial town--could

discourse with such intelligence, in a manner so nearly divine. A

company of bailiffs sent out to arrest him, just before the close of

his ministry, were as profoundly impressed by his manner and words as

if the angel in the sun had spoken to them, and could only go back and

report--"Never man spake like this man." And yet it does not appear

that Christ grew, at all, on the public sentiment, by means of his

discourses. He only mystified, a little, the public feeling, and made

himself a character about as much more suspicious and dangerous.

A few persons of a specially honest and fair temperament were so

wrought upon, by his miracles, and manners, and words, as to feel the

impression of some very strange, or even sacred power in his life; Mary

and Martha, for example, and the centurion, and the two senators

Nicodemus and Joseph, and probably all his apostles--not excluding even

Pilate, who was evidently shaken out of all confidence, by the sense he

had of some strange quality, in the manner and bearing of the victim he

is compelled to sacrifice. And yet there was a certain wavering,

probably, in all these minds, as if they could not imagine him, or

guess, after all, how he might turn out. Their misgivings half took

away what would have been their opinions. What they felt in him,

therefore, was not so much a power as a possibility of power. Nothing

was immovably fastened, save, perhaps, in the centurion, or the woman

that came with her box of ointment, and, it may be, one or two other of

his disciples. Great things have been done by him, wonderful beauties

of feeling unfolded, and yet all these are felt dubiously under a kind

of peradventure.

And the reason plainly enough is, that no point of view, as respects

his person, has yet been attained to, that will verify the facts and

impressions of his life. His friends think he is the Messiah, but they

have only the faintest notions who the Messiah is, or is to be. His

person is not conceived, and so it results that his doings make a

seemingly rough compound of strange things, jumbled together in a kind

of moral confusion that has really no right to be very impressive.

As we go back to inventory the matter of his life, we find some things

that are wonderfully sublime, some that are deep in the spirit of

wisdom, Sublime and wise, and so far impressive. some that repel and

hold aloof, some that bear a grotesque look, some that are attractive

and subduing to feeling as nothing else ever was, and some that even

discourage confidence. The sublime things are such as these; the virtue

that went out of him, when faith touched the hem of his garment; the

raising of the widow's son; the healing of the lepers; the voice out of

heaven; the stilling of the sea; the transfiguration, and all the

matter of his last discourses and prayer as given by John. In these

facts the glory of deity and of heaven appears to be let into the

world, and made visible in it. But they were witnessed only here and

there, and, for the most part) by different classes of persons;

creating rather mazes of' wonder, than a settled feeling of homage and

awe.

The wise things, such as indicated even a marvelous diplomatic talent,

in the good sense of the term, were his answer to the Pharisees, who

came to entangle him with the government--"Render therefore unto Caesar

the things that are Caesar's;" the confusion he brought upon the chief

priests and elders, coming with a like artful design, when he answered

their question--"By what authority," by another question--"The baptism

of John, whence was it;" his reply to the puzzle or catch of the

Sadducees--"Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be,"

by his Scripture citation and his inference from it--"I am the God of

Abraham, and the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob; God is not the God of

the dead, but of the living;" and more than all by his fearfully

impressive reserve, and the brief, but immensely significant

intimations he gave to Pilate about his kingship, as the king of truth;

taking, in fact, all courage out of the man, by the superstitious dread

awakened in his feeling. No teacher, prophet, or champion of truth,

ever evinced such complete insight of men, or was ever able to reduce

them to utter confusion so easily, by his mastery of their motives and

points of weakness. His profoundly artful enemies in fact, were all in

sunlight before him.

The points in which he repelled and set aloof multitudes that came to

be his clients and followers were such as these--he would not have a

partisan, and as most men expect to be taken as partisans, Sometimes he

repelled by his manner. when they adhere to another, they were chilled

and could not long follow him; he offended their Jewish prejudices

without scruple m the matter of the Sabbath, and also in the matter of

their exclusive nationality by the declaration of a universal kingdom,

where the men of all nations should come from the east, and the west,

and the north, and the south, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob; he turned the preposterous learning of the lawyers and scribes

to derision; he galled the consciences of many who were righteous in

the law, by his terrible exposures of their motives and their hearts;

he made God fearfully great and holy by his doctrine of future

punishment; his terms of discipleship were uninviting and severe--ye

shall be baptized with my baptism, hated of all men for my name's sake;

take up your cross and follow me; if any man hate not father and mother

yea and his own life also he can not be my disciple; resist not evil;

consent to serve and suffer, even as the Son of man came to minister,

and give his life a ransom for many. He made nothing of the popular

favor, nothing of gaining or retaining friends, which, though it was

one of the sublimities, even of his character, as regarded by us, was

in fact only a continual offense to the men of his time.

Some few of the facts of his life bore a grotesque look, at the time,

and could easily be turned to ridicule, as indeed they have been since.

Thus when the woman is brought before him craftily, by her accusers, to

Sometimes he was grotesque. obtain his judgment on her sin, he writes

abstractedly on the ground, lifting himself up at length to shoot in

his bolt--"let him that is without sin cast the first stone"--and then

stooping down again to write on the ground as before. This would be

ridiculed in a man, as a figure of mere hocus-pocus. And yet the

mystery of the manner, the silence, the abstraction, roused the

consciences of the accusers to such a degree, that they heard even

terrible thunders within, and shortly drew off, one by one, and left

him quite alone. No most eloquent sermon could have done as much. No

stroke of natural eloquence was ever more impressive. We have also what

some have called another grotesque figure in his triumphal entry into

Jerusalem. Multitudes go forth to meet him, branches of palm-trees are

thrown in his way, as if it were the day of his crowning, and the great

concourse of the people and the children in the temple, after he

arrives, fill the air, as it were by some outburst of inspiration, with

the cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the

name of the Lord!" And yet he comes riding upon an ass! Neither does it

raise at all the dignity of his figure, that he fulfills a prophecy;

for that is probably not observed at the time. Besides a prophecy that

requires the great Messiah to celebrate his triumph in such a figure

puts inspiration itself under a ban of derision, till we are able to

see as could not be seen till some time after, how this outward type

represents a king riding into power among men, through a suffering and

sadly humiliated life. What livery or mounting then will he most fitly

take for his type, in such a procession? on what shall he ride, but on

one of the humblest and least airy-gaited of the animals?

The facts, in which he drew on human feeling by the loving and subduing

energy of his own, compose the staple, we may almost say, of his life.

His tenderness. All his healings, raised in dignity by the manifestly

divine power in which they are wrought, display such assiduity of

kindness and devotion to the forlornest conditions and bitterest pains

of a world under sin, as to make up a kind of gospel in the plane of

bodily treatment; engaging most tenderly just those fallen

sensibilities that must be engaged, and yet could not, by mere

demonstrations of spiritual excellence. His union to the poor in their

sad lot, and his beautiful tenderness to their wants and troubles,

attract their personal sympathy and gratitude in the same manner. His

call, "come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden"--it is as if

heaven's love to the world were going forth to its weary, sin-burdened

millions, from a heart large enough to contain them all, and strong

enough to give them rest. His love to little children takes the

feeling, not of children, but of every body. His domestic, home-like

feeling when with Mary and Martha, and his yet more intensely human

sensibility, when he weeps and groans at the grave-side of their

brother--what a spell of more than mortal majesty is there in his,

"Lazarus, come forth," answered by the bursting tomb and rising form of

the man! How touching his delicacy, when, by loving anticipation, he

calls those "friends," who were not, and speaks of his death as a

laying down of his life for his friends. What woman's heart will not be

drawn to him by his manner to Mary, when she comes to him with her box

of ointment, and when he commends her, in her simple tribute of love,

as he never did any other of mankind; telling her that her little

gospel shall go down the ages with his, to be witnessed for a memorial

of her. His "one of you shall betray me," how sadly and tenderly is it

spoken, bitter and dreadful as the charge it lays most certainly is.

His whole farewell discourse and prayer, as given at large by John,

full of the loftiest assumptions, and tenderest promises, and lowliest

protestations of brotherhood--warm, and gentle, and strong, as inherent

divinity should be--what greater, more subduing power of love, on a

race broken loose from God, can we even imagine to be embodied in

mortal words!

And yet, over against all these affecting and subduing demonstrations

in his life, there were a great many Baffled expectation. things, we

know, which, at the time, seemed even to discourage confidence in him.

For example he was baffling always the expectations of his friends;

they could hardly name an expectation, and they had abundance of them,

which he did not forthwith take away, by the notification of some loss,

or cross of dejection, which to them wore a look totally opposite to

every feeling they had respecting the great Messiah. Not to multiply

instances in which he tried their confidence by other methods, we pass

directly to the two great closing facts of his life, his agony and

crucifixion. His work is now done, and nothing remains, but to let

others bring him to the murderous end they are planning to accomplish.

His whole feeling is now loose upon him, respited by no occupation; and

the dreadful burdens of concern for men, which his divine love, too

strong for the body, rolls down upon him, press him, as it were, to the

ground. He beholds the corporate curse, too, of the world's evil and

madness just ready to burst upon his person, and though he is not moved

by fear, his pure innocence struggles heavily, with instinctive horror,

before that retributive phrensy, which is going to baptize itself in

his blood! No so grand mystery of divine feeling was ever before or

after set before the gaze of mortals. But his friends are at no point

of view, where they can even begin to conceive it. His person, his

errand, his work, are as yet wholly beyond the reach even of their

guesses. They have seen strange gleams of quality in him, they have

been drawn, repelled, impressed, astounded and thoroughly posed by his

mystery, and they only try to settle the whirl of their brain by

calling him a great prophet, Messiah, the Christ, thinking him

virtually always as a man. And now, in the agony, just after his

triumphal entry into the city, when they look to see him rise and take

on his kingship, he collapses in weakness, without any visible reason;

falling on the ground, groaning, writhing, dripping in bloody sweat,

like grapes in the wine-press, and calling on God and men for help, in

meeting some unknown calamity that he does not name. It is as if he

were just at the end of his pretensions, and struggling, as a convict

might, under his impending doom. All heart is taken away from his

disciples at once; their confidence in him is fatally broken; as we can

plainly see in the fact that when he is arrested, an hour or two after,

they forsake him utterly. Peter makes one or two wild slashes for him

with his sword, and then he too is gone; only he will hang about the

hall when the trial goes on, carefully denying his discipleship.

In this manner Jesus goes to his cross; and the manner of his trial and

death, though supported with a His death takes away all confidence.

transcendent dignity on his part, that makes him even the chief figure

in the scene, are yet so thoroughly contemptuous and ignominious, that

the poor disciples are obliged to confess to themselves, if not to

others, that their much loved Messiah is now stamped as another

exploded pretender! A great reaction begins however, to be visible in

the minds of the multitude. As the Roman governor himself, before whom

he was dragged to a mock trial for sedition, was quite shaken out of

self-possession, by the dignity of his manner under the

questioning--quailing visibly in the sense of a mysterious something in

the man, justifying, equivocating, consenting, condemning, giving him

up to his accusers, and washing his hands to be clear of the innocent

blood--so in the death-scene of the cross, slave's death though it be,

in the outward ignominy of the form, the multitude grow serious, and

drop out their jeers in awe of his felt majesty, and finally go home,

at another swing of oscillation, smiting their breasts in dumb

confession of their murderous crime. They had expected nothing of him,

and, for just that reason, they are the more easily impressed by the

strange power in him--under such ignominy, dying in such majesty. Not

so with his disciples. They had expected every thing of him, and now

that he is dead, every expectation is blasted. Even their profound

respect, unwilling as they are to shake it off, and tenderly as they

would fain cling to it still, is yet a really blasted confidence, now

that he is dead under such ignominy. The two senators, Nicodemus and

Joseph, come with their spices, revealing what impressions they have

felt of his wonderful character, and daring now to show their respect

just because he is dead. Finally, on the third day morning, it is

rumored among the disciples that he is risen, but their soul is under

such a weight of stupor that they can not believe it. And two of them

we find trudging back homeward to Galilee, sad, and heavy-hearted, and

weeping, as it were, in doleful refrain --"We thought it had been he

that should have redeemed Israel!"

Where now is the power? We have been exploring a large field, hunting

down along the whole course of Christ's life, expecting, looking to

see, The power is not yet. the great name rolled up into volume and

majesty, but that any thing we have found should have power to

new-create the moral sentiments and affinities of mankind, we can

hardly believe. We have seen, between the infancy and the death, a

great many strange things, and a great many lovely. Coruscations of

glory have been shooting out, all along the remarkable history. But

there have been severities, and repellences, and discouraging tokens,

blended so continually with the story, and the end of it is so dark, if

not weak, that we get no such densely compacted unity of impression, as

belongs to a great moral power. We are put in a maze, or even a

thrilling kind of mystery, but that all-the-while cumulative power and

weight, that great name which is to be a gospel of life in men's

hearts, does not appear. And yet there is, it may be, a certain latent

heat in the facts we have noted, that is finally to become sensible

heat, or blaze into splendor. No life becomes a power, till we somehow

get the clue of it. A great many human characters are very much of a

riddle, till they come on to the crisis of fact, where their objects,

and ends, and secret aims, are all discovered, and where the seeming

faults and contrarieties, that were mysterious, get their solution--all

to be approved in the admirable and wise unity that could not sooner

appear.

Christ only differs here from such mysterious, peculiar men, in the

fact that he dies before the clue is The resurrection is the crisis of

his glory. given. It is only the resurrection and ascension back into

glory, that bring us out the true point of understanding. Now his most

extraordinary nature and mission, for the first time, come distinctly

into thought. Now, since he has gone up visibly into heaven, we begin

to understand what he meant, when he said, that he came down from

heaven. We conceive him as the incarnate Word, and begin to look upon

his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of

grace and truth. In him now there may be more than we saw, a greater

name and power; for the righteousness and love of God are in him, and

it puts a new face on his whole life, that he is here to save the

world.

We begin back now at the point of his infancy and we follow him onward

again, going over all the points we have named, but with results how

different! Every thing falls into place, and every step onward is the

unfolding of power. The wonderful authority becomes more wonderful; in

the right of a superior nature to give it sanction, the severity

becomes majesty; knowing who the teacher is, what before was truth

brightens into a glorious wisdom; the soft-looking innocence of the

life becomes a kind of general transfiguration; the agony, that seemed

to be wanting in magnanimity, becomes the love-groan, as it were, of

his mysterious nature; the crushing defeat of the death breaks into

immortal victory. Whatever, in a word, seemed weak, distracted,

contrarious, takes on a look of progressive order, and falls into

chime, as a necessary factor in his divinely great character. And so

the merely human beginning grows into what is more and more visibly

superhuman, dying into boundlessness and glory, as the sun when it sets

in the sea. The rising and the ascension put us on the revision, and

helped us to conceive who he was; but now he is so great that the

rising does not raise him any more, and the ascension does not glorify

him.

When we conceive the glorification of Christ, and the completion of his

great name, as a revision or revised How revisions of character affect

our impressions. impression, to which we are incited by his

resurrection and ascension, we are not without many illustrations. I

send these sheets to the press, when our great nation is dissolving, as

it were, in its tears of mourning, for the great and true Father whom

the assassins of law and liberty have sent on his way to the grave.

What now do we see in him, but all that is wisest, and most faithful,

and worthiest of his perilous magistracy. A halo rests upon his

character, and we find no longer any thing to blame, scarcely any thing

not to admire, in the measures and counsels of his gloriously upright,

impartial, passionless, undiscourageable rule. But we did not always

see him in that figure. When, already three full years of his time were

gone by, many of us were doubtful whether most to blame or to praise,

and many who most wanted to praise, had well nigh lost their confidence

in him, and even retained their respect with difficulty. But the

successes he deserved began, at last, to come, and the merit of his

rule to appear. We only doubted still whether wholly to approve and

praise. A certain grotesqueness and over-simplicity, in spite of all

our favoring judgments, kept off still the just impression of his

dignity, and suffered us to only half believe. But the tragic close of

his life added a new element, and brought on a second revision; setting

him in a character only the more sublime, because it is original and

quite unmatched in history. The great name now of Abraham Lincoln

emerges complete, a power of blessing on mankind, and a bond of homage

in the feeling of his country forever. Shall we not see, in this

humbler and yet striking example, how it is that moral power, even the

moral power of Christ, emerges finally and is crowned, only when the

necessary point of revision is reached? So it is that Christ begins to

be known as "the wisdom of God and the power"--"the power of God unto

salvation." This, too, is what an apostle means when he prays, that he

may "know him, and the power of his resurrection." It is not the

omnipotent power that raised him, which he longs to know, but the

heart-power, the power of his great name and glory, which began to be

discovered and conceived, when he rose from the dead. And the same

exactly is true of another famous passage, if only we had time to make

out the interpretation, where he says--"And declared to be the Son of

God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the

resurrection from the dead."

If then so great a power has been obtained by Christ, in the matter of

his life, we shall expect, of course, to see it in effects on human

life and character The power is proved by its effects. that correspond.

And we have not far to go before we find them. A few weeks after, when

the disciples are waiting to be endued with power from on high, even

for the promised Spirit, who should take the things of Christ and show

them unto men, convincing thus of sin, of righteousness, and a judgment

to come, a new scene is suddenly opened in their assembly, by the

arrival of the promise; whereupon the preaching of the great, hitherto

unknown, gospel is inaugurated as a power on the world. The cloud that

was on Peter's mind is now taken away; his understanding is opened; and

suddenly grasping the true meaning of his Master's life and death, as a

gospel of salvation for men, he begins to preach it. He goes over the

outline of his Lord's miracles and death, turning his discourse

principally on the matter of the resurrection, and proclaiming him

boldly, as the ascended king of the world. "Therefore being by the

right of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of

the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." And

then he turns directly down upon the consciences of the assembly all

the tremendous guilt of their crime in his crucifixion.--"Therefore,

let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that

same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ."

The result was that thousands in the immense assembly, overwhelmed and

utterly broken down, by the sense of their guilt, turned themselves, by

faith, as the apostles exhorted, to the now ascended victim of their

malice, for the remission of their sins. And how mightily are they

changed! It is as if some irruption of heaven's love had broken into

them; as it verily has, in the person of the just now hated and

murdered Nazarene. They appear to hardly know, as yet, what has

befallen them. They are so happy in their dear, mysterious fellowship,

that there are not hours enough in the day and the night for their

enjoyment of it. The city converts sell their goods and possessions to

feed the pilgrims on a longer stay, and they go on breaking bread, in

open hospitality, from house to house, eating their meat with gladness,

and praising God as they go.

This now is the power; first a convincing power, next a power of love

begetting love --how great a power it is and is to be, we may perceive

in these its first effects. By this power it was that the apostles and

first Christians gained their rapid victories over the learning and

philosophy, and finally the military empire of the heathen world. They

went every where preaching Christ and his resurrection, testified every

where the great name Jesus, saying--"there is none other name under

heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

And this name is a greater power now than it was then, and has a

greater hold of the world. It penetrates more and more visibly our

sentiments, The power increases still. opinions, laws, sciences,

inventions, modes of commerce, modes of society, advancing, as it were,

by the slow measured step of centuries, to a complete dominion over the

race. So the power is working and so it will till it reigns. Not that

Christ grows better, but that he is more and more competently

apprehended, as he becomes more widely incarnated among men, and

obtains a fitter representation to thought, in the thoughts, and works

of his people. If in some particular century the gospel seems to suffer

a wave of retrocession, it is only gathering power for an other great

advance. Bad power dies, right power never. Prophecy, or no prophecy,

such a Christ of God could not come into the world, without a certainty

coming in his train, that all the kingdoms of the world shall become

the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever.

I can not better close this exposition, than by citing a single passage

of Scripture, that contains and sums up Glorious affirmation of the

power. all we have been trying to show, in the briefest and most

pregnant testimony possible, every syllable of which deserves to be

profoundly meditated by itself--"Let this mind be in you which was also

in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery

to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon

him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and,

being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became

obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also

hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name;

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven,

and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue

should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the

Father."

The historical exposition of the moral power of Christ, or of the

process by which it is obtained, is now finished, and yet certain

points of rational consequence remain to be suggested, which could not

be crowded into the body of it, without creating an No dogmatic

statement possible. appearance of distraction. The view of Christ's

mission, I have been trying to establish, excludes the possibility, it

will be seen, of any dogmatic formula, in which it may be adequately

stated. It is not a theorem, or form of thought, but a process, and the

process includes all the facts of a life. It will also be seen how the

apostle labors, in the passage just cited, even to condense an outline

view of it into seven full verses of his epistle; in which also it is

made sufficiently evident, that the Scriptures themselves do not know

how to make up any formula of three or four lines, that will adequately

express, in the manner of our theologians, the import of Christ's

reconciling work. That work, accurately speaking, consisted in exactly

the whole life of Jesus; all that he said and did, and, to human

impression, was, in the conditions through which he passed. No such

life was ever written even of a man. Not even the gospels themselves

are any thing more than brief outline records. And one of the writers

distinctly intimates the impossibility of a complete narrative, because

it would make the record too cumbersome to have any value--the world

itself would scarcely contain the books. How then can any formula, or

brief summation of words, be imagined to fitly represent the meaning of

the life-work of Christ, when that meaning is exactly the power

obtained by the life, and can be represented only by the facts, of

which it is the character and expression.

Christ I just said is not a form of thought. He is no proposition. He

is given, neither by nor to, logical The reality of Christ is what he

expresses. definition. He is no quantitative matter, like a credit set

in a book, or a punishment graduated by satisfaction. His reality is

what he expresses, under laws of expression; the power, the great name,

he thus obtains under forms of human conduct that make their address to

reason, conviction, feeling, passion, sympathy, imagination, faith, and

the receptivities generally of the moral nature. What rational person

ever imagined that he could state, in a defined formula, the import of

any great character; Moses, for example, Plato, Scipio, Washington.

Hence the necessary poverty, and almost mockery, of all attempts to put

the work of Christ in formula, or to dogmatize it in a proposition, or

church article. The Iliad, or Paradise Lost could as well be formulized

in that manner as his gospel. We can give the "Argument" of these, in

so many headings for so many books; but the epic power will be wholly

in the acts and incidents that fill the books, never in their

"Argument." So we can say of Christ's work, and of the sublime

art-mystery of his incarnate life, what is not absurd, what may even be

of use--we do so when we call it God's method of obtaining power over

fallen character--still it must be left us to feel, that just nothing

of the power, that is of the whole living truth, is in the account we

have given. Nothing we can say of the power will appear to have much

power in it; for nothing raises the true sense of that power, but just

what he did, taken just as he did it. The most that can be hoped is,

that, by what of dissertation we may indulge, the sense of his work and

the facts by which his power is obtained, may be unlocked more easily.

In this manner, four points, in particular, may yet be made, in regard

to the process and effect of his life, that will render the power of it

still more intelligible, and so far more impressive.

1. That the kind of moral power obtained by Christ is different from

any which had been obtained by men, more difficult, deeper, and holier.

He No similar power among men. founds no school of philosophy, heads no

revolution, fights no great battle, achieves no title to honor, such as

the world's great men have achieved. Men consciously feel, that a

strong power is somehow gathering about his person, but will only know,

by and by, what it is. It is the power, in great part, of sorrow,

suffering, sacrifice, death, a paradox of ignominy and grandeur not

easily solved. Honor, in the common sense of that term, can make

nothing of it. Fame will not lift her airy trumpet, to publish it, and

would only mock it if she did. If we call him a hero, as some are

trying to do, then all other heroes appear to be scarcely more than

mock heroes in the comparison.

There is no wrong or impropriety in calling Christ a hero, if we do not

assume that, having found him in the class of heroes, we have thus

accounted for his wonderful eminence, on the ground of his mere natural

manhood. I believe that I have once or twice spoken, casually, of the

heroic element in his life; and I In what sense Christ was a hero. have

hesitated much, whether I should not present him more deliberately in

this figure. The only reason why I should not is that, regarding him as

the manifestation, or demonstration, of God, the honor I should claim

for him might only seem to put him below the scale of divinity and not

in it. And yet, in as far as he ranges in the scale, or under the

conditions, of humanity, obtaining a name and a power under such

conditions, it is even a gloriously divine token for him, that he so

visibly, remarkably, immeasurably, transcends all known examples of

heroism. Besides there is a very important matter to be gained by such

a conception of his character. We conceive him in the travail of his

suffering life and sacrifice, we magnify his tenderness and patience

and submission to the cross, we call him the Lamb that is offered for

our sin, and pressing wholly on this side of passivity, we are in no

small danger of enfeebling the moral power he is obtaining by his life.

Accordingly, to right the conception we get by such overdoing of his

passive and submissive virtue, there is needed also some just reference

to the energetic, and positive, and really grand heroism of his

mission. For really there is nothing, in all the heroic characters,

whether of history, or fiction, at all comparable to the sublime figure

he maintains, in his very humble, or, as we might even say, dejected

ministry.

He plainly does not think himself that he is in the passive key, even

when he suffers most; but he calmly asserts the power he has to keep

his life unharmed against all enemies--"No man taketh it from me, but I

lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to

take it again." Nothing compels him to die, but the grandly heroic

motive supplied by his love to his enemies. All true martyrs we

conceive to be God's heroes; but what martyr ever bore witness to the

truth, whose death had not some reference to the original, transcendent

martyrdom of the Son of God? Heroes throw their life upon their cause,

by inspiration from it; he had meat and drink and home for his

houseless body, in the work he had taken upon him, and knowing that he

must die for his cause, he could say "how am I straitened till it be

accomplished." Heroes are men who go above all the low resentments; he

could even pray the prayer of pity and apology for his enemies, when

dying under their hands. Great souls are not flurried and disconcerted

by the irruption of great dangers; behold the solid majesty of this

man's silence, this provincial man, this country mechanic, when so many

fierce accusations, by so many fierce conspirators in high life, are

hurled against him. Heroes that die, and bear themselves nobly in the

terrible hour of their conflict, are commonly caught without much

warning, and are fortified by the tremendous excitement of the hour;

Christ was facing death for at least three whole years, and waiting for

his time to come; yet never weakened, or swerved, by the doom that he

knew to be on him, but comforting his great mind constantly in the hope

that, when he should be lifted up, he would draw all men to him. The

great causes of heroes are commonly under the eye, and are more or less

computable in their time; but Christ, the poor rustic of Nazareth,

undertakes a cause and kingdom that comprehend the world, and require a

run of time outreaching all definite computation, and shows not half

the misgivings of the great heroes of the world, who expect their

triumph and perhaps their meed of fame, within a few short years..

There was never, we may safely say, any such instance of self-devotion

among men, never so little of heat or excitement, never such firmness

coupled with such tenderness and gentleness, never such oblivion of

popularity, never such incapacity to be humbled by ignominy. So that if

we speak of heroes, we are tempted either to say that he is no hero at

all, or else the only hero. And here it is that the moral power we have

seen him obtaining culminates. In this fact, the almost feminine

passivity we are likely to figure as the total account of his

character, reveals the mighty underwork and robust vigor of a really

immortal confidence and tenacity. The moral power he obtains, in a

character of such transcendent heroism corresponds. We make no true

account of it, till we take it as the supernatural flowering on earth,

of a glory that he had before the world was.

The example most nearly correspondent, among men is that of Socrates,

and yet the superficial, almost flashy merit of his power, heroic as he

certainly was, is about the most striking result of a just comparison.

There had been different opinions about Socrates before, and many

scholars even now do not hesitate Socrates the nearest human example.

to speak lightly of his coarse manners, and the general lightness and

rudeness of his character. Be the truth what it may, in regard to these

matters, there was certainly a remarkable dignity, and even sublimity

in his death. Arraigned and sentenced to death unjustly, for a mere

political offense, he refused, as a philosopher and good citizen, to

save his life by an escape that would make him a violator of the laws

of his country; and the Athenian people had been sufficiently exercised

in political matters to appreciate the merit of such a sacrifice. A

great popular reaction immediately followed, that overwhelmed his

accusers, and made his name, forever after, one of the great powers of

the world. A merely casual reaction followed the death of Christ, in

the same manner, but it came to no practical issue, just because the

sacrifice he made of his life was too deep in its heroic meaning to be

practically valued, and too profoundly accusatory to awaken sympathy.

He died for no ends of patriotic devotion, or even of moral

reformation, as regards the social wrongs and destructive vices of the

world, but for the state of sin itself and the recovery of souls to

God--just that kind of benefaction which only a very few of mankind,

such as Plato, for example, and like meditative teachers here and

there, had once thought of as a want, or could even begin to conceive.

To such a kind of sacrifice the world itself was a dead receptivity,

and it was to be the glory of his power, that he could open a

receptivity where there was none; that he could stir the consciousness

of lost men deeply enough to make the state of sin a dread reality, and

the want of reconciliation to God the prime necessity of their being.

And just here lies the wonder of his power; that he opens such a sense

of the holy and of men's relations to a holy God, as to make his own

public, where there was none, and create the very homage by which he is

to be received; raising nature up to ask the supernatural, and join

herself to it, in a faith that goes above all of this world's honors,

homages, and applauses.

2. It is a very great point, as regards the kind of power, Christ is

obtaining, that he humanizes God to God humanized to us. men. I have

already spoken of the necessary distance and coldness of a mere

attribute power, such as we ourselves generate, when trying to think

God as the Absolute Being. The incarnate life and history of Jesus meet

us here, at the point of our weakness. God is in Christ, consenting to

obtain the power, by which he will regain us to him. self, under our

own human conditions. He is in our plane, acting with us and for us,

interpreted to our sympathies by what he does and is, in social

relationship with us. His perfections meet us in our own measures, not

in the impossible measures of infinity; and so he becomes a world-king

in the world, and not above it and far away from it. We know him, in

just the same way as we know one another. He becomes the great Head

Character in human history, by living in it Himself--such a kind of

power, as being once in it, can never be gotten out of it, any more

than if it were a new diffusive element in the world's atmosphere. God

is no more a theosophy, or mere phosphorescence of our human

intelligence; no more a theophany, like those casual appearances of the

Jehovah Angel in the old dispensation--all which left him a God more

separate, in a sense, than before, as any such unveiling by mere

phantasm must--but a God-human or God-man, born into our race itself,

and even into a place in our human tables of genealogy. And since we

are so deep in the senses, he contrives to meet us there, that we may

hear, see with our eyes, look upon, handle him with our hands. Nay, he

comes directly into our bodies themselves, by the healing of his inward

touch, and occupies a great part of his ministry in works that take

hold of our sympathy, by means of our diseases. No greater advance on

human sensibility, we may fairly say, could possibly be made, than is

in fact made, in this wonderful chapter of humanization, that contains

the teachings, healings, tender condescensions, and sufferings, of the

divine man Jesus. He builds up anew, so to speak, and before our eyes,

in the open facts of his ministry, the divine perfections themselves,

and the moral power he obtains in doing it is just what it must be; a

name that is above every name.

3. It is another great article of his power, that he is able to raise,

at once, the sense of guilt and attract the confidence of the guilty.

By his purity of life, by the sublime reach of his very simple

doctrine, by his terrible warnings and reproofs, by his persistent

coupling of It both wakens guilt and draws confidence. disease, in all

his healings, with sin, by the sorrows and the suffering patience of

his life, by the bitter ignominy of his death, followed by the Spirit

coming after his resurrection, to show the things of his life to men in

their true light of meaning--by all these piercing demonstrations he

stirs the conviction of guilt, as never it was stirred before, and yet

with no such consequences of revulsion from God, as belongs to the

natural action of guilt. The feeling of guilt, under mere natural

conviction, is a feeling of recoil. The instinctive language of it

is--"I was afraid and hid myself." It shoves the soul off from God and

then it pictures God as being withdrawn from it. A certain chill is

felt when he is thought of, and the soul shivers in cold dread of his

purity. But the incarnate Saviour, taking his place with us in our bad

level, after the manner just described, stops the natural recoil of our

guilt, and marries even our self-condemnation to confidence. Great as

our guilt is, Christ, we see, can be our sponsor for all the wrong and

damage of it. As the guilt kept him not away from us, so it shall not

keep us away from him. Nay as it even drew him after us, shall it not

also draw us after him? True we have sinned, our sin is upon us, and

not even his forgiveness can ever annihilate the fact of our sin; but

if he has come over it all to be the righteousness of God upon us, may

we not come away from it, and be the righteousness of God in him? And

so when the tough and sturdy fact of our guilt would thrust us quite

away from God, Christ so far reverses every thing with us by the

wonderful power of his ministry, that our guilt is even made to be the

argument that draws us, and, as it were, fastens our confidence. It

would almost seem to be a miracle, and yet the result is only a simple

incident of that great moral power, by which he is able to reverse

every thing in the fallen condition of our sin. We come now--

4. To another and last point, where the moral power obtained by Christ

gets even its principal weight of impression; viz., to the fact made

evident, The culminating fact is God's affliction for sin. by his

vicarious sacrifice, that God suffers on account of evil, or with and

for created beings under evil--a fact very commonly disallowed and

rejected, I am sorry to add, even by Christian theology itself, as

being rationally irreconcilable with God's greatness and sufficiency.

It was very natural that the coarse, crude mind of the world, blunted

to greater coarseness and crudity by the chill of guilt in its feeling,

should be overmuch occupied in conceiving God's infinity and the merely

dynamic energies and magnitudes of his nature; the sovereignty of his

will, his omnipotent force, his necessary impassibility to force

external to himself, his essential beatitude as excluding all

inflictions of pain or loss. Hence it has been very generally held,

even to this day, as a matter of necessary inference, that God is

superior, in every sense, to suffering. Our theologians are commonly

shocked, as by some frightful word of derogation, when the contrary is

affirmed, and when they come to the matter of Christ's suffering, they'

are careful to show, regarding it as a necessary point of reverence,

that it was only the human nature that suffered, not the divine,

suffering by itself. Besides, it will even be admitted, perhaps

unwittingly, by those who dare to obtrude in this manner upon the

interior mystery of Christ's person, where all reasonings about the

physical suffering must be at fault, that even God himself, as well out

of Christ as in the incarnate person of Christ, does incur a profoundly

real suffering--not physical suffering, as I now speak, yet a suffering

more deep than any physical suffering can be.

The principal suffering of any really great being and especially of God

is because of his moral sensibility, God's perfections even require him

to suffer. nay, because of his moral perfection. He would not be

perfect, if he did not feel appropriately to what is bad, base, wrong,

destructive, cruel, and to every thing opposite to perfection. If the

sight of wrong were to meet the discovery of God, only as a disgusting

spectacle meets a glass eye, his perfection would be the perfection of

a glass eye and nothing more. None of us conceive Him in this manner,

but we conceive him as having a right sensibility to every thing. We

say that he is displeased, and what is displeasure but an experience

opposite to pleasure? so far a kind of suffering. We say that he

"loathes" all baseness and impurity, and what is closer to a pain than

loathing? We say that he "hates" all unrighteousness, and what is

hatred but a fire of suffering? Is he not a "long suffering" God, and

is there no suffering in long suffering? Is he not a patient God, and

what is patience but a regulated suffering? So of compassion, pity,

sympathy, indignations suppressed, wounds of ingratitude, bonds of

faith violated by treachery. So far we all admit the fact of divine

suffering, no matter how sturdily we deny it in theory. The suffering

is moral suffering it is true, but it is the greatest and most real

suffering in the world--so great that a perfect being would be likely,

under it, to quite forget physical suffering, even if it were upon him.

Making then so vast an admission, what does it signify, afterward, to

turn ourselves round, in what we conceive to be our logical sagacity,

and raise the petty inference that God, being infinite, must be

impassible!

But we must not omit, in this connection, to notice a fact, as regards

the moral suffering of God, that is not commonly admitted, or even

observed, God's beatitude not diminished by the suffering of is love.

like the others just referred to. Thus we conceive, that God is a being

whose moral nature is pervaded and charactered, all through, by love.

Some teachers even go so far as to insist that the Scripture

declaration--"God is love"--is no rhetorical figure, but a logical and

literal teaching; that God's very substance, or essence, is love. And

yet love is an element, or principle, whether substance or not, so

essentially vicarious, that it even mortgages the subject to suffering,

in all cases where there is no ground of complacency. As certainly as

God is love, the burdens of love must be upon him. He must bear the lot

of his enemies, and even the wrongs of his enemies. In pity, in

patience, in sacrifice, in all kinds of holy concern, he must take them

on his heart, and be afflicted for them as well as by them. In his

greatness there is no bar to this kind of suffering; He will suffer

because he is great, and be great because he suffers. Neither is his

everlasting beatitude any bar to his suffering; for there is nothing so

essentially blessed as to suffer well. Moral greatness culminates in

great and good suffering; culminates also in blessedness, for there is

a law of compensation in all moral natures, human as well as divine,

divine as well as human, by which their suffering for love's sake

becomes always a transcendent and more consciously sovereign joy. There

ought to be no incredible paradox in this; for it is a fact every day

proved--always to be known by mortal experience.

Now it is this moral suffering of God, the very fact which our human

thinking is so slow to receive, that Christ unfolds and works into a

character Christ's moral power consummated in the agony and the cross.

and a power, in his human life. His compassions burdened for guilty

men, his patient sensibilities, sorrows, sacrifices, the intense

fellow-feeling of his ministry, his rejected sympathies, wrongs,

ignominies--under and by all these it is that he verifies, and builds

into a character, the moral suffering of the divine love.

Hence what is called the agony, which gives, in a sense, the key-note

of his ministry; because it is pure moral suffering; the suffering,

that is, of a burdened love and of a holy and pure sensibility, on

which the hell of the world's curse and retributive madness is just

about to burst. There is here no physical suffering, save what results

from his moral and mental suffering. There is no fear; for, to human

appearance, there is nothing as yet to fear; and, besides, the

pathology of the suffering is exactly opposite to that of fear; in

which the blood flies the skin, retreating on the heart, instead of

being forced outward and exuding from it. There is, too, no appearance

of panic in the sufferer's action, and he expresses, no doubt truly,

what he feels when he says, that his "soul is exceeding sorrowful." We

discover, also, at several distinct points in his ministry before, that

he is under a tendency to just this kind of agony; as when he groans in

Spirit, declares that his soul is troubled, spends whole nights in

prayer. It is as if there were a load upon his sensibility which his

mere human organization could with difficulty support. And accordingly,

now that his active labors are ended, and his feeling is no longer

diverted and drawn off by occupation, now that he has made his farewell

discourse, offered his parting prayer, instituted his supper of

communion, the surge of burdened sensibility rolls in upon him all too

heavily to be sustained. And this is the agony. It is just what such a

nature, made the vehicle of such feeling, facing such a juncture, ought

to suffer and could not, humanly speaking, avoid. It is the moral pain

of his love, sharpened by the crisis of his love; and, and a bloody

sweat is wrung from his too frail body, by the overload of divine

feeling struggling under it.

In his cross there is also a physical suffering, of which something is

made by the Scriptures, and a great deal more by theology; for

multitudes conceive that this physical suffering is the pain God takes

for satisfaction, when he releases the pains that are due under the

just liabilities of sin. I will not undertake to solve the mystery of

these physical pains; for it must be admitted that God is a being

physically impassible. But it is something to observe that there is

nothing peculiar in them, as distinct from the mystery of the

incarnation. God is not finite, or subject, any more than he is

impassible, and yet he is, in some sense, uninvestigable by us, both

finite and subject. Enough for us, as regards the subject state of

Christ, that he is able to express so much of the glory of the Father.

So of the pains or physical sufferings. Their importance to us lies

probably, not in what they are, but in what they express, or morally

signify. They are the symbol of God's moral suffering. The moral

tragedy of the garden is supplemented by the physical tragedy of the

cross; where Jesus, by not shrinking from so great bodily pains, which

the coarse and sensuous mind of the world will more easily appreciate,

shows the moral suffering of God for sinners more affectingly, because

he does it in the lower plane of natural sensibility. And yet even the

suffering of the cross appears to be principally moral suffering; for

the struggle and tension of his feeling is so great that he dies, it is

discovered, long before the two others crucified with him, and sooner

than, by mere natural torment, was to be expected.

But there is a much harsher and sharper meaning frequently given to the

agony and the cross, as if Jesus were in the lot of sin a great deal

more Nothing penal in the agony and the cross. literally than I have

conceived him to be, and God were giving him a cup of judicial anger to

drink, from which his soul recoils This conception is supposed to be

specially justified by his exclamation from the cross--"My God, my God,

why hast thou forsaken me;" where it is imagined that God is dealing

with him in severity, hiding his face behind a cloud of ire, and

leaving him to bear the penal woe of transgression; or, if not this, so

far withdrawing from him as to drape the scene of his death in a felt

darkness of soul, that shall somehow express the divine abhorrence to

sin. The assumption, whether in one form or the other, appears to be

gratuitous. That the soul of Jesus, just reeling into death, should

utter such a cry was most natural, and it should be printed with a

point of exclamation, as being a cry of distress, not with a point of

interrogation, as if he were raising a question of remonstrance about a

matter of fact. When will theologic dogmatism understand the language

of passion? Besides an angel is sent to him in his agony to strengthen

him-an angel sent to support him in the desertion of God? Does he not

also protest that he can have twelve legions of angels to help him, by

simply asking for them? And in what does he close the scene of his

suffering, just after his bitter cry on the cross, but these most open,

trustful words of confidence--"Father into thy hands I commend my

spirit." It is hardly necessary to say that this hard and revolting

conception of the agony and the cross has a purely theologic origin. At

no other two points, in the ministry of Jesus, would the eternal Father

have testified with a warmer approbation or a sympathy more

close--"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Nay, the

Father did, in fact, give just this testimony for him beforehand, in

this article of his suffering; for when he was speaking of his death

now at hand, and his soul was troubled, falling into a kind of

incipient agony, how does he quell his feeling but in the petition,

"Father, glorify thy name;" whereupon there comes a voice from heaven,

saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." Comforted

by such a testimony, and daring, in his last prayer, to say--"I have

glorified thee on the earth," will it be imagined that God, beholding

such an accession of glory in his death, is even hiding from him still,

when the last hour comes, in grim displeasure?

Here then it is, in the revelation of a suffering God, that the great

name of Jesus becomes the embodied glory and the Great Moral Power of

God. In it, as in a sun, the divine feeling henceforth shines; so that

whoever believes in his name takes the power of it, and is transformed

radically, even at the deepest center of life, by it--born of God.

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PART III.

THE RELATIONS OF GOD'S LAW AND JUSTICE TO HIS SAVING WORK IN CHRIST.

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CHAPTER I.

THE LAW BEFORE GOVERNMENT.

THUS far we have been ranging in a field, we may almost say,

unobstructed by matters of difficulty and debate; we have reached, in

fact, the middle of our journey, and have encountered none of the great

battle points of the champions, but have only seen the smoke from afar.

We seem, indeed, to have been occupied only in such kind of

exploration, as could well be made for the benefit of it, and to simply

bathe our feeling in that love which God has revealed in his Son. But

we are now, at last, come to the borders of the Amalekites, where there

is no way to get a passage, but to make one. All the questions that

have troubled others are in our path also, from this point

onward--questions of law, penalty, justice, righteousness, and their

connections with mercy, forgiveness, and the justification of life.

A suspicion is often suggested, by those who are looking after the

truth among these difficulties, that there must be some hidden

ambiguity, The political analogies suspected. or confusion of meaning,

in the words here employed. What is said of law and justice, under the

analogies of human government does not appear to hold, without

qualifications not given. It can not be that such analogies of law, and

justice, and penalty, and pardon, prepared in the civil state, are not

to be used in religion. Like all other analogies of the outward life,

they were designed to be. And yet there are few close observers, I

suspect, who have not sometimes been so far impressed, by the

fatalities discovered in attempts to resolve Christ's work under this

kind of analogy, as to seriously doubt whether any thing reliable can

be thus accomplished. There certainly can not be, unless the analogy is

carefully qualified by others, such for example as those of the family,

the field, the shop, the market. There is also another kind of

qualifier, that is obtained by getting a partially distinct footing for

the subject, in a province of thought which is not under such

analogies.

And it is in this view that I now propose a distinction, which, as far

as it goes, takes the subject quite away from all the governmental

figures, allowing us to speak, or to reason of law and justification,

without being dominated by such figures--the distinction, I mean,

between law before government, and law by government; uninstituted,

necessary law, and law enacted and supported by instituted government.

If I am successful in the statement and development of this

distinction, a considerable part of the confusion which has been felt,

in these much debated matters of atonement, will, I think, disappear.

It is very obvious to any thoughtful person, that, in order of reason,

whatever may be true as respects order in time, there was law before

God's will, and before his instituting act; viz., that necessary,

everlasting, ideal, law of Right, which, simply to think, is The law

before God's will. to be forever obliged by it. The perfections of God,

being self-existent and eternal, were eternally squared by this

self-existent law; for, if they had any moral quality, it lay in their

conformity to some moral law, apart from which no such perfection is

conceivable. Otherwise, if God's perfections came forth only after and

out of his will, and after the institution of his government, then he

began to will and to institute government, without any perfections, and

even without any moral standard--becoming all righteousness, and

commanding all right, before even the ideal law of right had arrived.

The grand, primal fact then is, that God's own nature was in law, or

crystallizing in eternal obligation, before he became a lawgiver, and

that he became a lawgiver only because he was already in the power of

law. Not that he was in obligation to any governing force above him, or

back of him; for he was himself the only being, and the container of

all forces to be. The law was ideal, and not governmental, a simple

thought, which to think was to be in everlasting, necessary, obligation

to it. There was no command upon God, no penalty hovered by to

threaten; but, thinking right, His whole nature answered in sublime,

self-prompted, allegiance. And this allegiance to an idea, viz., right,

was his righteousness--the sum of all his perfections, and the root and

spring, in that manner, of all he governs for, or by instituted

government maintains.

How it is with him, in this law before government, we shall find by a

simple reference to ourselves, and Conception of the law absolute. the

methods of our own moral nature; for we exist in His image. I think of

space, for example, and this eternal, necessary idea of space goes with

me, compelling me to see all outward extensions, or distances in it. I

think of cause, and this necessary idea compels me, or qualifies me, to

see all goings on of change, under terms of causation. These ideas are,

in fact, forms of the mind; forms to which it adverts in all thinking,

and without which it could not think at all. The same is true of the

ideas of time, and number, and quantity. Being in the form of time, I

am put on thinking when; of number, on thinking how many; of quantity

on thinking how much. So I think of truth, in general idea, and having

that form of thought developed, I begin to think what particular things

are true. In the same way is developed the grand, all-regulative, Moral

Idea of Right; which to simply think, is to be put in everlasting

obligation. For it is the distinction of this idea, that it is the

Monarch Principle of the soul. It puts all moral natures under an

immediate, indefeasible bond of sovereignty. They become moral natures

because they are set before this idea of right. Animals think no such

thought, and are never set before this idea. They probably have the

ideas of space, and cause, and number, but right is of a higher range;

else if they could think it, they would be moral natures in common with

us.

Here then, as being simply existent with a moral nature, and without

being commanded, or before, we are put in a state of fixed obligation.

It matters not whether we know of a God; for, if we do, we are none the

more truly under law after his commandment comes than before-though we

may be more effectively under it. The simple idea of right, if we

accept the authority of it, and set ourselves to it for a total homage

and conformity, will be a complete regulation for the life--for every

thought, and act, and disposition--and will fashion us in a completely

harmonic character and state of righteousness. It only can not do this

after we have fallen away from it, and been thrown out of spiritual

order, by the shock of our disobedience. Then it will even require a

salvation to restore us.

Let us not forget, or overlook, at this point, the distinction between

the eternal, one idea which contains all law, as regards the

principle--being Applications doubtful, the law, never. a simple,

universal, always present, never doubtful idea--and those questions of

right or wrong, so called, which relate to particular actions. Here we

have abundance of doubt, and debate, and perplexed casuistry, bringing

us here to one conclusion, here to another, and sometimes to none at

all. To settle these questions we make appeal to custom, to Scripture

usage and precept, to what is useful, to what is beautiful, setting our

critical judgments at work, and our memory, and our tastes, and mental

associations. But these subordinate and particular questions of duty

are only executory, it will be observed, as regards the general

principle, and it matters little if we mistake, or differ in these,

doing it honestly, provided only we are trying to enthrone the Monarch

Principle and put every thing in allegiance under it. Meantime, in this

law of laws, we all agree without a shade of difference. It is the same

to one human creature, in one part of the world, as to any and every

other, in parts most remote; the same to the Gentile as to the Jew, to

the heathen as to the Christian. Nay, it is the same to created souls

in all orders, as to God uncreated, and the same to God as to them.

There is then a law before government, which is common to all moral

natures, and in which all moral distinctions have their root. It is, in

fact, the law of the conscience; for though it is common to speak of

the conscience as a throne of government inserted, by the creative and

constructive purpose of God, it does not appear to be true that God

ever contrived a conscience, in any other sense than that he has

appointed a moral nature for us, in distinction from one that is not.

The conscience of God is only the fact itself of his moral nature, and

our conscience is but the fact of our kinship with him, in the central

idea that contains the mold and law of his perfections. If we use the

term conscience to cover the ground, not merely of that central idea,

but of all particular actions under it, the conscience would, in that

case, be a really infallible oracle for infinite questions in us, apart

from all helps of judgment and discriminations of reason; only it is

plain as need be, and can not well escape our discovery, that we

certainly have no such oracle in us; for if we have it, whence come so

many unsolved questions and debates of duty?

On this point of a law before government, and a conscience that

enthrones it, we require no better exposition than that which is- given

by the apostle, when he declares, [17] that as many as commit sin

without law, [instituted law] shall also perish without the same; and

that only such as sin against instituted law will be judged by it; for,

though they have it not, they are yet a law [uninstituted] to

themselves, their conscience bearing witness before all commandment,

and apart from all administrative enforcement. What he means to say is,

that their moral nature itself answers, with inevitable conviction, to

the eternal, necessary principle of right; placing them, so far, in a

condition where they are a law to themselves, and would be forever, if

no rule, or judgment, or judge from without, should appear, to

authenticate, or vindicate, the obligation they feel.

Let us now conceive it possible, that God and all moral natures exist,

for a time, under this ideal, necessary law, or law of laws, having no

The Law Absolute supposed to rule for a time by itself. other; that

government is not yet undertaken, God having not come forth as yet, to

be the maintainer of this law, or to assume it as the charge of his

voluntary administration. The moral natures, in this view, simply exist

upon a common footing of necessary obligation--bound, all alike and

together, as a matter of inmost conviction, to do and be only right. I

do not say, it will be observed, that the law moral had ever any such

precedence of time, or any but a precedence of order, before the fact

of government assumed. Still it can do no harm to raise the supposition

of such precedence in time, if we are careful enough to use it only as

a means of distinguishing certain points, in the great subject we have

in discussion, that could not be as well distinguished in any other

way.

Having thus all moral natures upon this common footing of ideal,

necessary law, and no personal authority, Obedience makes complete

society. or will-force embarked, as yet, in the purpose to govern for

it and be its vindicator, one of two things will be the result; either

that the grand impersonal law will be accepted and obeyed, or else that

it will not. God, we know, will receive it in everlasting honor; for

exactly that he has done from eternity; and his being thus united to

the right, fixedly and totally, is his righteousness--the sum, in that

manner, of all his perfections. If created minds and orders cleave also

to right, in the same way, they will be instated also in the same

righteousness, and so in the same perfections with God. All moral

beings, united thus in their homages to right, will be united also in

love; love to each other, and love to the law, by which they are set in

society and everlasting chime together, as in ways of mutual

right-doing. Indeed the necessary and absolute law of right, thus

accepted, is very nearly answered by the relational law of love; so

that any realm of being, compacted in right, will as certainly be

unified in love, doing and suffering, each for each, just what the most

self-immolating, dearest love requires. Even God, in such right-doing,

will bend himself to any most expensive, lowest burden of sympathy, for

the benefit and well-being of such as are humblest in the order of

their dignity. The humblest in order, too, will as certainly magnify

and worship the Infinite Right-Doer, because there is proportion in

their sense of right-inspiring an homage that looks up in the lowliest,

as truly as a way of sacrifice that looks down in the highest. In this

manner the perfect, universal righteousness will organize a state of

everlasting order and good fellowship, whose ideal we name, in the

words, Complete Society.

But there is another alternative; viz., that some one or many races of

moral natures, in the state of impersonal law we have described, will

throw Consequences if any disobey. off the law, and break loose in a

condition of unsubjection; and here it becomes a very important matter,

as regards the great questions we have now in hand, to note the

consequences that will follow, and the new kinds of work and office

that will be undertaken.

First of all, the internal state of the disobedient race, or races of

moral natures, will be immensely changed. As certainly as they are

broken loose from right, they will be chafing in the bitter

consciousness of wrong, doing wrong to each other, feeling wrong,

contriving wrong, writhing in the pains of wrong. Their whole internal

state will be under a nimbus of confusion. For though nothing is

contrived in them and the world to have a retributive reaction, their

simply being moral natures will compel them to suffer a tremendous

shock of recoil. There will be a terrible disjunction of order in their

parts and powers; so that what they call their soul will be scarcely

better than a wrangle of contrarieties, or cage of growling

antipathies. As to any self-restoration that will be effective, it is

quite impossible. A flock of birds let fly could much less easily be

gathered back from all the remotest points of heaven. For the internal

confusion is so complex and wild--so nearly infinite-that no power of

thought can conceive it, or how it should be set in the recomposition

needed; no power of self-exertion accomplish the recomposition, if it

were conceived. The whole moral nature, in short, is so far abused and

suffers a recoil so dreadful, in the rejection of its law, that

consciousness itself becomes a mordant element, with no power left to

master the self-corrosive sublimation of its wrong. Not that in this

fall, or self-undoing, it suffers any thing which is called justice,

under the political analogies. We do not know that it suffers any thing

in the scale of desert, which is the common notion of justice; we only

know that it receives a shock of necessary pain, or disorder, from the

violation of an immutable idea, that belongs inherently to its moral

nature. If necessity does not know how to think, or any way get up a

scale of justice, then it is quasi justice, and we probably can not say

more--only the necessity of it is too absolute to be avoided. We may

even dare to say, with all profoundest reverence to God, that if He,

the All-Holy, were to cast off Right--the law before government--in the

case supposed, his wrong would be an earthquake shock, strong enough to

shiver the integrity of his mold, and leave him a wreck of eternal

incapacity, as respects both wholeness of being and a recovered harmony

in good. This, not because there is any ordinance of justice above him,

but that such is right, and such his moral nature, as related

thereto--both self-existent--that, without regard to justice, the

crystal must so break, by its own necessary law, and so He must

irrecoverably fall. Thus, too, any race of finite moral creatures,

falling irrecoverably in the same way, would be not less fearfully

undone; not by justice, but only by the inevitable recoil of their

offended moral nature.

Secondly, as another sad consequence, the law so much loved by all the

obedient natures, including God, is diminished in its honor,

desecrated, trampled, and mocked, and their minds are filled with

deepest concern for it. It is as if the very law of their own beatitude

were dying under its wounds. Asserting itself unhelped, and vindicated

by no force but its own, it seems to be even going down, or vanishing

away.

These two painful and disastrous consequences having arrived under the

law before government; viz., the fall of multitudes beyond any power of

God will institute government and redemption together. self-redemption;

and the law itself trampled in dishonor; is there any thing that God

will certainly undertake? His infinite righteousness contains the

answer; for by that he is ever lastingly fastened, in profoundest

homage, to the law, and about as certainly to the well-being of all

moral natures related, with Himself, to the law. He will therefore

regard himself as elected, by his own transcendent powers of will and

working, to assume the charge of a Ruler, and will institute

government; contriving by what assertions of authority, supported by

what measures, he may reinforce the impersonal law, and repair its

broken sway. To this end he will organize a complete frame of statutes,

and penalties, and motivities general, for the will, such as He, the

Infinite Lord, and Head Power of the worlds, may count worthy of his

wisdom and universal sovereignty--the same combination, we may well

enough suppose, that we have to admire in his word and Providential

order now. In this manner, or in some other closely related, we shall

see that He has taken the government upon his shoulder.

Nor is it a matter very widely different, that he will undertake the

redemption, or restoration, of the fallen race, or races; for he can

hardly do for the law broken down all that he would, without recovering

the disobedient to their full homage and allegiance. Besides, they are

fellow-natures with Himself, and the righteous love he bears them will

unite him to their fallen state, in acts of tenderest sacrifice. And so

the instituted government and the redeeming sacrifice will begin

together, at the same date and point, and work together, for very

nearly the same purpose. In the largest and most proper view, the

instituted government will include redemption; for, beginning at the

point of transgression, already broken loose, mere legislative and

judicial action, plainly enough, can not bring in the desired state of

obedience. Legislation wants redemption for its coadjutor, and only

through the divine sacrifice, thus ministered, can it ever hope to

consummate the proposed obedience. Redemption also wants legislation,

to back its tender appeals of sacrifice, by the stern rigors of law.

Both together will compose the state of complete government. We are

brought out thus by our supposition, upon the conception of a redeeming

work, undertaken, or that would be undertaken, for and before the ideal

law of right, and apart from any conditions of government, previously

instituted, or violated. Precisely how, or by what plan, the restoring

agency will operate, we, of course, do not know. Doubtless it will

involve the grand, principal fact, that God is in vicarious sacrifice;

and, if that is best, he will go forward in just the same ways of

sacrifice, and the same revelations of love, that he has made in the

suffering life and death of Christ. For since he is grounded, as

respects all his perfections, in the eternal law of right now cloven

down, he will love the principle itself, and love its adherents, and

love, for the law's sake, as well as for their own, all the

transgressors and enemies who may haply be recovered to it. And so we

shall have on foot a grand work of redemptive sacrifice, that has no

reference whatever to claims of justice previously incurred. The

problem can not, therefore, be to satisfy, or pacify justice, but

simply to recompose in the violated law the shattered, broken souls,

who have thrown down both themselves and it, by their disobedience.

A beginning will probably be made much like that of the Christian

history, in the establishment of sacrifices, the sending of prophets,

the strong discipline of Providential judgments, the long drilling and

milling times of observances, defeats, and captivities. And then, when

the fullness of time is come, we may look for an act of incarnation,

provided ally thing can be so accomplished; for the love of God will

bring him down to the fallen, and a life in the flesh among them, just

as it has done in Christ. He will come in the very spirit of the law

rejected, and they will see, in him, how good and beautiful it is, and

what burdens of suffering it will put upon him to bear for their

benefit. I am not authorized to say that, in the peculiar case

supposed, he will do just every thing which he has done by Christ and

his cross, I only say that he will shrink from no sacrifice, or sorrow,

or cross, that he may regain the erring ones to their law, and have

them reestablished in everlasting righteousness. And there appears to

be no reason for doubting, that he will go. through a historic chapter

of vicarious sacrifice, closely correspondent with that which is

transacted in Christ.

Thus far onward we are brought, in the lead of a supposition. Let me

not be understood as resting any thing on the deductions made, beyond

what the certain fact of a law before government will justify. There is

really no such precedence in time, but only a precedence of rational

order. Instituted government is, to all created subjects of God, as old

as ideal principle, and they never had a moment under this, before

coming under the other. My whole object in tracing this supposed

precedence of time, has been simply to get certain distinctions of idea

unfolded, that will serve the future uses of my argument. The

supposition is a fiction, the distinctions are profoundly real and

important--allowing us to get a footing for the subject, where it will

be less oppressively dominated, by the merely political, or judicial

analogies.

The distinctions of idea referred to are such as these; which any one

will see to be legitimated Conceptions legitimated. in the exposition

now traced--legitimated, that is, as conceptions, though not

established as existing facts.

1. That there might be a scheme of cross, and sacrifice, and restoring

power, every way like that which is executed in Christ, which has

nothing to do with justice proper; being related only to that quasi

justice which is the blind effect, in moral natures, of a violation of

their necessary law.

2. That instituted law is no necessary precondition of redemption.

3. That the righteousness of God is not by any means identical with his

justice, but includes all the perfections of God in his relation to the

law before government, and never requires him to execute justice under

political analogies, save as it first requires him to institute an

administrative government in the same.

4. That law and justice might be instituted as co-factors of

redemption, having it for their object to simply work with redemption,

and serve the same ends of spiritual renovation--if there was a prior

fall, under the law before government, they naturally would be.

5. That justification need not have any reference to God's justice, and

probably has not, but only to a reconnection, by faith, with the

righteousness of God, and a consciously new confidence, in the sense of

that connection.

It will probably have occurred to some readers, in conjunction with

what has here been said of the law How related to the story of the

Fall. before government, to inquire how far, and in what manner, it

coincides with the Scripture representation of the original trial-state

of man? Here, to the human race at least begins the instituted

government of God. It comes in as no after thought, to supplement the

insufficiency of an ideal law which is older. In the breathing of the

first breath, this also arrives, and the living soul is not complete in

its moral equipment, sooner than it is put in authority by God's

paternal keeping and commandment. Still it will be more convenient and

rational, not to regard the fall as literally beginning at the breach

of a merely instituted, almost arbitrary, apparently trivial statute,

such as by the common understanding we have in the statute of the tree,

but to regard the real breach as beginning at the everlasting

law-principle hid in that statute, and violated in the violation of it.

This third chapter of Genesis is taken, by many scholars who are not

given, at all, to the mythical interpretations, as being, in some

proper sense, a myth. They discover a mythologic air in the story, and

note a plain distinction of manner between it and the historic chapters

that follow, or indeed between it and all other Scripture beside. Nor

is it any just offense that such a conception is admitted; for a myth

may as well be the vehicle of truth as any other form of language--be

it epic, or ode, or parable, or fable. The sin of imputing a myth is

when it is done against the fact of history, and not when it is the

proper organ of history. And it may be that a myth occurs in

revelation, just because there is, at the time, no culture of thought,

and philosophy, and reflective reason, deep enough to express, or

conceive the matter given, in a way of didactic statement. It is, in

fact, historic, because it is the form of story for a matter profoundly

abstruse in its nature, and possible to be conceived, as yet, in no

other form.

It comes out accordingly, laboring under such limitations of thought

and culture, that the eternal law of right is a tree, and the knowledge

of good and evil a fruit that hangs on it, and the declared

threatenings of death, notifications of the consequences otherwise

unknown. Temptation figures in the story as a serpent, and the

new-begun race are summoned to a conflict with him, and an assured

triumph over him. Then pass out the sad pair, excluded from all

possible self-recovery, as if fenced away by the flashing swords of

cherubim, to work and suffer, and conquer, as God and his Son will help

them.

Now there seems to be a peculiar fitness in conceiving the first sin to

be thus specially concerned with the original law of duty--the law

before The Fall specially related to the Law before government.

government--because that law is really pronounced in the simple fact of

being a moral nature. Existing as a moral nature, a man, Adam was

already in that law, and the issuing of any command or prohibition,

regarding a matter of action, would bind him, only as an executory

application of that law. Not even killing, under the statute "thou

shalt not kill," becomes a crime of murder, save as the perpetrator is

found to have connected the statute with the prior law of laws, and

done the deed as a wrong, by "malice aforethought." No particular act

is sinful, save as the prior law of right is implicitly violated in it.

It makes no difference, therefore, whether the forbidden tree be taken

as a mythic conception of the law before government, or as an

arbitrary, outward test of obedience in particular action; for no such

test could touch the sense of obligation, save as it implicitly came

under, and carried along with it, the already felt obligation of right.

All the statutes we speak of are executory of this law, else they are

nothing. Any fall must be transacted really before this law; for the

guilt of breaking any law creates a fall, only as this grand,

all-inclusive law is cast off, and the regulative principle of the life

is changed. Be it touching a tree, or tasting a fruit, the sin has all

its meaning in the fact that everlasting right is cast away, and the

golden harmony of right dissolved.

This being true, I see not any way of describing a fact so deep, and,

for ages, so far beyond the possible conception of men, that could be

at all equal to this paradise, and tree, and fruit, and fall, and final

expulsion, and flashing sword of cherubim. The profound reality of the

fall must, in any view, have been passed before the eternal, inborn law

of right, and the death and the curse that followed, signify a great

deal more as declaratives of natural consequence, in such a breaking

out of law, than they can, as penal sentences of desert, in the matter

of tasting a fruit.

Here then is the want and true place of redemption. It must have some

primary and even principal reference to the law before government, and

not to any instituted law, or statute, or judicial penalty existing

under that. Every thing God does in his legislations, and punishments,

and Providential governings of the world, is done to fortify and

glorify the Law before Government. All that he will do, in redemptive

suffering and sacrifice, revolves about this prior Everlasting Law, in

the same manner. In this law his supreme last ends are gathered; out of

this law all his beatitudes and perfections have their spring. No so

great thing as redemption can have principal respect to any thing else.

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[17] Rom. ii, 12-15.

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CHAPTER II.

INSTITUTED GOVERNMENT.

WHAT is to be understood by God's instituted government has been

already indicated in a general way; Instituted Government--what it is.

if we are to conceive it more accurately, we must first of all,

distinguish what is included in a moral nature as being necessary to

it; and then all that we find superadded, or conjoined to it, will be

the administrative matter God has instituted, as a religious polity for

the world. A moral nature, in the closest sense of the term, appears to

be no matter of divine contrivance, more than the circles are in which

the heavens are set--it must be a nature that can think the everlasting

law, and has liberty of will to reject, or embrace it. God is not

obliged to create this moral nature, but if such a nature is to be

created, it can not, as far as the necessary idea is concerned, be

either less or different. But there is room outside of this, for a

large creative outfit and providential management, where contrivance,

and counsel, and statute, and judgment, and all that belongs to an

administrative polity may get ample range of opportunity. And here we

find the instituted government of God. In this government, counsel and

will are added, to maintain the everlasting law. God undertakes, in

this, to be its Guardian and Vindicator, making specific applications,

adding retributive enforcements, casting soul and body, as far as

contrivance may, and arranging the whole economy of causes, to throw

the strongest possible motives on the side of right, and against the

choice of wrong, or continuance in it.

Inasmuch, too, as the government he institutes looks beyond mere ideas

of legal enforcement, comprehending, or at least associating, purposes

Comprehends law, penalty, Providence, and grace. of recovery, he will

incorporate a grand machinery of discipline, and also of

reconciliation, working by all the g secret griefs of persons, and

public woes of society--by the migrations of conquered peoples, by the

persecutions of religion, by the oppressions of governments, by the

wars and rebellions overruled. And then to these he will add, for the

same final end, what is more effective than all discipline, the

incarnate mission of Christ, and all Christly causes, the mission also

of the Holy Spirit, with all Spirit-causes threading the world's bosom;

the church also, the word, life, death, resurrection, and eternal

judgment. The matter is large, but solidly compacted in God's eternal

counsel, not intelligible always to us, but intelligible to Him--good

as intelligible; because it is the solemn ordering of his will, for the

one good end of right.

That we may conceive the nature and offices of this instituted

government more exactly, let us note a few points that will require to

be observed, in the right understanding of the relation it holds to the

law before government, and also farther on, to the vicarious sacrifice

and free salvation of Christ.

1. Let it be observed that law and obligation do not begin with God's

will, and are not created by his will. Law exists before God's will. It

appears to be the supposition of many, that God creates all law by his

will, and can make any thing right, or obligatory, by his enactment.

Contrary to this he makes nothing obligatory which is not right, or

somehow helpful to right, enacting nothing in which he is not first

commanded, as, regards the principle, by that everlasting, ideal law,

in which even his goodness itself is fashioned. In one view, all the

statutes he enacts are explicatory, simply, of the law before

government. In another view, they are only vindicatory of the same. So

that the one fundamental precept of right contains, or demands, in a

way of organic enforcement, all the statutes ordained; having these for

its complete explication, or fulfillment, and being fitly vindicated by

the executive energy of these. The law before government measures, in

this manner, all the law declared by government, only it obtains an

immense accession of authority by the specifications in which it is

drawn out, and the sanctions of God's infinite will superadded for its

enforcement.

It is a great mistake of multitudes, and one that amounts well nigh to

a superstition, that they take the Decalogue not fundamental.

decalogue, or ten commandments, for the fundamental law of duty and

religion, back of which there is no first principle more radical, or

inclusive. Just contrary to this, they are most, of them statutes

reenacted from the common law maxims, prevalent among the people to

whom they are given. Indeed, they have a great part of their

excellence, in that which is their defect; viz., in their merely

preventive, negative form; running, all but one of them--"thou shalt

not," "thou shalt not,"--as if made for a people who had lost all sense

of obligation to the positive good of a well-doing, right-doing life,

and could only be reached, by commanding them away from wrongs they

love to practice. In the one positive statute--"Thou shalt love the

Lord thy God, and thy neighbor as thyself," there was really something

fundamental; it was in fact the law of laws; but for just that reason,

it was too much, and the ten particular negatives signified more to

such low servile natures, because of their contracted quantity and

minatory sound.

2. The instituted government differs from the law before government, in

the fact that it inaugurates justice and penal sanctions. There is no

Justice pertains to Instituted Government. express sanction to

vindicate the law absolute, and no definitely understood sanction.

Certain effects of disorder and pain would follow disobedience, but

that they would follow in any scale of desert, we do not know. The

justice they will execute, therefore, is only a blind quasi justice, if

it be any thing which deserves the name. But the instituted government

of God is fast anchored in the terms of justice, declaring definite

penalties, and maintaining them with: impartial exactness. It rules by

the majestic will-force of God, asserted in its statutes and penalties.

And, in this fact, it gains a mighty accession of power; especially

when considered as in reference to minds already broken loose from

obedience.

In one view, it was the beauty and dignity of the impersonal law, that

it spoke only by its own excellence, with no adventitious, or external

compulsions to help it. It would rule by what it is, and not by what

will be done for it when violated. In this manner it would most fitly

address righteous minds; speaking to them even as it does to God. No

sanctions appealing to interest, or fear, would be at all appropriate

to them, but would even be a mockery rather of their liberty; for to be

in the right is already their choice, and they love it, even as God

does, because it is right. Enforcements are wholly out of place, till

such time as they are sunk away from right into the lower ranges of

motivity, where the smart of justice and its penal sanctions becomes

fit argument for them. To arrest them now and turn them back, on such

kind of consideration as prepares them to be taken with the love of

goodness and right for their own sake, is the first thing wanted.

Nothing will answer for them, in a way of being recovered, but to have

their collision with a government fortified by sanctions penally

threatened and judically executed. And this brings me to say--

3. That instituted government, if not taken in the large view as

containing, is the necessary co-factor of, redemption. By it the law

before government is re�nacted, or applied specifically, and the

definitely enforced applications are so many points of obligation

impressed. The soul therefore, living The necessary co-factor of

redemption. under sin, can not drum itself to sleep in mere

generalities of wrong; for it hears condemning thunders breaking in

from almost every point of duty in the scheme of life. The moral sense

too is mightily quickened by the arrival of justice, and the tremendous

energy in which it comes. For it is a great mistake to imagine that the

sanctions of justice are valuable only as intimidations. They are God's

strange work, and the fearful earnestness they show raises our moral

impressions, or convictions, to the highest pitch of tensity. Capital

punishments, in the civil state have their value, in the same way, not

in merely making it fearfully perilous to commit the crime so punished,

but a great deal more in the tremendous reverberation raised in our

moral nature, when the public law utters its opinion of the crime, in

sanctions so appalling. Operating in these ways, to enforce and sharpen

moral conviction, the Scriptures are always conceiving the instituted

law as a necessary co-factor in the matter of redemption. It is even

declared, to be "not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and

disobedient;" as if it were set like the cherubim before Paradise, to

flash, and cut, and drive away, and pen the guilty in their outcast

lot. So far the instituted government is law for the sake of

redemption. It is called, indeed, "the letter that killeth," "the

ministration of condemnation;" but the meaning is simply, that the

knowledge of sin is by it, and that when a soul is truly slain by the

law, it is only the more ready to be quickened by the faith of a

gratuitous mercy. Good in itself it becomes death unto the subject,

that sin may appear sin, according to its now discovered perversity and

exceeding sinfulness. And so--this is the gospel outline--"what the law

could not do in that it was weak, through the flesh [or fallen state of

sin] God sending his Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and [to be a

Saviour] for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of

the law [even the eternal righteousness of God] might be fulfilled in

us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

There is also still another point of view, in which the instituted

government of God works redemptively. All the previous history of the

world, Includes world-government as co-factor with redemption. from the

creation downward, till the fullness of time for Christ is come; all

the migrations, deliverances, captivities; all the callings, and

covenants, and prophetic inspirations, have been managed to bring on

the fit day, and get the preparations ready. And, besides all this, the

people have had a religion organized by statute, and been drilling in

rites and observances, divinely ordered--all profoundly related to the

grand vicarious sacrifice to come. In this manner, the religious mind

has been cast in the mold of Christian ideas, and a language has been

provided, otherwise impossible, on artificial roots, for the reception

and perpetual publication of the new gospel. God's instituted law

therefore, instead of being a simply killing agency, a ministration of

death, was in fact, casting molds of life from the first, and

commanding on, so to speak, unto the great salvation. Christ never

could have come, in fact, if the law had not been casting patterns for

him, and getting ready all the great external matters of the world's

empire. Again--

4. It is important, at this early point, to notice a distinction which

will often be recurring in the future stages of the argument; viz., the

distinction Righteousness and Justice distinguished. between

righteousness and justice. Thus the righteousness of God is the

rightness of God, before the eternal, self-existent law of right; and

the justice of God is the vindicatory firmness of God, in maintaining

his own instituted law. One is by obedience to a law before God's will;

the other is by the retributive vindication of a law that is under and

by God's will itself. One is without option, before immutable,

unconditioned, everlasting law; the other is what God wills and does,

in the world of conditions, that is of means and measures. God must be

righteous; God will be just. That he must be, because it is right; this

he will be, because he has undertaken to maintain the right and govern

for it. There is the character from which he rules; here is the reason

of polity by which he rules. Without that, he could not be himself;

without this he can not administer a government that will command his

subjects. Righteousness is necessary to the endowment of his person;

justice is necessary for a wholly different reason; one for the reason

of character, the other for the reason of polity Nothing can ever

dispense with that; this can be tempered only by that which conspires

with it, working for the same ends. Righteousness in God accordingly is

satisfied only with righteousness in men; justice is satisfied with

whatever makes good the dishonors of violated law, working with it, to

fulfill its end.

The justice of God is grounded in the wants of his government; being

that which enforces it, that which creates respect for it, and for the

ruler, and gives the emphasis of immovable authority to his word and

will. He must govern by no fast and loose method, surrender nothing to

chance, or caprice, or the inability to inflict pain. And so he must

command a character of justice for his government, even as he has a

character of righteousness for himself, in the everlasting, immovable

adhesion of his nature to right.

5. It is another distinction of God's instituted government, that,

while the law before government is impersonal, Instituted Government is

personal; virtually a person. this is intensely personal, and finally

becomes a person, or scarcely different from a person. I have already

spoken of the fact that, being from the will of God, it takes on, so

far, a personal character. What I would now say is more; viz., that we

commonly do not go back of God, when we think of his government--never

do it, in fact, save when we are occupied reflectively on its grounds

and reasons--but we practically take God for his government, and his

government for God. It is now a wholly concrete affair, and no more an

abstraction. In this manner, it gets vivacity, and a look of

reciprocity. We do not like, in fact, to call it a government, for that

is not relational enough to meet our feeling, but we drop the

institutional conception, taking up the personal, and calling it

King--God is King, that is government enough; and we prefer to let our

mind be occupied wholly with his royalties and the homage due to his

attributes. More intensely, because externally personal, the government

is still to become; for Christ will be visible Messiah, that is visible

King, King of Righteousness and so of Peace; whereupon, beholding the

government now upon his shoulder, we shall crown him gladly with our

invocation--"Give the King thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness

unto the King's son." Nor will the glorious kingship be any the less

personal and tenderly dear, that being withdrawn from sight, he is

substituted by the Holy Spirit invisible, going through all things, and

present every where; for he will be the Spirit of Christ shed forth on

us by Christ, and maintaining, in the very center of our hearts, a

Kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

It is sufficiently obvious, from these specifications, that the

instituted government of God is a matter of no secondary interest,

compared with Absolute necessity of instituted government. the law

before government in which it is grounded. It is the mental habit of

some, to be specially pleased with that which is back in the field of

abstractions; and such might think it better to have only the ideal

law, without any polity of concrete government organized to enforce it.

In which, under the pretext of depth, they take up, in fact, the most

superficial judgment possible. They consent, in this, to let go just

that without which existence itself were of no value; for how soon

should we cast off the ideal law in some experiment of disobedience,

and then our moral nature itself is a broken affair, past all power of

self-recovery. Without redemption existence is valueless, and there is

no redemption without an instituted government.

But there comes in here from an opposite direction, or from within the

fold of the gospel itself, a class of Dangers apprehended from the

remission of sins without compensation. theological objectors, who

apprehend a complete sweeping away of God's instituted law and justice,

by the free remission of sins. I propose no argument just here with

their objections, I will only state them that they may not seem to be

overlooked.

Thus they insist that, if Christ does not bear the penalties of sins

himself, and yet takes them away from Law becomes only advice. the

guilty, he thereby also takes away all due enforcements of law, and

leaves the precept to be mere advice. Where go the laws of God, when

the penalties of transgression are remitted gratis, by universal

proclamation, and the promise given to every transgressor that he shall

even be justified? What could any civil state, or government hope, from

a law punishing assassination by death, and promulgating, at the same

time, a free pardon to every criminal suing for it?

In confirmation of their argument, they also remind us that when

certain teachers, claiming a more than common illumination, toss all

such objections aside, extolling it as one of the fine things in

Christ, that he finds government enough in God's love and paternity,

and is willing to let go what are called the Jewish rigors, the effects

are such as to show most convincingly the essential lightness of the

doctrine. A proper insight of human nature, saying nothing of the

gospel, ought, they contend, to open our eyes to a discovery of what is

more competent; for to make a government of mere love and paternity is,

in fact, to make just no government at all, but is, simply to throw the

whole matter of duty and character loose upon the chances of a coaxing

process, where the subject, living in a lower plane, has too little

care for the goodness shown him, to get any thing out of it, but a

license of impunity for whatever he likes best. In such doctrine there

is no ring of conviction. God and religion die out of it, and a certain

modishness of philanthropy is all that can long remain.

The objectors also vary their argument, alleging that when God forgives

sin, without some penal satisfaction, his rectoral honor and character

are God's rectoral honor surrendered. made equivocal, if not fatally

diminished. Sin they say, and truly, tramples the honor of God. If then

he farther consents to let it do so, what becomes of his authority and

respect as a ruler? To vindicate the integrity of his position by

punishments duly enforced, would countervail the dishonors of

transgression. But what becomes of his honor and rectoral authority,

when his threatenings turn out to be but a mock ammunition, in which

there is no projectile included? Who will be awed by his will when he

governs only in terrorem, with the terror, in fact, omitted?

Again the righteousness of God appears, they say, to be made equivocal,

in the same manner. He commands His Righteousness made equivocal. what

is right to be done, because it is right, and because right is an

everlasting and absolute law in its own nature--necessary to all

created mind, necessary even to himself. About this grand ideal of

right he builds the whole fabric of his government; all his laws assert

and interpret this; all his penalties enforce this; all his judgments

are the discipline he wields for this. What then does it signify that

he freely remits all the possible wrongs of wrong-doing, as against his

great central principle of right, or righteousness? The principle,

indeed, is none the less right; it is only deserted; that too by Him

who undertook to be its vindicator and defender. The enforcement is now

gone, and with it, what was more impressive, the solid majesty of that

greatness, which itself was built up in the principle of it, and stood

in sacred awe before the eyes of all creatures, as the unchangeable

Righteousness.

It is another variation also of the damage or loss they discover in

God's rectoral character, that the supposed free-remission is not only

a discontinuance of his operative justice, but appears to blur the

evidences of justice, in his character. The power of God's justice

obliterated. God's attitude, before his subjects will be determined, to

a great extent, they allege, and truly, by the impression he makes of

his immovable adhesion to justice. The punishments denounced against

transgression will themselves have a certain deterring force, as being

denounced, but a vastly greater force comes into impression, whether in

the civil state or in the government of God over souls, when justice is

duly exalted and consecrated, by what may be called the dread sacrifice

and strange work of punishment: There is such majesty in justice thus

consecrated, that moral natures feel it all through and tremble

responsively to it. Punishments have a Certain value, as appeals to

fear, and as motives addressed to self-interest, but the sense of

goodness, armed by justice, strikes into the moral nature itself far

more deeply and by an immediate efficacy. It can not therefore be taken

away without great apparent loss.

In arguments like these, showing the probability of damage to the

integrity and authority of God's government, from a free remission of

sins, coupled with no penal satisfaction of justice, there is, it must

be admitted, an appearance of reason. How far it is an appearance

deduced from political analogies, that will disappear when such

analogies are duly qualified, will be hereafter seen.

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CHAPTER III.

THE ANTAGONISM BETWEEN JUSTICE AND MERCY.

CERTAIN points were stated, in the close of the last chapter, where the

integrity of law and justice appears to be involved in necessary damage

from the introduction of forgiveness, or a free justification. Under

the various schemes of judical satisfaction, it is accordingly assumed,

that Christ, by his suffering life and death, made the compensation

necessary, and prepared, whether by this method, or by that, what is

called the ground of justification. In this manner, God has two

dispensations, one coming after, and the other going before, and

related to each other as mercy to justice, forgiveness to punishment,

justification to condemnation. Having begun to govern by mere law,

enforced by rewards and penalties, and by that having failed to secure

his proposed ends of character and eternal felicity, he brings in a

second dispensation, by Christ, to rescue the guilty from the deserved

penalties of justice; which it does, by means of his suffering offered

as a satisfaction to justice. And so the law, it is conceived,

maintains its integrity still, when otherwise it would be quite broken

down, or even virtually given up.

Here then is the great contested matter of the Christian salvation, and

the issue made up at this point, is now to be tried. I am obliged to

disallow the necessity of any such penal satisfaction, or indeed No

compensation to justice needed. of any compensation at all to God's

justice, for the release of transgression; that is, of any compensation

beyond what is incidental to the vicarious sacrifice and the power it

obtains by declaring the righteousness of God.

As regards this question, two kinds of answer may be given that are

quite distinct and independent of each other; one that turns upon a due

qualification Two modes of argument. of the antagonism between justice

and mercy--which will occupy the present chapter; and another which

considers specifically the several kinds of damage that are supposed to

follow, when sins are forgiven without compensation--which will occupy

the next three chapters. The present chapter is not necessary to my

general argument, but is a kind of interpolation, and is introduced,

not because it is required by my doctrine, but because a revision of

our impressions concerning the supposed antagonism, appears to be due

to the general subject, and even to the honors of divine justice

itself.

Undertaking this revision, I put forward two points, where we seem to

fall into misconceptions, that increase the antagonism between justice

and mercy, and make it wider and more complete than it really is.

1. Having much to say about justice, as an exact doing upon wrong of

what it deserves, we begin to imagine that justice goes by desert, both

in its rules and measures, and thinks of nothing else. It follows, of

course, that justice lets go being just, exactly as it Justice in the

scale of desert misconceived. falls below the scale of desert in its

executed penalties. We have many scriptures also to cite for authority;

as when it is declared that God will "render to every man according to

his deeds," "reward every man according to his works;" or when it is

declared that every man "shall receive the things done in the body,"

having them as it were put back upon him for his punishment; or when

the lex talionis itself is formally appealed to as the rule of God's

justice--"For with what measure ye meet it shall be measured to you

again." All these and other like Scripture expressions are taken to

mean about the same thing, as giving back to wrong just what it gives,

and we conceive it to be a matter a great deal more definite than it

is, to say that justice is the making of a transgressor to suffer what

he deserves.

In a certain popular sense, this language and all the scripture

citations referred to are good--nothing could be more forcible or

impressive--but, when we ask precisely what we mean by it, we shall be

more at a loss than we expected. Is it any fit conception of God's

justice, that he will put evil upon a wrong-doer, just because he is

bad and according to his badness, apart from all uses to the man

himself, or to others, or to the government he violates? Is it the

divine justice to fly at evil doing and make it feel just as much evil

as it practices? Is there no counsel in God's justice, no consideration

of ends, or uses?

We can hardly be satisfied, I think, with this. Indeed we could not

approve ourselves in putting on a wrong doer the evil he deserves to

suffer, without finding some reason for it besides his desert. And yet

we could not be satisfied, in reducing God's justice to a mere

consideration of public ends, or reasons of beneficence. We feel that

there is, and ought to be something more fiery and fateful in his

justice than that. What then is the conception that meets our feeling,

and what, exactly, do we mean, when we say that justice and desert are

ideas that go thus fitly together?

We mean, first of all, that there is a deep wrath-principle in God, as

in all moral natures, that puts him down upon wrong, and girds him in

The wrath-principle of justice no law to God. avenging majesty for the

infliction of suffering upon wrong. Just as we speak of our felt

indignations, and tell how we are made to burn against the person, or

even the life of the wrong doer, so God has his heavier indignations,

and burns with his more consuming fire. But this combustion of right

anger, this wrath-impulse so fearfully moved, is no law to God

certainly, requiring him to execute just what will exhaust the passion.

It is only that girding power of justice that puts him on the work of

redress, and that armature of strength upon his feeling, that enables

him to inflict pain without shrinking. And then, at just this point,

comes in another function, equally necessary; viz., wisdom, counsel,

administrative reason, which directs the aim, tempers the degree, and

regulates the measures and times, of the pain. Thus it is that we

ourselves dispense and graduate justice; and then, standing at the

hither point of our vindicative passion, we say that we have done upon

the wrong doer just what he deserves. Standing, farther off, at the

point of counsel, and considering how we have graduated the measure of

his punishment, we should say, that we have done upon him, only what

the welfare of society, and the due sanctification of law requires.

There is, then, no such thing in God, or any other being, as a kind of

justice which goes by the law of desert, and ceases to be justice when

ill desert is not exactly matched by suffering. God's ends, and

objects, and public reasons, have as much to do with his justice as the

wrath-principle has, which arms and impels his justice. It is no breach

of justice therefore, and no real fault of proceeding, that God tempers

justice by mercy, and mercy by justice, whenever he can most advance

the solid interests of character and society by so doing. There is no

principle which any human being can state, or even think, that obliges

him, on pain of losing character, to do by the disobedient exactly as

they deserve. The rule, taken as a measure, has no moral signification.

God therefore need not give Himself up to wrath, in order to be just;

he can have the right of counsel still. Perfect liberty is left him to

do by the wrong doer better than he deserves, and yet without any fault

of justice--better that is, considering his own condemning judgment of

him, and the man's condemning judgment of himself, than he might well

do, or even ought to do, if the sublime interests of his government

should require.

2. It is another misconception, just now stated in the introduction of

this chapter, that we assume the essential priority of law and justice,

as related Another misconception as respects the priority of justice.

to mercy; as if it were another dispensation having a right, in its own

precedence, to be undisturbed and qualified by no different kind of

proceeding. Was not every thing put upon the footing of law, and since

we have broken through the law, how can God bring us into justification

without overturning the law Himself? Will He mock his law, because we

have mocked it? and will he give it up, because we have turned away

from it? What remains then for Him, but to do justice upon us? How can

he justify, in this view, unless there be some satisfaction, or

compensation of justice provided?

There does not after all appear to be any solid merit in this kind of

argument. It matters not whether we say that we have two dispensations,

or Justice and mercy co-ordinate and co-operative. one; in some sense

we have two, viz., justice and mercy; but it does not appear that there

is any priority of time in one as related to the other, or that both

are not introduced to work together for one common result. Then,

whether we understand the mythic tree, or test-tree of the garden, to

be the law before government, or to be some instituted precept in which

it is presented more specifically, the sin of the sin is, in either

case, the casting off of the former; that which carries with it a

revolution of character down to its deepest principle. And the "death"

that followed was the moral dying that must come with such a

revolution--no death of God's infliction, but a declarative death,

connected with the fall out of principle. Then follows what is called

the promise, and what is called the curse-the promise first and the

curse afterward--that as the new hope, this as the new state of wrath

and penal discipline. And both together, having one and the same

general aim, are inaugurated, as the right and left hand, so to speak,

of God's instituted government. They are to have a properly joint

action; one to work by enforcement, and the other by attraction, or

moral inspiration; both having it as their end or office, to restore

and establish the everlasting, impersonal law. God never expected and

never undertook, calling that his government, to bring his subjects on

and consummate his purposes regarding them, by statutes and penalties

of justice. It might as well be imagined that he undertook to govern

his heavens by the centrifugal force, and added the centripetal

afterward, to bring the flying bodies back.

There is a certain antagonism, it is true, in the modes of action

observed by the law-power of God's statutes and the justifying power of

Christ; even as there is between the two great forces of nature just

referred to. But the antagonism is formal, not real; partial, not

absolute. They are to be co-factors in the operation of a government

that undertakes, for its object, the reconciliation of fallen men to

God--a state of beatific worship and complete society. And to this end

one is set to enforce obligation, stir the conscience, intimidate and

set back the impetuosity of sin, so to waken right conviction and

prepare a felt necessity of the other; and then the sensibility taken

hold of and impressed, softened and melted, in one word drawn by that

other, is to win a choice, raise that choice into a love, in that love

become a new revelation, so a salvation. And so much is there in this

twofold action that without some such grip of law and justice on the

soul, no grace-power of God could ever win it back; and without the

grace-power felt in its blessed attractions, no mere law-and-justice

power could beget any thing closer to God than a compelled obedience,

or fear that hath torment. There was in fact an antecedent necessity of

their conjoined working, that, in the due qualifying of each other,

they may complement what would otherwise be a fault in each.

Thus by the retributive principle running through all our natural and

Providential experience, the self-sacrificing, vicarious,

love-principle is How the two co-operate in redemption itself. so

tempered as to make our time of grace a thoroughly rugged and stern

holiday; while by the love-principle, gently interfused, all the

retributions of our experience are held back and qualified, to be only

fomentations of thoughtfulness and holy conviction. Indeed we may go

farther and have it as a fact discovered, that these partially

contesting agencies only press us yet more effectively, because they

seem to be in a race for us with each other. The retributive principle

is propagating disorder, misrule, blindness, obduracy of feeling in our

sin, closing up, as it were, the gates of receptivity; so that shortly

nothing shall be left for love and sacrifice to work upon--at which

point, as far as we can see, justice gets entire possession of us and

has our everlasting future to itself. Or reversing the example, the

mercy-principle in Christ's sacrifice gets advantage of the

retributive, winning the soul to itself and begetting it anew in God's

liberty--when of course the justice-claim falls off to be a claim gone

by forever. In this manner they both work together, striving, as it

were, to outstrip each other, and exert, in that way, only the more

stringent motive pressure on the life and character. Let no one then

imagine that they are in a state of real contrariety, because they are

so far antagonistic in their action. The celestial analogies already

referred to show that order and static equilibrium are, in fact, the

resultant of contending forces. Were either one of these to stop its

endeavor, the condition of wreck would be forthcoming speedily. And

just so nature, all through, is packed with analogies that correspond.

Heat and cold, light and darkness, land and sea, central fires and

weights of rock above, are all doing battle round us in the same way,

and the result is an accruing order and stability that represents

eternal beneficence.

How far then is it conceived by God, in the appointments of justice and

mercy, that they really infringe upon each other; how far that the

rugged and rough power of justice is like to be injured and borne down

by its tender competitor, enough to want some compensation for its

injuries? The real fact is, that God's instituted law really commands

through love and sacrifice; for no created mind could possibly be

thrust straight through into good, by penal enforcements and

motivities. It never is in good, till it has cast out fear and gone

forever clear of it, to love the right, or the holy, for its own sake.

Law has nothing to do with such a result save initially. It even

supposes a captivating power working with it, to bring out the result,

and consummate the love in which the law's intentions are fulfilled.

Or suppose that in the race of contestation just now described, it

should happen, as one or the other gets exclusive and final dominion of

the soul, that the excluded party suffers a real infringement. Then, by

the supposition, justice may have taken away the chances and infringed

the rights of mercy, as truly as mercy can have violated the rights of

justice; when if compensations are to be made, the mercy-impulse of

God's feeling has as good a right to compensation from his justice, as

that from his mercy. For his mercy is as old as his justice, and began

as soon, and is a character certainly not less dear or sacred. Justice,

too, may as fitly groan for the pacification of mercy, as mercy for the

pacification of justice.

On this point of infringement and rightful compensation, I have looked

intently for some declaration of Scripture, and am only surprised that

I do not find what I should have expected to meet in many examples; for

nothing is plainer than the distinctness of manner and How the

Scriptures hold this antagonism. office, in what are called justice and

mercy. One acts retributively, the other compassionately; one by laws

of natural consequence, the other by supernatural intervention; one

goes by desert, the other by self-sacrifice transcending desert; one

condemns just where the other undertakes to even justify; so that,

factors though they be in forwarding a common result, we should not be

surprised to find them set against each other in Scripture terms, and

described as reconcilable, only in the fact that one pays tribute to

the other. Still I know not where it is done. God nowhere signifies

that he has given up the world to the prior right of justice, and that

mercy shall come in, only as she pays a gate-fee for the right of

entrance. [18] A reference is frequently made to two passages of

Scripture as implying one of them, and the other affirming, a

repugnance between justice and mercy, which only God's wisdom in his

Son can sufficiently reconcile. Thus, when it is declared, in sovereign

promise, that "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and

peace have kissed each other," [19] the supposition is that by some

wondrous compensative grace of God, as in Christ, these incompatibles

are made to coalesce. Whereas nothing is meant, as will be seen by a

reference to the Psalm itself, but that in the public restoration

promised, goodness and fidelity, and right and concord, shall return as

a benignant constellation of graces, to bless and adorn the new

society. Again it is repeated, how often, that "mercy rejoiceth against

judgment;" [20] as if that were even the key principle of the gospel

plan. It very well might be, only taking the two to be merely as

distinct in their action, as was just now represented. But then it

would be just as true, that judgment rejoiceth against mercy. The

passage however has nothing to do with either of these two modes of

contrariety. By the "mercy" it means simply the man who does mercy, and

that he rejoiceth against judgment, or over it, in the sense that his

heart is too strong, his confidence too immovable, to be shaken by any

sort of condemnation--"he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath

showed no mercy, and mercy [when it is faithfully done] rejoiceth

against judgment." "Boldness in the day of judgment" is a promise of

the same thing.

It would be difficult, on the other hand, to represent all the figures

of community and close conjunction held by these words in the

Scripture. Sometimes it is conceived that God's mercy has its

opportunity in his justice, and not any obstacle at all. Even as the

great Hebrew poet, conscious of no dereliction from orthodoxy,

testifies, "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou renderest

to every man according to his work." [21] Sometimes the two co-factors

are strung together, as pearls that are alike, on the same string--"I

am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness

in the earth;" [22] "The weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy

and faith;" [23] "Knowing therefore the goodness and severity of God."

[24] They sometimes, even cross over into the province one of the

other, and change offices; "the terror of the Lord persuades," [25]

even as "the cross lifted up draws;" [26] and "the law slays" [27] even

as Christ rejected "reproves of sin." [28] Again they both alike

support the appeal of warning--"behold the judge standeth at the door!"

[29] "behold the bridegroom cometh!" [30] The rule of judgment is also

declared to be the same in both, according to even the same

chapter--"For as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the

law;" [31] "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus

Christ, according to my gospel." [32] The judge, too, is to be at once

the eternal Lawgiver and, in some equally true sense, to be Christ

himself. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" [33] "Hath

given him authority also to execute judgment because he is the Son of

man." [34]

We shall find also, both in the old Testament and the New, declarations

made of God and of his Son that represent both in the same general

combination The old and new dispensations, how related. of attribute;

asserting themselves, at once, both in all the rigors of justice, and

all the tender concern of a forgiving sacrifice and sympathy. Thus we

have from the Old--"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long

suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for

thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by

no means clear the guilty, [that is the incorrigible.] [35] And again,

answering exactly to this we have from the New--"Tribulation and

anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, [continueth

incorrigible in it] of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But

glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew

first and also to the Gentile." [36] And what have we, in fact, but a

complete summing up of all such combinations in these two words--"the

wrath of the Lamb?"

Does any one ask what, in this view, becomes of the superior grace, or

graciousness of the New Testament? I see no room for a superior grace,

that requires a superior and better kind of God. The two dispensations

are not two, in the sense of being opposite, but only in the sense of

being one of them more full and complete than the other at once could

be. The New Testament is only a new edition of the Old, greatly

enlarged and improved--yet still accordant faithfully in its radical

import. They both declare the same God, only in different stages of

human thought or development; neither of them could be true, if they

gave us different kinds of God, or of government. Still though God is

just in both, and merciful in both, the former was likely to be taken

more legally and felt more as a bondage, because it was a drill of

outward rites and observances; and the latter to be taken even as a

deliverance from that bondage, because of the incarnate person who

could fitly represent to men's feeling the dear charities of God, and

show the rites fulfilling their idea in his own complete and all

sufficient sacrifice. No one was obliged to stay fast in the legalities

of the old religion; multitudes of the glorious fathers and prophet

teachers and little ones of faith did not; they broke through into the

faith-world, as God was helping them to do, even by means of their

rites; but in general they stuck fast in the letter, and the letter was

death. The new ministration therefore in the incarnate person was life

in comparison, a ministration of righteousness that doth exceed in

glory.

But while the offices of justice and mercy are so plainly in a close

relationship, and are brought along God dispenses justice in a right of

discretion. so cordially together in the Scripture, intertwining both

as forces of good in the government and governmental character of God,

I most freely admit the necessity that God's justice should be

maintained in the highest possible degree of emphasis. It is necessary

to God's administrative character. As regards that character, he can as

well be perfect in a shortened benevolence, as in a restricted and

diminished justice. Or if we look only at the defenses of law, and the

motivities at work for the regaining of souls, it is a matter of the

highest necessity, that there should be no appearance of slackness in

God, and that his justice should be kept fast in the loftiest, most

sovereign pitch of firmness possible. And what is this? Is it the

truest firmness of justice that it is itself fast bound by the letter,

having no liberty but to exact precisely the pound of flesh, suffering

no reduction? Is the weight of God's justice heaviest, when it is

according to some formally exact standard of measurement conceived for

it by theologic opinion--a standard it must meet, in order to be itself

justified? Must He be a precisionist in order to be passed as just? On

the contrary he seems to me to be most grandly just, when he holds his

firmness in a certain way of liberty--most grandly merciful too, when

he dispenses mercy, as one taking counsel of justice. He should seem,

in his justice, to say that he will suffer no jot or tittle of the law

to fail; and then to make the saying still more certainly good, he

should, for the law's sake, add such argument of love and mercy, as

will restore both jot and tittle and, if possible, the whole broken

body of the law. Nothing goes highest in God's attributes, when it

loses out the chance of liberty and discretionary counsel. Not even the

righteousness of God will be fitly expressed, when his eternal liberty,

in the principle, is hampered by the letter, in his penal enforcements.

We shall conceive this subject most worthily, I think, if we revert a

moment to first principles in the Justice dispensed by natural law.

universal order. Saying nothing here by of justice, as regarding its

necessities, or ends, or the vindicatory character, or the vindicatory

function it discharges in the matter of government, let us look

directly at the single point of executive certainty and firmness, in

the way of dispensing justice. And here we shall very soon convince

ourselves, it appears to me, that God has not undertaken to dispense

justice by direct infliction, but by a law of natural consequence. He

has connected thus, with our moral and physical nature, a law of

reaction, by which any wrong of thought, feeling, disposition, or act,

provokes a retribution exactly fitted to it and, with qualifications

already given, to the desert of it. And this law is just like every law

of natural order inviolable, not subject to suspension, or

discontinuance, even by miracle itself. And justice is, in this view, a

fixed principle of order, as truly as the laws of the heavenly bodies.

This, too, seems to be the prevailing representation of the Scriptures;

as when they testify that "the wages of sin is death;" "that whatever a

man soweth, that shall he also reap;" that the rust of gold and silver,

cankered in the hoards of covetousness, "shall eat the flesh as it were

fire;" that by the law of the judgment itself, we "shall receive the

things done in the body"--having them come back as tormentors; that

talents improved shall be doubled, and talents misimproved "taken

away;" that wickedness shall "go to its own place;" "go away;"

"depart;" passing off henceforth to be with itself, and be "filled with

its own devices." A good many declarations of Scripture appear to speak

of something more nearly inflictive; but it is better to conceive, in

such cases, that the language is declarative only of what is coming to

pass, by the fixed laws and causes of natural retribution,--which laws

and causes have a self-propagating action without limit; for no

disorder can issue itself in order.

And yet, as we have been saying, these same ordinances of justice are

to go along with mercy and in some possible way of conjunction are to

The natural law of justice never infringed by mercy. work out, with

her, even redemption itself. But how is this? where is the possibility

of this, without even a subverting, by mercy, of the retributive laws

just described? Do I then subvert the law of gravity, when I lift a

weight from the ground? or by kindling a fire, cause the smoke to

ascend in spite of gravity? Or, when I forbid the simples of gunpowder

to unite in the touch of fire, by throwing a water-bath on them, do I

therefore overthrow, because I so decisively dominate in, the chemical

affinities concerned? Were not all these laws and affinities intended

to be just so far submitted to my will? If then, by my will, acting in

among them, they are brought to act in serviceable ways, as they

otherwise would not, or not to act at all, is their nature therefore

violated, or their law discontinued? [37]

No more are the ordinances of justice overturned, when mercy comes to

them and blends her action with Mercy only interacts supernaturally

with justice. theirs. The executive laws of justice are natural; the

person of Christ, his character, all the moral power he obtains in

human feeling by his action, his beautiful life, his death of

sacrifice, is supernatural. This kind of power too, working in men's

hearts and dispositions, any one can see does not stop the causative

forces of retribution working in the same. It only works in with them,

as a qualifying agency. The same of course will be true, when the Holy

Spirit takes the things of Christ--the same things--and, showing them

inwardly, brings them into such highest power as they may exercise.

Accordingly, when the mercy of the sacrifice, working in thus with and

among the retributive causes of justice, issues a result which neither

she nor they could issue alone, it no more follows that the order of

justice is violated, than that nature's law of gravity, or chemical

affinity is violated, in the examples just given. Still the justice-law

goes on, doing exactly what was given it to do, only so far co-working

or working in with mercy, as it was originally meant to do. Even as

Christ came to nature in miracle, as a higher first term, doing all his

mighty works without stopping, or suspending any law, [38] so, much

more easily may it be true, that his new creating and delivering work

of mercy, operating only as by moral power, falls in conjunctively

among the retributive causes of nature, and without any discontinuance

turns them to a serviceable office, in accomplishing its own great

designs. Still they work on, subject to the fixed law of justice, which

is neither subverted nor suspended, and never will be. It even assists

the conversion of men, by acting strictly in character, as a condemning

and slaying power.

Let us turn our thoughts then, for a moment, upon the relative working

of these two forces, so generally considered to be wholly contrary and

In their relative working they magnify each other. mutually destructive

of each other, and see how they both get honor and sublimity together,

when God has his liberty in them and wields them as in counsel; for he

does it in a way to confirm and magnify both, never to diminish or

weaken either. Thus, when we go out into life, the retributive causes

of nature roll out their heavy caisson with us, and drag it down the

road, making no stop, and turning never aside more than do the stars;

and mercy comes out also in her soft gait and tender look of sorrow to

go with us, in like faithful company. She looks upon the dread machine,

goes before it, goes behind it, blesses nature's inflexible order in

it; only putting on the soul itself her secret, supernatural touch, and

the soft inward baptism of her feeling--even that which she has

unfolded so powerfully in the facts of the cross--and dewing it thus

with her tender mitigations, keeps it in the possibility of good; while

the retributive causes go their way, and do their work, not arrested in

their action, but only qualified resultantly, by the different kind of

action blended with them. Finally the subject, quailing often, as in

guilty dread, under the condemning justice, and drawn by the softening

ministrations of mercy, comes to that final crisis, where he is either

born, or never to be born of God.

If it be the first, then, as he is born of God--partly by the

quickening power of mercy, and partly by the Conversion by their joint

action. slaying power of justice--the retributive causes begin to have

a kind of action qualified by the now sovereign action of mercy.

Instead of bearing every thing along in their own way, they consent, as

it were, to roll under, giving now their much needed help to the dear

co-factor whose triumph they have helped already, by continuing on, to

do as in discipline, what before they were doing as in penal

enforcement, and thundering as sublimely still below the horizon, as

then they did above. The new born disciple is imperfect, and they now

fall in to have a chastening agency, for the correcting of such

imperfections. And how dreadful, in severity sometimes, are these

after-storms of discipline, that cross the track of the justified. It

is even as if some mighty Nimrod, hunting in the shepherd's field, were

setting his fierce dogs upon the straying ones, to chase them back to

his fold.

Another stage arrives. Made ready for the change, they die and so at

last go clear both of penalty and Salvation glorifies justice.

discipline together; only with such a sense, made fast in them, of the

eminent majesty and immovable worth and truth of God's justice, that

they would even feel it less profoundly, under the distracting smart of

its eternal pains themselves. They go home thus to God, to hide as

lovingly in the bosom of his justice, as is any other of His tenderest

attributes. And then how much forever does it mean, to chant the honors

of justice--"even so, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy

judgments."

Go back now to the point of crisis and conceive it to be turned the

other way,--that the transgressor growing penally hardened under the

retributive Judgment vindicates mercy. causes of his nature, pushes

finally bye his day of rescue. Still the mercy clings to him,

whispering still its "come," to mitigate the natural hardness and

bitterness of his now incorrigible transgression. In due time comes the

last change also here. Christ, who was the Saviour, is now the Judge,

and he makes not the law simply, but the very principle of his cross

and sacrifice too the standard of his judgment sentence. Every thing is

included in this--"Ye did it not to me;" did it not, that is, in doing

acts of mercy to "the least of these" little ones of their Master. And

so the justice, working in God's causes, becomes itself the lictor and

everlasting vindicator of mercy--not of legal statutes only, but of all

Christly possibility and example; piling on additions of penalty, as

much more severe, as the ill desert of wrong is now become more

aggravated and appalling. Not that justice now has forever extirpated

mercy by its judicial ascendancy. Rather is it become the body guard of

mercy forever--fencing not away any soul from it that will come to it

for life, but maintaining the inviolable order of that pure society it

has undertaken to gather. Mercy will never be dead though it may be

finally displaced; for mercy is a part of God, and God will never be

thought as having let the cup dry up in his bosom, to indulge himself

only in the wrathful severities of justice. Still God is love--always

to be love--only the. retributions of justice will be now so branded

in, that no one turns himself to the love; holding still fast the

"congenial horrors" that are so firmly fastened upon him, by his

everlastingly persistent choices.

Now if any one imagines that God's eternal justice will be more

effectually magnified, by running its career of penalty straight

through, punishing the jot and tittle of wrong, by the jot and tittle

of penalty, and even exacting the jot and tittle of satisfaction,

before it can suffer forgiveness itself to forgive; I confess it does

not so appear to me. I see no honor accruing to God's justice when it

mortgages his whole nature beside; rather is it greatest, when he

maintains it in a certain liberty, counseling for it and working his

great ends of counsel by it. Nay it will be greatest, when it is

closest in companionship with mercy, thundering strong help in the wars

of her subduing ministry, and then avenging her rejected goodness at

the close.

In just the same way it might be shown, going over the ground again,

that mercy never bears so grand a Both most honorable when working

together. look, or moves so majestically, as when she takes counsel of

justice. No man is ever so magnificently just as he that can be even

tenderly merciful, no man so truly merciful as one that can hold

steadily exact the balance of truth and justice. Our highest

impressions of God's justice are obtained, when we conceive it as the

partly discretionary dispensation of a mind in the tenderness and

loving patience of the cross; our highest impressions of his mercy,

when we conceive it as the wonderful sacrifice to which even his

justice allows him to bend. Little honor then does any one pay to God's

judicial majesty, in a scheme of satisfaction that takes away his right

of discretion, and requires him to stand for his exact equivalent of

pain, according to the count of arithmetic.

In this exposition of the antagonism between justice, and mercy, I have

said nothing of what may even be taken as being, in a certain view,

their They even coalesce at the root. radical union. It is a little

remarkable how near many writers will come to this conclusion, when

treating of the harmony of God's attributes, who will yet, when

treating of atonement, represent God's justice and mercy in a

thoroughly grim aspect of collision. Take the following very

respectable example:--"Wherefore we must so conceive of them as that,

in all respects, they may be consistent and harmonious; as that his

wisdom may not clash with his goodness, nor his goodness with his

wisdom; as that his mercy may not jostle with his justice, nor his

justice with his mercy; that is we must conceive of him to be as wise

as he can be with infinite goodness, as good as he can be with infinite

wisdom, as just as he can be with infinite mercy, as merciful as he can

be with infinite justice. For to be wise beyond what is good, is craft;

to be good beyond what is wise, is dotage; to be just beyond what is

merciful, is rigor; to be merciful beyond what is just, is easiness;

that is, they are all imperfection, so far as they are beyond what is

perfect. Wherefore we ought to be very careful not to represent these

his moral perfections as running a tilt at one another; but to conceive

them altogether as one entire perfection; which, though it exerts

itself in different ways, and actions, and operates diversely,

according to the diversities of its objects, and accordingly admits of

different names, such as wisdom, goodness, justice, and mercy, yet is

in itself but one simple and indivisible principle of action." [39] The

assumption appears to be that all God's attributes, being at one in his

righteousness, may so far condition each other as to maintain a

measurely and helpful working with each other. Where then shall we put

the case of one totally blocking another, and refusing to allow a step

of movement till it has gotten its complete satisfaction? And if

justice may block the way of mercy, why may not mercy as properly block

the way of justice? To say, in such a case, that both "are one simple

and indivisible principle of action" does not appear to be very

significant. What we call love does itself require justice to be done,

in a certain contingency, because it is necessary to the fit

maintenance of law, and the order and safety of God's kingdom. What we

call mercy is agreed by all to be the natural behest of love. Justice

and mercy therefore, both alike, are so far forms of love. Again the

same is true of righteousness, or right-this requires both justice and

mercy; for no being can ever think himself righteous, who does not

exercise mercy where mercy is possible--"faithful and just"

[righteous,] says an apostle "to forgive us our sins." [40] God will be

just, retributively, because he is righteous. He will also be merciful

and forgiving, because he is righteous.

In our own human judgments, we strike into this conception readily,

however difficult it may be to find how the two are compatible. A

distinguished A fact for illustration. English preacher, traveling in

the country, is stopped by a highwayman demanding his purse. He

descends composedly from his horse, and falling on his knees, offers a

prayer for the guilty man, that he may be regained to a better mode of

life. Rising he says--"Now go home with me and take the place I will

give you in my family, never to be exposed, always to be cared for,

there to win a character and be known from this time forth, God helping

you, as a Christian man." The offer is accepted, the promise fulfilled,

and the man is known from that time forth, as an example of fidelity

and true piety towards God; only giving the story himself many years

after, on the death of his benefactor. Has it ever occurred to any one

that, in such benefaction, he was not a righteous man? Had he ever a

scruple himself that he was not? Was he not also a man who, in a

different case, where no such opportunity of mercy was left, would

stand firmly by the laws, and the rigid execution of justice? Did he

ever even think to accuse himself, as being in the fault of laxity

concerning justice? And yet he appears, when judged by the judicial

analogies, to have become accessory after the fact, by concealing the

crime committed; or if not accessory, to have been guilty of

compounding a felony. What then shall we say of him, but that, being a

simply righteous man, he thought of something juster than political

justice; viz., to forgive, recover, and save?

Practically then, however we may speculate on the subject, we have no

difficulty in allowing the compatibility Analogy in the correlation of

forces. of justice and mercy, and regarding them rather as

complementary than contrary, one to the other. May we not even suspect

that it is with them, much as it is in what is now called "the

correlation of forces?" They seem indeed to be, and in fact really are,

very different one from the other--what can be more unlike in one view,

than the severities of God's justice, and the benignities of his

mercy?--and yet, as we are shown that motion is heat or convertible

into it, and heat into motion, and both into light, and all into

chemical affinity, and as all these forces, externally viewed so very

unlike, are even radically one and the same, it should not be difficult

to allow that the antagonism of these coordinate factors in religion,

so greatly magnified hitherto, is after all a case of identity

rather--not of identity in the experience, but of identity in the root

and causative force in which they spring. Is there not as good reason

to imagine that motion is hurrying away from light, and light pitching

into chemical affinity, and this using up the heat of the planet so

that by and by the stability and habitable order of it will be gone?

and should we not set ourselves, in the same way, to find how the

Creator is going to make compensations to the forces, for the losses

they suffer from each other? And yet behold no single pennyweight is

lost, for all the forces are one!

On the whole this matter of a contrived compensation to justice, which

so many take for a gospel, appears to me to contain about the worst

reflection Compensation theories issued in mock truths. upon God's

justice that could be stated, without some great offense against

reverence; for in whatever manner the compensation, or judical

satisfaction, is conceived to be made, in the suffering of Christ, we

shall find every thing pushed off the basis of truth. The justice

satisfied is satisfied with injustice! the forgiveness prepared is

forgiveness on the score of pay! the judgment-day award disclaims the

fact of forgiveness after payment made, and even refuses to be

satisfied, taking payment again! What meantime has become of the

penalties threatened, and where is the truth of the law? The penalties

threatened, as against wrong doers, are not to be executed on them,

because they have been executed on a right doer! viz., Christ. And it

is only in some logically formal, or theologically fictitious, sense,

that they are executed even on him. Many of the best teachers, it is

true, have maintained that God's threatenings do not amount to a pledge

of his veracity; [41] and it is very true that no one will complain of

any lack of veracity, in the fact that they are not executed against

him, as he might where a promise of good is not fulfilled in his favor.

Still there is obviously something due to God's dignity in the matter.

Allowing that, in some given case, he might safely do better by a

transgressor than to execute the threatened penalty, it is very plain

that an attempt to rule in the general, by a mere vaporing of penalty,

or by penalties always to be remitted, would indicate a want of system

and magistrative firmness, too closely resembled to a want of truth, to

allow any solid title to respect.

If it should be objected that as much defect of truth is implied in the

mitigations of law and justice, under the plan I have sketched, it is

enough to answer that no mitigations are made which were not implicitly

understood in the verbal threatenings themselves. These threatenings

only declared in general what the grand causalities of justice were

bringing to pass, acting by themselves; and the specific variations to

be issued by the interactions of mercy show no abandonment of justice,

and support no charge of discrepancy, as long as the retributive

causalities continue under their naturally immutable laws. First there

is a natural order of justice, then there is a supernatural order of

mercy interacting with it. And the working of the two is so difficult

to be traced, so complex in its modes and issues, that no judicial

sanction could be verbally stated, that is more exact or closer to the

truth of justice, than that which is in fact asserted in the penalties

denounced. Why then should any fault of truth be felt, when there is no

vaporing in terrorem, or shuffling in contraries, but only a regular

going on of justice and mercy--the natural order and the

supernatural--moving with locked hands, sometimes issuing a

deliverance, and sometimes a finality of retribution; neither, at all,

violating the other as an everlasting and fixed ordinance, and both

even helping each other into a range of dignity and power otherwise

unattainable. The forgivenesses promised are not emptied of sound

reality as such, by the fact that they are legally paid for. The perils

of justice are the real perils of real justice, not of justice

satisfied. What mercy can do, and what justice will, is clear as the

nature of both; for both stand fast together, as they have eternally,

in God's unchangeable righteousness.

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[18] This complete silence of the Scripture, concerning a compensation,

or necessary satisfaction paid to justice, has probably been noticed by

many. I have only fallen upon a single instance, in the Lectures of Mr.

Veysie. Admitting the commonly received Scripture ideas of

reconciliation and propitiation, he considers all that is said of

satisfaction, as their necessary ground, to be originated wholly by the

speculations or constructive theories, of men; and he says--"Now the

sacred writers nowhere, as far as I know, expressly assert any

satisfaction at all as having been effected by the death of

Christ.--Veysie's Bampton Lectures.--I.

[19] Ps. lxxxv. 10.

[20] Jas. ii. 13.

[21] Ps. lxii. 12.

[22] Jer. ix. 24..

[23] Math. xxiii. 23.

[24] Rom. xi. 22.

[25] 2 Cor v. 11.

[26] John xii. 32.

[27] Rom. vii. 11.

[28] John xvi. 8.

[29] Jas. v. 9.

[30] Math. xxv. 6.

[31] Rom. ii. 12.

[32] Rom. ii. 16.

[33] Gen. xviii. 25.

[34] John v. 27.

[35] Ex. xxxiv. 6-7.

[36] Rom. ii. 9.

[37] Vide, Nature and the Supernatural, p. 58, ��.

[38] Nature and the Supernatural, Chapter IX.

[39] Scott's Works, Vol. II., p. 204.

[40] 1 John i. 9.

[41] Discourses and Treatises by Dr. Park. Introductory Essay, p. 16.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE LAW PRECEPT DULY SANCTIFIED.

THE doctrine of the chapter just concluded supersedes, it will be

observed, all those compensational contrivances for the saving of God's

justice, which have been the labor of theology under this head of

atonement; showing how justice and mercy are factors in God's plan

working safely together, and are complementary in part to each other by

reason of the antagonism of their functions; showing also how, by this

same qualified antagonism, the order of God's plan is made sure, and

his ends of government accomplished. This I believe to be the doctrine

of scripture and, of course, to be true. Still it is a kind of truth

that requires time and reflection, and is not likely to approve itself

generally at once. Having therefore given it forth to work

suggestively, and finally to approve itself, I consent to waive it, and

go on with my argument, by another course that is separate and is no

way dependent on it.

Holding now in view the same particular apprehensions of damage, from

the introduction of forgiveness and free justification, that were

mentioned in the close of the third chapter, I propose, in this and the

two following chapters, to go over them in order, and show that the

said grounds of apprehended damage do not exist; or that, if they might

exist, they are adequately provided against. I do not say that they are

provided against by any strictly compensative arrangements, though I

shall bring forward and specify things which others may take as

compensatory, in respect to law and justice, if they choose.

We shall be discussing, in these chapters, what many take for the whole

subject; viz., the ground of forgiveness; but as this, in the view I am

giving, is no real subject at all, I do not propose the matter to be

investigated in that form. I propose rather to inquire what is the

working of forgiveness itself, as accomplished by the Moral Power of

Christ in his Sacrifice? It appears to be supposed that forgiveness is

a mere letting go of the guilty, just as a man who has been injured by

another lets him go, consentingly, without further blame. But there is

this very immense difference, if we will not be deceived by the most

superficial notion possible, between our letting go of an adversary and

God's, that, while our adversary is wholly quit of our impeachment,

God's is really bound fast in the chains of justice and penal

causation, and held as fixedly in their fires, after he is let go, as

before. Merely telling him that he is forgiven signifies nothing, even

though it be by a voice from heaven. He must be forgiven, the

forgiveness must be executed, by an inward change that takes him out of

his bondages, and the hell of penal causations loosed by his sin, and

brings him forth into the liberties of love and adoption. This will be

effected by the grace of Christ in his vicarious sacrifice., And then

the question follows, how the forgiveness, the real deliverance

accomplished by him, may consist with the precept, and the enforcements

of law, and the rectoral justice of God? No ground of forgiveness is

wanted; but only that the forgiveness itself be executed in a way to

save all the great interests of eternal authority and government.

The first named ground of apprehension is, that the law precept may

seem to be loosely held and fall into practical dishonor. Do we then

make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea we establish the law.

I turn the question here, as regards the precept of the law, upon the

particular word honor; partly because it is historical, being a

favorite word of The sacrifice saves the honors of the law precept.

Anselm for such uses; and partly because there is no other word so

appropriate. Sin dishonors the law, breaks it down, tramples it in

customary contempt, raises a feeling of disrespect in mankind strong

enough to be itself called the law of this world. Hence the necessity

of punishment, which is that self-asserting act of God, in its behalf,

by which he invests it with honor. For it must be remembered here, that

we are not looking for some scheme of penal substitution, compensation,

satisfaction, but are, in fact, discussing the great question how it is

that God forgives; or, what is the same, accomplishes the restoration

of fallen character? Where it is coming out, that he gets a great part

of this power, not by his mere love and suffering patience and divine

sympathy in Christ, but also in part by the invigoration of law and its

moral impressions. A very small matter it will be in this view, that he

manages to just save the law by some judicial compensation--he does

infinitely more, he intensifies and deepens the impression of law, to

such a degree that it comes out reenacted, as it were, to be fulfilled

in a higher key of observance.

To make this very important fact apparent, attention is called to four

distinct points of view, in which Christ, by his sacrifice, magnifies,

if I should not rather say glorifies, the precept of the law.

I. He restores men to the precept. If there were no instituted law,

none but the law before government, there would be no doubt of this.

But the instituted Christ restores to the precept. law goes by

enforcement, and is honored because of the enforcement; how then can it

be honored in a loss of the same, that is in forgiveness? Because, I

answer, the subject forgiven is restored to all precept; not to the

Right or Precept Absolute only, but impliedly to all the statutes of

God's instituted government, for the application and the enforced

sanction of that. No matter then if the forgiven soul is taken clean by

the sanctions, to think only of precept. All the more and not the less

does he honor it, that he is brought into a love of it, and of God by

whom it is enforced, such that his obedience becomes an inspiration. We

may even say that he is released from the law wherein he was held; but

we only mean that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in him, by

the free assent of his liberty, outrunning all enforcement, If then

Christ restores to such a noble conformity, raising the whole stature

of life and quality of being in them that are restored, how can it be

said that the precept of the law is made void or put in dishonor? Is it

any more dishonored, or made void, in the case of such as are not, and

will not be, restored? Has any remission been extended to them? Just

contrary to that, they are going to be made responsible in fact and in

strict justice, for their contempt and rejection, not of the precept

only but of the great mercy tendered them, to help their recovery into

it.

On the whole, there appears to be no single point where any loss of

honor can be imagined, as far as the precept is concerned. Christ

beholds it from the first moment onward, doing nothing and wanting

nothing, in all the immense travail of his incarnate ministry and

death, but to commend the Righteousness and Beauty of it, and regain

lost men to that homage which is at once their own blessedness and its

everlasting honor.

II. Christ honors the precept, not only in what he does for our sake,

in restoring us to it and forgiving us in it, but quite as much in what

he does Christ reasserts and establishes the law itself. for its sake,

to restore and save it also. For how shall he so magnify the law, as by

setting it on high, enthroning it in love, organizing in it a kingdom

worthy of its breadth, beneficence, dignity, and all-encompassing

order? We often magnify Christ's work as being a work of salvation for

men, because it is in this view that it makes an appeal so persuasive

to human feeling; but there is nothing he would spurn himself, with a

more total disallowance, than the thought of a salvation gotten up for

men, one side of the grand, everlasting law, in which God's empire

stands. We greatly mistake, if we think that Christ is doing every

thing here, as prosecuting a suit before human feeling, and to bring

human souls out of trouble; he wants to bring them into righteousness;

and that again, not for their sakes only, but a great deal more for

righteousness' sake; to heal the elemental war, and settle everlasting

order, in that good law which is the inherent principle of order.

What meaning there may be in this ought, henceforth, to be never a

secret to our American people. In our four years of dreadful civil war,

what immense sacrifices of blood and treasure have we made; refusing to

be weakened by sorrow, or shaken by discouragement, or even to be

slackened by unexpected years of delay. Failure was prophesied on every

hand; compositions were proposed without number. Yet nothing could meet

our feeling but to save the integrity of our institutions, and forever

establish the broken order of the law. All the stress of our gigantic

effort hinged on this and this alone. No composition could be endured,

or even thought of, that did not settle us in obedience, and pacify us

in the sovereignty of law; and, to the more rational of us, nothing

appeared to lay a sufficiently firm basis of order, but the clearance

somehow of that which has been the mockery of our principles. and the

ferment even, from the first, of our discord. The victory we sighed

for, and the salvation we sought, were summed up in the victory and

salvation of law. Failing in this every thing would be lost. Succeeding

in this all sacrifice was cheap, even that of our first-born.

What now do we see in the sacrifice of Christ, but that he, only in a

vastly higher and more grandly heroic devotion of his life, is doing

all for the violated honor and broken sovereignty of law. He proposes,

indeed, to be a Saviour to men; but the gist of the salvation, both to

us and to him, is that heaven's original order is to be restored in us,

and made solid and glorious, in the crowning of God's instituted

government forever. Every thing that we see therefore, in the incarnate

life and suffering death, is God magnifying the honors of his law by

the stress of his own stupendous sacrifice. Such an amount of feeling,

put into the governmental order, commends it to our feeling; and also

turns our feeling into awe before it. The law is raised as precept, in

this manner, to a new pitch of honor, and the power of impression given

to it, by the vicarious sacrifice and more than mortal heroism of

Jesus, is the principal cause of that immense progress in moral

sensibility and opinion, that distinguishes the Christian populations

of the world. What they so much feel and have coming in upon their

moral sensibility, in ways so piercing, is the law of duty, glorified

by suffering and the visibly divine sacrifice of the cross.

III. Christ adds authority and honor to the law-precept, as being, in

his own person, the incarnation of it. In itself, what we call law is

impersonal, He is himself the incarnation of the precept. a cold

mandatory of abstraction. Its authority, as such, is the conviction it

is able to produce of its own imperative right. An additional honor and

authority is given it also, when God reaffirms it, and from the point

of his invisible majesty, assumes the maintenance of it. A certain

authority is gained for it also by impressive circumstance, when it is

delivered from the thundering and smoking mountain top. By the cold

intimidation of such a pronouncement, it even becomes appalling; it

makes the people quake and shiver. Still the coldness and the stern

decretive majesty partly benumb conviction. To have its full authority

felt, it must be brought nigh in its true geniality and warmth, as a

gift to the higher nature of souls; exactly as it is, when it is

incarnated and made personal in Christ, addressing human conviction by

his human voice. For Christ is not, as many seem to fancy, a mere

half-character of God incarnate, a kind of incarnate weakness in the

figure of a love-principle, separated from every thing else in God's

greatness, necessary to the tonic vigor of love. Being the incarnation

of God, the full round character of God as he is must be

included--authority, justice, purity, truth, forgiveness, gentleness,

suffering love, all excellence. All these, in fact, belong to God's

character, and they are here brought nigh, brought into concrete

expression, thus to be entered, by Christ, as a complete moral power,

into souls, They work all together, in his charities, in his miracles,

in his doctrine, in his death, resurgent with him, as it were, when he

rises and goes up on high, there to assume the kingdom with him and to

judge the worlds. Hence the remarkable authority that is felt to be

somehow embodied in him, even from the first. There is really more of

authority for the precept of law, in the fifth chapter of Matthew, than

there is in the whole five books of Moses; nay, there is more in his

simple beatitudes themselves. For moral ideas and the claims of duty

under God, are brought specially nigh, when spoken thus, out of human

feeling, to the living sensibility. and conscious want of human hearts.

Scarcely necessary was it for him to add, that no jot or tittle of the

law should fail; still less, when the mysterious authority of his

manner and person were always enforcing the same impression. He spake

with authority, they said, and not as the Scribes; "never man spake

like this man." His simple definition, or summation of law--"Thou shalt

love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and

with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the

second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as

thyself"--seemed, to the captious scribe, a kind of second giving of

the law, so divinely impressive was the manner, and he durst not

question farther. Nothing could be more natural; for, in his person,

not the love only, but the law, nay, the instituted government of God

itself is incarnated and become a person, It is seen when he is looked

upon, heard when he speaks. What then shall be so felt as the authority

of his manner? How else shall law, too, get a presence so majestic in

the world, as when it thus becomes the good, great King of

promise--Immanuel--Messiah? But these are all inferior and scarcely

more than accessory arguments; the principal remains to be added which

is this--

IV. The almost inconceivable honor Christ confers on the law precept,

in the fact that his incarnation, life, and death upon the cross--all

that I have His life and death are his obedience to law. included in

his vicarious sacrifice--are the fruit of his own free homage and

eternally acknowledged obligation to the law; in one word his deific

obedience.

I have spoken of the law before government, the eternal absolute law of

right. Under it, and by it, as existing in logical order before God's

perfections, even they, as we found reason to believe, have their

spring. It was not necessary here to go into any very elaborate

argument; for it can not escape the discovery of any one, that if God

has moral perfections of any kind, they must have a standard law, and

obtain their quality of merit, by their fulfillment of that law. Of

course there is no precedence of time in the law, as compared with the

date of God's perfections, but there must be a precedence of order, and

the law must be obligatory in that precedence. But we come now to a

matter which, to most minds, will be more remote and more difficult;

viz., to the fact, that God has not only a character ever lastingly

perfected in right, but that, by the same law, he is held to a

suffering goodness for his enemies, even to that particular work in

time, which we call the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. Christ was, in

this view, under obligation to be the redeemer he was; and fulfilling

that obligation, he conferred an honor on the law fulfilled, such as

could not be conferred by any stringency of justice laid upon the race

itself. A point so remote from many, and yet of so great consequence,

requires to be more carefully established.

Consider and make due account then, of the fact, that the eternal law

of right, which we can not well deny is the basis of God's perfections,

and of all The Law is Love and Love is Vicarious Sacrifice. law human

and divine, is only another conception of the law of love; and that, as

the righteousness of God fulfills the Right, so it is declared that

"God is Love," as being another equally valid conception of his eternal

perfections. The two principles, right and love, appear to exactly

measure each other. One is the law absolute, or ideal, commanding the

soul, even if it were to exist in solitude; the other is the law

relational, grounded on the sense of relationship to other beings, who

may be socially affected by our acts. Thus every one who will be and do

right, in the large and complete sense of the principle, will as

certainly love all beings, whether God or men, whether friends or

enemies, whether deserving or unworthy, with whom he finds himself in

relation. The law of love appears to be, in some sense, a law of.

revelation, as the law of right is not. And yet the law of love is just

as truly grounded in nature, commands the assent of natural conviction

just as invincibly, when it is once stated. The only reason why it is

not propounded universally as a principle of natural morality, is that

the close relationality of it is cross to our humanly selfish habit. We

can talk of being right, and are willing to think of that as a duty,

because we can put a lower, merely conventional, and market sense on

the word, that accommodates our self-approbation; but we shrink from

the law of love, and do not propose it in our schemes of ethics,

because we do not consciously recognize and practically own the

brotherhood of other beings. In a certain philanthropic and romantic

way, we do it, but to have the law drawn close enough to put us under

bonds of concern for them, and even of suffering and sacrifice for

their sake, is not a kind of standard that we naturally propose. Very

admirable and truly great is the example, when it is fulfilled; we are

even quite melted in the tenderness it excites; but the goodness is too

nearly superlative, the standard too high, and we look for some other

in some lower key.

But this will not be the manner of God. Love to him is Right and Right

to him is Love. And, as certainly as he is in this law of love, he

Christ fulfills eternal obligation. will suffer the pains of love, he

will go beyond all terms of mere justice or desert, yield up

resentments, pass by wrongs already suffered, put himself in a way to

receive the wrongs and bear the violence even of personal enemies, if

he can hope to do them good with no counterbalancing injury. In a word,

he will so insert himself into the miseries, and even into the guilt of

their state, as to have them as a burden on his feeling, contriving, by

whatever method, at whatever expense, to bring them relief. All this in

eternal obligation. We do not commonly speak of God as a being under

obligation, because, being transgressors ourselves, we associate some

idea of constraint and even fear with obligation; yet what are God's

moral perfections, but his mind's free homage to binding principles?

And if the principles are not good enough to bind, what is the merit of

their observance? God is of course amenable to no law, as prescribed by

a superior--enough that he is freely, gloriously, amenable to law, in

its own self-asserting majesty; that which, like himself, is eternal,

that which he "possessed in the beginning of his way, before his works

of old." Perhaps it is better not to say that he is under law, lest we

associate some constraint, or limitation, but that he is in it, has it

for the spring of his character and counsel, and so of his beatitude

for ever. Even as Hooker eloquently says--"that law which hath been of

God and with God everlastingly"--"it is laid up in the bosom of God."

God then does not make the law of love, or impose it upon us by his own

mere will. It is with him as an eternal, necessary, immutable, law,

existing in logical order before his will, and commanding, in the right

of its own excellence, his will and life. This being given, all his

plans, decrees, creations, and executory statutes are built to it, as

the heavens by the eternal laws of geometry. And so, all government

being cast in this mold, God is united to creatures, creatures to God

and to each other, by this one common term, which interprets and

unifies all. Were there any being, whether Creator, or creature, who

had a different kind of law, prescribing a different kind of virtue, he

would be unintelligible to the others, and practically unrelated to

them. And his virtue, call it by what ever epithets of distinction,

could not even pass the audit of a common respect and praise.

In this manner we are prepared for the conclusion and even brought down

close upon it, that Christ came into the world, as the incarnate Word

The cross not optional but obligatory. and Saviour of sinners, just

because the eternal, necessary law of love made it obligatory in him to

be such a Saviour. It is with him even as the apostle represents, when

he says--"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of

Christ." It is not commandment that he speaks of, but it is law, that

same which rested on the divine nature and which Christ fulfilled in

his sacrifice; that same in which he gave himself, for love's sake,

even to death for malefactors and enemies. The essentially vicarious

action of the love-principle and the manner in which it makes the want,

or woe, or even sin, of others its own personal concern, I have

sufficiently shown already, [42] but I find the point so finely

conceived by Edwards, that I am tempted here to cite his language; only

wishing that he could have seen the reach of what he is saying, as

affording the only good and right solution of the substitution of

Christ, or of the scripture expressions The substitutional action of

love perceived by Edwards. concerning it. "A strong exercise of love

excites a lively idea of the objects beloved. And a strong exercise of

pity excites a lively idea of the misery under which he pities them.

Christ's love and pity fixed the idea of them in his mind, as if he had

been really they, and fixed their calamity in his mind as though it had

been really his. A very strong and lively love and pity towards the

miserable tends to make their case ours; as, in other respects so in

this, in particular, as it doth, in an idea, place us in their stead,

under their misery, with a most lively, feeling sense of that misery;

as it were feeling it for them, actually suffering it in their stead by

strong sympathy." [43] Thus it was that Christ bore his burden as being

under the eternal law of love, and so fulfilled it as to make it, in

some really impressive sense, his law--"the law of Christ."

There was no constraint in the obligation, it is true; the more

wonderful therefore is the grace of the obedience that is yielded so

freely. And of course the obligation, when we thus speak, is not any

obligation due to us. We had no claims to lay upon him, any more than

our enemy has a claim upon us, that we shall sacrifice our peace, or

life, to his benefit. It was simply obligation to the grand,

everlasting, essentially vicarious principle of love, an obligation to

be gracious, and do by his disobedient subjects, since he could well do

it, better than they deserve; which if he could not consent to, he must

be quite another and less approvable character before the standards of

his own perfect mind. There is nothing optional, as many conceive in

his sacrifice. He could renounce it, only as he could the honors of his

own perfect character. In it he is just as good as he is in obligation

to be. If better, then either he is better than he should be, or the

law less good than it ought to be. Whereas it is the exact merit, the

glory of both, that they punctually meet in the utmost limit of good.

The conception of some such obligation, or obedience to obligation, in

the work and sacrifice of Christ, has been more or less nearly

approached Anselm and Bellamy. by many. Thus Anselm, while conceiving

that Christ undertakes the work at his option, still imagines a kind of

obligation post requiring it of God himself. "Does not the reason why

God ought to do the things we speak of seem absolute enough, when we

consider that the human race, that work of his so very precious, was

wholly ruined, and that it was not seemly that the purpose which God

had in man should fall to the ground?" [44] Bellamy also conceives that

God, in requiring perfect obedience of man as the condition of his well

being, even carefully squared his own action by the golden rule, in a

way of volunteer allegiance to it, saying, "I did as well by mankind,

as I should desire to have been done by myself, had I been in their

case and they in mine; for when my Son, who is as myself, came to stand

in their place, I required the same of him." [45]

But there is another version of the obedience of Christ--the same which

is indicated in these last words--which requires our attention. Thus

The obedience of Christ to the Father, his obedience to law. many,

giving to certain words of scripture a meaning favored by their most

superficial acceptation, look upon it never as the obedience of God

himself to the eternal, necessary law, but as being that of a certain

second person, who is somehow other and not God, contributed by him to

God for sinners. Obtaining thus a peculiar merit by his suffering

obedience, the second person, they conceive, is able to pay the first

for the letting go of their punishment. And they quote, as authority

for this, all the texts that speak of Christ as being sent, or

commanded by the Father, as doing his will, as obedient unto death, for

the Father's reward. As if one person of the Trinity, putting another

under command, and sending him into the world to suffer and die for

sin, were any permissible account either of the Trinity, or of the

suffering. Why must we take hold of words in this manner, without

considering at all the conditions of the subject matter? The Father is

above, representing the eternal government; the Son is a man below,

acting, so far, under and obeying that government. But in another,

wholly consistent view, he is, in his human person, the express image

and outward type of what is most intense and deepest in the character

and action of God himself; representing, in what is called his

obedience to the Father, the everlasting obedience of the whole divine

nature to the ideal, fundamental law. Thus when he testifies--"I came

not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me"--"as the

Father gave me commandment so I do," he is to be understood just as he

is when he says--"the Father is greater than I;" that is, not as

declaring his literal inferiority, and his subjection as the eternal

Son, or second person, to the Father's mandates, but as speaking for

the human state he is in, and refusing to be made an idol of in his

human figure. He is only saying, do not stop at me, and localize God

quantitively in me, when he is only in me, as being expressed by me.

Let your thought begin at me, and then, counting me one with the

Father, in what you have discovered by me, let it travel up and crown

itself in him. Having gotten out of me the feeling and character of the

God invisible, count that having seen me "ye have seen the Father that

sent me;" that, in what I have called my obedience to Him, ye have seen

that everlasting obedience to law, which is the essence and soul of his

perfections. Let your homage therefore be to Him, as the God above

limitation, discovered to your love in and by limitation.

In this manner, Christ is always contriving to carry men's thoughts

above, or up through, his humanity, and forbid their coming to a period

of stunted measurement in his human person. He takes the subject state,

doing and showing every thing in and by that state, and then, referring

it back to that unseen sovereign state of which it is the

representation. Any other conception of the matter, such as puts the

Son literally under the tutelage and authority of the Father, is a

superstition put for doctrine, and not any rational belief. God is

three in no such sense that he is not one; least of all is he three, in

any such sense, that he has relations of authority and subjection in

his threeness. The obedience of Christ, then, represents just that

which we have seen to be included in God's moral perfection, or

righteousness; viz., the everlasting obedience of his nature to the law

of right, or of love. Nay, if we will let our plummet down to the

bottom of this great sea, the cross of Jesus represents and reveals the

tremendous cross that is hid in the bosom of God's love and life from

eternity.

It is obvious enough that, in such a way of obedience, Christ makes a

contribution of honor to the law he obeys, that will do more to

enthrone The immense honor paid to the Law by Christ's obedience. it in

our reverence, than all the desecrations of sin have done to pluck it

down--more too, than all conceivable punishments, to make it felt and

keep it in respect. The grand evil of sin is that it tramples law and

brings it into contempt. Many, too, apprehend danger from the full

remission of sin, lest it should leave the law trampled and without

vindication, and reveal a kind of indifference to it in God, that will

be fatal to all due impressions of its authority and sanctity. Here

then, over against all such damages and apprehended mischiefs of

laxity, we now place the momentous, grandly impressive, fact of

Christ's obedience--his obedience unto death--taken as an exhibition of

God's eternal homage to law, and of the cross of sacrifice by which his

feeling and will are everlastingly bowed to the burdens of pity and

suffering. Even as Christ himself conceives the representative nature

of his whole life, when he says--"I have glorified thee on the earth."

Now I do not undertake to show, be it observed, that Christ came into

the world, in a plan to set his obedience over against the damages and

Compensation enough were compensation wanted. debts of sins; or that he

came to fill out any scheme of satisfaction, or compensation. If any

thing is wanting to compensate the loss of punishment, it will be

enough that the very things suffered and done to make the forgiveness

an executed fact, give back greater honors to the law than are lost by

the loss of punishment. No, Christ came just because the law he had

been in from eternity sent him, and his incarnate appearing was but the

necessary outcoming in time of God's eternal Love. He descended to the

lot of men just because he had them in his heart. His object was only

to minister. His compassions, even before he came, were tinged all

through with sorrowing tenderness. His emotional nature was stung and

wounded every day, after he came, by the scenes of wrong and cruelty he

was compelled to look upon, the sicknesses, and pains, and deaths, and

torments of spiritual disorder to which he ministered. The storms of

the world's madness gathered round him in his work, and the inward

storms of mental agony rolled heavily over him sometimes in his private

hours. But his effort was to simply fulfill such a ministry to lost men

as would gain them back to God and eternal life. He strove, in

particular, by his teachings, healings, sympathies, and the impressions

of his personal suffering, to inaugurate a new and more adequate moral

power by his ministry; so to get hold of their moral convictions, so to

work on their guiltiness, by the due manifestation of God, and his

love, as to even regenerate their character. And doing all this, going

even to the cross for love's sake, in a perfectly simple devotion, what

will more certainly follow than that even the law thus gloriously

fulfilled in his ministry, is itself raised into power by the honor he

confers upon it? Every thing gets a moral power that he touches, or

looks upon--the Jordan, that he went down into it; Nazareth, that it

saw his childhood; Capernaum, that it heard his first sermon; the

waters of Gennessaret, that they floated his boat and settled into

peace under his word. Nay, if we could find it, even the rock of the

mountain that supported his head in the sleep of his solitary night,

would have itself a sacred power from his person. Why not then the law,

that which he had with him before the world was, that which he taught

so convincingly, that which he fulfilled by so many exhaustive labors,

and by sorrowing even unto death?

Grant that here is no contrived compensation to law, is it any the less

truly compensated, any the less sacred, and honorable, and powerful on

a lost world's feeling, that he has glorified it forever in their sight

by his simple obedience? Whatever we may say or think of the matter of

judicial compensation, as a purpose to be answered by his death, he

could not be ignorant that the highest possible honor would be imparted

to the law by his obedience to it; still it does not appear that even

this was any principal end of his engagement. His principal end was in

the sacrifice itself; viz., in the fulfilling and bringing forth of

God's love to men, and the organizing of God's kingdom among them, by

his glorious, world-transforming power. In this he did not fail, and it

is only affirming a very subordinate matter, to say that his power,

which came out of the law, came back also upon it, and made it a

greater power than either the obedience, or the punishment of all past

ages could.

As regards the degree of honor thus conferred by his obedience on the

law, two points need especially to be observed. First, that the law

fulfilled The very law dishonored organizes the redemption. by his

vicarious love and ministry, was exactly the same that our sin had cast

off and desecrated--this it was that put the lost world upon his

feeling, proved its goodness in his goodness, shaped the beauty of his

beauty, travailed for us in his agony, and held him to the obedience

even unto death. So the violated law comes back upon us to overwhelm

us, by showing us, in Christ, just what goodness was in it. Secondly

that, in this suffering and sacrifice of Jesus, there was nothing new,

but only a new revelation of that which was old as the perfections of

God. As a new waking up of feeling in deity, always before impassible,

it would be a fact too violent for belief. Contrary to this, it is but

the letting out of God's feeling, that could get no such sufficient

vent of evidence before. This same agony and passion heaved in the

breast of God's virtue, even from before the world's foundations. God

was suffering in feeling for the ages to be, even before the evil was.

In his counsel of creation he could not think of wrong, and disorder,

and pain breaking loose, without being exercised for it according to

its nature. There was a losing side of pain, in his goodness, just

because it was good; only the loss was never a true loss, because it

was eternally repaid by the willingness to lose for love's sake. The

Gethsemane of his compassions kept company with his joys, and the

conscious goodness of one was high enough to exalt the conscious bliss

of the other. All this now appears, in the specially human facts of

Christ and his passion. The law that was being thus sublimely

fulfilled, in God's suffering love from eternity, is only now fulfilled

to human view, by the suffering ministry of Jesus. No such revelation

was made, or could be, in the field of nature before. Scantily and

feebly was it made, so as to just glimmer and nothing more, in the word

of the ancient prophets, and the guesses of the ancient saints. Now it

is out in the full, revealed in time--God is in the world in love,

fulfilling his eternal law Himself, for the saving of its rejectors.

But there are two objections to be noticed. The first is that which is

actually, yet accidentally, stated by Mr Burge, without any conception

of its Objected that the obedience was nothing new. applicability to

the case here occurring. He says [46] --"In his divine nature,

therefore, he could not have rendered precisely that obedience which

man failed to render. Neither can it be supposed that in his divine

nature, when he was incarnate, he obeyed the divine law, in any sense

different from that in which God obeyed it from eternity. It is not

seen, therefore, how Christ's obedience to the law could manifest God's

regard for holiness, on account of his union of the divine and human

natures, any more than if no such union had existed." Most true it is

that he did not obey the law in any sense different from that in which

God had obeyed it from eternity. But the inference that nothing is

shown by his obedience, more than was shown by the eternal obedience,

is just as good as it would be to argue that, manifesting nothing of

God's love in his death, more than was in God's love before, it is

therefore nugatory. The glory of his incarnate mission is precisely

this, and in this is the gain of it, that he unbosoms, in time, what

love and obedience to law were hid in God's unseen majesty, or but

dimly and feebly shown before.

The second objection referred to is that in such use of the obedience

of Christ, conceived to be a simple fulfillment of his obligation, we

get no surplus merit to be our righteousness. By a very strange, almost

incredible mock refinement, the sacrifice of Christ is dissected by the

prominent satisfaction theories, just between Objected that, in such

use of the obedience, no surplus merit is left for us. the passive and

the active, the suffering and the obedience; the suffering being put to

our account with justice and called our atonement, and the obedience

taken as a positive fulfillment of the law, and assigned to us for a

righteousness. I can hardly trust myself to speak of this wretched

imposture of science, falsely so called, as it deserves. It is a

halving, as it were, of Christ and his sacrifice, that makes both

halves alike of non effect. Of what worth is the suffering, taken as

mere suffering, with no obedience or moral quality in it? Of what

worth, too, is the obedience, considered as having suffered nothing,

proved itself by nothing, and even missed the prime attribute of

reality? Is God a being who wants suffering by itself, and will have it

from no matter whom? Is he a being who can make a righteousness for us

quantitatively out of another's obedience, and be himself pleased with

the impossible fiction? O how different a matter is the sublime

obedience of Jesus--obedience unto death, death as the seal of

obedience--covering the law thus with its original honor and breathing

God's everlasting love into out fallen desecrated nature! This is

gospel--possible truth, and good enough and great enough to be true.

Whoever turns it, therefore, into wood and hay may be ingenious, but he

will have scarcely less to answer for in his doctrine, I seriously

fear, than others have in their sin.

Reviewing now the ground over which we have passed, I think it will be

seen that Christ has set the law precept in a position of great honor

and power, enduing it with such life and majesty, in men's convictions,

as it otherwise never could have had. (1.) He proposes, we have seen,

no remission of sins which does not include a full recovery to the law.

(2.) All that he does and suffers in his sacrifice, he as truly does

for the resanctification of the law as for-our recovery. (3.) In his

incarnation, he incarnates the same, and brings it nigh to men's

feelings and convictions, by the personal footing he gains for it in

humanity. (4.) He honors it again by his obedience, which is, in fact,

a revelation of God's own everlasting obedience, before the eyes of

mankind; the grandest fact of human knowledge. With great confidence

then I state the conclusion, that the law precept is safe, established

in power, crowned with invincible honor. Whatever may be thought, or

apprehended, in respect to the possible damage accruing to God's law,

as regards the matter of enforcement, when the remission of penalty is

proclaimed, there can be no misgiving, in respect to the integrity and

sanctity of the requirement. Whether there is any proper ground of

concern for the loss of the penal enforcements, will be considered in

the next chapter.

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[42] Part I., Chapter I.

[43] Edwards' Miscellaneous Observations, p. 5.

[44] Cur Deus Homo, Lib. 1., Cap. iv.

[45] Vol. I., p. 259.

[46] Discourses and Treatises by Dr. Park, p. 475.

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CHAPTER V.

LEGAL ENFORCEMENTS NOT DIMINISHED.

THE common assumption, that law is absurd or impossible without penal

enforcements, is not quite true, Legal penal enforcements necessary for

bad minds. or is only true in a given case or condition. God himself

acknowledges law even from eternity, though it has to Him no sanction

over and above its own excellence. All upright beings do the same.

Indeed a law propounded with a penalty, to a realm in perfect holiness,

would even be an impropriety, or blamable offense to their feeling. Not

so, when propounded to minds no longer capable of being swayed by the

authority of beauty and excellence in their own right. For it is the

misery and shame of bad minds under sin, that excellence and beauty,

powerful as they still are over the sentiments of their higher nature

not yet extirpated, are no longer sufficient, by themselves, to recover

and restore the broken homage of their fall. They move on a point, too

far above the plane of motivity occupied by sin, to control and subdue

it. They are likely indeed, when embodied in Christ, to be felt more as

a disturbance, than as an attraction. What is wanted therefore, in

connection with his new salvation, is some John the Baptist going

before, to prepare his way. The new moral power wants a force-power to

precede; something which meets the selfishness of sin in its own plane,

making the appeal, at first, to interest or precautionary prudence, by

intimidations and appeals to fear. To have approving sentiments raised

for law in the bosom of transgression, and so to have it kept in

reverence, is highly important, or even necessary, but there is wanted,

beside, a more rugged sort of argument, that of strong penal

enforcements; such as may cut off delays, stop the idle debates of the

head, and raise a point-blank issue with pride and willfulness that,

being an issue of peril, can not be parried.

To be more exact, we have proposed for us, at this point, two distinct

schemes of motivity, neither of which is properly and fully Christian;

first the scheme that makes nothing of fear, and the lower motives

addressed to prudence, counting wholly on such as lie in the ideal

goodness and beauty of holiness itself; and secondly the scheme which,

finding natural causes arranged for the penal chastisement of wrong,

counts the arrangement a complete moral government in itself, beside

which no other is wanted, or in fact exists.

The former scheme assumes that goodness and right are their own

argument, able to rule by their own simple excellence. What is good for

False assumption that goodness is government enough. angels in their

height of virtue, is declared to be good also for men in their sin. At

any rate, as the argument goes, nothing less, or lower, is permissible

any where; for what kind of excellence, or virtue is that, which is

goaded by the impulsions of fear and threatened force? If any such

thing is thought of, in this scheme, as conversion, the assumption is

that evil will let go evil, and turn itself to good, simply for

goodness' sake, without any thought or motive met in its own plane to

dislodge it. Christ is more practical, and just as much more rational.

He does not look on the world as being in a' state to be converted

romantically, as by the mere attractions of goodness and beauty. A

beginning is to be made, he clearly sees, with sin, at its own level;

the level of guilty apprehension, fear, selfishly interested forecast

of the future. His first thought is to block the way of transgression,

by warnings and appeals of terror. Setting the gate of God's mercy and

truth wide open, he does not expect the transgressors to enter, just

because he sits there, in the lovely charms of goodness. He expects

them to come in, only as he compels them to come in; sending out the

rugged sheriffalty of law and penal enforcement, to grapple them, as it

were, by the shoulder. It is nothing to him that the first motives

felt, in such a case, are too low for any state of virtue. Enough that,

by guiltiness, want, fear, interested feeling, struggling with the

dreadful and appalling problems of life, he is able to get them

arrested in evil, and that, when the arrest is made, consideration

begun, willfulness broken, the nobler motives of admiring

sentiment--love, beauty, sacrifice--may come into play, and work their

captivating spells of goodness on the heart's devotion. No delicate

philosophy detains him; if the lower motives appealed to are not fine

enough for goodness, they are, at least, coarse enough for

badness--just the fit evils to put in the way of evil, just the

arguments it is able to feel, when it can be reached by nothing else.

And so, by this very practical regimen, he is able to balk the progress

of transgression, turn back the soul on thoughtfulness, so on

repentance, so on the love of goodness and excellence for their own

sake. And this to him more emphatically than to any other teacher of

the world, is the only real state of virtue--dear to him specially in

the fact, that, in being perfected as love, it casteth out the fear, in

whose guilty intimidations it found the opportunity and date of its own

beginning.

Thus it is that Christ, recognizing the fears as an original and

profoundly rational function of souls, makes no scruple of appeal to

them, even when his object is to consummate a character wholly superior

to their active sway. He believes, we shall see, in strong penal

enforcements, and puts them forward, clear of all delicate misgiving,

to be the advance guard of his mercies.

The second scheme referred to holds a humbler key; it is wholly in the

plane of prudence and natural retribution; delighting in the discovery

that, False assumption that retribution is government enough. according

to the original outfit of life, the moral law, or law of responsible

conduct, has a whole system or economy of causes put in company with

it, to be its avengers and redress its violations. And this, it is

conceived, is the complete account, or whole, of God's moral

government. What we call punishment is the natural correction of our

evils. Every sin, they say, is sure to be overtaken by its penalty; no

trial, or judge, or judgment-seat, is wanted, the culprit carries his

own hells of punishment with him, and every transgression kindles its

own fires. And so it is conceived that motives of fear, prudence, and

actual suffering, are the only arguments of virtue; which, of course

never rises above the control of such, and really wants no other.

Salvation itself, if we are to use the term, consists in simply backing

out of our wrongs, because we are scorched by justice, or will be, in

them. Saying nothing of the very ignoble and mean quality of such

virtue, it is plain as it need be, that such kind of enforcement by

natural causes, taken by itself, and not as a base for the working of

higher motives, makes inevitably the most hopeless, helpless, least

enforced, scheme of duty that can be conceived. The result of such a

scheme is not any state of virtue, but a state of natural punition that

is, without a peradventure, endless. For the penal causations take

away, at once, the powers so to speak of obedience. When the soul

breaks into sin, the laws of retribution begin forthwith to punish it,

by throes of internal disorder, which no power of the will can stop. It

is shaken out of equilibrium, out of the full natural possession of

itself, out of its constitutional harmony, by the terrible recoil of

its transgression. The passions, fears, convictions, sentiments,

imaginations, are all set loose in a quarrel with each other, and the

will can neither recompose the state of harmony, nor the mind itself

accurately conceive the internal readjustments necessary to such

harmony. The transgressor could as easily regather his money sown upon

the Gulf Stream, as gather himself back out of the penal causations in

which he is sweltering. The penal disorders and breakages will

propagate, indirectly, other disorders and breakages, and the motions

of life itself will be only "the motions of sins," propagating more

sins. Even as a broken engine can not mend itself by running, but will

only thresh itself into a more complete wreck. Setting his will to

obey, as being now corrected by suffering--and he can do nothing

more--his will can as little tame the soul's wild turbulences, or quiet

the mob of its internal commotions, as it could the public anarchy of

an empire. The exact difficulty now is, in fact, that the natural

retributions are stronger as disabilities, than as motives, and are

therefore no enforcement at all.

Now it is the merit, I conceive, of Christianity, that, of these two

schemes of motivity, it holds exactly neither; or perhaps I should

rather say Christ combines both kinds of motivity. that it comprises

both together; viz., a standard of divine excellence and beauty,

drawing men to goodness by the moral attractions of goodness itself;

and a grand economy of penal causations in nature, by which evil done

is confronted with evil to be suffered, and is thus forced back, on the

consideration of that blessed authority which ought to be loved for its

own excellence Only it is a matter of the highest consequence to add

that, in comprising these two elements, Christianity holds them both

with important additions, or variations, necessary to their

effectiveness.

First, that the moral power of good, as expressed by the law, is to get

an accession of moral power, in Christ, beyond that which naturally

belongs to First, by his moral power, he re-enforces the law. it as

impersonal precept; for it is to be glorified and raised in power, by

the miracle of the incarnation, and the sacrifice and supernatural

ministry of Jesus. The moral power it gets in this way is to be itself

a kind of supernatural person, invested with such life and feeling, by

the methods of the cross, that, entering into natures disordered and

broken by the penal retributions of sin, it may recompose them in

heaven's order and harmony; so to be a true redemption. For it will

redeem, in this manner, from the natural laws and causations arranged

to serve as enforcements, and prevent these enforcements from issuing

in results of eternal disability; as they otherwise would, in the

manner just now stated. They were never intended, as retributions, to

maintain a mere scheme of obedience by force--which is no obedience at

all--but to work in with and toward this other and higher power, that

is relatively supernatural, and brings the soul up finally out of their

compulsions into a complete liberty in good.

Secondly, this being true, Christianity is able to press the

enforcements on that side, with the greatest emphasis, and even to

increase the responsibilities enforced. Taken as a scheme of

retributive causations in nature, they sleep, as it were, in silence,

to be discovered only as they are provoked. But Christianity brings

them all out, in the bold announcement of And so is able to enforce it

by stronger penalties. them by a doctrine. And to make them felt, it

puts them forward in the shape of positive enactments, to be executed

against the transgressors, by a positive judicial sentence. Furthermore

it makes the rejection of Christ, and the supernatural grace prepared

by him, a great part of the sin to be answered for--just as it must be,

in fact, regarding natural causes as the sole agents of retribution;

for the greater advantages, and helps, and revelations of goodness and

beauty, sin rejects, the greater will be its criminality and the deeper

hold of it the fires of natural retribution will, of course, take. In

this manner Christianity presses enforcements up to their limit,

placing its own great mercies and captivating charms of good always

along side of them, and allowing itself never to be detained by any

delicate misgivings of philanthropy.

For there is no hardship now in severity; the hardest and sorest defect

is really in the want of it. Taken by themselves, the penal sanctions

of nature would be only a ministry of condemnation; they would kill and

nothing more; now they condemn and slay to make ready for life; lifting

their ominous flag of warning on the shoals of future wreck, to beckon

the transgressor back on a revised consideration of his courses. Would

it be a kindness if this flag were taken down?

It has been convenient, thus far, to speak of penal enforcements simply

as compelling motives, or as warnings and intimidations addressed to

prudential The immense moral power of judicial severities.

consideration. But they have a much deeper and more nearly basal

office, which is commonly not observed. They have even a certain moral

power in themselves, which is of a wholly different cast from that of

Christ in the sacrifice, but which he contrives to unite with his own,

by the sturdy severities of his doctrine. In our discussions, for

example, of punishments in the civil state, and particularly of capital

punishments, it appears to be taken for granted, that these two, the

intimidation of crime, and the reclamation of the criminals themselves,

are the only objects of penalty. Whereas the grandest, and most real,

and deep-working office of punishment is the fearfully sharp sense it

wakens of crime itself, by such tremendous severities or thunderclaps

of extermination--wherein even the good, protective law can so utter

itself and must, against the deeds of wrong that shake society. The

moral conviction roused is the main benefit--that sensibility to order,

and law, and right, that runs quivering through the bosom of all

citizens, when the almost sacrilegious violence of justice turns upon

the felon's life, commanding the scaffold and the rope to stop his

breath! And precisely in the same way it is to be conceived, that

strong and terrible retributions, not only serve as motive powers of

interest in the government of souls, but have another and weightier

office, in creating moral sensibility, or setting in moral conviction,

as regards the sanctity of law and the dreadful criminality of sin.

Without this, no visitation of mere gentleness and suffering sacrifice

will make a salvation that has the true efficacy. The very subsoil of

guilt requires to be stirred by God's terrors. They must not simply

skim the surfaces of fear, but strike through into the deep underwork

of moral conviction itself. All the better too, if we behold the

terrible thunder-strokes of Providential severity falling on the head

of whole communities, or nations, or specially on the head of the most

deserving peoples; because it visibly is now, not sins, but sin, not

any special crimes, but the comprehensive criminality of a state

unrelational with God, that requires or instigates so great severity.

Hence, the great common woes that fall on whole peoples, in what are

called the severities of nature--the storms, fires, earthquakes,

pestilences, famines, wrecks, orphanages of the world--the unspeakably

appalling facts are known, and they have no other solution that is

either satisfactory or tolerably sufficient. The language of Christ,

applying all such things to the common guilt of mankind, shows in what

manner they were understood by him. "Suppose ye that these Galileeans

were sinners above all the Galileeans, because they suffer such things?

or those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them,

think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

It appears then that Christ, coming to us in his sacrifice, to unbosom

the love of God, and publish the free forgiveness of sins, is fully

awake, nevertheless, to the sacred necessity of maintaining law by

Christ therefore denounces eternal punishment and assumes the judgment

of the world. adequate enforcements, and ploughing up moral conviction

by great Providential and judicial severities. Only the more fit

subject of wonder is it, therefore, that so many teachers are disturbed

by their very unnecessary concern for what they call the law; imagining

that a free remission may somehow kill the law and contriving even

schemes of punition for the Son of God himself, that they may save it!

As if the supernatural grace he brings, to rescue from the penal

retributions of God, were quite taking away the enforcements; which it,

in fact, only makes effective. Most strange it is that, when they are

going every way to bring counsel from afar for the saving of law, they

can yet see nothing in two such facts as these--continually reiterated

by Christ himself--facts almost as new and distinctive even as the

forgiveness of sins by his cross; (1.) eternal punishment; (2.) the

judgment of the world by himself. Publishing announcements like these,

and making even love to thunder, in motives so appalling, is it to be

feared that Christ is letting down authority, and obliterating the

fixed lines of duty, by some unguarded license of mercy? Why the law

never before got itself really uttered, and the grand awards of the

future life never showed their true figure of majesty, till they were

revealed in this fearful way of emphasis by Christ himself.

Accordingly, to these two very remarkable points in the public teaching

of Christ, considered as related to the enforcement of law, I now

invite the reader's particular attention. And--

I. To the specially Christian declaration of future punishment,

sometimes called eternal, or endless punishment.

I am well aware of the disappointment I may inflict on certain

progressives, or disciples of the new gospel, that, in so free a

handling of what is held by authority, I still give in to a doctrine of

the future punishment that is so revolting to reason, and, as they will

say, to thoughtful minds already so nearly outgrown. If they can allow

any reason for the fact that does not imply a subserviency to

prudential motives, let it be that I am thoroughly fixed in the

purpose, and that on grounds of reason, never to make a gospel--either

to have no gospel at all, or else to accept the gospel that is given

me. I have been through all the questions, taken all the turns of

doubt, suffered all the struggles of feeling in respect to this

confessedly hard looking doctrine of future punishment; I have even

learned, in these struggles, to pity the meagerness of any soul that

has encountered no troubles and painful misgivings concerning it.

Neither is this pity at all diminished but increased, rather, by the

fact, that I am brought back finally to acquiesce in it myself, and

even to look upon it as being probably a necessary factor of the

Christian salvation. What else can we infer, when we find, as we shall

by a little search, that our merciful Christ, he that comes in love,

and saves by the sacrifice of his life, is the first distinctly

responsible promulgator of it himself?

But, before proceeding to show this fact, let us attend to some

considerations in which the doctrine may be duly qualified and cleared

of the severities, by which it is made unnecessarily shocking to many.

We could well enough allow that the epithet "eternal" [aionios] need

not mean eternal, in the exact, The word "eternal" not very decisive.

speculative sense. It is of no great consequence, that we insist on it

as a term of duration logically infinite. Enough that we receive it

practically, as giving that finality to thought, beyond which there is,

for us, nothing to be meditated farther. It is very true that the same

epithet is used respecting the duration both of punishment and of

blessedness--"These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the

righteous into life eternal"--but it is surmised by some, without any

great violence, that as we get only the slenderest impressions any way

of the state of suffering called eternal, the intent of Christ may only

be to shove our thought over on that sea, and let us get the measures

of it by our long, long voyage afterward; that the punishment is called

eternal as the life, because it is the punishment of the eternal state,

and is best apprehended here, when taken as a practical finality for

the mind.

I make this concession, partly because I have no care to press the

matter so far as to make a bad eternity hang on the form of a word, and

partly because it is sometimes argued, in the same way, that as the

capacity and blessedness of the life are to be forever amplified by

exercise, so also are the capacity and woe of the punishment. And this

latter is almost certainly not true. It may even be argued, with a

considerable show of evidence, that the immortality of the soul does

not belong to its mere nature, but depends rather on the eternally

imperishable nature of that on which it feeds--God, truth, duty,

self-sacrifice, holiness--and that when it only knows and goes after

the phantoms of condition, or of mere conventional and temporal good,

it must finally die out, for the poverty of that soul-food which it

takes for its life. What is sometimes called the doctrine of the

annihilation, or literal destruction, of the wicked, is the same more

coarsely conceived. A good many passages of Scripture, too, are cited

for it, without any great show of violence; and a good many others,

with only that common kind of violence which consists in taking

literally what is figuratively given.

Rejecting, however, this annihilation theory as, plainly enough, not

being the doctrine of Scripture, we still do observe, as a matter of

fact, The certain reduction of the soul by sin. in this present life,

that souls under sin are not amplified by their experience in it, as

they are by their experience in good. Gaining vigor, it may be, for a

little while, they finally begin to shrink in quantity, losing out

capacity for both character and the higher kinds of suffering; a fact

in which the scheme of purgatorial restorationism loses all show of

evidence, or we may almost say of possibility. Every thing we see of

sin, in the world of fact, shows it to be a desolating, extirpating

power in souls; killing out, by degrees, even the faculties and

possibilities of religion, and reducing, in that way, all the hopes and

chances of restoration, down to the very last edge of life. Almost any

thing, therefore, can be more easily believed, than that, dropping off

that edge, with but half a nature left, transgressors are there to be

converted and finally restored, by the mere smart of their pains--that

which would distract their love-impulse if they had it, and can not do

much to restore it if they have it not.

But while this diminution of quantity in souls under sin is fatal, as

it certainly is, to any hope of purgatorial The higher powers

extinguished, but not the soul. recovery, it does not go the length of

proving their extinction, but gives exactly the point of view that

yields the least exaggerated and truest impression of the Scripture

view of punishment. Thus we observe that, for a little while, the human

faculties appear to be invigorated by the struggles of passion, or

selfish ambition; but that shortly they begin to be inevitably wasted

in quantity, narrowed in volume and capacity, so as finally to produce

the impression, that their intensity--as in cunning, hatred, envy,

policy, and avarice--is getting to be a kind of intensified littleness;

a fire still hot, but running low in fuel, and sure to be as much less

considerable in its energy, as the substantive quantities of the soul

are more diminished. So the wasting goes on doubtless hereafter as

here, and the penal wear of bitterness and wrong continues. But it does

not follow that the waste will operate a cessation of being, because

there are faculties and powers not wasted. The memory is as faithful a

recorder of what is bad, as it could be of what is good. The

conscience, with its law of right, is not extirpated any more than the

sense of time or space. The will is even confirmed by habit in a state

of unsubduable capacity, and the will is the grand centralizing element

of personality itself. The affinities for what is bad are as durable as

they would be in good. The progressive diminution, therefore, is never

to end in cessation, but may well be figured by the asymptote curve,

which, as the mathematicians will even demonstrate, has the remarkable

distinction of forever approaching a straight line even by a fixed law,

yet never making coincidence with it. So, probably enough, it may be,

and we may even take it as the true conception, that souls which have

become only hacks of punishment, will forever continue in being,

spinning along their lengths of mediocrity, intensified in points but

not enlarged, and having their eternity as the protracted opportunity

of their moral insignificance and hopelessness. Under the grand organic

law, that faculties not used, or badly misused, are finally extirpated,

their religious nature is likely to be nearly, or quite gone by. All

the Godward summits of being and thought--aspiration, susceptibility

for good, the sense of moral beauty, the power of realization by

faith--are demolished, and a coarse, hard nature only remains, graveled

by low animosities, without great sentiments, and rising never into any

look of altitude, save when it is raised by the vehemence of its

passions. Even the suffering that is left is that of a nature tapering

down to a diminished grade of feeling, or abject continuity of

consciousness, that is only the more desolate that it can not utterly

die.

Holding this conception, we go clear, it will be seen, of that very

shocking extravagance, which maintains Infinite punishment denied. the

infinity of future punishment. Mere infinity of duration does not make

the quantity infinite, as many so hastily assume; for, if there be a

diminution of degree as there is an extension of time, the quantity

will never exceed a given amount. So too, if the continuance be

endless, not on the score of old sins long ago committed--the sins of

the previous lifetime--but as being ordered to match, and measure, and

punish, the continuance of new sins, freely committed and persistently

adhered to, the eternal punishment so-called, may be only a stream of

temporal retributions, appointed to match the stream of eternally

recurring transgressions. As regards this matter of amount, or

quantity, we can really have no very definite conceptions; for though

the state of punishment be endless, we have no gauges of intensity that

we can apply, and do not even know how far the continuance rests on the

continuance of transgression.

At the same time, we do perfectly know, that the arguments often used

to show that the punishment of sin ought to be, and therefore must be,

infinite, are groundless--carried by a practice on words that plays

them into inferences not contained in their meaning. Thus it is argued

that the law of God has infinite value, and that sin therefore, being a

violation of it, must be an infinite evil, worthy of an infinite

punishment. The constitution of our government, I reply, has very great

value, but it does not follow that any particular man's treason,

however bold, is in exactly the same measure of consequence. The

physical universe is infinite, but it does not follow that any man's

infringement of its laws is an infinite infringement. Sometimes the

argument is, that every sin heads a train of consequences that is

endless, and is therefore infinite, requiring an infinite punishment.

So does every most common, or trivial act, bring on after it an endless

train of consequences that otherwise would not have happened; no man

goes to his breakfast without this result, but it does not follow that

his breakfast was infinite. Sometimes the argument is, that since the

law of God is the best law possible, he ought, in true justice, to make

the strongest expression of attachment to it that is possible;

therefore that he ought to inflict the strongest possible punishment

for the breach of it. But that strongest possible may be only a finite,

carefully moderated punishment; for if God were to lay his omnipotence

into the severity of it, he would only shock the sensibility of the

public world addressed, by a cruelty visibly monstrous, and the

suffering inflicted would have no expression at all that belongs to

punishment.

The sober and rational fact, then, as regards the matter of endless

punishment, is, that it is a finite retribution, The retribution finite

but naturally endless. laid upon the head of finite sin, and graduated

in a general way by the demerit of it. The suffering state which it

produces is described in figures that raise an impression of great

severity; and there is no reason to believe that, take them as we may,

we shall, at all, exceed the just realization of their degree. They

will profoundly shock us, indeed, if we take them literally, and yet,

so very slow are we to imagine a condition of unseen spiritual

suffering, that we shall not, even then, raise a conception of the real

misery that is at all adequate. All the greater and more reasonably

conceived misery will it be, if we make no doubt that God is ready, at

any future point in the run of it, to embrace, in everlasting

reconciliation, any truly repenting soul. I say not any regretful soul,

but any soul that is heartily turned to a new and eternally righteous

life. For this will be the keen, all-devouring misery, that, with so

many regrets, there is so little repentance, or even power of it; that

the nature, now but half a nature, halting, as it were, on its clumsy

and paralytic members, finds not how to rise any more forever. Strong

enough to suffer, and wicked enough to sin, the tendrils of adhesion to

God are dead, and it can not fasten itself practically to his

friendship. Goodness it remembers but can not sufficiently feel. All

its struggles are but heavings of the lower nature--pains of defeat

that are only proving, by experiment, their own perpetuity.

Assuming all these qualifications of measure and degree, there is

nothing left in the matter of endless punishment, by which we can fitly

be disturbed, except that it does not bring out the kingdom of God, in

that one state of realized unity, and complete order, which we most

naturally desire, and think to be worthiest of his greatness and

sovereignty. It certainly would be more agreeable, if we could have

this hope; and many are resolved to have it without Christ's

permission, if they can not have it with. They even make it a point of

merit, to seize this honor bravely for God, on their own

responsibility, and for it, if they must, defy the Scripture. I think

otherwise, and could even count it a much braver thing, to willingly be

less brave, and despite of our natural longings for some issue of God's

plan that is different, follow still the lead of the Master.

We come back now from this rather long excursion, where we have been

trying to settle our conceptions of the nature of the future

punishment, and of the qualifications that may save it from a look of

excess, to consider the relation Christ assumes towards it, in his

vicarious sacrifice, and the free justification of sins. Observe then--

1. That while he undertakes, in this manner, a universal remission of

sin, or even to freely justify every penitent transgressor before God,

he has never yet thought, as far as we can discover, that he is putting

God's law and justice in jeopardy, or raising any kind of theologic

objection, such as now disturbs the concern of many. He does not even

appear to think that he is here on any exclusively merciful errand; for

Christ does not even imagine that by mercy he is weakening law. though

it is a signal distinction of his incarnate ministry, that he reveals

the heart of God, and the dear cross hid in his love from eternity, he

does not spare to reveal, as faithfully, His truth, and justice, and

authority, and righteousness, and all that is required to fill out the

majestic proportions of His character and government. He begins, thus,

with the declaration that no jot, or tittle of the law shall fail; that

no righteousness of scribe or pharisee shall be enough; and can not

close his first sermon, without promulgating, several times over, the

appalling doctrine of future punishment. This doctrine is quite as

distinctively Christian as the forgiveness of sins. I do not, of

course, imagine that the fact is new, but the doctrine is. The fact was

in the law of natural retribution from the first, just as gravity was

in the world before it was declared by science; for the penal

disorders, once begun, are not reducible by us, and the trains of

retributive causes started by transgression make up a series of

propagations naturally endless. Besides, as we just now saw, the total

disuse of the religious nature must, in a short time, extirpate all the

higher powers and possibilities of religion. And when that is done,

when the feasibility of the soul to good is gone by, what is left but a

state of incapacity that is final?

Christ, then, brought forth into bold assertion, for the first time,

the doctrine of eternal punishment; not as creating the fact, but only

as declaring that which lies in the simply natural causalities of

retribution. Under the old dispensation the published Christ the first

teacher of eternal punishment. sanctions of law were temporal, or, if

they were such as must naturally run over the border of this life into

the next, they were not so conceived or represented, and never, in

fact, got their motive power in being so recognized. Indeed, the future

life itself is not distinctly conceived as a fact in the early

Scriptures. We can see it irresistibly asserted ourselves, in such

facts as the translation of Enoch and Elijah, less distinctly in the

visitations of angels, visibly felt but unspoken in the longings of

good men; but the holiest and best of patriarchs and wisest of teachers

still said nothing of it, drew no motives from it. Farther on,

expressions begin to be dropped, that show the fact struggling into

formal recognition. And yet we find the question still on hand, between

the Pharisees and the Sadducees, at the time of Christ's coming,

whether there is any such fact of a second existence beyond this

life--so completely temporal had been the cast of God's moral

government, practically, down to this time. And here it is that Christ,

announced by John as coming to lay the axe to the root, and thoroughly

purge his floor, and burn up all the chaffy hypocrisies of a mere

lifetime sanctity, with unquenchable fire, breaks on the world in his

distinct, unflinching, never qualified, oft repeated, variously

conceived, proclamation of eternal punishment. His most common way of

phrasing the doctrine is derived, perhaps, from the destruction of

unclean things by fire in the valley of Hinnom; or perhaps from the

combustion of bodies there, as represented in the last chapter and

verse of Isaiah. Under this figure, and others variously related, he

describes again and again the outcast state of souls. Sometimes the

tokens of pain that are added to waken apprehension, though of course

not literal, are such as produce a heavy recoil in our sensibility. All

the punishments of the Old Testament, even the curses of Ebal, are as

dew in comparison. If he had come into the world to be himself the

Nemesis of transgression, he could not have spoken words more

appalling. The enforcement power was never before carried so far, and

could not, even, in thought, be carried farther. There is no scruple in

driving the pressure of interested motive to its last limit. Fear could

quiver in the dread of no greater loss. And this, it will be noted,

from Jesus, the Saviour of the world! he that is incarnated into the

world's curse, and dies in his suffering ministry for it! Observe

also--

2. That Christ, in these declarations of eternal punishment, never

betrays one symptom of doubt, or delicacy, Has no apparent scruple in

the doctrine. as if there might be some injustice, or over severity in

them, such as needs to be carefully qualified. He plainly enough has no

such struggles of mind on the subject, as we have. His most delicate,

tenderly sensitive humanity gives no single token of being, either

offended, or tried, by the fact of so great severities. It can not be

that he is untroubled by questions on this subject because he is less

tender of man's lot, or of God's honor, than we are, or because he is

not far enough on in the world's progress, to have had our great

theologic problems occur to him. Perhaps we shall not be able to solve

this strangely unquestioning manner of his, but I strongly suspect that

the secret of it lies in the fact, that he has a way of conceiving the

matter and manner of eternal punishment, such as leaves our modern

questions out of sight, and does not even allow them to occur. Perhaps

he only thinks of the bad man as going on to eternity in his badness,

and the laws of retribution, as going along with him, to keep his

voluntary bad deeds company, much as they do here; regarding the

malefactor as a malefactor still, and suffering, at any given moment,

for being just what he is at that moment--that and nothing more. God

has, in fact, put nothing of his pain upon him; he only takes it on

himself, and there is really no more reason to be troubled about the

severity of his lot than there is here in the retributions of this

life.

He uses, it must be admitted, the most appalling figures--"outer

darkness," "great gulf fixed," His appalling figures. "thirst,"

"torment," "wailing," "weeping," "a worm that dieth not," "a fire that

is not figures. quenched"--but he has no misgiving; probably because

words of any kind are so impotent, in giving the due impression of any

state unrealized, and need to be even violently overdrawn to answer

their object. However this may be, it is quite evident that the tough

questions of our modern philanthropism have either not arrived, or are

quite gone by, and that notwithstanding his wonderfully intense love

for mankind, his feeling still goes with the punitive order of God's

retributions, adding even heavier emphasis from his own personal

indignations. Again

3. It is a remarkable fact that one of the strongest evidences of the

strictly superhuman character of Who is he, that he is endured in such

teachings. Christ is contributed, or experimentally brought out, by the

singular command he has over such, even now, as passionately abjure his

doctrine. I make no assumption here that goes beyond the fact of their

abjuration itself and the manner of it. They will deny that he asserted

any such doctrine of punishment. But they will also admit that he

testified, again and again, in all most varied and most pungent words

of warning, to what sounds very much like it, and which being

qualified. by no process of interpretation, are the very ipsissima

verba of the doctrine; that he was the first decisive teacher in this

strain; that he insisted much on the point and often recurred to it;

and, whatever else may be true, is the practical promulgator and first

founder, in that sense, of a something which has gotten footing as the

doctrine, or has come to be the doctrine, of eternal punishment;

Suppose now that I who write this treatise--a man in my common human

figure--had done exactly the same thing, in the same way of precedence,

and that, making many speeches on religious subjects, I sprinkle them,

all through, as the four gospels are sprinkled, with these fiery

denunciations of punishment; how many living men of the whole world, if

I were to lead off in such a doctrine, would hear me for one moment

with patience? They would not stop to find whether, by some elaborate

and careful practice on my words, they could sift the offensive

doctrine out of them. Such efforts at interpretation would themselves

be an offense. Nothing but contempt, downright, instant, unhesitating

contempt, is the due, they would say, of such a teacher. He is a man

behind the age; a dark-minded fanatic, without feeling, or justice, or

reason, representing God by the low severities of his own morbid

nature. And yet what reverence is there to Jesus, in the promulgation

of such doctrine! They that deny it most confidently will even strain

themselves, to find words of honor and eulogy, in which fitly to

applaud his virtues and embody their sense of his perfections. Meantime

they go into careful examinations of what seem to be his manifold

utterances of the doctrine of eternal punishment, and by laboriously

ingenious constructions, which he could easily have made unnecessary,

but never once remembered to make, they get the bad meaning wholly out

of them. Having proved him thus to be, in fact, about the faultiest,

loosest, teacher, in a matter of mere fact, that ever undertook to lead

the world, they acquiesce in him perfectly; their reverence is

complete!

They do not perceive, that they have done the difficult thing, and

rejected the easy. How much easier, when they were detained by a

reverence so profound for the manifestly superhuman character of

Christ, treating him as they could no other being uttering such

declarations, to believe that he was good enough and Admitted still to

be great, why not also to be true. great enough to see the truth of

them; too good, too great, as already proved to their feeling, to allow

them any hope of improving his doctrine by the screws they put upon his

words. The case is one where the text--"For my thoughts are not your

thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord"--ought to

suggest the query whether, possibly, God is not good enough, or good in

a sense that is deep enough, to levy these fearful punishments, just

because of his goodness; maintaining them as mysteries of beneficent

rule whose scope and contents are to us inscrutable. Again--

4. A true Christian inquirer, struggling with a burdened feeling, under

the huge difficulties of this question, Where eternal punishment is

denied, shown to be a moral want. will be very apt to meet with such

kind of results, or effects, falling under his notice, in the case of

those who deny the fact of eternal punishment, as to start a certain

spiritual revulsion in him and persuade him that Christ had some

sufficient, profoundly deep and true reason for his doctrine, whether

we can find it or not. There is plainly enough no object in preaching

this kind of salvation (which is no salvation, because there can be no

destruction,) but to find a place of impunity in sin, or at least to

loosen the yoke of obligation and make it comfortable. And that, when

it is a fact, is about the most contemptible, lowest occupation a

mortal can be in. And the fruit will correspond with the effort; for

the followers of such a leading, it will be observed, range themselves,

always and every where, on the side of laxity, or the side opposite to

justice and punishment. They will refer all sin to circumstances, and

take the blame away. Society is cruel, they will perceive, but wrong,

never. But when they come to speak, or be spoken with, in regard to the

great spiritual realities of the spiritual life and consciousness, they

will scarcely fail to make a demonstration that is simply revolting. To

converse successively, with only two or three persons, brought up in

this denial of future punishment, and have the conversation turned upon

loving God, I have more than once felt would suffice to cure any

earnest, living Christian of his misgivings of future punishment, or

push him by his most rugged and resolute doubts, whether he can solve

them or not. Instead of conceiving of the divine love in that deep,

tender way of sacrifice and justifying mercy, that belongs to the

cross, they will rattle upon the words in a way so loose and light as

to be even shocking. "Do I love God? How could I help loving him? God

has never done any thing bad to me, and never wants to do any thing,

but to make me happy, Yes, and if there were not so many people praying

and supplicating dolefully, as if they were afraid of something, or God

a being to be afraid of, I think we should all be happy." Under this

gospel of impunity, there grows up a religion which is itself a kind of

sauciness to God, as little relieved, as possible, by any subduing

property. Beautiful charity! love that bearest all men's burdens! love

that believest, hopest, endurest all things! love that can suffer an

enemy! love that in Jesus suffered for a world of enemies! love that is

born of God supernaturally in souls under evil! love that is fed and

fuelled supernaturally, by Christ and his dear passion, inwardly

revealed! what hast thou to do with this unchastened, brassy, dinning

confidence, which asserts a religion without fear, lays a claim to

happiness apart from all condition of repentance, and magnifies a God

who, without maintaining any good of principle, consents to be only the

convenience of all!

I draw this picture not for any purpose of odium, but simply because it

suggests and so nearly justifies the Punishment an intrinsic element of

the gospel. suspicion, that Christ had a reason for his doctrine of

eternal punishment, in the necessary and, to him, perceived wants of

character itself. We can see, at a glance, that if there were no such

future peril, and God were such a being that no fact of destruction

were possible under him, then there could, of course, be no salvation,

or Saviour. So far it was a point, intrinsically, of Christianity, to

assert the doctrine of future punishment; for upon that basis only it

stands, as a real salvation. But there seems to have been a deeper and

more subtle reason, both for the fact of such punishment originally

instituted, and for the assertion of it by Christ; viz., that, by these

tremendous severities alone of God, could men be made to feel the

cutting edge of principle enough to have it really get into their love,

and makes it a principled love. Otherwise it would have no moral

quality at all, but like that we have just described, would be only a

brazen forwardness, in approving such a God as meets their liking; a

God with. out terrors, concerned to get them into happiness, either

with, or without, principles.

However this may be, it is not difficult to see how far the success and

saving power of the gospel of Christ depend on these appeals to fear,

and these cogent motivities of interest, by which he so unsparingly

presses the world; for by these it is, and only by these, that he takes

men at the point where they have any sufficient sensibility. By this

appalling law-work he breaks their security, startles their negligence,

rouses their guiltiness into a ferment, and calls out the question,

what shall we do? Never, it is very true, does any one of these

motivities enter into the staple of piety--they are spent when piety

begins, or at least passed by accordingly as it advances. And yet these

terrible severities--not too terrible, or appalling for the sturdy

composure and hardness of sin--are just that fire in the rear, by

which, as a more rugged constraint upon nature, the guilty are gathered

to the spiritual drawing, or all-constraining loveliness and love, of

the cross.

But Christ also adds enforcement, as we have said, to the law--

II. In the fact that he declares himself to be the final judge of the

world. Having shown the divine nature travailing in sacrifice and

suffering love for the world, and having proclaimed a universal end of

God's penalties, to such as are joined to the law-precept, by receiving

it in the embrace of his person, he must needs He will vindicate law by

the judgment of the world. fortify his attitude, by some correspondent

assertion of his divine eminence and authority; which he does by openly

asserting his personal prerogative, as the final judge of the world. As

he is the Saviour of mankind, so he is to be Judge of mankind--and

Judge, because he is Saviour. For he distinctly intimates himself that

he takes this necessary point of self-assertion, to restrain the

presumption otherwise likely to be raised, in the coarse, blind feeling

of men, by his great condescensions--"For the Father judgeth no man,

but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor

the Son even as they honor the Father." Again also, when he says--"And

hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the

Son of Man." In other words, the very fact that he was become the Son

of Man, humbled to the weakness of humanity, was itself a reason why

his equilibrium of dignity should be saved, by the counter-weight of

this tremendous office--an office all the more fit to such a purpose,

that judges, in the civil state, are conceived to have no right of

leniency, or mercy, being set for nothing but the exact application of

law to the exact merits of causes; which having done, whether in the

sentence of life, or of death, their official function ceases. And so

Christ, having bowed himself to all humblest conditions of suffering

and sorrow, that he might ransom guilty souls from their deserved

penalties, ceases fully and finally from a relationship that would make

him possibly no better, at last, than a convenience for men's sins, and

takes his attitude of judgeship over them; waiving henceforth all the

inclinings and soft connivings and tender flexibilities of his mercy,

that he may be forever known as the arbiter and king of the worlds.

I do not undertake to settle, in this connection, precisely what is

meant by the judgment of the world; whether it is to be literally a

trial had The judgment made necessary by the supernatural salvation. in

public assembly, or before the grand convocation of the worlds, or

whether such representations given are only figures impressively drawn,

to give, in the general, or by means of one general scene, what is

passing and to pass in the innumerable and particular cases of souls,

when they arrive, or come in to receive their personal awards and enter

on their everlasting state. This, however, will be obvious that, if

there were no work of grace or mercy on foot, no supernatural

salvation, there would scarcely need to be any judge of the world. The

transgressors would go to their exact lot of punishment just as stones

under gravity fall to the ground. The grand penal order of nature would

be at once judge and executioner, and they would sink to their true

level, by inevitable laws, that find them out as exactly even, as God

himself can know them.

But the judgment of the world under Christianity is made necessary, by

the fact that, in a mixed experience under law and grace, where the

penal order of nature is restricted, tempered, mitigated, by the

supernatural interactions of grace, no punishment takes place in the

exact manner and degree that it would under natural retribution, pure

and simple. The laws of natural retribution continue, in one view, as

at the first, and their operation continues, and yet their action has

been so far modified hitherto by the interactions of a supernatural

mercy--engaged all our life long to rescue us from them--also by the

fact that a new matter of responsibility has come into their

jurisdiction to increase, henceforward, the guilt of sin, and to

intensify proportionally its desolating penal effects, that a

supernatural judgment-seat is wanted, to settle the account of justice

and distribute the allotments of souls. When so many diverse and mixed

qualities of character are generated under the contesting powers of

penalty and mercy, so many variously appearing, yet really similar, so

many similarly appearing, yet really various, kinds of product, some

tribunal of judgment appears to be wanted, to make the necessary

discrimination of desert and order. It is a matter of no great

consequence to know what is the exact grade of any man's demerit--let

the laws of retribution settle that--but it is a matter of consequence

where some are so bold in their conceit, and some are so dejected in

their modesty and conscious lack of goodness, to have the great

life-question of order and kind settled, by a solemn act of recognition

or rejection.

The Christian gospel requires, in this manner, a judgment-seat, and in

this office Christ himself asserts the authority that is given him. The

subject is adverted to in a great many of his parables, and expressly

set forth in many of his public discourses. In the twenty-fifth chapter

of Matthew he photographs The dies irae of Christ and his followers.

the transaction in a scene of judgment formally conceived as universal.

He comes, the Son of Man, to sit upon the throne of his glory. All

nations are gathered before him, not to be graduated, but separated in

kind, one from another, as sheep from goats. These he recognizes and

calls, these he disowns and repels, all under the simple question,

whether they are with him personally in his cause and with him in his

sacrifice or not. Some who were too modest and poor in spirit, to have

any feeling of confidence, are surprised by his welcome--"ye did it

unto me"--asking, "when ministered we to thee?" And others who have

always been assuming to maintain his cause, and half expecting him to

acknowledge his great obligations to them, are as much surprised by his

terrible sentence of rejection, "ye did it not to me." Thus before

Christ's bar, as he himself conceives, the tremendous issues of life

are to be finally determined--"These shall go away into everlasting

punishment, the righteous into life eternal."

Furthermore how entirely compatible his love and suffering patience

are, with all severest rigors of justice, will be seen in the

impressions of his judgment office and day that are held by his

followers. They call it the dies irae, the great day of his wrath, not

refusing to magnify the day as a day of great majesty and revelation,

even "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." They have

plainly enough no such thought as that the justice of God, or the

divine orge has been satisfied and forever evened in its demands, by

the sufferings of Christ. Nor have they taken up, it is equally plain,

any such impressions of the merciful Jesus, the dear Christ of God, as

makes it incompatible for him to be invested, some time, in these awful

rigors of judgment. That righteous orge, that deep instinct of justice,

which dwells in every bosom of love, and without which love could never

rise into the majesty of holiness, that wrath which had sometimes

kindled so terrible a fire of animosity in the loving ministry of their

Master, they expect to be revealed in his judgment proceedings, and

they even appear to look upon him in it, with a dread the more

appalling, that, as being the natural and necessary counterpart in

character of so great sensibility and self-sacrifice, it should

therefore be in correspondent measures. Hence the sharp and dreadful

paradox they bolt upon us--in a form of words having such vindictive

energy that there is nothing, as far as I know, in all human language

to match it--"the wrath of the Lamb."

It is certainly most remarkable, considering how Christ himself is the

first promulgator of eternal punishment, and is to be himself the judge

of the world--revealing the terrible wrath-power of his kingdom, in so

many ways and terms so appalling--that he should be conceived to have

almost overturned God's law by his terms of mercy, and only not to have

done it, by consenting to be an offering before the offended wrath of

the law! So he compensated the law by the contribution of his

sufferings, and satisfied the dues of justice. Why does it never occur

to such as are taken by this kind of theologic contrivance, that after

Christ has made due satisfaction to the wrath-principle of God's

justice, there is still wanted, above all, some more tremendous

sacrifice, to satisfy the wrath of the Lamb? Never before was the

vindicatory principle in government so fearfully asserted as by him.

When therefore he has made an end of pacification by his cross, what is

to be provided that shall pacify him? Shall he satisfy his own wrath?

Or is it possible that he should somehow justify without any

satisfaction? And if that is possible, is not the whole scheme of

satisfaction exploded, and the wrath-principle found to be itself

compatible with mercy?

I assume it then, with confidence, to be a conclusion firmly

established, that Christ, in preparing the free remission of sins, has

not taken from God's The enforcements then are all kept good without a

satisfaction. law, or at all weakened, its necessary enforcements.

Author himself and first adequate promulgator of the doctrine of

eternal punishment, invested with all the honors and authoritative

rights of the Supreme Judge of men; armed, in such capacity, with

indignations equal to the lamb-like patience of his sacrifice--it is

not by him, that men have the pressure of God's penal enforcements

taken off. On the contrary, when before had the law such a pressure of

enforcement in the plane of interest, as it has under Christ himself?

When before were such thunderbolts dropped in the path of the fears?

When had the misgivings of guilty conviction such earthquakes to feel

heaving under ground? When were delay and neglectfulness cut short, by

such hidden perils waiting for the spring? Why, it is even a full half

the peculiar force of Christianity, that it brings the law of God into

a pressure on the soul so nearly irresistible! It had before no motive

in comparison. Christ preaches to the fears and the self-interested

calculations of deliberative prudence, in a way so positive as to

suggest no sense of scruple in him, and permit no evasion of doubt in

us. He begins low down, at the underwork, we may almost say, of nature,

and expects to regenerate, in the supernatural life of faith, only them

whom he has first arrested and concluded in sin. The letter that

killeth is his, as truly as the Spirit that giveth life.

No, if there be any thing in the gospel of Christ least of all to be

apprehended, it is a discontinuance, or weakening of law. The law-power

not only remains uninjured, to do its work of enforcement in souls, but

it is brought closer to them and is made weightier and more imminent in

its pressure, than ever before. Not only temporal motives but all the

powers, in fact, of the world to come, are now crowded into its

sanctions. And so little apprehension is there accordingly, in the New

Testament, of any possible damage to God's law, or justice, that the

immense theologic concern for it, which puts us to a strain of

contrivance so pressing, is even most innocently overlooked. I do not

even recall any single mention, by the New Testament writers, of the

fact that Christ, in his death, was laying a necessary "ground" of

forgiveness, or justification, without which it would not be safe, as a

matter of law and sound government, to forgive. He comes to work out

forgiveness, or rather to work it in--this is abundantly declared--but

there is no syllable of reference to the fact that he is doing so much,

or contributing so great suffering, to make forgiveness possible. There

appears to be no suspicion as yet that this kind of meaning has only

been foisted upon the word, and does not belong to it, but the

discovery must ere long arrive. And yet, if the case were different, if

there must be a loss to the law from the dispensation of forgiveness,

and a compensation must be made to the law, what grander, more

indisputable, compensation could be offered by Christ, than his new

doctrine of eternal punishment, set home by the tremendous emphasis he

gives it in the declaration, that he will be the Judge himself!

But there is a possible objection that requires to be noticed. Thus if

natural causes, or causes in the scheme of nature, have been so

arranged as to chastise and duly punish all sin, and Retributive causes

not abolished by deliverance from them. then Christ intervenes by a

movement supernatural, to work a release from these causes in the

redemption of souls, and does actually deliver them, it appears, after

all, that the enforcement of law is so far, at least, given up, or put

bye. To this I answer, first, that the enforcement is no more given up

than the law of gravity is given up when I sustain, by my will, a body

that would otherwise fall to the ground; for in such a case, the law of

gravity continues as truly as if it were left to its own way. And,

secondly, that the force-power of nature was originally set, to work

enforcement for the law of duty, just because and by means of a

grace-power, supernaturally working with it and complementary to it.

There is no greater mistake than to assume, as many do, that the law

was put forward first to be maintained by enforcement, and then that

the grace-power comes in afterward to displace it. The scheme of moral

government was to be a double acting and essentially restorative scheme

from the first, and the two great factors were to be coordinate, always

going along by a correspondent development, and assisting each the

other. And exactly this is what we find even in the facts of the New

Testament; the side of retribution appears, according to our human

judgment, to be intensified in about the same ratio as the side of

grace. Neither is any thing more clear, than that the enforcement side

depends on the gracious, quite as much as this on the other. For the

retributive causes of nature, once beginning to run, and wholly left to

themselves, put the subject down, at once, under a doom of complete

disability, and cease to have any value as enforcements at all. No

longer motives, they are simply manacles. But the moment a supernatural

grace is felt coming in, as it did at the first, to bring hope and

liberating help, the retributive causes become enforcements, just as

they were meant to be. The doctrine of endless punishment, taken as put

into words, was never any thing but a version of the fact, that

retributive causes are naturally endless in their propagations; but the

understanding was, and always has been, that a supernatural grace,

going side by side, should even keep them in power, as they give power

to it, and that so the grand joint product of justice and grace should

be always preparing. The very last thing to be apprehended is that the

forgiving side is going to prostrate the law side. The law could do

nothing but create disability, in that it was weak, without the other.

If there had been a law given which could have given righteousness,

verily righteousness should have been by the law. But now the law is a

schoolmaster for grace, and righteousness a free gift for the law. So

between both there is salvation.

Besides the personal moral power of Christ, that which he obtains by

his suffering ministry of love and sacrifice, gets a tonic efficacy how

majestic, by the tremendous moral emphasis of his denouncements, and

the energy he shows in being able to use force enough for his purposes;

even as every great general gets the moral power to carry his will by a

word, in the fact that he has been able to carry it by his previous

championship of force, in fields more impressive than words.

In advancing this doctrine of punishment, I am well aware that some

will call it the doctrine of Radamanthus, and that perhaps without

concern This rugged, unphilantropizing gospel will stand. to settle the

question, whether Christ had any better title to respect than he. They

have had a thought of God's beneficence, they will say, and they dare

to believe in it. They believe that his Creatorship and counsel will be

vindicated, as they only can, by results of universal order and

happiness, such as he has put it in our hearts to desire. Perhaps I am

as much exercised by the desire as they, but I can not take that desire

as a proof. Our existence has been mixed with discord from the first,

and, for aught we any of us know, this rough element belongs inherently

to the highest attainable state of good. That their gospel of

speculative philanthropism is carrying just now the vote of the world,

more and more largely, is quite probable. But I have thought much, in

comparison, of the older, more rugged, rougher gospel, and I feel

obliged to say, that it looks most real, and capable, and great. There

is nerve in this, and there is none in the other. Christ here takes

hold of human nature as if he knew it, and had something great to do

for it. He bears a look of mystery, greatness in counsel, and efficient

rule, such as the God of the world visibly bears himself--He that has

thunders, and tempests, and earthquakes, and wild waters, and

death-dealing causes, hovering in silence, or ravening in terror,

through all his works. The Christ, so carefully separated from his own

reiterated fact of future punishment, has no grand governmental

strategy, and bears no hand of mighty working any where. No man need

ever be warned lest he "be offended in him;" for we find him offering

only sweets for motivities, and bathing in soft odors and oily promises

the obstinacy of sin. No I the Christ of the old gospel, he of eternal

punishment, he of the judgment-day--the more I think of him, and of

man, and the kind of Saviour man re quires to get hold of him, and

rouse him out of his death-torpor in sin, the more clear it is that he,

the terrible Christ, is the Christ we want. The other, I strongly

suspect is a conceit of human opinion, representing only a phase or

fashion of the time, that will be very soon gone by; while the real

Immanuel, coming in much mystery, and raising many hard questions, and

fitly called Wonderful, will be proving, in all time, his great power

and beneficence, only the more sublimely; having quantities in him that

are not from men, or in men's measures; breaking out visibly in great

victories all down the ages, and reigning, as will finally be

acknowledged, in a kingdom that shall have no end.

So far we accept the unquestionable future of revelation. As regards

that ideal kosmos, in which our philanthropic friends propose to confer

so much greater honor upon God, I will simply suggest, that they might

less dishonor him, if they could allow that our present state is, in

some true sense, a kosmos. God never made any state that was not.

Inasmuch, therefore, as his future kosmos must, like the present, make

room for the fact of liberty, who can be sure that there will not be in

it jars and thunders of dissent, impossible to be excluded--shocks that

will stir the tragic movement in feeling, and keep off the tameness of

any such total elysium, or general Peace-Society state, as our

speculative seers are wont to promise--even as the kosmos of matter

rests in the perilous equilibrium and lively play of antagonistic

forces?

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CHAPTER VI.

GOD'S RECTORAL HONOR EFFECTIVELY MAINTAINED.

TO maintain the precept and enforce the sanctions of law, are not the

only matters of concern to be provided for, in the promulgation of

forgiveness; a third matter, much insisted on, is that the magistrate

himself keep good his Rectoral Honor and the Legal Justice of his

magistracy. Regarded as the administrator of instituted government, he

is practically the government himself, and is looked upon as being the

government. Hence if it should happen that, in the introduction of a

free justification, God's magisterial character--his Rectoral Honor and

Justice--is let down, or loses the necessary impressiveness, the damage

incurred will be fatal. And this, it will be remembered, was one of the

alleged forms of detriment, or damage, to be apprehended, unless some

kind of satisfaction is made to God's justice. All the compensation

theories have a principal respect to this supposed necessity. For how

shall God be just, and have respect in the character of justice, unless

he executes justice? or unless he somehow has his justice satisfied, by

volunteer pains contributed for that purpose?

Hence the many, variously turned contrivances of substitution, by which

this point is supposed to be carried, and a ground of justification

prepared that saves the justice and public honor of God, in a release

of his penalties. These various schemes or theories are made up in the

terms, official substitution, penal suffering, expiation, judicial

satisfaction, ransom, purchase, bearing the curse, payment of the debt,

and the like; used sometimes interchangeably as being, to some extent,

equivalents, or more commonly set up, each by itself, as the idol

figure of some peculiar doctrine dominated by it.

Our New England teachers, for nearly a century past, have commonly

taken a form of representation that has not as yet obtained general

currency, The New England scheme of substitution. any where else.

Pressed by the difficulty of any scheme that supposes a literal

satisfaction of God's justice, or the release of the guilty obtained by

the penal suffering of the innocent--because it so profoundly shocks

the most immovable, and most nearly innate convictions of our moral

nature--also by the new-sprung inference of universal salvation that

inevitably follows; viz., that, if Christ has borne the punishment of

the world, no principle of justice in God will allow him to inflict

that punishment again upon the transgressors themselves--pressed by

these difficulties they began to conceive that Christ, in his cross,

maintained the righteousness of God without punishment, by what was

expressed, to the same effect as in punishment, of God's abhorrence to

sin. Christ, they conceived, has simply shown, by his death, the same

abhorrence to sin that would have been shown by the punishment of the

guilty. The righteousness of God therefore stands erect and fair, even

though punishment is released.

Of this latter and later mode of doctrine I will speak first and

briefly, recurring afterwards to the older, which turns on the penal

suffering of Christ, and the maintenance and satisfaction thereby of

God's justice.

There is no room for scruple in affirming, that every thing done by

Christ gets its value, under laws of expression, No fault that it turns

on what is expressed. or, as in modern phrase, under terms of esthetic

representation; christianity as a power on the world, is expression.

Nay, the incarnation itself is what is expressed, and not what is

contained, or suffered quantitatively as a compensation to justice, in

the incarnate person. Punishment itself, apart from the matter of penal

enforcement, considered in the last previous chapter, has besides a

most sacred and noble efficacy in what it expresses of God--the

determination of his will, his righteousness, in a word his rectoral

fidelity to the law. This expression, too, is wanted as being the

equivalent of a like impression; for nothing is expressed to us, save

as it is impressed in us, in the same degree. And in just this way the

gospel itself is resolvable into expression, because it is wanted in a

way of impression; which is the real effect and mode of its value.

Thus far we have no difficulty; but the question still remains whether

a fit compensation is really made for the release of punishment, by

what is expressed of abhorrence to sin, in the sufferings of Christ?

That no compensation is wanted--justice and forgiveness being

co-factors, working together in the instituted government of God, and

the justice-factor being even confirmed in its vigor, by the revelation

of future punishment and the inauguration of Christ as the judge of the

world--was abundantly shown in the last chapter, But consenting, for

the present, to waive this advantage, we accept the question, whether

any expression made of abhorrence to sin is a proper and sufficient

substitute for punishment?

And here it occurs to us, at the outset, as a very obvious fact, that

abhorrence to sin expresses almost nothing that would be expressed by

punishment. Abhorrence to sin no fit equivalent of justice. Abhorrence

is a word of recoil simply and not a word of majesty. There is no

enforcement, no judicial vigor in it. I may abhor what I am only too

weak, or too much in the way of false pity, to handle with the due

severity. It does not even require a perfect being to abhor sin,

especially in the wicked forms of it--that is to draw back from it, as

being disgusted and shocked by it. But there is no such drawing back in

justice. Justice moves on in the positive vigor of the wrath-principle,

girded with inflexible majesty, for the doing upon wrong of what wrong

deserves. To put forward an expression therefore of God's abhorrence to

sin, as a substitute for justice, is to give it the weakest possible

substitute. If the abhorrence could be shown keeping company with

justice and justice with it, there would be no deficiency, but to make

a governmental sanction out of abhorrence by itself, and publish a free

forgiveness to sin, on the ground of it,: is to make forgiveness safe

by a much less positive and weaker way of handling than forgiveness

itself. All doubt on this point ought to be forever ended, by simply

asking what kind of figure, as regards efficiency, any government of

the world would make, dropping off its punishments and substituting

abhorrences?

But this abhorrence theory encounters another objection equally fatal,

in the fact that really no abhorrence No abhorrence expressed in

Christ's death. at all to sin is expressed in the suffering death of

Christ. All manifestations of goodness and purity are implicit

evidences of such abhorrence, but beyond that we discover no evidence

more direct. To what in the transaction of the cross can God's

abhorrence, by any possibility, fasten itself? Does God abhor the

person of Jesus? No. His character? No. His redeeming office? No. The

sins of the world that are upon him? They are not upon him, save in a

figure, as the burden that his love so divinely assumes. His standing

in the place of transgressors? He stands not in that place at all, as

having their moral desert upon him--only in their place as a good man

stands in the place of his enemy, to bear his wrongs and make his own

violated feeling the argument of pity and patience with him. Where then

does the abhorrence of God take hold of Christ or of his death at all?

What does it find in him, or about him, or on him, or under him, that

can be any wise abhorrent? If it should be said that God really abhors

nothing in him, but only lays severity upon him, to be taken by us as

the sign of his abhorrence, then how does it appear that the severity

laid upon him has any moral significance at all, if it is not penal

suffering? If he is put in our place to suffer the penalty of our sins,

then we can easily see abhorrence to our sins expressed in his

suffering. But mere severities and pains laid upon him, even though God

violated his own deep sympathies and loving approbations to do it, can

only show the fact of something very abhorrent somewhere, and is much

more likely to raise abhorrence in us, than to signify God's abhorrence

to us.

It will be found accordingly, if the language of those who take up this

abhorrence theory is carefully watched, that they have a latent

reference back Latent resumption still of the penal suffering. always

to Christ, as being in some penal condition, without which our sin is

no way concerned with his suffering, or his suffering with it. The

object was to get away from the very repulsive idea of a penal

character in Christ's suffering, and so from the appalling objections

that seemed to be incurred by it; but when the point of difficulty is

once turned by the softer word "abhorrence," we look back and find the

penal suffering held mentally in reserve, in order to get the Divine

Sufferer into an attitude, where God's abhorrences can be imagined to

adhere to him, or find expression through him. Thus it will be said

continually, that "God's abhorrence to sin was laid upon his

Son"--which means, if it means any thing, that God's judicial

indignations were laid upon him; that God withdraws from the Son in the

agony and upon the cross, to signify his displeasure, that is, his

judicial displeasure; nay, the doctrine will sometimes be even doubled

round again so as to say that God's "justice is satisfied" in his

death; only to be doubled back, of course, when the objections incurred

by the scheme of penalty are to be met; for then it will be answered

that Christ does not suffer penally, but only in a way to let God's

abhorrence to sin be expressed through his suffering.

I conclude, on the whole, that this New England expedient of conceiving

the substitution of Christ, as being only God's way of showing his

repugnances to sin by the suffering of Christ, instead of doing it by

the punishment of the guilty, has in fact, no base of reality, even to

those who resort to it, save as it reverts to the older scheme of penal

suffering and resumes all the methods of that scheme. Indeed it will

even be found, that Dr. Edwards, having taken the ground [47] that "the

death of Christ manifests God's hatred of sin, in the same sense as the

damnation of the wicked," still carries out his reasonings, under the

very scheme of penal suffering that has been renounced, to a point of

excess in that scheme that is abundantly shocking; viz., to the

conclusion that "the sufferings of Christ were agreeable to God." "If,

by mere pain," he says, [48] "be meant pain abstracted from the

obedience of Christ, I can not see why it may not be agreeable to God.

It certainly is in the damned; and, for the same reason might have

been, and doubtless was in the case of our Lord."

To pursue this particular scheme or doctrine farther appears to be

unnecessary, after we have found it lapsing always in the older

doctrine it undertook to qualify, or displace. To this older doctrine

we accordingly return.

Here it is conceived that God, as a ruler, must execute justice because

he is just--if not upon the guilty, then upon Christ their substitute.

Justice Immutable Justice only not sufficiently just. he must have, the

inexorable, everlasting wrath [orge] of his judicial nature must be

satisfied; and as it was to be satisfied by the penal suffering of

transgressors, so it can only be satisfied, in case of their release,

by a full compensation of penal suffering offered by their deliverer.

Now if it were simply conceived that God, by a necessary, everlasting

charge upon his moral nature, is fated to be the absolute Nemesis of

wrong,--unable therefore to avert himself, or be averted, till every

iota and least speck of it has gotten its full desert--there would, at

least, be a certain sublimity in the conception. But there is no such

thought as that; the inexorable justice [wrath] wants only suffering it

is conceived for its satisfaction, and the suffering of innocence will

be just as good as the suffering of guilt, if only there is enough of

it; which is about the same thing as to say that God's justice is so

immovably set on having its due of pains and penalties, that it will be

just as well satisfied in having them, apart from all relations of

justice. There was never a doctrine that more obviously broke itself

down by its own simple statement. Nor is it any wise relieved, when it

is added that the pains and penalties which justice obtains for

satisfaction are not exacted, but yielded by consent; for then we have

a kind of justice under all most sounding epithets of majesty,

immutable, necessary, sovereign, which is yet willing to get its pains

and penalties by contract!

I ought perhaps to say that, under the general phraseology of this

doctrine, there appears to be some variety Softened or varied forms of

the doctrine. of impression indicated by a softening, or modified

definition of terms. Many do not understand by God's justice any

vindictive attribute or instinct that must have satisfaction, but only

a character of public justice, or general justice, that is necessary to

be maintained, by a firm and exact distribution of penalty, in order to

keep the instituted government in respect and authority. These only

want the character of public justice made good, by some other

expression--commonly by that of abhorrence--when that which is made by

punishment is taken away. Some can not satisfy themselves in what

manner the needed compensative expression is made, and not finding how

to explain the difficulties met, take refuge at last in mystery--not

observing that where confessedly nothing is known, there can be nothing

expressed. These lower, softer kinds of commutation however do not

satisfy, at all, the more logical, firmly dogmatic natures, and the

tendency has been, more and more distinctly of late, to settle into

what are called the deeper grounds of the subject, and plant the

doctrine in the soil of first principle; viz., in what is conceived to

be the eternal, necessary attribute of divine justice itself.

I could hardly trust myself to state the argument, or vindication, by

which this more adequate and deeper doctrine is supposed to be

maintained; and therefore I am constrained to cite the language of two

late writers of distinction, that they may accurately represent

themselves and their view of the subject. I do it for no purpose of

controversy, but only to obtain, for the great matter in question, the

easiest and surest mode of settlement.

Thus it is formally argued by a teacher in great authority, [49]

that--"A being determined by considerations outside of Himself

[considerations of Absolute Justice how to be conceived. public effect

for example] can not be God. It is essential to the very nature of God

that he be independent and omniscient; but with these attributes a

determination ab extra [as where God is conceived, in the death of his

son, to be actuated by considerations of public law and authority, and

results of salvation gained, or to be gained, by his sacrifice] is

utterly and forever irreconcilable. \* \* \* Were theologians to receive

this first truth and couple it with that noble utterance with which the

Shorter Catechism opens--Man's chief end, etc.,' they would never be

found framing theories, which would strip God of his justice and set

the universe [i. e., the benefit of it] above the throne of their

Creator. \* \* \* God is himself the highest end for which he could act."

Now it is very true that, in one view, there is and can be nothing out

of God, and that, in the same, he can act for nothing out of Himself.

It is also true that his acts and purposes are not for things, or

creatures taken up as ends, after their creation; but these things and

creatures, present eternally to God's thought as possibilities, in

Himself, were as truly his ends, before they began to exist externally,

as they could be afterward. They were, in fact, as truly other and not

himself, as they came to be afterward. For them and their benefit

accordingly he has eternally acted. To say otherwise, denying that he

can have ends out of himself, under the supposed Calvinistic pretext of

doing honor to his sovereignty, is to make him Allah and not God. He is

even radically unchristianized in his God is not Allah nevertheless..

perfections. For it is the glory of God, the summit even of his glory,

that, being sovereign, he knows, not justice only, but self-sacrifice,

and is so sublimely given to ends out of Himself, that he can even be a

suffering God in his feeling, for the recovery and salvation of his

enemies. Doubtless he does all things, in' a sense, for his own glory;

which is only saying, if we speak with intelligence, that he does all

things to make the luster of his greatness and moral perfections

visible; in other words to radiate abroad his love and goodness, in a

way of imparting himself; which is to all created minds their only hope

of perfection and complete beatitude. We are brought round thus, in

fact, upon the noble conclusion that he does every thing for ends ab

extra, not for Himself. The argument, therefore, that God must have the

everlasting anger of his justice satisfied, because he is acting wholly

for Himself, appears to be about as repulsive, in every way, as any

thing well call be. It even makes the grim orge or vindictive

attribute, to be itself the summit of God's perfections. Insisting that

he must do every thing for himself, nothing for any public ends of

benefit and blessing to creatures, it seems even to say, what certainly

can not be meant, that his very perfection is, to stand, first of all,

for the satisfaction of his wrath, and kindle his glory at the point of

his resentments!

Another attempt has also been made, in quite another quarter, to

maintain what is virtually the same ground, only it is done by a more

ingenious Another conception of Absolute Justice. and plausible way of

argument. Consenting virtually to the principle, as every intelligent

thinker must, that we can properly conceive God only by drawing on

material included in our own human consciousness, the writer finds, in

all "ethical natures," whether it be the nature of God, or of man, a

certain prime element that he calls "Justice," and which is

instinctively arrayed, roused to vindictive energy, against all wrong,

or transgression. This judicial nature, called "justice," he also

conceives to be the point absolute in moral character. This must stand,

and nothing else which will not stand with it. Thus he says-- [50]

"A fundamental attribute of Deity is justice. This comes first into

view and continues in sight to the very last, in all inquiries into the

Divine Nature. No attribute can be conceived that is more ultimate and

central than this one. This is proved by the fact that the operation of

all the other divine attributes, love not excepted, is conditioned and

limited by justice. For whatever else God may be, or may not be, he

must be just. It is not optional with him to exercise this attribute,

or not to exercise it, as it is in the exercise of that class of

attributes which are antithetic to it. We can say--God may be merciful,

or not, as he pleases,' but we can not say, God may be just or not as

he pleases.' It can not be asserted that God is inexorably obligated to

show pity; but it can be categorically affirmed that God is inexorably

obligated to do justly."

His all-conditioning, first attribute of justice therefore must have

"plenary satisfaction" he maintains, else there can be no deliverance.

The conditionated grace of love must wait on the unconditionated,

absolute impulse of justice, and drink the cup of its indignations dry.

Thus it is conceived that, "In the incarnate Son, God voluntarily

endures the weight of his own judicial displeasure, in order that the

real criminal may be spared. The Divine compassion itself bears the

infliction of the Divine indignation, in the place of the transgressor.

The propitiation is no oblation ab extra, it is wholly ab intra, a

self-oblation upon the part of Deity itself, by which to satisfy those

immanent and eternal imperatives of the Divine Nature, which, without

it, must find their satisfaction in the punishment of the

transgressor." "Side by side in the Godhead, there dwell the impulse to

punish and the desire to pardon; but the desire to pardon is realized,

in act, by carrying out the impulse to punish; not indeed upon the

person of the criminal, but upon that of his substitute. And the

substitute is the Punisher Himself."

I have stated thus at large and carefully this newly elaborated scheme

of satisfaction, partly because it has a certain point of merit, and

partly because it is a failure where a sufficiently strong failure was

wanted. The point of merit is that it has the ingenuousness to put

entirely by the doubling, battledooring art commonly practiced in

discussions of this subject; it does not make Christ other than God,

that he may offer something to God's justice; and then a divine person

[God] that he may be able to offer what is sufficient; and then again

human that the divine may not suffer; but it takes the ground and

faithfully adheres to it, that the satisfaction made is wholly ab

intra, or within the divine nature itself. The point of failure is

equally important, because it brings the doctrine of penal suffering

and judicial satisfaction, to just that issue, where its failure is

likely to be final and conclusive.

First of all, the ingenuous admission, here made, that the justice of

God is satisfied from within Himself, or by punishment dispensed upon

Himself, A very weak justice that God exacts of himself. is even

admirably fatal. What kind of power any Ruler must hold, in the

impressions of his subjects who, to make sure of justice, takes all his

punishments out of himself, it is not difficult to see. There plainly

could not be a weaker figure in the name of government.

Besides the justice gotten, in this manner, must be as insipid to Him,

as it is useless for the purposes of government. Justice wants what is

just if And the justice is not just beside. it wants any thing, and

here it is found feeding itself out of that which is exactly not

just--what vestige of justice can there be in any punishment which a

righteous God gets out of Himself? Is it so then, after all, that this

inexorable, undivertible, Nemesis of God's ethical nature, this

judicial sentiment which must be satisfied first and before every thing

else, will be just as well satisfied with a punishment not just, as

with one that is?

There also appears to be a remarkable oversight here, in the scheme of

satisfaction proposed, as regards the God suffers--not his compassions.

penal suffering itself. "The Divine compassion itself bears the

infliction of the Divine indignation in the place of the transgressor."

Why the divine compassion, more than the divine justice? Does the

justice punish the compassion? For aught that appears there is no

suffering in the compassion more than in the justice. By supposition,

the truth is, merely, that there is a conflict between the two contrary

impulses, justice and compassion, and the divine nature--not specially

the compassion, not specially the justice--suffers. These words justice

and compassion do not as having each distinct sensibilities make up the

deity; they inhere in a Being, and that being, as being, suffers, by

their conflict. Does it then satisfy justice, that the being in whom it

inheres, suffers partly on account of it?

Besides, if it were conceivable that the being took so much suffering

wholly on his love, or on account of his love, did it never occur to

the writer that Withheld from suffering would have suffered more. if He

had refused, for love's sake, to encounter so much suffering he would

certainly have suffered infinitely more? Nay, that such a refusal would

even have turned the Divine bosom itself into a hell of suffering

forever? Given the fact of God's Infinite Love, he suffers

demonstrably, not more, but less, in consenting to be the deliverer of

men--by suffering however great.

But the scheme breaks down most fatally of all in the confusion of

meaning, or the covering up of a double meaning, in the word justice. A

The Justice conceived is ambiguous. sufficient discrimination here

would have shown that the absolute justice pertaining to ethical

natures is a fiction, without any shadow of reality. It is almost

incredible, that a really intelligent writer should throw himself upon

the axiom, "God must be just," "God is inexorably obligated to do

justly," without perceiving that we assent to it for no other reason

than that the words "just" and "justly" mean "righteous" and

"righteously." God can not of course do any thing unrighteous, or, in

that sense, unjust; that is God must keep his integrity. Is that the

same thing as to say that God has no option left, but to stand by

retributive justice and do by all men exactly as they do to others?

Calling "the impulse to punish" justice, has he no liberty left, but to

follow that impulse, just as far as it must go to be exhausted? If that

should possibly be true, it will require something more to establish it

than simply to propound it as an axiom. Interpose, at this point, two

very simple distinctions and the supposed infallible argument vanishes.

First, the distinction between righteousness and justice;

righteousness, being a character grounded in the Righteousness and

Justice, Wrath and Justice. absolute, unconditioned law of right

existing before government; and justice, being a rectoral,

politico-judicial character, maintained by the firm vindication of

government; conditioned of course by the wants of government. Second,

the distinction between the wrath-principle and justice; the

wrath-principle being only that moral sensibility, or passion, that

impels a moral nature to the infliction of evil in redress of wrong,

and steels it against the restraints of false pity; and justice being,

in the administration, a due infliction of such evil, according to the

ill desert of the wrong. By the first distinction, righteousness is

seen to be absolute, and justice to be a matter only of means to ends,

and so of deliberative counsel. By the second, the wrath principle is

seen to be no law at all, but only an impulse to be regulated by

counsel; which, when it is, makes justice; when it falls short, laxity;

when it runs to excess, revenge and cruelty. I have the same kind of

ethical nature as God, and it is even a praise in me, nay, an

obligation upon me, to do by my enemy better than he deserves--to

forget my injuries and even to suffer for his good. Is it then a fault

in God that he does the same? It is very true that I administer no

government over my enemy, and so far there is a difference. But this

difference leaves it optional with God to do by his enemy still better

than he deserves, when-, ever he can do it, without injury to the

public interest of government. And if that is agreed, where is the

absolute, all-conditioning, unconditioned justice-element of his

nature--the wrath that is to bridle and bestride everlastingly his will

and counsel? Ceasing ii this manner to call righteousness justice, and

justice wrath, the claim that wrath is God's first attribute, and must

be satisfied, is seen to be quite groundless. And the supposed

adamantine cup, that requires to be kept exactly full of blood, to let

forgiveness into the world, is happily found to be only an ambiguous

term in speech and nothing more!

It will occur to almost any one, that this very huge mistake respecting

the absolute nature of justice, originates in a confounding of

righteousness and justice. That is absolute, unconditioned,

unconditional, a law to all moral natures and even to God; a law, as we

have seen, [51] before God undertakes to so much as organize a

government for it. For this law absolute, the government Righteousness

absolute, not justice. of God including his justice only maintains

guard, just as guillotines do for statutes; but guillotines are not

statutes themselves, neither is justice the same as the everlasting law

of right whose wrongs it avenges. It was not the thunderings, and the

lightnings, and the smoke, and the sound of a trumpet that were

engraved in stones, but it was the law. Law is the principal and

absolute matter, the variable and conditional is what counsel arranges

and does to vindicate law. [52] or executive counsel, as truly as the

fire that fell on Sodom, or the destruction of the golden calf. Or if

we use the epithet as a word of character, the character is not

original and absolute in God, but is obtained by doing justice. Which

again requires to be done, only because, and just so far as, it is

means to ends in a way of maintaining government; not because God's

nature contains a wrath-principle absolute, that must be exactly

satisfied. And still it is, with many, a question how far, or whether

in fact ever, it can be relaxed? also whether, if relaxed by

forgiveness, it must not be somehow compensated? And they even go so

far as to be sensitively concerned for God's law, if he is conceived to

let go any sin, without some exact equivalent obtained. To proclaim a

free remission, without some such equivalent, they do not hesitate to

say would quite break down his government; he might be a good adviser

still, they will say, but nothing more--no real governor at all.

And yet we can easily see that any such kind of concern is theologic

with us, and not practical. We do not practically feel, after all, that

in After all, have no such concern for God's justice. the universal

free remission published by Christ, God's rectoral authority is at all

weakened, or requires any new buttress of support to be added. And the

probable reason is that the immense reinforcement of eternal obligation

by Christ's doctrine of future punishment, and of the future judgment

by himself, puts all thought of concern for God's authority so far

away, that it can not even occur to us. We find ourselves quivering for

dread, under even mercy itself. The necessity of some compensation made

to God's justice occurs to no man, save in a way of theory.

Passing now into another field, let us consider, in a way more

positive, what Christ has really done that affects, or may be seen to

affect, the interests of justice. The remainder of the chapter will be

occupied with matter that I could well enough put forward as a way of

compensation; suffering no doubt whatever that it would be more

satisfactory, closer to the problem of compensation itself, and more

genuine than the others of which I have been speaking. But I shall

offer it, instead, simply as proof, how closely God adheres to law and

justice still in the very matter of vicarious sacrifice. And I let go,

in this way, what might be a considerable relief, or commendation to

many, just because I have too little respect for the compensations, to

be accessory, in any way, to this kind of wrong against the simplicity

of the gospel. These compensations have a too contrived look, and

suggest too easily the ingenious littleness and tumid poverty of man's

invention. I would rather have the gospel in God's way of dignity

without them, than to have it in a guise so artificial and meager

without the dignity.

It lies in the very conception of vicarious suffering, I am giving in

this treatise, that Christ is entered practically into the condition of

evil and made Christ is incarnated into the curse. subject to it. This

condition, too, of evil, we shall find is, in some very important

sense, a penal condition. It is what is called, in one of the epistles,

"the curse;" an epithet which has reference, I suppose, indirectly, if

not formally, to the expulsion from paradise set forth in the third

chapter of Genesis. Not that the sentence there passed on the guilty

pair, and on the world for their sake, was any positive infliction. The

scriptures very commonly represent what occurs retributively under

fixed laws of nature in that way; because the true moral idea of God's

dealings with evil is best conceived in that way, by minds in the

earlier stages of development. But to us the effects of sin are its

curse, and the laws of retribution, set in deep and firm in the economy

of nature itself, are God's appointed ministers of justice. In this

manner we conceive that every thing up to the stars--the whole realm of

causes--is arranged to be, in some sense, the executive organ of God's

moral retributions.

Accordingly, the moment any sin breaks out, all the causes set against

it fall to being curses upon it. As the sin itself must be against the

will of God, and every thing created centers in that will, a shock of

discord runs through the general frame-work of life and experience.

Order itself utters a groan of disorder. The crystalline whole of

things is shattered, as it were by some hard blow, and the fragments

begin to grind heavily upon each other. The soul itself, lacerated by

its own wrong, winces for pain, like an eye that has extinguished sight

by gazing at the sun. The passions, appetites, fears, aspirations are

pitched into a general quarrel with each other, and especially with the

reason and the conscience; and the will, trying to usurp control of

all, when it can not sufficiently master any thing, falls off its

throne, as a tyrant plucked down by revolt. The body suffers a like

shock of disorder, and true health vanishes before the secret crowd of

infections, twinges, and immedicable combustions, that steal into the

flesh, and traverse the bones, and go burning along the nerves. Evil

becomes a kind of organic power in society, in the same way; a kingdom

of darkness, a conspiracy of bad opinions and powers usurped for

oppression, under which truth and goodness and right and religion

itself are, either badly perverted, or cruelly persecuted. The very

world, made subject to vanity, groans and travails every where, waiting

for some redemption that can redeem it from itself.

Now this state of corporate evil is what the scriptures call the curse;

and it is directly into this that Suffers the corporate evil with us.

Christ is entered by his incarnation. In this taking of the flesh, he

becomes a true member of the race, subject to all the corporate

liabilities of his bad relationship. The world is now to him just what

it is to us; save that the retributive causations reach him only in a

public way, and never as a sufferer on his own account. He is even

depravated or damaged in his human constitution just so far as that

constitution is humanly derivative. For he was the Son, not of an

immaculate, but of a maculate motherhood; otherwise the humanity

assumed were only a dainty, and merely ideal embodiment, such as rather

mocks our sympathy than draws it. Besides, he would be tempted in all

points like as we are, and give us to see how he bears himself in our

lot. Therefore we believe him to have entered himself into our

humanity, just as it is--into the curse itself, under which it lies.

Joining himself to us, in a participation so real and deep, his birth,

we half imagine, coming with a shock, and hear strange wail break out

in the child's first cry. Or if this be fancy only and not fact, we

can, at least, see for ourselves that, when he comes to go into his

great ministry, in the bonds of the curse, and be joined to all the

corporate woes and judicial disorders of the curse, he recoils with a

shudder, falls off into a sharp long contest of fasting and temptation,

finally to emerge as from a fight with demons. [53] In this struggle

and victory his ministry begins, only the victory does not annihilate,

or more than simply master his dreadful repugnances. We can see, at

points all the way on, where the pressure of his labor does not occupy

and respite his feeling, that his soul wrestles heavily through storms

of revulsion, or incipient agony. To calm such storms he continues all

night in prayer. He is "grieved," he "groans in spirit," he "has a

baptism to be baptized with" and he is "straitened" by the dreadful

pressure of it, till it be accomplished. He is "troubled in spirit," he

cries "now is my soul troubled," and finally, when all his work is

ended, and there is no longer any active ministry to divert or occupy

his attention, he sinks, at once, into a dreadful superhuman agony and

horror of darkness, moaning heavily--"My soul is exceeding sorrowful

even unto death!" Now in all these incipient agonies, and finally in

the last great agony of all, his trouble is mainly mental, as we can

see for ourselves. [54]

It is even so upon the cross, where he dies, physically speaking,

before his time, because of the more dreadful moral suffering or

revulsion that was on him, in his felt contact with the curse and the

judicial horrors of evil. [55] Partly, it is the concern he feels for

his enemies, invoking the curse of his blood upon themselves and their

children; and partly it is the baleful shadow that is upon every

thing--the hour of darkness and judicial madness that is on his

crucifiers, the black flag hung over the sun, and the geologic

under-world shuddering horribly for their crime.

Thus it was that he came into the curse and bore it for us. Not that he

endures so much of suffering as having it penally upon him--he has no

such thought--and yet he is in it, as being under all the corporate

liabilities of the race. He had never undertaken to bear God's

punishments for us, but had come down simply as in love, to the great

river of retributive causes where we were drowning, to pluck us out;

and instead of asking the river to stop for him, he bids it still flow

on, descending directly into the elemental rage and tumult, to bring us

away.

Let us not fail now to observe the deliberate respect he pays to God's

instituted government and law in this matter. First, that having all

miraculous Observe what honor he pays to justice. power, and using that

power continually for the removing of diseases, and sometimes even for

the quickening of the dead, he steadily refuses to use it for the

rescue of his person when arrested; or the confounding of his

adversaries, when arraigned; or even to so much as hurl aside the cross

and his crucifiers. "No, let sin be just as evil and wild as it will;

society just as cruel to all that are in it, me included; just as

visibly accursed, as the retributive order of God's causes requires it

to be." And again, secondly, observe that, when he has all power to

stop the retributive causes, and strip away the whole instituted order

of justice, he will not do it--will not annihilate, or suspend, or in

the least infringe, any single attribute of causation, arranged for the

moral discipline of transgression. As he will not discontinue any law

of nature by his miracles, he will not do it for the deliverance of a

soul, which in fact is much less than a miracle. He is a being strictly

supernatural, and his work in the deliverance of transgressors is also

supernatural; but in coming to them, in their thraldom, to lift them

out by his divine love and sympathy, he only masters the bad causes,

but does not stop them. It could as well be imagined that a strong

magnet, lifting its iron weight into the air, discontinues, or

annihilates the law of gravity. Nothing in short is so conspicuous, in

the vicarious suffering and death of Christ, as the solemn deference he

pays to God's instituted justice in the world, and even to the causes

from which he comes to redeem.

Whoever then is pressed with the necessity, that some ground of

forgiveness should be prepared by Compensations enough, were

compensations wanted. Christ, in order to make forgiveness safe--some

compensation made to law and justice for the loss they must suffer, in

the release of their penalties--has not far to go to find the matter of

a compensation that is more than sufficient. Let him remember, first,

the tremendous artillery sanctions. added by Christ, in his two really

new doctrines, that of eternal punishment and that of his coming in

glory to judge the world; and then again let him consider Christ in his

whole lifetime, wrestling with God's retributions upon the world, him.

self included under them, and finally drinking dry upon his cross the

cup of judicial madness these retributions mix in the hearts of his

enemies; and then, once more, let them note how he carefully refuses to

subvert the retributive causalities of God's judicial order in souls,

even though it be to accomplish their deliverance--let him bring

together these most weighty tributes of honor, added by Christ to the

majesty of law, and whether he shall call them compensations or not

(for it makes very little difference by what name he calls them) he

will certainly not be concerned any more, lest God, in the forgiveness

of sins, may have sacrificed the honors of his authority, or the

majesty of his justice. All this too, without any fiction of abhorrence

expressed, justice satisfied, official transfer made of guilt, official

substitution suffered in the matter of punishment. There is no

theologic shuffle, in which persons, and characters, and sentiments of

right, and dues of wrong, are confounded, but every thing is left just

as it stands, in the facts of the history; making its own impressions,

mocked by no subtleties, weakened by no moonshine of scholastic

science.

As I have made much, in this treatise, of the suffering element in

Christ's sacrifice, regarding mainly his moral suffering, and that as

an expression of the suffering sensibility of God towards his enemies;

and as I have just now magnified, in like manner, the suffering of

Christ under the retributive and corporate evils of the curse, I ought

perhaps to make some reference to a scheme of substitution, or

compensation, different from the others of which I have spoken. For it

is a somewhat curious fact, that we have a late treatise of our

own--much commended and really more deserving than any modern treatise

I have seen--which describes a mode of compensation, executed in

Christ, where the suffering of God in the punishment of the wicked, is

made up, or substituted, by His equal suffering in the cross of Jesus.

It does not appear to be observed that the treatise of Mr. Burge has

this peculiarity; but he states very distinctly the fact, that Burge's

new theory of compensation by divine suffering. God, in his

punishments, evinces his respect for his law, by the amount of evil he

is seen to endure in those punishments; and then proceeds--"By God's

submitting to an evil, is meant his consenting that a thing should take

place, which must be, in its own nature, disagreeable to his benevolent

heart, if received independently of all other things. The misery of

mankind, which would have been the effect of the execution of the law,

would have been such an evil. \* \* \* If then the sufferings of Christ

were really an evil in the sight of God, and he submitted to them on

account of his law, it must be evident that they are sufficient to show

respect for his law. These sufferings must have been an evil of very

great magnitude. Hence, for God to submit to such an evil on account of

his law, must be a manifestation of respect to it exceedingly great."

[56]

We seem to be coming out here upon a scheme of compensation, which, at

least, involves no offense to our. natural sentiments of right; but the

prospect vanishes too sow to allow us any space for congratulation. The

little clause "on account of his law," will be observed in the language

cited; and the implication is that Christ must needs suffer, on account

of the law, in order that God's suffering for him and with him should

go to the same account with the suffering He would undergo in

punishment. And then, regarding the suffering of Christ as being

somehow on account of the law, the argument goes off upon the revealing

of God's "opposition to sin," and his "displeasure against sinners,"

ending virtually, after all, in a way of compensation by abhorrence as

it is commonly held. If Mr. Burge, perceiving the full import and merit

of the conception he began with, could have had the firmness not to be

swerved from his point by deference to existing opinions, his new base

of compensation, by which one kind of moral suffering in God is

substituted by another, would have allowed him to erect a complete

superstructure of his own, and one that should be nowise revolting to

right. But he seems to have not conceived the fine possibility it gave

him.

In the general view I have thus given of the compensations, and

especially in taking the position that God's law and justice are

sufficiently vindicated in Christ, saying nothing of compensations at

all, I anticipate two objections--

1st Obj. That the christian world is unanimous in the belief that

Christ has offered a compensation to the Christian world unanimous for

compensation. justice of God, and that such compensation is necessary,

as a ground for the forgiveness of sins. There is some truth in this,

and I have no pleasure in a raising a conflict with any so generally

accepted faith or opinion. But I have (1.) made up as large an account

of compensations as any one can desire, if a compensation must be

provided; and (2.) I have it to say, that whatever agreement there may

be in respect to the need of a compensation, there is no agreement as

to the mode; and (3.) that, for the first thousand years of the church,

there was nothing said of any compensation at all, except that the

suffering death of Christ was a compensation paid to the devil; and

(4.) that Anselm, at whom this notion of a compensation to God begins,

only makes up an argument in which God's violated honor is compensated

by the obedience unto death of his incarnate Son, conceiving the fact

of no compensation at all to God's justice or the want of any--much as,

in the previous chapter, I have shown what honor God has put upon the

law-precept, by Christ's obedience, and here upon the penalty, by his

incarnate submission to the curse or the natural retributions of God.

How much is left of the objection after a specification like this, I am

not anxious to inquire.

2d Obj. That the view here advanced will not satisfy the strong

substitutional, or imputational phrases applied to Christ in the

scripture. Exactly contrary to this, I am clear in the conviction, that

it has the particular merit of giving to all such forms of scripture

expression, their most easy and genuinely Substitutional phrases of

scripture not met. natural meaning, and that, without doing any offense

to the standards of our moral nature. There is a kind of legerdemain,

or word-shuffle practice, in such phrases; by which Christ is shown to

be set in the very condition, or it will even be said in the very guilt

of sinners, having their sins really put upon him, to be answered for

by him in suffering before God's justice, and to satisfy that justice.

If it were necessary to reason with attempts that are themselves even

shocking violations of reason, it should be enough to say, that Christ

is either really in the lot of ill desert, or else he is not. If he is

there, then he ought to suffer; and if he is not, then it is the

greatest wrong and irreverence to pretend that he suffers justly. I

have dared to say that he is not there, and suffers nothing as justly

due to himself. He only comes into the corporate evil of sin, as being

incarnated into humanity, and, working there to recover men away, both

from sin and punishment, he, for so long a time, encounters and suffers

the curse they are justly under. This he does, not to satisfy God's

justice, but in a way of coming at their consciences and hearts;

whereupon it results that they, being released or recovered, by so

great expense of suffering and sacrifice, give him their testimony of

thanks, in the most natural way possible, by telling how he "was made a

curse for them," "bore their sins in his own body," "gave himself for

them," "was made sin for them," "gave himself to be their ransom,"

"died for them," "suffered the just for the unjust."

The case is one we can not parallel, but suppose--no matter if the like

was never heard of--that some state, An illustration of the

substitutive language. the Roman for example, has contrived a prison

for the punishment of public malefactors, on the plan of an ordeal by

Providence. The prison is placed in the region of some deadly miasma,

that we will say of the campagna; the design being to let every convict

go free, after some given numbers of years are passed; on the ground

that, being still alive, he must have learned to govern himself for so

long a time, and is also marked for life and liberty by the acceptance

of Providence. The fell poison of the atmosphere decimates, of course,

the number of the prisoners, almost every week. Finally it comes to the

knowledge of a certain good monk of the city, who has learned to follow

his Master, that a notable prisoner who, a long time ago, was his

bitter private enemy,. begins to show the working of the poison, and is

giving way to the incipient burnings of the fever. Whereupon the godly

servant says "this man was my enemy, and for Christ's sake I must go to

him, trying, if I can, to save him." Becoming thus the prisoner's

faithful nurse and attendant, he is recovered and goes free, and the

benefactor takes the infection and dies. And now the rescued man throws

out his soul on words, trying vainly to express the inexpressible

tenderness of his obligation. He writes, and talks, and sings, nothing

but gratitude, all his life long; telling how the Christly man saved

him, by what poor figures he can raise. "O he bore my

punishment"--"became the criminal for me"--"gave his life for

mine"--"died that I might live"--"stood in my lot of guilt"--"suffered

all my suffering." It will not be strange, if he should even go beyond

scripture and testify in the fervors of his homage to so great

kindness--"he took my debt of justice"--"satisfied the claims of

justice for me;" for he will mean, by that, nothing more than he has

meant by all he has been saying before. Then, after a time, when he and

his benefactor are gone, some one, we will imagine, undertakes to write

their story; and the dull, blind-hearted literalizer takes up all these

fervors of expression, in the letters and reported words of the rescued

felon, showing most conclusively from them, that the good monk actually

got the other's crime imputed to him, took the guilt of it, suffered

the punishment, died in his place, and satisfied the justice of the law

that he might be released! Why the malefactor himself would even have

shuddered, at the thought of a construction so revolting, hereafter to

be put upon his words! The honors won for Christian theology, by this

kind of interpretation put upon the free words of scripture, make a

very sad figure, and are better to be lost than preserved. I do not, to

speak frankly, know a passage of scripture, that can with any fairness

be turned to signify a legal or judicial substitution of Christ, in the

place of transgressors--none that, taken with only a proper Christian

intelligence, can be understood as affirming, either the fact, or the

necessity, of a compensation made to God's justice, for the release of

sin.

If now we take the material of this and the two previous chapters,

apart from any thought or proposed These law factors necessary, in the

moral-power construction of the gospel. scheme of compensation for the

release of punishment, we can not fail to see the immense importance

and absolute integral necessity of it, in a gospel that proposes to

quicken and spiritually restore the world. Not even the transcendent

moral power over mankind, which Christ has obtained by his incarnate

life and sacrifice, can have any sufficient sway, save as it is

complemented, authenticated, and sharpened into cogency, by the sturdy

law-work of these three chapters.

It is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of christian

doctrine, that what the critical historians call the "moral view" of

the atonement, in distinction from the expiatory, has been so

persistently attempted, and so uniformly unsuccessful. The

discouragements of failure appear to signify nothing; still the attempt

is renewed, age after age, as if pushed on by some sublime fatality

that can not be resisted. And what shall we see in this sublime

fatality, but the felt pressure of truth, thrusting on attempts to

issue the truth in some right form? What also shall we see in so great

persistency under failure, but a pledge of final success? And we are

the more confident of this, in the revision of these three chapters,

that we are able so clearly to see, why the attempts at a moral

construction of the sacrifice, such as have heretofore been made,

should have failed. They have keen partial, they have not included

matter enough to make any complete gospel, or to maintain any permanent

hold, as a power, in men's convictions. They begin to wane as they

begin to live, and shortly die for want of any complete apparatus of

life. One proposes Christ as an example. Another imagines that his work

is exhausted in correcting the superstition, or false opinion, that God

will not forgive sin; and so allowing God's paternity to be accepted.

Another shows him to be the teacher of a divine morality that must

needs restore the world. Another beholds, in his life and death, the

manifested love of God. Others follow in varieties that combine some,

or all, of the proposed modes of benefit, and fill out, as they

conceive, the more complete account of his moral efficacy. The inherent

weakness of all such versions of the gospel is, that they look to see

it operate by mere benignities--something is either to be shown or

done, that is good enough to win the world.

The one fatal defect that vitiates all such conceptions and puts them

under a doom of failure is that they make up a gospel which has no law

side of authority, penal enforcement, rectoral justice; nothing to take

hold of an evil mind at the point of its indifference or averseness to

good, nothing to impress conviction, or shake the confidence, or stop

the boldness of transgression. Doubtless it is something great, a

wonderful and chief element, that Christ unbosoms the Suffering Love of

God, and obtains a name and power, in that manner, so transcendent; and

yet not even he himself appears to put this captivating figure first in

order, in the working plan, or economy of his gospel. On the contrary,

we may distinctly see, when he comes to the end of his ministry, that

he expects the dispensation of the Spirit now to begin, as he retires,

in a cogent, piercing, fearfully appalling work, that is far as

possible from any thing captivating or benignant. And yet even this

will be, in a sense, by him and by his cross. "And when he is come he

shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to

come." How of sin? "because they believe not on me." How of

righteousness? "because I go to the Father and ye see me no more." How

of judgment? "because the prince of this world is judged." In these

thunders he will be revealed, and by these mighty shocks of inward

convulsion, he will open a passage for his love and beauty to enter.

For what honor is there on the precept of God's law, when Jesus

personates it in his life! and how dreadfully, visibly, base is the

sin, that can attack that life and do a deed of murder on it! Well

might the poor maddened multitude, overwhelmed by unutterable

convictions of wrong in what they have done, go home smiting on their

breasts! And the righteousness of God--what opinion shall they have,

now, either of it, or of themselves, when they conceive him ascending

to the Father? He came out from the righteousness of God, verily he

lived it in the world, and now he has gone up clad in its honors to

reign. And the justice of God--what is now so visible, as that the

cross itself is God's mightiest deed of judgment? for here goes down,

as by a thunderstroke, the prince of this world--all the organically

dominating powers of evil; its fashions, its pride, its pomps of

condition, its tremendous codes of false opinion, all its lies, all its

usurpations. These overgrown tyrannies upon souls are hurled, like

Dagon, to the ground; and Pilate and the priests, and the senators, and

the mob, and the soldiers, are all seen choking in dumb silence, before

the cross and the judgment-day quaking and blackness of the scene. Poor

sinning mortals! how weak do they look! how like to culprits judged!

In all which we have, according to the conception of Christ himself,

what exactly corresponds to the matter of these three rugged chapters

of government. Expecting, as he does, to draw all men, by the

captivating love and grace of his sacrifice, he has no such thought as

that the moral power of his life will do any thing by itself. There

must be law, conviction, judgment, fear, taking hold of natures dead to

love, and by this necessary first effect, preparing a way for love. No

effective and firm hold of the world as world, does he even hope to

get, save as he breaks the shell of the world's audacity and blunted

feeling, by these piercing rigors of conviction--doing visibly and

suffering all that he does and suffers, in a way to honor the precept,

enforce the penalty, and sanctify the justice of law; the precept as

right, the penalty as righteous, the justice as the fit vindication of

the righteousness of God. No moral-view account of his gospel,

separated from this, can be any thing but a feeble abortion. In this

firm conjunction, his wonderful life and the name he has obtained,

which is above every name, become the power of God unto salvation--thus

and not otherwise.

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[47] Discourses on Atonement, Park's edition, p. 31.

[48] Page 35.

[49] Biblical Repertory, A. D. 1859, pp. 474-5.

[50] Bibliotheca Sacra, Oct., 1859. Art. II --The Atonement a

Satisfaction for the Ethical Nature of both God and Man.

[51] For the distinction between righteousness and justice, See Chap.

I., Part II.

[52] The Hebrew scriptures have a way of putting these two ideas

righteousness and justice together that is instructive. They make use

of two distinct sets of words, one that is morally significant, the

other forensically; and it is remarkable how firmly these two sets of

words, occurring almost constantly in a kind of twin relationship, keep

themselves to their places; scarcely ever, or quite never crossing over

to uses that confuse their meaning. Thus we have--"righteousness and

judgment"--"righteous judgment"--"justice [i. e., righteousness] and

judgment"--"just [i. e., righteous] judgment"--"judgment and justice"

[i.e., righteousness]--with a great variety of similar combinations;

where it will be observed, in the last three cases, that our English

translation, putting justice and just in the place of righteousness and

righteous, makes a considerable look of confusion; owing to the fact

that the words just and justice are so often used, in English, in the

judicial and vindicatory sense. It would have been very much better if

the translation had excluded this ambiguity, by steadily representing

the steadiness of the original, in a use only of the words righteous

and righteousness, and reserving the terms just, justice, judgment and

the like, for the other class of uses, the vindicatory, in the manner

observed by the scripture. Nobody in that case would ever have begun to

imagine that retributive justice was an original, everlasting,

unconditioned, first principle in the moral nature of God. That is true

of righteousness only, never of justice.

[53] Christ and his Salvation, pp. 94-111.

[54] This fact has been observed by others, who yet have not regarded

his mental suffering as proceeding simply from his love vicariously

burdened for the world's evils, and have not taken his redemption as

accomplished by his moral power on the world. Thus Dr. John Pye Smith

has the insight to perceive, that--"The fact of natural death, the mere

ceasing to live, was the smallest part of those sufferings; it was

their termination and relief. The sorrow which he endured ineffably

transcended all corporal agony. It was death in the soul. Our moral

feelings sin has made slow and torpid; so that we can form none but

very faint conceptions of the load of distress and horror which passed

on that soul, whose unsullied innocence and perfection of sensibility

were without an equal in all human nature. He suffered all that a

perfectly holy man could suffer, but the highest intensity of his

anguish lay in that which was mental." (Testimony to the Messiah, Vol.

II, p. 343.)

[55] Christ and his Salvation, pp. 225-275.

[56] The Atonement, Discourses and Treatises, by Prof. Park, pp 158-60.

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CHAPTER VII.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

AND yet the great Moral Power obtained by Christ for the reconciliation

of men to God, fortified and buttressed by these vigorous law-factors

of which I have been speaking, is obviously still no absolute or

complete power, as regards the result proposed. No moral power ever

goes to its mark in that way. The force or fiat-power of God strikes

directly through, by its own cogency, but his moral power works only by

inducement; that is, by impressions, or attractions that may be

resisted; for it is not one of the possibilities, Moral power supposes

the consent of faith. that character should be struck out, by any

exterior action that does not act through choice or faith, in the

subject. That would be not only a miracle, but a morally absurd

miracle. Moral power therefore, acting by itself, always falls

inevitably short of the result proposed, appearing thus, in one view,

to be scarcely any real power at all. The grandest, most ineffable kind

of power--in Christ a glory most visibly divine or deific--it still

bears a look of insufficiency, whenever it moves on a moral nature that

will not suffer it to be sufficient. But where it wins consent, or

faith, it is not so; there it is visibly, consciously power, bearing

some of the highest attributes of sovereignty; even transforming the

subject all through, in the deepest secrets of impulse; creating, as it

were, new possibilities of character, new springs of liberty in good.

Beginning in the plane of inducement, or attraction, it no sooner wins

consent, or faith, than it becomes inspiration; bearing the soul up out

of its thraldom and weak self-endeavor, to be a man newborn, ranging in

God's freedom, and consciously glorious sonship.

And this, if I am right, is the very greatest thing done below the

stars, evincing the greatest power. The subject is reconnected herein

with the divine nature, atoned, reconciled with God, transformed by the

inward touch of God's feeling and character. This, if any thing, is

power, the power of God unto salvation. Only it is by the supposition a

salvation by faith. Winning faith, it works by the faith it wins; and

so, being trusted in, it makes the trust a new footing of life and

character.

Now it is this new footing of faith, or salvation by faith, which the

New Testament Scriptures call Justification by Faith. Not that men

Justification by faith is the result proposed. were never justified by

faith before--they were never justified in any other way, never saved

on any other footing. The Old Testament saints, and as truly the

outside saints, of whom I believe there have been many besides Jethro

and Job and Cornelius, were all justified by faith. They were such as,

not knowing Christ, trusted themselves practically to God as their

Helper and Keeper; or not knowing God, trusted themselves implicitly to

some supernatural Helper felt to be near, and accepted as their Unknown

Friend. We only speak of justification by faith in Christ, as a new

footing of salvation, because there is such a power obtained for God,

by the human life and death of Christ, and the new enforcements of his

doctrine, as begets a new sense of sin, provokes the sense of spiritual

want, and, when trust is engaged, creates a new element of advantage

and help, to bring the soul up into victory over itself and seal it as

the heir of God. And thus it is, or in a sense thus qualified, that we

speak of justification by faith, as the grand result of Christ's work,

and the all-inclusive grace of his salvation.

Holding this view of Christ and his gospel, we can see beforehand, that

justification by faith will even be a principal matter of Christianity;

and Practical faith and church opinion may not wholly coincide. then it

will not be strange, if some should glorify it more as an idol of

dogmatic opinion, and others more as a footing of grace and divine

liberty. It will be dear to many, living in their heads and supervising

the gospel as thinkers, because it is the articulus stantis vel

cadentis ecclesiae; but a great deal more dear, to a much greater

number, as the point where Jesus practically meets their want, and

becomes a new celestial confidence in their faith. What however it

means, may not be very exactly understood or agreed, between those who

prize it as a church article, and those who value it as the new footing

and spring of their spiritual liberty--the justification of life. Nay,

it will not be strange, if some whose souls are most kindled by the

grace of it, should nevertheless make a church article of it that is

quite inconsistent, or even revolting. In my present chapter,

therefore, I shall endeavor to gather in what light I can from the

previous chapters, upon this truly principal matter of the Christian

salvation.

The single text of Scripture at which the doctrine begins, and in

which, we may almost say that it ends, The principal text discussed.

though hundreds of other passages bring in their consenting evidence,

is the much debated testimony of Paul [57] --"Whom God hath set forth

to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his

righteousness in the remission of sins that are past, through the

forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness,

that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in

Jesus."

The first clause of the passage, relating to propitiation, will be

considered more properly in another chapter. At present, our concern is

to settle the true meaning of the remaining part, relating to the

righteousness of God, and the dispensation of his justifying mercy.

The mere English reader will not know, that the three words here

occurring, righteousness, just, and justifier of--The three words all

of one family.noun, adjective, and participle--are all words of the

same root in the original, and, of course, are as closely related in

meaning, as they can be in so many different parts of speech, that are

grammatical offshoots of the same root. Informed of this, he will ask,

at once, why the three words are not translated so as to preserve the

impression of their kinship?--thus to read, either "the righteousness

of God," "that he may be righteous and make righteous," or else, the

"justice of God, that he may be just and the justifier of"--so to

reflect the apostle's meaning, in the exact one color he gave it, by

his three co-relative words in the Greek? I hardly know what answer to

make to this question, unless it be that the text had been already

warped, by a dogmatic construction, before the translation was made.

This, however, is not quite certain; for the latter class of words from

the Latin --justice, just and justify--are commonly used in the

translation in precisely the same meaning as the former class from the

Saxon--righteousness, righteous and make righteous. I say "commonly

used," but they are not always so used; for the Romans had two senses,

very distinct from each other, when they spoke of justice. They were a

very intensely legal people, and they sometimes meant by justice,

justice under political analogies--vindicatory and forensic

justice--and sometimes justice in the moral sense; that is,

righteousness. The Greek word or class of words, never means justice

and just under political analogies, but always moral justice; that is

uprightness, or rightness of principle. Hence the mixing of both

classes of words in the translation of this text, so as to read

"righteousness" and "just" and "the justifier of," wears a suspicious

look, and is, to say the least, unfortunate, because of the ambiguity

it creates.

Still no very great detriment will be suffered, if due care is taken

always to understand the words just and justify as having, like the

word righteousness that precedes them, a purely moral

significance--that God is just, as being righteous, and justifies,

simply as communicating his own character and becoming a righteousness

upon us. Unhappily this caution is not observed by theologians, and

these two words are construed very commonly by them, under the judicial

analogies; as if there were a fixed attribute in God called his

justice, which is immutably set for the vindication of right, and the

redress of wrong, by deserved punishments. "That he might be just"

therefore "and the justifier," is taken as if there were some

adversative relation between the clauses, or as if it read "just and

yet the justifier" &c.--Christ having so exactly satisfied the

immutable justice, by his sufferings, that God appears to be just as

ever, even though he justifies, or passes judgment in favor of, those

who deserve nothing but punishment.

It will be seen accordingly that a right view of Christian

justification will depend, to a great extent, on a proper and true

understanding of the three staple words referred to. I propose

therefore at the outset, and before offering any construction of the

passage in question, to pause on the words themselves, and show, by a

sufficiently careful investigation, what is their true meaning.

The Old Testament has two words, one a moral and spiritual, and the

other a judicial, which, as was noted in the last chapter, [58] are

very commonly used in conjunction, yet never appear to cross, or get

confused, in their meaning. Our present concern is with the first. It

means originally straight just as our Saxon word right and the Latin

word rectus denote, in their symbol, a straight line; that being

nature's type of moral rightness, or rectitude. Now this moral word of

the Old Testament is translated, taking noun, adjective, and verb,

either righteousness, righteous, and being right; or justice, just, and

being just. The noun is How the three words stand in the Old Testament.

translated righteousness more times than can well be numbered, and

justice in the moral sense of righteousness at least twenty-five

times--never, that I have been able to discover, in any judicial, or

vindicatory sense. The adjective is translated righteous still more

frequently, and just, in the sense of morally upright, or righteous,

about fifty times--never as just, in the retributive and judicial

sense. The verb, which is here the principal matter of debate, is

translated to be upright, holy, true, honest, innocent--all words of

moral significance--also finally to justify. Here only does it take on

even a semblance of judicial character; and the semblance is, to say

the least, extremely doubtful here. The Hebrew grammar, it may be

necessary to observe, has a causative mood for the verb, which is

called the Hiphil. Thus the Indicative he is right, becomes in the

Hiphil, he causes to be right, makes right, or righteous. We have three

terminations that give a Hiphil power in English, ize [harmon-ize] from

the Greek, fy [sancti-fy] from the Latin, and en [hard-en] from the

Saxon. But our English verb to be right had never taken a Hiphil form,

or power, and for this reason, perhaps, the translators passed over, in

many instances, to the Latin word justify, adopting that; though they

sometimes manufacture a phrase that carries the causative meaning.

Thus, instead of saying in Daniel, "they that justify many," they say

"they that turn many to righteousness." [59] And yet when they come to

Isaiah they read--"by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify

many; [60] when the meaning is exactly as before--"turn many to

righteousness." Plainly enough, in both these cases, there is no

thought of the many being made even with God's law, or judicially

acquitted, but only of their being made righteous. It is as if the very

un-English expression were used--"shall right-en," or "shall be the

righteousser of, many."

It may readily be seen that, out of this causative or Hiphil use, there

will be a sliding naturally into the idea of passing as righteous;

because, in that, we only make righteous to ourselves; and then this

passing as righteous will have a certain look of justifying judicially,

in the sense of acquittal. "He is near that justifieth me, who will

contend with me?" [61] -- where the idea is, neither that God makes

right, nor that he acquits and absolves, but simply that he passes, or

approves as right. Hence the pertinence of the question --"who will

contend with me?" or show me to be wrong? In two other cases [62] we

encounter the expression "justify the righteous;" where, of course,

there is no righteoussing of such as are not, neither is there any more

a justifying in the sense of acquitting or absolving; but there is

simply a passing of the righteous as righteous. In three other cases

[63] we find the expression--"justify the wicked" where the very point

of the charge is that the wicked are taken to favor, passed as

righteous, and so that moral distinctions, not forensic, are

confounded. There is here no reference whatever to any judicial

defection, save through the moral of which it is a result. On the whole

I do not know an example in the Old Testament, where the original moral

word above referred to, whether translated righteousness, righteous,

and be right, or justice, just, and justify, is used in any but a

properly moral sense.

We come now to the Greek word of the New Testament, the same which is

translated righteousness, just, and justify, in the particular passage

I How they stand in the New Testament. am debating. Here we find the

noun [dikaiosune] always translated righteousness, never justice; for

justice is a word which does not once occur in the New Testament; the

adjective [dikaios,] translated about fifty times righteous, and just

in the moral sense ("condemned and killed the just") [64] about thirty

times, never once in a judicial, unless it be in the passage we have

under examination; also the verb [dikaioo,] always translated to

justify, because we have no other Hiphil word to fill the place; still

showing clearly always, by the collocation it is in, as here, that it

has a moral force only, just as it has in the Old Testament. Taking

this very sentence then--"to declare his righteousness that he might be

just and the justifier"--who can imagine that the two latter words,

just and justifier, are words to be turned away from their family

relation in the very same sentence, and made to carry a forensic or

judicial meaning? There was never such an example of bad writing in the

world. Besides it may be safely affirmed, that no hardest possible

strain of labor put upon this causative or Hiphil word, to justify, can

make it carry, at all, the complicated, artificial notion of such a

justifying--that which justifies, without either making any body just,

or accepting any body as being just, but only passes a verdict of quasi

justice, on grounds of penal suffering not personal in the subject, but

contributed by another. Why if the transgressor had borne his own

suffering, and had perfectly filled up the measure of it, who can

imagine a fiction so extravagant, as that he should be called a just

man? He would not even be forensically just, any more than a malefactor

who has served out his sentence.

I ought perhaps to note, in this connection, the very intensely,

mysteriously moral impression held by such Uses and conceptions of

Plato. a writer as Plato, when he speaks of right, or righteousness;

or, if so he is translated, of the just, or justice. "Justice," he

says, "is the virtue of the soul, injustice its vice. The just soul

then and the just man will live well." [65] In the same connection he

speaks of the harmonizing effect on the moral nature, calling

righteousness, or justice, "a correct arrangement of the parts of the

soul towards each other, or about each other." He recurs again and

again to a discussion of right, or justice, and gets lost in the

mystery, not finding how to conceive it. He represents Socrates in a

discourse upon it, telling how he has inquired of many, and has only

been sunk in greater doubts by their answers--this only is clear that

they all conceive it as a certain divine something, going through all

things, to rule them by its unseen sway. One whom he questions goes

into the etymology of the word dikaios, conceiving that it was

originally diaion, because it goes through and governs all things, and

that the k was inserted "for elegant enunciation." Another, consulting

the mysteries, found it to mean the same as cause; viz., a power to

rule and set in order. Another referred it to the sun, because it had a

pervading and heating and all-nourishing power. Another, for a like

reason, took it to be a certain divine fire in the soul. Another took

it as a kind of piercing world-soul, that, like the soul of Anaxagoras,

mingled with nothing, yet pervaded all things. Whereupon affectingly

baffled by so many sublime guesses, he gives over the search, declaring

that he is now in greater doubt and mystery of thought, than before he

undertook to learn what justice is. [66] How far off now, in all these

wondering, almost adoring struggles of thought, is this great teacher,

from even so much as the faintest mental reference to any judicial

analogies! Could he have conceived the right, as everlasting, necessary

idea, a law before all government, going through, as it were, even God

and God's perfections, and so through all moral natures, he would, at

least, have found the Monarch Principle of the universe in that also,

some fit point of rest for his inquiries Even the groping in which we

have just followed him, the lofty burning mystery he is in, were a

preparation how sublime, how almost sacred, for the apostle's doctrine

of the cross, when he says--"Whom God hath set forth to declare his

righteousness for the remission of sins." The transcendent principle he

could not find, yet even worshipfully sought, is there discovered--a

law, as Hooker conceives, "laid up in the bosom of God." [67]

We come back thus upon the apostle's great text of justification, to

settle, if we can, the true construction of its meaning. And it could

hardly The three words then, are moral not judicial. be more clear, I

think, that none of the words here grouped together, righteousness,

just, justifier of, are to receive a judicial, or judicially

vindicative meaning; which, again, is but another form of the

conclusion that, in Christian justification, there is no reference of

thought whatever to the satisfaction of God's retributive justice, or

to any acquittal passed on guilty men, because the score of their

account with God's justice has been made even by the sufferings of

Christ. The justification spoken of is a moral affair, related only to

faith in the subject, and the righteousness of God, operative in or

through his faith. In this conviction we shall be farther confirmed, if

we take up each of the three co-relative words and follow them into

their relational uses.

1. The righteousness of God. Many teachers appear to understand this

expression, in the particular case now in hand, as meaning, in fact,

the vindicatory justice of God. God declares his justice, they

conceive, in the penal sufferings of Christ, so that he can remit the

sins that are past and keep his justice good. If so, there is no other

such use of the term. We do not read "the justice of God which is by

faith;" [68] nor No judicial meaning in the righteousness of God. "by

the justice of one the free gift came upon all;" [69] nor "going about

to establish their own justice, have not submitted themselves to the

justice of God;" [70] nor "the justice of God unto all, and upon all

them that believe." [71] These passages all turn upon the word

righteousness, and if we substitute their meaning by that of justice,

they only become absurd, or even revolting.

2. That he might be just. Here it is often conceived, that God must

needs keep himself just, in men's convictions; The being just not

judicially meant. that is just in the judicial and vindicatory sense,

as the avenger of transgression, else he can not forgive, or justify.

The English word just occurs only twice in the New Testament, in this

retributive and judicial sense, where it translates, not dikaios, the

moral word, but endikos, a word always retributive. [72] Meantime, in

the more than thirty other examples, where it translates dikaios, it

means simply just in the sense of right, or righteous, and can not be

made to mean any thing else. In the phrase we are now debating,

therefore, we can not understand the word just to mean retributively,

forensically just, without supposing that, in this one single use, the

original word has forgotten its meaning--which is the most unlikely

thing possible. Besides, the adversative construction that goes almost

necessarily with the idea of a retributive meaning in the epithet just,

is favored by nothing in the grammar, but is forbidden rather. It does

not read--"that he might be just [retributively] and yet justify," but

"that he might be just and justify;" that is that he might be so

conspicuously, gloriously righteous, as to communicate righteousness to

every believer. Neither will it signify any thing to say that, in

undertaking to be so conspicuously righteous, he will rather repel than

draw, and of course will do any thing but communicate; for though there

may be something appalling in the perfect and pure righteousness of

God, it is also, in another view, a character most tender, benignant,

and patient. If I were a wholly righteous man, given up to right in a

perfect and unfaltering homage, I should certainly forgive my enemy for

that reason. And in just this way an apostle conceives the

righteousness of God, saying--"faithful and just [that is, righteous]

to forgive us our sins." [73] His opinion of God's righteousness is

such, that he even grounds the confidence of forgiveness in it. And

another apostle grounds the confidence of a most tender treatment of

the undeserving, on the same idea of God's righteousness, saying--"God

is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, in that ye

have ministered to the saints," &c. [74] Fallen sadly away from their

faith, he even conceives that God will have it still as a point of

righteousness, to remember their good deeds and make more of them than

they deserve. In this way, God will have declared his righteousness in

Christ-shown him self righteous, even to the extent of putting

righteousness upon every one that believeth.

3. And the justifier of. Here we have the causative mood of the Old

Testament word reappearing in the The justifying not judicial. New. And

there is no example, that I know, where it carries a judicial meaning

though there is, of course, a large variety of meaning in the uses.

When it is declared that men shall "justify God," it certainly does not

mean the same thing as when God is said "to justify the ungodly;" and

yet there is a closer approach of meaning, in the two cases, than

might, at first, be supposed. When men justify God, they pass him

righteous, and when God justifies the ungodly, he passes them

righteous--only he becomes, besides, the righteousness upon them that

makes it true. The justification is purely moral in the first case,

because no justification but a moral one is here possible; and that, in

the second, there is no thought of a judicial acquittal, on account of

penal compensations paid by Christ, will be most conclusively shown

from the fact that the common uses of the word so plainly relate to

what is moral only. Thus it is declared, by our apostle, in the very

discussion we are having in review, that Abraham "believed God and it

was counted unto him for righteousness;" [75] and the very particular

matter of promise on which he believed, being so justified by his

faith, is given us expressly; viz., that he should have an heir to

perpetuate his family. He is justified, we can see, by simply being

brought nigh enough to God in his faith, to be the friend of God, and

become in vested in God's righteousness. This justification again is

called "the justification of life," [76] supposing evidently the fact

of some life-giving power in the dispensation of it; and where is the

life-giving of a mere acquittal, passed on the ground that the bad

account of sin is made even? Again Christ is declared to have been

"delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification."

[77] But if the whole matter of the justification depends on what he

has suffered for our offenses, we shall as certainly be justified, or

have our account made even, if he does not rise, as if he does.

Doubtless the rising has an immense significance, when the

justification is conceived to be the renewing of our moral nature in

righteousness; for it is only by the rising that his incarnate life and

glory are fully discovered, and the righteousness of God declared in

his person, in its true moral power. But in the other view of

justification, there is plainly enough nothing depending, as far as

that is concerned, on his resurrection. When, again, he is himself

declared, though "manifest in the flesh" and subject to its low estate,

to be "justified in the spirit," [78] what does it mean but that his

higher life is seen to be invested with tile evident righteousness of

God--inwardly just, or justified? To imagine that he is only declared

to be legally acquitted, judicially justified, is quite impossible.

When again we read--"but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye

are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our

God" [79] --what is the very subject matter of the declaration, but the

moral renewing of the soul? Besides, "the Spirit of God" is conceived

to be concerned in the justifying spoken of; as he certainly could not

be and is never even supposed to be, in the doctrine of a mere

compensational and judicial justification.

Having now these three main points of the apostle's language made out

and established, in a manner that leaves no room for dispute, we need

also The "declaring" and the "remission" explained. to notice, in a

very brief manner, two or three of the subordinate points which affect

the general meaning. The expression "to declare," is rather

insufficient. The original, very forcible expression is, "for the

in-showing" [endeixin,] that is, "for producing an effective impression

of, the righteousness of God." For every thing, as regards a justifying

effect depends, it will be seen, on the powerful demonstration made of

God's righteousness, in the incarnate life and death of Christ. It

appears to be a matter of doubt, with the commentators, whether the

phrase, "through the forbearance of God," is to be connected with the

participial clause, "that are past," or with the clause, "for the

remission." But the participle, "that are past," does not mean "that

are passed by," but only "that took place in past time." To conceive,

therefore, that the sins took place, by the forbearance of God, is too

weak to be a true conjunction. Say, instead, "for the remission, by

God's forbearance, of sins in the ages past;" and the vigor of good

sense returns. There appears to have been a fear of saying "the

remission of sins by God's forbearance," lest it might not be the true

theology. It is not considered, perhaps, how the declaration of God's

righteousness will have covered up that laxity, if laxity there was.

We read the whole passage then as follows--"To declare [that is,

demonstrate, inwardly impress] his righteousness, for the remission, by

God's forbearance, The true version. of sins heretofore committed; to

declare [demonstrate,] I say, for this present time, his righteousness,

that he might be righteous [stand full before us in the evident glory

of his righteousness] and the justifier [righteousser] of him that

believeth in Jesus."

If any apology is necessary for using again this very ungrammatical,

mock-English substitute for the word "justifier," it must be that,

without some Catholic and Protestant versions both considered. such

device, I do not see in what way I can steer my exposition exactly

enough, through the close and perilous strait between the Catholic

doctrine on one hand, and the Protestant on the other, to avoid an

appearance of lapsing in this or that--when both, in fact, are only

unsuccessful attempts to exhibit the true gospel idea. The Catholic

says, "making righteous;" the Protestant says, "declaring to be

righteous;" neither of which is the exact conception of Christian

justification. The Christian is not a man made righteous in himself, or

in his own habit; neither is he a man held to be righteous, when he is

not, by what is called a "declaratio pro justo;" for it is no fitting

way, for a gospel of divine mercy, to end off in a fiction that

falsifies even the eternal distinctions of character. Hence there is

wanted here a verb that we have not--even as the Greeks appear to have

made one out of their adjective--so that we also may say, "that he

might be righteous and the righteousser," &c.; for it is the peculiar

and exact result of this outlandish word, that it describes a state,

where the righteousness may be conceived as a flowing in of God's

righteousness upon the believing soul, thus and forever to flow. The

subject is not conceived to be made righteous personally, by infusion,

and started off as an inherently right-going character, but is thought

of as being held in everlasting confidence and right-going, because he

is vitally connected, by his faith, with the inspirations of God, or of

the righteousness of God. He is made righteous, using the Catholic

words, in the sense that he is always to be so derivatively from the

righteousness of God; accounted righteous, using the Protestant, in the

sense that he is always being made so, by the righteousness of God

revealed from faith to faith. And this is his condition of

justification; his being always just because he always believes; never

to be just, for a moment, after he ceases to believe.

In this careful exposition of what may be called the charter text of

Christian justification, two points have been held in reserve for

separate consideration; viz.. the righteousness of God as related to

justification; and the relation we ourselves have to God's

righteousness, in the faith by which we are justified.

I. The righteousness of God as related to justification. The apostle,

as we have already observed, makes much of the in-showing, or felt

impression produced, of the righteousness of God; The Righteousness of

God as related to justification. repeating, for the sake of

emphasis--"to declare"--"to declare, I say, the righteousness of

God"--first "for the remission of sins," and next "for the justifying,"

or righteoussing of sinners; evidently conceiving that, in the

declaration, or impression made [endeixin] of God's righteousness, lies

all the principal value of his work.

According to the common conception, his declaration of the

righteousness of God prepares a ground of remission, or a ground of

justification; and in Christ not a ground, but a power, of

justification. that sense Christ obtains, by his death, the grace of

remission, or of justification. Perhaps we shall find reason to

believe, that Christ is a great deal more to us than a ground; viz., a

power of the same things--in such sense a power that, if they were not

wrought by him, they would never, in fact, be, at whatever cost of

grounding they obtain a right to be.

The very light notions prevalent concerning remission, or forgiveness,

and especially in connection with the idea that Christ is concerned to

prepare Light notions of remission. a ground of remission, make it

necessary to revise our impressions at this point. It is a rather

common question, whether God could forgive sins on the ground of our

mere repentance, without any ground of compensation made to his

justice? But if he could, meaning only what is commonly meant by

remission, the remission would make no change and confer no benefit

whatever. Besides the question only asks what God could bestow, if we

should do the impossible? For no man is able, by his own act, to really

cast off sin and renew himself in good; and to ask what God may do, in

such a case, indicates a very superficial view both of sin and of

remission.

What then is remission more sufficiently conceived? The word, both in

Greek and English, is a popular word, which signifies, in common

speech, a letting go; that is, a letting go of blame, a consenting to

raise no impeachment farther and to have all wounded feeling dismissed.

But though God accommodates our understanding, in the use of this

rather superficial word, we can easily see, as I have already intimated

in another place, that his relations to a sinning soul under his

government, taken hold of, as it is already, by the retributive causes

arrayed in nature itself for the punishment of transgression, are so

different from those of a man to a wrong doing fellow man, that a mere

letting go, or consenting no longer to blame, really accomplishes

nothing as regards the practical release of sin. It is only a kind of

formality, or verbal discharge, that carries practically no discharge

at all. It says "go" but leaves the prison doors shut. [80]

We ought to be sure beforehand, that the Scripture will not leave the

matter here, but will somehow man age to strike a deeper key. And we

find, Three conceptions held by the Scripture. as we go into the

inquiry, that we have, at least, three distinct forms of expression

given us, to accommodate our uses, according to the particular mode of

thought by which we are, or are to be, exercised.

Thus, if we are thinking of God's displeasure, or his feeling of blame,

we have the word "remission," that speaks of releasing the blame; and

we often use the much deeper word forgiveness in the same superficial

sense.

If, again, we think of our sin as a state of moral incapacity and

corruption, fastened upon us by the retributive causes which our sin

has provoked, we are allowed to speak of "forgiveness" as the "taking

away" of our sin; just as we may of being "healed," "washed,"

"reconciled," "delivered," "turned away," "made free." Here we conceive

that God is able, in the declaration of his righteousness, to get such

a hold of the souls that are sweltering in disorder, under the natural

effects of transgression, as to bring them out of their disorder into

righteousness. By his moral power, which is the power of his

righteousness supernaturally revealed in Christ, he masters the

retributive causations of their nature, and they receive what is more

than a ground of remission; viz., the executed fact of remission, or

spiritual release. Otherwise, under a mere letting go, the bad causes

hold fast like fire in brimstone refusing to be cheated of their prey.

The same is true of forgiveness; only when this same deliverance is

called, in the English, "forgiveness," there appears to be a reference

to the fact that Christ forgives, in the sense of giving himself for,

the transgressor, to get so great power over him and be the power of

God unto salvation upon him. [81]

If, again, we think of something higher and more sovereign, even than

this executed release; if we want to get above all the condemnations of

statutes, and the severe motivities or enforcements of instituted

government itself; if we raise our thought, with a certain divine envy,

to God, longing to be as little hampered as He, by fears and

requirements and bad liabilities; then it is given us to know that we

are "justified"--made and kept righteous, by the righteousness of God

upon us, and reigning as a Divine Moral Power in us. And therefore it

is that so much is made of "the declaring [in-showingj of the

righteousness of God" by Christ because, in real verity, our

justification is to be the righteousness of God upon us. For this

righteousness declared is but another name for the great Moral Power

already shown to be obtained by Christ in his sacrifice. Beginning at

the point of Christ's humanity, and tracing his course onward through

death and the resurrection, he is obtaining, all the while, as man, a

great Name and Power; till finally we see him culminate in absolute,

deific perfection, or the righteousness of God. Beginning at the other

pole, and conceiving him in deific perfection, or righteousness, which

is by him to be declared, or made a power on men, we only describe

inversely the same thing. In one case the humanity culminates in the

righteousness of God; and in the other the righteousness of God is

incarnated and declared in humanity. The result is an embodiment, in

either case, of God's perfection in a human life and character, to be a

new-creating, justifying power, and so a gospel.

Christian justification has, in this view, no reference whatever to

justice under the political analogies, or to any compensation of

justice. As respects Justification has no reference to justice. the

full, round conception of it, an immense advantage is gained by the

distinction I have drawn, between the law before government, and the

instituted government by which God undertakes the maintenance of it,

and our final restoration to it. The righteousness of God is what God

was, before the eternal, necessary law of his own nature, When we are

justified by faith, or "by yielding our members instruments of

righteousness unto God," which is the same thing, we are carried

directly back into the recesses, so to speak, of God's eternity--back

of all instituted government, back of the creation, back of the

statutes, and penalties, and the coming wrath of guiltiness, and all

the contrived machineries and means of grace, including in a sense even

the Bible itself, and rested with God, on the base of His antecedent,

spontaneous, immutable righteousness. We are taken by all the

foundations of the world, and the governings, compulsions, fears, and

judgments that make up the scaffolding of our existence, and have our

relations, with God, only to the law before government; being in it,

and the freedom of it, as being in Him and His freedom. In so far as we

are still incomplete, statutes, penal enforcements, and all kinds of

instituted means and machineries, are necessary to the mixed quality we

are in; but in so far as we are in the righteousness of God, we are

raised above them, into that primal law which God undertook, as the

total object of his administration, to establish in created minds. We

are thus united to God in the antecedent glories and liberties of his

eternal character. The bondages and fears of our guiltiness are left

behind. Being in God's righteousness, we also share the confidence of

his integrity. And the work of righteousness, both for Him and for us,

shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and

assurance forever.

This is justification with a meaning, and it is only this, however we

may conceive it, that makes our justification a state of peace and

liberty, so unspeakably strong and triumphant. How artificial, and

meager, and cold in comparison, is the justification which only means

that justice is satisfied in Christ's pains, and that faith, seizing on

that fact, concludes that punishment is escaped! This is justification

as before justice--which is only one of God's means of government--not

before the everlasting standard for which government exists. In other

words, it is justification without righteousness; for if any thing is

said of that, it appears to be only meant, that as good a footing is

obtained for the soul without righteousness, as if it were righteous.

But if justifying faith has no respect to the fact that justice is

satisfied, then it will be objected that the liabilities of justice

still remain. Undoubtedly Objected that the liabilities of justice

still remain. they do, if by liabilities we mean the dues of justice;

and our dues would be exactly the same if a ground of release were

provided in the pains of another. That ground provided would not make

the dues of penalty any the less due, in justice, from us. The

objection here is created by an assumption that there is no deliverance

from the claims of justice, save as they are legally compensated. What

has been said of justice and penalty, in the four previous chapters,

will sufficiently show the contrary. Besides, no soul that has felt the

righteoussing power of God, and been raised to a conscious

participation of his righteousness--set in His confidence, let forth

unto His liberty--will assuredly want any other evidence.

Another kind of objection will occur to many; viz., that the

righteousness of God is too severe and stern to have, when declared,

any such attractive Another objection that righteousness condemns and

repels. power over souls that are in wrong, and is most of all unfitted

to become a new-creating force in their life. Such persons have been

somehow accustomed to think of God's righteousness, as being one and

the same thing with his justice, and their associations correspond.

Instead of blessing themselves, and counting all souls blessed, in the

fact that God is everlastingly right, having all the benignities,

fidelities, integrities, and supreme glories of a perfect

righteousness, they speak of it as being an appalling character, one

that creates inevitable dread and revulsion; setting it forth in

terrorem, not seldom, as a hard and fateful rigor opposite to love.

Whereas righteousness, translated into a word of the affections, is

love, and love, translated back into a word of the conscience, is

righteousness. We associate a more fixed exactness, it may be, and a

stronger thunder of majesty with righteousness, but there is no

repugnance between it and the very love itself of Christ. When Christ

thinking of his death and resurrection, says that he will convince the

world, in that manner, of righteousness, does he mean that he will not

also draw the world by love? or does he rather mean that, raising the

conviction of righteousness, he will draw the more powerfully? Nowhere,

in fact, do we feel such a sense of the righteousness of God, as we do

in the dying scene of Christ--"Certainly this was a righteous man"--and

we only feel the more powerfully that God is a forgiving God.

Indeed we have just the same opinion of righteousness in men--we only

expect the more confidently to be forgiven, because the man we have

injured is a righteous man. If I have an enemy who has done me a great

personal wrong; if I can bring him to justice and make an example of

him that will do much to honor the laws; if, too, I have a fire of

natural indignation that, apart from all revenge, arms me against him

and prepares me to see him suffer; shall I be false, therefore, to my

own virtue, if I do not make him suffer? Calling this my instinct of

justice, is it therefore a finality with me, beyond the control of

reason and right? Is there no justice above justice, in which, as a

righteous man, I am even bound to subordinate the lower ranges of

vindictive impulse, and give myself tenderly to courses of patience and

suffering sacrifice, that I may gain my enemy? Nay, if my vindicatory

impulse should indeed assume to be my law, what can I do but call it a

temptation of the devil, and betake myself to fasting if need be to

subdue it?

Dismissing then all such false impressions, and taking the

righteousness of God no more as a preventive to mercy, but as a ground

of mercy rather, Justification restores the normal state of being. we

begin to see how much it means that Christ, in becoming the moral power

of God in his sacrifice, becomes, in another, but nowise contrary view,

the righteousness of God declared. For in the original normal state of

being, the righteousness of God was to be a power all diffusive, a

central, self radiating orb--Sun itself of Righteousness, shining

abroad on all created minds and overspreading them, as it were, with

the sovereign day of its own excellence. The plan never was that

created beings should be righteous, in such a sense, by their own

works, or their own inherent force, as not to be derivatively righteous

and by faith. They had and were eternally to have, their righteoussing

in God. Remaining upright, they would consciously have had their

righteousness in God's inspirations, and would even have been hurt by a

contrary suggestion.

Hence the dismal incapacity of sin; because it separates the soul from

God's life-giving character and inspirations. Having Him no more, as

the fontal source, of righteousness, it falls off into an abnormal,

self-centered state, where it comes under fears, and legal

enforcements, and judicial wrath, and struggles vainly, if at all, to

keep its account even, or recover itself to its own ideals. Works of

the law, dead works carefully piled, will-works, works of

supererogation, penances, alms, austerities of self-mortification--none

of these, nor all of them, make out the needed righteousness. Still

there is a felt deficiency, which the apostle calls "a coming short of

the glory of God." Nothing will suffice for this, but to come back,

finite to infinite, creature to Creator, and take derivatively what, in

its nature, must be derivative; viz., the righteousness that was

normally and forever to be, unto, and upon, all them that believe.

Here then is the grand renewing office and aim of the gospel of Christ.

He comes to men groping in a state of separation from God, consciously

not even with their own standards of good, and, what is more,

consciously not able to be--self-condemned when they are trying most to

justify themselves, and despairing even the more, the more they

endeavor to make themselves righteous by their own works--to such

Christ comes forth, out of the righteousness of God, and also in the

righteousness of God, that he may be the righteousness of God upon all

them that believe, and are so brought close enough to him in their

faith, to receive his inspirations. And this is the state of

justification, not because some debt is made even, by the penal

suffering of Christ, but because that normal connection with God is

restored by his sacrifice, which permits the righteoussing of God to

renew its everlasting flow.

When I speak thus of the connection with God as being restored, by the

sacrifice of Christ, let me not be understood as meaning, by the

sacrifice, only what is tenderly sympathetic and submissive in Christ's

death. I include all that is energetic, strong, and piercing; his

warnings, his doctrines of punishment and judgment, all that is done

for the law before government, by his powerful ministry and doctrine.

His sacrifice is no mere suit or plaint of weakness, for the

righteousness of God is in it. When the metallic ring of principle, or

everlasting right, is heard in the agonies and quakings of the cross,

the sacrifice becomes itself a sword of conviction, piercing

irresistibly through the subject, and causing him to quiver, as it

were, on the point by which he is fastened. Mere sympathy, as we

commonly speak, is no great power; it must be somehow a tremendous

sympathy, to have the true divine efficacy. Hence the glorious

justifying efficacy of Christ; because the righteousness of God is

declared in his sacrifice. We pass now to consider--

II. The relation of faith to justification. Though the righteousness of

God is declared and made to shine Faith how related to justification.

with its true divine luster and glory by Christ, still the

justification is not conceived to be an accomplished fact, as indeed it

never can be, prior to faith in the subject. It is justification by

faith and not without--"and the justifier of him that believeth in

Jesus." What is this faith, and why is it necessary?

It is not the belief that Christ has come to even our account with

justice; neither is it the belief that he has obtained a surplus merit,

which is offered, over and above, as a positive righteousness and set

to our credit, if we will have it. Neither of the two is a fact, or at

all credible any way. Neither would both, if believed as mere facts, do

any thing more for us than a belief in any other facts. Our sins do not

fly away because we believe in a fact of any kind. We can even believe

in all the historic facts of Christianity, as thousands do, with. out

being any the more truly justified.

No, the real faith is this, and very little intelligence is required to

see the necessity of it; viz., the trusting of one's self over, sinner

to Saviour, to be in him, and of him, and new charactered by him;

because it is only in that way that the power of Christ gets

opportunity to work. So the sinner is justified, and the justificatior

is a most vital affair; "the justification of Faith defined. life." The

true account of it is that Jesus, coming into the world, with all God's

righteousness upon him, declaring it to guilty souls in all the

manifold evidences of his life and passion, wins their faith, and by

that faith they are connected again with the life of God, and filled

and overspread with his righteousness. And there springs up, in this

reconnection of the soul with God's righteousness, a perfect liberty

and confidence; for it is no more trying to climb up into a righteous

consciousness and confidence by itself, but it has the righteousness by

derivation; flowing down upon it, into it, and through it, from the

everlasting spring of God's excellence. And just here it is that

Christianity wins its triumph. It shows man how to be free in good and

makes it possible. The best that all other religions and moralities can

do, is to institute a practice of works, and a climbing up into

perfection by our own righteous deeds; but the gospel of Jesus comes to

our relief, in showing us how to find righteousness, and have it as an

eternal inspiration; "even the righteousness of God that is by the

faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." [82] In

it we do not climb, but rest; we goad ourselves into no

impossibilities, groan under no bondage that we can not lift; sink into

no deep mires because we try to struggle out. We have a possible

righteousness, because it is not ours but God's; Christ received by our

faith, to be upon us and for us, all that we could wish to be for

ourselves. This is the transcendent distinction, the practically

sublime glory of our gospel, our great all-truth--Justification by

Faith. Here is conquered the grandest of all problems, how to put

confidence in the bosom of guilt, and settle a platform of virtue, that

shall make duty fxee and joyful under all conscious disabilities.

Here it was that Luther broke into heaven, as it were, and a

bewilderment of change that he could not, for the Luther's great

discovery of justification. time, understand. He had been trying to be

justified by works; that is, by fastings, penances, alms, vigils,

wearing down the body under the load of his sins, and crying to God in

his cell, day and night, for some deliverance that should ease the

torment of his still and always self-condemning soul. A right word from

Staupitz let him see the fool that he was--that Christ would take him

because he was guilty; having died for him because he was guilty, and

not because he was righteous. At that point broke in, what light and

confidence! His emancipated soul burst off all its chains in a moment,

and took, as it were, the range of heaven in its liberty. He was new

himself, the world was new, the gospel was new. It had not entered into

his heart to conceive the things that were freely given him of God, but

now he has them all at once. Justification by faith, justification by

faith--his great soul is full of it; he must preach it, he must fight

for it, die for it, know nothing else.

In the inspiration of this truth it was, that his great career as a

reformer and spiritual hero began, If any thing will make a man a hero,

it will be the righteousness of God upon him, and the confidence

Luther's head did not understand his heart. he gets in the sense of it.

If he can be eloquent for any thing, it will be in the testimony of

what Christ is to him, in the now glorified consciousness of his inward

life, But we must not fall into a very great mistake here. Luther is,

in fact, two, not one; viz., a Christian, and a theologian; and his

Christian justification by faith, that which puts such a grand

impulsion into his feeling, and raises the tone of his manly parts to

such a pitch of vigor, is a very different, altogether separate matter,

from that theologic contriving of his head, which he took so

confidently for the certain equivalent. Taking this latter, it would be

difficult to find how any one should become much. of a hero, or be

lifted to the pitch of any great sentiment, in it. Indeed, the very

great wonder is, that a man so intelligent should imagine, for a

moment, that he was fired with a passion so mighty, and a joy so

transcendent, by the fact that an innocent being had taken his sins and

evened the account of justice by suffering their punishment! This he

thought he believed; but we are not obliged to believe that he did.

Really believing it, and conceiving what it means, the fact would have

set his stout frame shuddering, and turned his life to gall. The truth

indeed appears to be, that his heart sailed over his theology, and did

not come down to see it. We find him contriving, in his "Epistle to the

Galatians," how Christ, having all the sins of mankind imputed to him,

"becomes the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer thief,' rebel,

and blasphemer, that ever was, or could be, in all the world;" and his

doctrine is, that suffering the just wrath of God, for the sin that is

upon him, Christ makes out a right of justification for us before God

which is complete, because it completely satisfies the law. And then to

be just cleared of punishment, and believe that he is, he conceives to

be the very thing that makes his glorious liberty and raises the

tempest of his joy! The manner appears to be hideous, the deliverance

to be negative and legal only; but his heart is ranging high enough, in

its better element--the righteousness of God--even not to be offended

by the crudities he is taking for a gospel.

But this is not the first time, that the head of a great man has not

been equal even to the. understanding, or true interpretation, of his

heart. Indeed, nothing is more common, as a matter of fact, than for

men of real or even the highest intelligence, to so far misinterpret

their own experience in matters of religion, as to ascribe it to and

find it springing radically out of, that which has no sound verity, and

could never have produced such an experience. Let no one be surprised,

then, that Luther's justification by faith, that which puts his soul

ringing with such an exultant and really sublime liberty, makes a

plunge so bewildering into bathos and general unreason, when it comes

to be affirmed theologically in his doctrine. As he had it in his

Christian consciousness, the soul of his joy, the rest of his

confidence, the enlargement of his gracious liberty, nothing could be

more evidently real and related to the deepest realities of feeling;

but as he gave it in his dogmatic record, I confess that calling it

justification by faith--articulus stantis, vel cadentis ecclesiae--I

could more easily see the church fall than believe it. Happily our very

great reverence and admiration for the man may be accommodated in the

confidence, that any one may reject it utterly, and yet receive all

that his faith received in his justification; and may also be with him

in profoundest sympathy, in the magnificat he chants, and, with such

exhaustless eloquence of boasting, reiterates, in his preaching of the

cross and the glorious liberty it brings. Certain it is that no man is

a proper Christian, who is not practically, at least, in the power of

this great truth. If any thing defines a Christian, it is that he is

one who seeks and also finds his righteousness in God.

I am well aware how insufficient this exposition of the great Christian

truth, justification by faith, will be to many--to some, because it is

a truth that can be sufficiently expounded, by nothing but a living

experience of its power; to others, because they have already learned

to find their experience in words and forms of doctrine, by which it is

poorly, or even falsely represented. What questions the view presented

will encounter, especially from this latter class, I very well know,

and will therefore bring the subject to a conclusion by answering a few

of them.

Do we not then, by holding a view of justification so essentially

subjective, virtually annihilate the distinction between justification

and sanctification? This is Justification and sanctification not

confounded. one of the questions, and I answer it by saying that if the

two experiences were more closely related than they are commonly

supposed to be, I do not see that we need be greatly disturbed on that

account. Still they are sufficiently distinct. According to the

Catholic doctrine they are virtually identical; because the "making

just," or "making righteous," which is conceived to be the sense of

justification, is understood to be a completed subjective change, one

that goes below consciousness and makes the soul inherently

right--which is the very significance also of sanctification. But if we

only conceive the soul to be so joined, by its faith, to the

righteousness of God, as to be rather invested by it, or enveloped in

it, than to be transformed all through in its own inherent quality; if

the righteoussing goes on, even as the sun goes on shining when it

makes the day, and stops of necessity when the faith withdrawn permits

it to go on no longer; then we have a very wide and palpable

distinction. The consciousness of the subject, in justification, is

raised in its order, filled with the confidence of right, set free from

the bondage of all fears and scruples of legality; but there is a vast

realm back of the consciousness, or below it, which remains to be

changed or sanctified, and never will be, except as a new habit is

generated by time, and the better consciousness descending into the

secret roots below, gets a healing into them more and more perfect. In

this manner, one who is justified at once, can be sanctified only in

time; and one who is completely justified is only incipiently

sanctified; and one who has consciously "yielded his members as

instruments of righteousness unto God," may discover even more and more

distinctly, and, by manifold tokens, a law in his members not yet

sanctified away. There is also a certain reference in justification to

one's standing in the everlasting law; whereas sanctification refers

more especially to the conscious purity of the soul's aims, and the

separation of its moral habit from evil. By another distinction,

justification is the purgation of the conscience, and sanctification a

cleansing of the soul's affections and passions. Both of course are

operated by God's inspirations, and are operated only in and through

the faith of the subject.

There is indeed no objection to saying that, in a certain general way,

they are one--just as faith is one with love, and love with

regeneration, and this with genuine repentance, and all good states

with all others. The same divine life or quickening of God is: supposed

in every sort of holy exercise, and the different names we give it

represent real and important differences of meaning, accordingly as we

consider the new life quickened' in relation to our own agency, or to

God's, or to means accepted, trusts reposed, or effects wrought. In the

same way, justification is sanctification, and both are faith; and yet

their difference is by no means annihilated.

Another question likely to be raised in the way of objection is,

whether, in the kind of justification stated, I do not give in to the

rather antiquated notion of imputed How related to imputation.

righteousness? To this I answer that if the notion supposed to be thus

antiquated, is the theologic fiction of a surplus obedience, over and

above what was due from Christ as a man--contributed by him in pains

and acts of duty from the obedience of his higher nature--which surplus

is imputed to us and reckoned to our account, such imputation is

plainly enough rejected; still there will be left the grand,

experimental, Scripture truth of imputed righteousness, a truth never

more to be antiquated, than holiness itself.

The theologic fiction more fully stated appears to have been something

like this: that Christ, taken simply as a man, was under. all the

obligations that belong to a man; therefore that he was only righteous

as he should be in fulfilling those obligations, and had no

righteousness to spare; but that, as being the God-man, he was under no

such obligations; whence it resulted that, by his twofold obedience,

passive and active, he gained two kinds of surplus righteousness; a

passive to stand in the place of our punishment and be a complete

satisfaction for it, and an active to be set to our account as being

our positive obedience--both received by imputation. And so we are

justified and saved by a double imputed righteousness, one to be our

suffered penalty, the other to be such an obedience for us as will put

us even with the precept of the law. It is even a sad office to recite

the scholastic jingle of such a scheme, made up and received for a

gospel. Plainly it is all a fiction. The distinction of a passive and

active obedience is a fiction; the passive obedience being just as

voluntary as the active, and therefore just as active, The assumption

that Christ, to put righteousness upon us, must provide a spare

righteousness not wanted for himself, is a fiction that excludes even

the possible koinonia of the righteousness of God. And a still greater

fiction is the totally impossible conception of a surplus

righteousness. Christ was just as righteous as he should be, neither

more nor less, and the beauty of his sacrifice lay in the fact, not

that it overlapped the eternal law, but that it so exactly fulfilled

that law. His merit therefore was not that he was better than he should

be, but all that he should be; for if he was perfect without the

surplus, then he was more than perfect with it, and we are left holding

the opinion, that there is a righteousness above and outside of

perfection! Still again the imputation of such a perfection to us, so

that we shall have the credit of it, is a fiction also of the coldest,

most unfructifying kind, and impossible even at that. What has any such

pile of merit in Christ, be it suffering, or sacrifice, or punishment,

or active righteousness, to do with my personal deserts? If a thousand

worlds-full of the surplus had been provided for me, I should be none

the less ill deserving, if I had the total reckoning in possession.

The experimental, never-to-be antiquated, Scripture truth of imputed

righteousness, on the other hand, is this:--That the soul, when it is

gained to faith, is brought back, according to the degree of faith,

into its original, normal relation to God; to be invested in God's;

light, feeling, character--in one word, righteousness--and live

derivatively from Him. It is not made righteous, in the sense of being

set in a state of self-centered righteousness, to be maintained by an

ability complete in the person, but it is made righteous in the sense

of being always to be made righteous; just as the day is made luminous,

not by the light of sunrise staying in it, or held fast by it, but by

the ceaseless outflow of the solar effulgence. Considered in this view,

the sinning man justified is never thought of as being, or to. be, just

in himself; but he is to be counted so, be so by imputation, because

his faith holds him to a relation to. God, where the sun of His

righteousness will be forever gilding him with its fresh radiations.

Thus Abraham believed God enough to become the friend of God--saying

nothing of justice satisfied, nothing of surplus merit, nothing of

Christ whatever--and it was imputed to him for righteousness. No soul

comes into such a relation of trust, without having God's investment

upon it; and whatever there may be in God's righteousness--love, truth,

sacrifice--will be rightfully imputed, or counted to be in it, because,

being united to Him, it will have them coming over derivatively from

Him,. Precisely here therefore, in this most sublimely practical of all

truths, imputed righteousness, Christianity culminates. Here we have

coming upon us, or upon our faith, all that we most want, whether for

our confidence, or the complete deliverance and upraising of our guilty

and dreadfully enthralled nature. Here we triumph. There is therefore

now no condemnation, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath

made us free. If we had a righteousness of the law to work out, we

should feel a dreadful captivity upon us. If we were put into the key

of righteous living, and then, being so started,; were left to keep the

key ourselves, by manipulating our own thoughts, affections, actions,

in a way of self-superintendence, the practice would be so artificial,

so, inherently weak, as to pitch us into utter despair in a single day.

Nothing meets our want, but to have our life and righteoussing in God,

thus to be kept in liberty and victory always by our trust in Him.

Calling this imputed righteousness, it is: no conceit of theology, no

fiction, but the grandest and most life-giving of all the Christian

truths.

We have this imputation also in another form that is equally natural

and practical. Thus, instead of having our faith imputed unto us for

righteousness, We also to have our righteousness putatively in God. we

ourselves teach our faith to locate all our righteousness putatively in

God; saying "The Lord our righteousness," "Christ who is our life,"

"made unto us righteousness;" as if the stock of our virtue, or

holiness, were laid up for us in God. All the hope of our character

that is to be we place, not in the inherent good we are to work out, or

become in ourselves, but in the capital: stock that is funded for us in

Him. And then the character, the righteousness, is the more dear to us,

because it is to have so high a spring; and God is the more dear to us,

that he will have us hang upon him by our faith, for a matter so

divine. And the joy also, the confidence, the assurance and rest--all

that we include in our justification--is the more sublimely dear, that

we have it on a footing of permitted unity with God so transforming and

glorious. There is, in short, no truth that is richer and fuller of

meaning and power, than this same figure of mental imputation, in which

we behold our character laid up and funded for us in the righteousness

of God. In one view it is not true; there is no such quantity, or

substance, separate from him, and laid up in store for us; but there is

a power in him everlastingly able to beget in us, or keep flowing over

upon us, every gift our sin most needs; and this we represent to our

hearts, by conceiving, in a figure, that we have a stock, just what we

call "our righteousness," laid up for us even beforehand, in the

sublime quarter-mastering of his love.

It is no fault then of our doctrine of justification by faith, that it

favors a notion of imputed righteousness; for in just this fact it is,

that the gospel takes us out of the bondage of works into a really new

divine liberty. Here, in fact, is the grand triumph of Christianity;

viz., in the new style of righteousness inaugurated, which makes the

footing even of a sinner good, and helps the striving bondman of duty

to be free; even the righteousness of God that is by faith of Jesus

Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe. When this is anti.

quated, just then also will salvation be.

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[57] Romans iii, 25-6

[58] Vide note p. 382.

[59] Dan. xii, 3.

[60] Isa. liii, 11.

[61] Isa. l, 8.

[62] Deut. xxv, 1, and 1 Kings viii, 32.

[63] Ex. xxiii, 7; Prov. xvii, 15; Is. v, 23.

[64] James v, 66.

[65] Republic, Lib. I., Cap. 24.

[66] Cratylus.

[67] I have said nothing, in this verbal disquisition, of a very

singular philological anomaly, that occurs, in the etymology of this

word dikaiosune. Used, as far as I have been able to discover, in an

exclusively moral sense, it appears, and is taken by the

lexicographers, to be of the same root, as another family of words,

that have none but a vindictive and intensely judicial meaning. Thus we

have dike translated vengeance, punishment, and the like; endikos just,

in the sense of justly deserved; endikeo to avenge, or revenge;

katadikazo to condemn. Now this forensic family and the moral family

are supposed, both together, to be derived from the Sanscrit radical

dik, which means to show, and is the undoubted root of the Greek word

deiknumi, which also means to show. And perhaps we get a clue in this,

to the manner in which both the families above referred to raise their

meaning. For to show is to spread out, to level, or, as we say, to

ex-plain. And this kind of figure associates well with the true

straight line of rectitude, and also with the even impartiality of

retributive justice; as when the prophet says--"Judgment also will I

lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet." In the same way it

comes to pass, that Solon calls the calm, smooth sea, "the right

[dikaion] sea." Xenophon also calls a jolting chariot a "not right [not

level] chariot," in the same way. Virgil too calls the outspread, even

plain, "justissima tellus." Whatever may be true, in this very singular

problem of etymology, the two great families, the moral and judicial,

are certainly distinct in their meaning, and there is no fair pretext

for carrying over a judicial meaning to the moral family, on the ground

of their etymological relationship.

[68] Rom. iii, 22.

[69] Rom. v, 18.

[70] Rom. x, 3.

[71] Rom. iii, 22.

[72] Just now referred to in the note, p. 414.

[73] 1 John i, 9.

[74] Heb. vi, 10.

[75] Rom. iv, 3, 20-22.

[76] Rom. v, 18.

[77] Rom. iv, 25.

[78] 1 Tim. iii, 16.

[79] 1 Cor. vi, 11.

[80] Dr. Whitley says with great truth--"Remission of sin is not the

mere cold reputative or forensic remission of a bond or debt; it is not

a bare judicial, external discharge from the obligation of the law to

positive pains and penalties; it is something more distinct and

practical, something more present and homefelt within us--it is

remission or liberation from the essential naughtiness, heinousness,

and malignity of moral evil itself; for whilst all penal ire and

positive infliction might be remitted and foreborne, the spiritual

disease and death of the soul might remain in all their genuine

horrors, in all their innate mischief and misery." (Atonement and

Sacrifice, Sect. 12.)

[81] By a singular coincidence, other languages make their word of

release out of the verb to give, in the same manner. Thus we have

condono, par-don, ver-geben, accurately matching our English word

for-give. A coincidence the more remarkable that the Greek word

charizomai, translated by our word forgive, has no reference to the

figure of giving at all. Still Christ is put in this figure, [dedome

huper,] many times over in the New Testament, and that perhaps is the

sufficient explanation. Gal. ii, 20; Eph. v, 25; 1 Tim. ii, 6; Tit. ii,

14; John vi, 51.

[82] Rom. iii, 22.

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PART IV.

SACRIFICIAL SYMBOLS AND THEIR USES..

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CHAPTER I.

SACRIFICE AND BLOOD AND THE LUSTRAL FIGURES.

BY the previous exposition, Christ is shown to be a Saviour, not as

being a ground of justification, but as being the Moral Power of God

upon us, so a power of salvation. His work terminates, not in the

release of penalties by due compensation, but in the transformation of

character, and the rescue, in that manner, of guilty men from the

retributive causations provoked by their sin. He does not prepare the

remission of sins in the sense of a mere letting go, but he executes

the remission, by taking away the sins, and dispensing the

justification of life. This one word Life is the condensed import of

all that he is, or undertakes to be.

In the unfolding of this view, I have not overlooked, or at all

neglected, the representations of Scripture; every thing advanced has

been carefully supported and fortified by ample citations, fairly and

reverently, but not always traditionally interpreted. Some, however,

may be disappointed, or perhaps offended, by the slight attention I

have paid thus far to a large class of phrases and figures derived from

the ceremonial law and the uses of the altar, and brought over, by a

second application, to express the practical verities of the cross. But

my design has not been to put any slight on these sacrificial

terminologies. I have only adjourned them to a future discussion by

themselves, because of the unhappy confusion it would create in our

trains of thought, if they were brought in to be canvassed, here and

there, at points of casual application. We have now reached a point,

where the attention: may be given them which their very great

importance demands.

I propose therefore, in this and the next following chapter, to

ascertain, if possible, their precise Christian The sacrificial terms

and their interpretation. meaning, and exhibit their true relation to

the doctrine of Christ, as expounded in the preceding pages. I

undertake this inquiry, not with a view to getting sanction for the

opinions expressed, but in the conviction rather, that a great part of

the misconceptions and doctrinal crudities that have been the world's

affliction, in this greatest of all matters given to knowledge, have

been due to certain hasty, half-investigated impressions, and a kind of

traditional charlatanry of dogmatism that have thrown these ritual

terms and figures out their proper and rightful meaning. Reserving to

the next following chapter terms and questions more secondary in their

import, I shall occupy the present chapter with a discussion of the

primary terms sacrifice, and blood, and the lustral figures of

cleansing and purifying--with which the secondary terms are blended,

and by which, to a certain extent, they must be explicated.

The whole ground to be covered is well represented, in a single passage

from the Epistle to the Hebrews--"How much more shall the blood of

Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot

to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

[83] In this "how much more," referring back to the sacrifices and

sprinklings of blood in the ritual of the previous dispensation, we

have brought into view the fact of some important, divinely appointed

relationship between those sacrifices of the old religion, and the

grand final sacrifice of Christ in the new.

If we speak thus of a "divinely appointed relationship," we impliedly

assume that the sacrifices were divinely appointed. There has been The

Hebrew sacrifices, how related to that of the gospel. much debate on

this question, even among Christian teachers themselves. The great

Hebrew scholar, Spencer, maintains the opinion that the Jewish

sacrifices were established by Moses, in a way of accommodation to the

heathen sacrifices, in which his people had been trained. Archbishop

Tillotson goes still beyond him, admitting that even the Christian

sacrifice is an act of accommodation to the prejudices and

superstitions of the pagan nations. It will not be denied, or should

not be, that pagan nations, all pagan nations, have been ready somehow

to erect altars and make suit to their gods by sacrifices. This

standing confession of guilt and apostasy from God is about as nearly

universal as dress, or food, or society. But the remarkable thing, in

this general use of sacrifices, is that they take so coarse a form, and

one so evidently tinged with superstition.

By a most learned and thorough canvassing of proofs, Dr. Magee [84] has

shown the truly appalling fact that human Human sacrifices, Pagan,

never Jewish. sacrifices have been offered by every people of the known

world except the Jews. And a guilty fear, just as conspicuous and just

as nearly universal, has prevailed, that the gods are up in their wrath

and must have blood to appease them. Now if the Jewish people had

borrowed their sacrifices from the pagan peoples, whence comes it that

they never show a trace of any such superstition--except in cases where

it is reproved and condemned--and never once in their history offer a

human sacrifice? For the very point of the command upon Abraham to

sacrifice his son is, to show him, in the: end, that no such sacrifice

is wanted--that obeying God is the deepest reality of sacrifice.

Abraham had never read Edwards on the Affections, knew nothing of a

piety by definition; and the object is to give him a lesson

transactions ally, such that, when he is put through the lesson, he

shall have the fact established implicitly in his heart--just as Jacob

learned to pray transactionally, by his wrestling with the angel.

Exactly the same lesson was learned transactionally, or was to be, in

all the sacrifices; only in a less impressive, and thoroughly

searching, and fearfully trying, manner.

But supposing the Hebrew sacrifices not to have been derived, in any

sense, from the pagans, as they even visibly were not, still it is a

question how they originated, and especially whether they Sacrifices

both human and divine in their origin. were taken up spontaneously, or

were instituted by the direction of God? And here again there is even a

more persistent debate that is not yet ended; as indeed it never can be

till the question is more skillfully stated. For if they were

instituted by God, it could only be by God acting through the

sentiments, and wants, and guilty yearnings, of men. They were

instituted doubtless just as language was; viz., by a divine

instigation acting through human instincts and voices. Man was made for

language, and had, in his very nature, a language faculty. But God's

work was not ended when that faculty was given, it was only begun; he

goes on with it providentially and by secret helps of instigation,

causing it to be put forth, and guiding it by his educating and

pervasive intelligence, and so the resulting fact of language is

completed. In the same manner, human so0uls were made for religion, and

the fact of a fall into sin made the want of it even more urgent. There

was now an aching after God, and a dreadful oppression felt in the

sense of separation from God. And what could occur more naturally, than

some distinct effort to be reconciled to God. In this way, minds were

put on the stretch to find some way of expressing penitence,

self-mortification, homage, and the tender invocation of mercy.

Observing thus how it was the way of smoke to go up heavenward, what

hint could they take more naturally, than to make it the vehicle of

religion; bringing their choicest, finest animals, such as they took

even for their food, and the expression of their hospitality, and

sending up their cloud of worshipful homage, by offering them in fire

upon their altars? Meantime God is turning them inwardly, by his secret

inspirations, to the same thing; wanting as much to help them in being

reconciled to him, as they to be reconciled. And so, being in vicarious

sacrifice Himself, he prepares them to the very patterns of the

heavenly things in Himself, and gets them configured to the everlasting

sacrifice, afterwards to be revealed in his Son. For there is a

correspondence here, and all these rites, in which for a time the souls

of men are to be trained, are so related to Christ and are so prepared

to be, that when he is offered, once for all, their idea is fulfilled;

whereupon the outward names they generate are to rise into spiritual

word-figures, for the sufficient expression of his otherwise

transcendent, inexpressible grace.

Sacrifices then are not the mere spontaneous contrivances of men, but

the contrivances of men whose contrivings are impelled and guided and

fashioned by God--just as truly appointed by God, as if they were

ordered by some vocal utterance from heaven. They relate, in fact, to

all God's future in the kingdom of his Son, and are as truly necessary,

it may be, to that future as the incarnation itself. Nay, they are

themselves a kind of incarnation before the time. Assuming thus a

clearly divine origin for them, we go on to consider more distinctly

what is not their office, and also what it is. And here the first thing

necessary is, to rule out certain false teachings or assumptions which

have created inversions of order and thrown the whole subject into

confusion.

Thus it is maintained extensively, that we are to get our conceptions

of the old sacrifices from the sacrifice of Christ, taking them as

shadows cast Not to be interpreted by the sacrifice of Christ. backward

from the sun. But this is very much like assuming, that we are to get

our notions of the heart, as a physical organ, from our understanding

of the heart as the seat of spiritual life; or to get our notions of a

straight line from our understanding of right, or rectitude. We invert

the order of nature in this manner, and reverse the whole process of

language. The maxim, "first that which is natural, afterwards that is

spiritual," we turn quite about, and instead of conceiving that

physical things are given to be the bases of words, or word-figures

representing spiritual truths, we say that the physical objects were

fashioned after the ideas, after the figures, to be coarser substances

correspondent with the spiritual realities represented by them. If we

know any thing, we know that the whole process of generation in

language runs the other way, and that the figures come after the facts,

the higher spiritual meanings after, and out of, the physical roots on

which they grow.

It is very true that God, in creating the outward forms of things, has

a reference of forecast to the uses they will serve as forms of thought

and spirit; a reference, for example, in bodily pain, to the generation

of the legal word penalty, as a word of religion; a reference in the

formalities of the ritual sacrifice And yet they are meant for

Christian uses. to the uses they may fill, as terms and figures, in the

representation of Christ, the grand spiritual sacrifice. It is also

true that we, looking back on the ancient sacrifices, after

apprehending the glorious consummation of their meaning in Christ, may

regard them with a higher respect, and with many different impressions;

just as we may think of the heart and indeed of the whole human body,

in a different manner, after we have seen, with Mr. Wilkinson, the

whole spiritual nature represented by it, and coursing, and flowing,

and finding fit procession, in it. But these different impressions are

only impressions, and no man would undertake, in having them, to draw

out the physiology of the human body from them. No more will any sound

teacher undertake to show what the ancient sacrifices were, or meant,

from the sacrifice of Christ, for which they have provided the

necessary nomenclature.

Clearly no such method of interpretation is admissible. We can not

construe meanings backward, but we must follow them out in that

progressive way, in which they are prepared. If we are to understand

the sacrifices, we must take them in their outward forms, and in the

meaning they had to the people that used them, just as we take all the

physical roots of language; and then, having found what they were in

that first stage of use, we must go on to conceive what Christ will

have them signify, in the higher uses of his spiritual sacrifice.

We have another inversion of time and order equally mistaken, when it

is maintained that the sacrifices were given to be types, to the

worshipers that used them, of Christ and his death Not given to the

worshipers to be types to them of Christ. as a ground of forgiveness

for sins. They are certainly "types," "shadows," when looked back upon

by us, of good things that were to come; but it does not follow that

they were either types, or shadows, or any thing but simple facts of

knowledge and practical observance, to the people who were in them. Nor

is there any the least probability that, in using them, they were

taking a gospel by forecast. There is no lisp of any such impression in

the sentiments they express, either at, or about, their sacrificial

worship. The prophets themselves could as little understand "what," as

"what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ that was in them did

signify," when testifying of the Messiah to come. Not even Christ's own

disciples, instructed by his teachings for three whole years, had any

conception at all, or even suspicion, of the appointed correspondence

between his suffering life and death and the sacrifices of the law,

until the descent of the Spirit, after his death, gave them discernment

of such a correspondence. Is it then to be conceived, that these

sensuous, simple-minded, first men of the world outreached all their

prophets, and even the carefully taught hearers of Jesus, and got their

salvation at the sacrifice of lambs and bullocks, by embracing a Christ

before his coming, whose prefiguration, in such sacrifices, not even

these could understand, or imagine, for whole weeks after his sacrifice

was accomplished? Such a conceit is over-theoretical and scholastic; it

is theologic moonshine, not the true sunlight of sober Christian

opinion.

This also was too nearly true of all the immense type-learning that

once figured so conspicuously in the Scripture interpretations of this

and And yet even necessary as types of Christian language. other

subjects. It is very true that the ancient sacrifices were, and were

given to be, types of the higher sacrifice of Christ. Not, however, in

the sense that they were such to the worshipers in them, but in that

common, widely general, always rational sense, that all physical

objects and relations, taken up as roots of language, are types and are

designed to be, of the spiritual meanings to be figured by them, or

built into spiritual words upon them--the physical heart to be the

radical image and name of the spiritual disposition, good or bad; the

straight line [rectus, right] to be the natural word-type of duty and

righteousness. A type is, in this view, a natural analogon, or figure,

of some mental, or spiritual idea; a thing in form, to represent, and

be the name of, what is out of all physical conditions, and therefore

has no form. And the outward world itself is a grand natural furniture

of typology, out of which the matters of thought, feeling, unseen

being, unseen states and worlds of being, are always getting, and to

get, their nomenclature.

In this sense the ancient sacrifices were, no doubt, appointed to be

types of the higher sacrifice; visible forms, or analogies that, when

the time is come, will serve as figures, or bases of words, to express

and bring into familiar use, the sublime facts and world-renewing

mysteries of the incarnate life and suffering death of Jesus. There

were no types in nature, out of which, as roots, the words could grow,

that. would signify a matter so entirely supernatural, as the gracious

work and the incarnate mystery of Christ. The only way, therefore, to

get a language for him at all, was to prepare it artificially; and the

ancient ritual of sacrifice appears to have been appointed, partly for

this purpose. It had other uses for the men who were in it, but the

analogical relation between it and the supernatural grace of Christ,

hereafter to be represented in the terms it is preparing, is one that

reveals a positive contrivance. We discover in it, both the strictly

divine origin of the sacrifices, and that they were appointed, quite as

much for the ulterior, higher uses to be made of them, (which no man

would even conceive for ages to come,) as for the particular,

immediate, benefit of the worshipers in them. An apostle speaks of

them, it is true, as "the example and shadow of heavenly things," [85]

and as "a figure for the time then present." [86] They were indeed such

examples and figures, and were used as rites of practical religion for

the time then present; but he only means to say that the ancient

worshippers received impressions in their use, answering to "the

heavenly things" in Christ, without conceiving, either him, or the

analogical relations of their worship. They had nothing to say

themselves of a future sacrifice, shadowed in their rites; though it

was their privilege, apart from all such impossible expectations, to be

inducted into a temper and state, in the use of them, that was after a

heavenly pattern--even the sacrifice that was in God and that, being

shadowed in their forms was after wards to be revealed in Christ

himself.

There is, then, we perceive, an inherent appointed relationship between

the ancient sacrifices and the sacrifice What meaning had they to the

worshipers? of Christ, such that we shall come into the true sense of

what is meant by his sacrifice, offering, blood, only by an accurate

and careful discovery of the meaning, and use, and power, and historic

associations of the ancient sacrifices. What then did these sacrifices

signify? what were they appointed to do, for the persons who accepted

and observed them as the cultus of their religion?

When we set ourselves to answer this question, we are met by two very

common assumptions, or teachings, They made nothing of the pain of the

victims. that only misdirect our search, and throw us out of the true

line of discovery. Thus a great deal is made, by many, of the fact that

the animal is slain for the sacrifice--thrust down into death, it is

conceived, in the worshiper's place. Quite as much also is made, or

even more, of the fact that the animal suffers pain in dying; and thus

is an offering of so much pain to God, in substitution for the deserved

pain of the transgressor, Both these constructions upon sacrifices

belong, it will be seen, to schemes of expiation, or legal

substitution, asserted for the gospel, which in fact require and look

for the discovery of similar ideas in the analogies of the ancient

ritual.

As to the latter, the pain of dying, it is no light and trivial way of

answer, to say that, if the pain of the animal was any such principal

thing, then there was no need of any thing farther. To burn the flesh

and sprinkle the blood were of no consequence, if the sacrifice was

already complete. Offering the flesh in smoke was nothing, if only the

pain was offered; for there was no pain in the dead victim. Even

supposing the pain to be valuable to the worshiper in a way of

expression, the expression is complete, as soon as the victim is dead.

What is wanted therefore is the killing of the animal, which requires

no special ceremony.

Furthermore it is, to say the least, a very singular thing, if so much

of the power and significance of the sacrifices lies in the death and

the dying pains of the animals, that no single worshiper of the old

-dispensation, ever has a word to say of these animal dyings and pains

of dying, drops no word of sympathy for the victims, or of sympathetic

relenting for sin on their account, testifies no sorrow, witnesses to

no sense of compunction, because of the impressions made on him, by the

hard fortune they are compelled to suffer. I recollect no single

instance in the whole Scripture, where the faintest intimation of this

kind appears; and yet, by the supposition, impressions to be made in

this way are even a principal matter in the sacrifices!

Besides, it is also another fault in all such representations of the

mode of what is called atonement by sacrifice, Had no tender sympathy

for the victims. that they suppose a tenderness of feeling, as regards

the death and suffering of animals, which this people had as little of

as every pastoral people must; that is, very nearly none at all. They

lived, every day of their lives, on the animals killed in the morning

at the tent door. Every woman, every child, looked on at the butchering

and grew up in the most familiar habit of seeing life taken; nor was

any thing more common than for women, or even for quite young children,

to kill and dress a lamb, or a kid, with their own hands. And yet their

sacrifice of atonement, it is conceived, is going to have its effect,

by the impressions of death and dying pain it wakens in their delicate

sensibilities! The fictitiousness of such conceptions is quite too

evident.

Moreover it is a great point in the observance of these rites that the

animal shall be the first born of its The choice quality of the animal

signified more. dam; a male without spot or blemish. But why, on what

principle, if the chief value of the sacrifice depends on the death and

dying pains of the animal? Would not any other, a third born, a female,

or a lame or blemished animal, die as convulsively and suffer as much?

It is also a very significant objection to these constructions of

sacrifice, that, when two goats are brought to the priest for the

people's offering, one is slain and his blood sprinkled on the

mercy-seat and about the holy place, to remove the defilement The

deportation of the sin signified by the scape-goat. supposed to be upon

them, from the sins and uncleannesses of the people; and then the

other, by which they are to be personally cleansed themselves, suffers

no death, or dying pain at all, as their substitute, but having their

sins all put upon his head, by the priest's confession, is turned loose

alive and driven off into the wilderness--so to signify the

deportation, or clean removal of, their guiltiness. It is therefore

called their "atonement" and is, in fact, an offering just as truly as

the other that was slain, only it is sacrificed by expulsion, and

without even so much as a thought of its death or pain of dying.

Excluding now these unsupported and really forced constructions of the

sacrifices, the question returns, what, in positive reality, were they?

Ordained to be a liturgy. wherein lay their use and value? They were

appointed, I answer, to be the liturgy of their religion; or, more

exactly, of their guilt and repentance before God as a reconciling

God--not a verbal liturgy, but a transactional, having its power and

value, not in any thing said, taught, reasoned, but in what is done by

the worshiper, and before and for him, in the transaction of the rite.

The people, it must be conceived, have not yet come to the age of

reflection. They know nothing about piety, or religious experience, as

reflectively defined, preached, tested, by words. Always going out

after their eyes in objective ways of action, and never returning upon

They wanted a religion for the eyes. themselves, they have no

reflective action, no discovery of themselves by self-testing

criticism. They are conscious of certain single acts, which they feel

to be sins, but not definitely conscious of sin as a state of moral

disorder. Of course they are religious beings, guilty beings, but these

deep ground-truths of their nature work out in them, from a point back

of their distinct consciousness; felt only as disturbances, not

discovered mentally in their philosophic nature and reality. Now to

manage such a people and train them towards himself, God puts them in a

drill of action, works upon them by a transactional liturgy, and

expects, by that means, to generate in them an implicit faith,

sentiment, piety, which they do not know themselves by definition, and

could not state in words that suppose a reflective discovery.

This transactional liturgy, taken as a divine institute, is a

contrivance of wonderful skill. Considered as in Their fine adaptation

as a transactional liturgy. reference to the capacities of the

worshipers, and also to results of repentance for sin and newness of

life, it displays a wisdom really divine. It begins at a point or base

note of action, that, so far as I can recollect, is wholly unknown to

the cultus, or the sacrifices, of any heathen religion. Moving on

results of purity, or purification from sin, it supposes impurity, and

lays this down as a fundamental figure, in what may be called the

footing of ceremonial uncleanness. Then the problem is to cleanse, or

hallow the unclean.

There is no definition of the uncleanness; for the time of definition

has not come. Every thing stands, thus far, on the basis of positive

institution. Implicit meaning of the unclean state. Every priest is

unclean, till he is cleansed; every place, till it is hallowed. On the

great day of atonement, every body is unclean, and the general mass of

the people go up thus every year to Jerusalem in caravans, at the

greatest inconvenience and with much expense, to be cleansed of their

defilement by sacrifice. How far they distinguish in idea this moral

kind of uncleanness, from that of their legal appointments, we do not

know. Perhaps they do not very soon raise the question of such a

distinction. This only they know, that whoever touches a dead body is

unclean, and the house in which he dies; that the leper is unclean;

that whoever has any suppurative issue is unclean; that whoever

touches, or eats an unclean animal, is unclean; that every vessel,

dress, oven, defiled by such animals, makes unclean by the use. The

specification is too long to be completed, and I only add that every

person touching an unclean person is ipso facto unclean. Add also that,

as the unholy can not approach unto God, so every unclean person is

shut away from the temple, from society and house and table, put under

quarantine as regards every body else, and every body else under

embargo as regards him, producing a state of revulsion and of general

torment that is, in the highest degree, uncomfortable.

Upon this now as a basis, is erected the liturgy of sacrifice and blood

as a positive institution. It terminates formally in the result of

making clean. The argument of it is--"For I am the Lord your God; ye

shall Meaning also of the clean state made by sacrifice. therefore

sanctify yourselves and ye shall be holy." It says "do this," "bring

this offering," "sprinkle this blood, and you are clean." Perhaps the

worshiper will do it only in a ritual, half political way; still he

will be so far clean, at any rate. But there is a chance that his soul

will go on beyond the mere ritual effect, and, allow a deeper sentiment

to be called into play. Perhaps he will pass into a new sense of

cleanness that breaks over the mere ritual confines, and imports some

real beginning of a higher cleansing in his spiritual nature. It

certainly will be so, if he brings his offering as a really devout and

penitent worshiper.

So it was with these men of the first, most unreflective ages,

exercised in this kind of worship. By and by, as a reflective habit

gets to be a little Conceptions more and more spiritual thus matured.

unfolded, a kind of chiding, or rebuke of heartlessness begins to be

heard in certain quarters, as if men could think to carry God's favor

by bullocks and goats and blood! Still farther on, one, or another will

be heard crying out in the depth of his guiltiness, and quitting all

sacrifice in despair of it, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and

renew a right spirit within me." Then the prophets will begin to rebuke

the multitude of sacrifices, as a wretched imposture and offense to

God, and to prophesy the complete ending of this old covenant of forms,

and the establishment of God's new covenant, by the Messiah; who shall

come to write God's law in the heart itself, and make religion the

completely spiritual affair openly, which it always has been

implicitly. Then, at last, Christ comes, to substitute all sacrifices,

and be himself the sacrifice offered once for all--in what sense and

manner we shall see.

Having sketched this outline of the sacrificial history, in its stages

of progress and its final culmination, we go back now to the simple

first stage of How the sacrifices get their power. the liturgy, and

look into the scheme of it, inquiring how it is to get its power? Not

by the death of the victim, we have seen; there is nothing said of the

death as having any significance, and there is really not care enough

felt for it to give it any. Not by the pain of the victim; nothing is

made of that, and nothing is farther off from the worshiper's thought,

than to have so much as a serious feeling about it. Not by the

satisfaction for sin, or the satisfaction of God's justice; nothing is

said either of satisfaction, or of justice, as there could not be when

nothing is made either of the pain, or the dying. Not by the

substitution made of the victim, given up to suffer in the worshiper's

place; for if nothing is made of the suffering of the victim, nothing

could be made of a substitution of that suffering. A certain symbolic

substitution, or substitution for significance's sake, is made, when

sins are confessed on the head of the offering, and just the same is

made on the head of the scape-goat, even more formally, when he is

driven off alive, to signify the deportation of sin; where, of course,

the symbolic sign is all and the goat nothing--but simply a goat

feeding elsewhere.

Excluding now these negatives, the question returns, whence comes the

liturgic value and power of the sacrifice on the feeling of the

worshiper? First of all there is a certain expense and pains-taking

incurred by him, in providing the victim and in making a journey,

commonly toilsome, and consuming many days' time to get his offering

duly made. Secondly, it is another matter which enters the more deeply

into his feeling, that he chooses reverently a fine, fair, first-born

animal, that he may give his best to God and that which he most values.

Thirdly, when he comes to the altar, before that mysteriously veiled,

invisible recess where Jehovah dwells, he puts his hands on the head of

the victim, or the priest does it for him, and confesses his sin; going

away absolved, as one made clean. Fourthly, it contributes immensely to

the power and impressiveness of the transaction, that the blood which

figures so largely in it, sprinkled and poured and touched upon this

and that place to sanctify the altar and the priest, has been

previously invested with an artificial sacredness for this very

purpose. No one, even from the earliest beginnings of sacrifice, has

been permitted to eat blood, and Moses reenacts the law, under which he

makes it even a capital offense, like blasphemy or sacrilege--"For the

life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the

altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that

maketh atonement for the soul." [87] Not that the life thus offered the

life made sacred and mysterious by such associations gathered to it,

carries effect by ceasing to live, that is, by death symbolized in the

sprinkling of it. No, it gets its effect as being life, the sacred,

mystic, new-creating touch of life; for death is uncleanness itself-no

one touches a dead body without being made unclean-but the blood is all

purifying; "all things are by the law purged with blood."

Here then is the grand terminal of all sacrifice; taken as a liturgy,

it is issued in a making clean; it purges, washes, sprinkles, purifies,

sanctifies, The effect is to be lustral only. carries away pollution,

in that sense, absolves the guilty. Calling it a making of atonement

for this, or that place, or person, it is in the result a making

clean--"the priest shall make atonement for her and she shall be

clean;" [88] "make atonement for the house and it shall be clean;" [89]

"made an atonement for them to cleanse them." [90] The effect is to be

lustral simply. The worshiper may never have thought reflectively on

his inward defilement, but when so much is done by him for the lustral

effect, in a manner so reverent, when he has been touched by the sacred

blood in which the mystery of life is hid, followed by the formula that

pronounces him clean, it will be strange if his transactional liturgy

has not signified more for the state of his inward man, than any

prescribed trial and testing in the doctrines of words could have done,

at his stage of culture. It is very true that these sacrifices which

they offered year by year continually, are declared by an apostle "not

to make the comers thereunto perfect." But he only means that they do

not finish out, or bring his want of grace to an end; not that they

result in no genuine fruits of character. So when he declares that "it

is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away

sins," he does not mean that no one finds a true remission in his

offering, but only that he wants another still, and still another,

while Christ is offered, once for all, and makes a complete finality of

sacrifice.

In what sense a sacrifice?--this now is the principal question whose

answer we seek, and are ready to give. In what sense Christ is a

sacrifice. Here, of course, all the exclusions just made are to be

repeated--his pains have no value as pains, or his dying as death; he

does not satisfy God's justice; he is not legally substituted in our

place. There was nothing of this nature in the sacrifices and, when he

becomes a sacrifice for sin, there should not be in his.

A good proximate and general answer to the question, in what sense a

sacrifice? is this: that he fulfilled Not a literal sacrifice but more.

the analogy of the ancient sacrifice; serving like uses, only in a

highe key, and in a more perfect manner, with a more complete lustral

effect. It has been a question, much discussed, whether Christ is a

literal, or figurative sacrifice, and the latter conception has been

repelled, with much feeling, partly because it has been advocated in a

way of escaping the fact of any sacrifice at all, and partly because

both parties fail to see any very serious meaning left, when the

figurative sense is admitted On one side he is just a figure sacrifice,

nothing more. On the other, being reduced to this, he is just a phantom

sacrifice, and that is nothing at all. It is not perceived that, when a

word rises out of fact in the physical range, to be the fixed name, by

figure, of something in the range of thought and spirit, it obtains a

meaning as much fuller and more solid as it is closer akin to mind. Is

good taste nothing because it is not the literal tasting faculty of the

mouth? Is a good heart nothing because it is not the pumping organ of

the body, but only a figure derived from it? Is rectitude nothing

because it is only a figurative straightness, and not a literal

straight line? Is integrity nothing because it is only a moral

wholeness and not the veritable integer of arithmetic? How visibly does

the figure, as figure, rise to a nobler and more real meaning, in all

such examples; and when we find that human language is underlaid all

through, in this manner, with physical images, observing their wondrous

fitness to serve as a wording for all that mind can think, or wish to

express, we are half disposed to believe that they were made and set

into nature for this purpose. They become even more real as figures

than they are as facts, and there is no so great victory for any truth,

or subject of intelligence, as when it has obtained some fit analogon,

or "figure of the true," to be its interpreter.

Here, accordingly, it was that God displayed his skill, in adjusting

the forms of the altar, and all the solemn A nomenclature for the

gospel. externalities of the ritual service. They were not only to be a

liturgy for the time then present, but they were to prepare new bases

of words not existing in nature, and so a new nomenclature of figures

for the sacrifice of his Son. And it took even many centuries to get

the figures ready, clothed with fit associations, wrought into fit

impressions, worn into use and finally almost into disuse, by the

weary, unsatisfied feeling that is half ready and longing for something

beyond them--all this it required, to get a language made that was at

all competent to express the perfectly transcendental, supernatural,

otherwise never imagined or conceived fact of divine suffering and

vicarious sacrifice in God. Now the central figure, in this new

language for the cross, is sacrifice; a word as much more significant

when applied to Christ, than when applied to the altar ceremony, as the

Lamb of God signifies more than a lamb. Other words and images come

along in the same train, which also belong to the altar and the old

transactional liturgy of the temple, and. Christ emerges on the world

through them all, as by a kind of Epistle to the Hebrews, himself the

full discovered love and vicariously burdened sorrow--the cross that

was hid in God's nature even from eternal ages. In this view he does

not begin to be the real and true sacrifice, till he goes above all the

literalities of sacrifice, and becomes the fulfillment of their meaning

as figures.

However this may be, it is sufficiently plain that he can be a

sacrifice, only under conditions of analogy and figurative

correspondence, and I am quite certain that he was never conceived, by

any one, to A sacrifice under conditions of analogy. be a literal

sacrifice, who had not somehow confounded the distinction between a

real and a literal sacrifice. He is a sacrifice in much the same sense

as he is a Lamb. He is not offered upon any altar, not slain by a

priest, not burned with fire. He is not offered under and by the law;

but against even the decalogue itself--by false witness and murder. He

dies on a gibbet, and the priests have no part in the transaction, save

as conspirators and leaders of the mob. There is no absolution, but a

challenge of defiance rather--"his blood be on us and on our children."

In this exposition a certain discoverable analogy is supposed, between

what was done, or suffered by Christ, and the offering of victims at

the altar. No external correspondence in the analogy, unless in the

sacred blood. But there is no shadow of resemblance in the external

facts of Christ's death, unless it be in some slight finger-marks of

correspondence, such as the evangelist notes, when he says, "that the

Scripture should be fulfilled--A bone of him shall not be broken." And

yet there is such a deep-set, grandly real, and wide-reaching

correspondence, that no man, fresh in the sentiments of the altar,

could well miss of it, or fail to be strangely impressed by it. Here is

the first-born, the unblemished beauty, the chaste Lamb of God--never

came to mortal eyes any such perfect one before. And the expense he

makes, under his great love-struggle and heavy burden of feeling, his

Gethsemane where the burden presses him down into agony, his Calvary,

where, in his unprotesting and lamb-like submission, he allows himself

to be immolated by the world's wrath--what will any one, seeing all

this, so naturally or inevitably call it, as his sacrifice for the sins

of the world. His blood too, the blood of the incarnate Son of God,

blood of the upper world half as truly as of this--when it touches and

stains the defiled earth of the planet, what so sacred blood on the

horns of the altar and the lid of the mercy-seat, did any devoutest

worshiper at the altar ever see sprinkled for his cleansing! There his

sin he hoped could be dissolved away, and it comforted his conscience

that, by the offering of something sacred as blood, he could fitly own

his defilement, and by such tender argument win the needed cleansing.

But the blood of Christ, he that was born of the Holy Ghost, he that

was Immanuel--when this sprinkles Calvary, it is to him as if some

touch of cleansing were in it for the matter itself of the world! In

short, there is so much in this analogy, and it is so affecting, so

profoundly real, that no worshiper most devout, before the altar,

having once seen Christ--who he is, what he has done by his cross, and

the glorious offering he has made of himself in his ministry of good,

faithful unto death--who will not turn away instinctively to him,

saying, "no more altars, goats, or lambs; these were shadows I see; now

has come the substance. This is my sacrifice and here is my peace--the

blood that was shed for the remission of sins--this I take and want no

other."

And so it comes to pass that Christ is continually set forth in the

gospels and epistles of the New Testament, in the terms of sacrifice,

because there is Christ called a sacrifice because of his lustral

power. so great power in it for the soul; also in the fact, otherwise

never conceived or brought down to mortal experience, that God's

eternal character has a cross in it, a sorrowing, heavily burdened

mercy for his enemies, a winning and transforming power, which it is

even their new-creation to feel. I can not go over all the sacrificial

terms and expressions of the New Testament, or even the very deliberate

exposition of whole chapters in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the

correspondence, or analogy, between Christ and the ancient sacrifices,

is carefully traced. I will only say, in general, that a very important

oversight, in respect to all the altar phrases of the gospel, needs to

be corrected. They are cited to prove atonement in the sense of

satisfaction, or of an offering made to reconcile God. Hence there is

nothing made of the lustral figures, that almost always go along with

them; which, if they had any meaning given them, would conduct the mind

straight in upon the conclusion, that Christ is offered, not to satisfy

God, but to take away sin, to cleanse, purify, make alive and holy, the

moral state of sinners.

Sometimes and not seldom the lustral figures themselves, the very

object of which, under the old ritual, was to conduct the worshiper's

mind Abuses of Scripture texts. the into a fit conception of the result

preparing in his sacrifice are taken just as if they only meant by the

cleansing they speak of in a New Testament use, that God is so far

reconciled by due satisfaction, that he may pass transgressors now as

being clean, when they are not. They are sprinkled, washed, purged,

purified, cleansed, in the sense that for Christ's sake they are

admitted to be so, when they are not! And so the proof texts of

satisfaction are multiplied with great facility. Let any one gather up

all the allusions made in the New Testament to the altar sacrifices,

noting carefully those which look towards a lustral and transforming

effect on men, as distinguished from those which clearly and positively

refer to an effect on God, and he will be astonished to find how the

doctrine of judicial satisfaction has engulfed, as by a maelstrom

sweep, every most unwilling thing that has come in its way. Probably

ninetenths at least of the proof texts of the New Testament, under

figures taken from the altar, make the sacrifice of Christ a plainly

lustral offering in its effect, while the other tenth as plainly stop

short of any reconciling effect on God. And yet they have so long been

read in a different way, that we are scarcely aware of the forced

meaning put upon them. Such a fact can not be verified, without going

into a general canvass of the texts, which is here impossible. I can

only call attention to the fact, adding as examples just a few of the

principal texts, which it will be seen, without a word of comment, bear

the lustral meaning, or the expectation of a cleansing, sin-removing,

life-giving, effect, on their faces.

Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. [91]

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent

his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.

[92]

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. [93]

Who his own self bare our sins, in his own body on the tree, that we,

being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye

are healed. [94]

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal

Spirit, offered himself, without spot, to God, purge your conscience

from dead works to serve the living God. [95]

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the

blood of Jesus, \* \* \* Let us draw near, with a true heart, in full

assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil

conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. [96]

And having made peace, through the blood of his cross, by him to

reconcile all things unto himself; by him I say, whether they be things

in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and

enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in

the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, unblamable,

and unreprovable in his sight." [97]

Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

[98]

The charlatanism of interpretation--it is really one of the saddest

chapters of our Christian history! And what a revelation of it have

these poor texts to give, when released from their long captivity, and

allowed to simply speak for themselves!--testifying, all, with glad

consent, that Christ is our sacrifice, for the taking away of our sin,

our quickening unto life. our cleansing and spiritual reconciliation

with God.

There is still another class of figures generated casually, outside of

the ritual; partly judicial, partly political and historical, partly

commercial, and partly natural. The footing already gained by what we

have shown respecting the divinely contrived symbols of the altar,

makes it unnecessary to devote a distinct chapter to their

consideration. It will be sufficient to give them a brief supplementary

notice here.

The first class, the judicial, or seemingly judicial, appears

abundantly in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah--The judicial figures.

"stricken, smitten of God and afflicted;" 4t wounded for our

transgressions;" "bruised for our iniquities;" "the chastisement of our

peace was upon him;" "by his stripes we are healed;" "for the

transgression of my people was he stricken;" "it pleased the Lord to

bruise him." These are all figures that refer, more or less clearly, to

judicial and penal processes; as if Christ, the subject, were somehow

punitively handled in our place. But the whole chapter, it will be

observed, is from the point of gratitude, or holy ascription, after the

offering is made. It is the witness of a tender confession, not a

prophesy, save in that form. And what is more natural than for a soul

delivered of its curse, its retributive woes, its penal bondage, and

heaving in great sentiments of praise and holy ascription to its

deliverer, to represent him, in his suffering goodness, as having taken

upon himself the very pains and dues of justice he has removed? "Did he

not bear my punishment? did he not bleed under my stripes? was not my

chastisement upon him? was he not smitten of God in judgments that were

falling on me?" And yet every one who makes this confession will know

that he means this only as in figure, to express his tender

acknowledgment, and nothing will be farther off from his thought than

to imagine that he was literally asserting the punishment of his

deliverer. [99]

Besides we have, here and there, a mark put in, which indicates moral

effect, and turns the meaning quite away from the understanding of a

literal punishment; as for example in the "peace" that follows

chastisement, and the healing that follows the stripes--"with his

stripes we are healed." Furthermore, it would be a plain abuse of

Scripture to set one class of figures, in regard to a given subject,

clashing with another; and still more to set the mere chance symbols of

a subject directly against the deliberately contrived symbols prepared

for it. If, then, we find the altar symbols looking systematically, all

as one, towards results of moral effect, these casual symbols and all

others of the same general nature ought surely not to be taken as

looking towards an effect purely judicial and penal.

And there is still less reason for this, in the fact that Christ, doing

all for moral effect, did actually bear, as we have fully shown, the

corporate curse and penal disorder of the world, in a way of renewing

it; a fact in which all such judicial figures. are sufficiently met,

though the curse was in no sense penal as against him.

The political and historical figures are such as grew out of the

release of captives taken in war. Thus we Political and historic

figures. have "redemption," as a figure derived from the buying back of

captives; and "ransom," as the sum advanced for that object. Thus

Christ, in offering himself for our deliverance, became our redemption,

gave himself a ransom for us, or more briefly gave himself for us.

Where, of course, the main idea signified, is our moral and spiritual

emancipation from the bondage of evil; a result in the nature of moral

effect, wholly coincident with the lustral figures of the ritual.

The commercial figures are to the same effect--"bought with a price;"

"purchased with his blood;" The commercial figures. "forgive us our

debts." Whole theories of atonement have been based on each of these

analogies, and all the other symbols of the New Testament have been

compelled, how often, to submit themselves to the regulative force of

these analogies, taken virtually as the literalities of the question. A

much truer and freer meaning would be assigned with as much greater

dignity, and requires not even to be stated.

The natural figures are such as death and life, "reconciled by the

death;" "saved by his life;" "tasted death for every man;" "Christ who

is The naturally significant figures. our life." In all these figures,

which are multiplied in a hundred shapes, and set in a hundred diverse

combinations, moral effect is the always present and, in fact, only

constant matter intended.

I will not pursue this exposition farther; for the reason that there is

plainly no necessity for it. The general conclusion is, that all the

Scripture symbols coincide, as nearly as may be, in the one ruling

conception, that Christ is here in the world to be a power on

character--to cleanse, to wash, to purify, to regenerate, new-create,

make free, invest in the righteousness of God, the guilty souls of

mankind. Beyond that nothing plainly is wanted, and therefore there is

nothing to be found.

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[83] Hebrews, ix, 14.

[84] Vol. I., p. 74, ��.

[85] Heb. viii, 6.

[86] Heb. ix, 9.

[87] Lev. xvii, 11.

[88] Lev. xii, 8.

[89] Lev. xiv 52.

[90] Numb. viii, 21.

[91] John i, 29.

[92] 1 John iv, 9-10.

[93] 1 John i, 7.

[94] Peter ii, 24.

[95] Heb. ix, 14.

[96] Heb. x, 19-21.

[97] Col. i, 20-2.

[98] Rev. i, 5.

[99] Illustrated more fully pp. 396-7, Part III., Chap. VI.

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CHAPTER II.

ATONEMENT, PROPITIATION, AND EXPIATION.

IN the previous chapter, a careful investigation was made of the use or

purpose of the ancient sacrifices and rites of blood, and the endeavor

was, to find by what means, or in what sense, Christ is called a

sacrifice, and is represented as accomplishing so much by his blood. In

this investigation I passed over certain much disputed points in the

institution and the Christian doctrine of sacrifice, that, in settling

first the more positive questions of practical use and meaning, we

might not be distracted, or confused, by multiplicities too numerous to

allow the distinct settlement of any thing. We come now to the much

debated and difficult questions that range under the words atonement,

expiation, propitiation. These are words pertaining secondarily to

sacrifice, or to the effects of sacrifice, and are commonly set in such

prominence, as to be words of principal figure, not only in the

doctrine, but also in the preaching of the cross. Our investigation

therefore of sacrifices and the Christian sacrifice will not be

complete, or satisfactory, till these ruling words and ideas are

ventilated by a careful discussion.

As regards the words themselves, it may be well to note, in the first

place, that the English word atonement is entirely an Old Testament

word, not Two ruling conceptions. Atonement and Propitiation. occurring

at all in the translation of the New, except in a single instance;

[100] where it is given as the translation of a word that is twice

translated reconciliation, in the previous verse, and in every other

place in the New Testament is translated reconciliation. And yet the

deviation in this particular instance is less remarkable, because the

English word atonement, at the time when the Scriptures were

translated, meant to reconcile, that is, to at-one. And it is in this

sense of making reconcilement, putting-at-one, that the word is so

often used in the Old Testament. There, however, it is not so much the

literal translation or transfer of the Hebrew word in its own type, as

a new, though very good and proper construction, put in its place. The

Hebrew word is cover, the very same root from which our English word

cover is derived. Thus where we read so often, "he shall make atonement

for you," "scape-goat to make atonement," and the like, it means the

same thing as to make sin-cover, that is, reconciliation; the

conception being, that sin is thereby covered up, hidden from sight or

memory. Exactly the same thing is meant, when, using a different

figure, it is said to be purged, cleansed, taken away. When the

transgressor is said to be atoned or reconciled, the being covered is

taken subjectively in the same way; as if something had come upon him

to change his unclean state, and make him ceremonially, or, it may be,

spiritually, pure.

But the subject thus atoned is not only covered or cleansed in himself,

but he is figured as being put in a new relation with God, and God with

him; and it is as if God were somehow changed towards him--newly

inclined, mitigated, propitiated or made propitious. It resulted

accordingly, that the Hebrew word to cover was very frequently

translated in the Greek Septuagint, by a word that signifies to

propitiate or make propitiation. And the same word occurs, in six

instances in the New Testament, and under three grammatic forms; where

it is translated, three times, "propitiation;" once, "to make

reconciliation;" once, "be merciful;" and once, "mercy-seat;" the three

latter examples having, of course, their fair equivalents, in the

phrases, "make propitiation," "be propitious," and "seat of

propitiation."

We have then, two ruling conceptions of sacrifice, connected with, or

resulting from, the figure of a sin Both conceptions miscolored by

expiation. cover; one representing the effect in us, and the other an

effect in God as related to us--reconciliation [at-one-ment,] and

propitiation. I shall recur to them again, at the close of the chapter,

to settle more exactly their relative import, when applied to the

Christian sacrifice. Meantime, another very weighty matter demands our

careful attention; viz., the question of expiation.

Both these terms, atonement and propitiation, are turned from their

true meaning, in our common uses, by the false idea of expiation

associated with them, or entered theologically into them. To atone is

no more to reconcile, that is to restore and make clean, but it is made

to mean the answering for sin, making amends for it, by offering

expiatory pains to obtain the discharge of it. Propitiation is made in

the same way, to signify the placation of God, by a contribution of

pains and expiatory sufferings. We can not therefore recover the two

words, atonement and propitiation, to their true meaning, without going

into a deliberate and careful investigation of the false element by

which they are corrupted.

The word expiation does not once occur in the Scripture. The idea is

classical, not scriptural at all, but the word has been sliding into

use by the Expiation not a word of the Scriptures but of the classics.

christian disciples and teachers, and getting itself accepted

interchangeably for such as belong to the Scripture, till it has come

to be even a considerable test of orthodoxy. I do not object to it,

however, because of its origin, but because of its incurable falsity. A

new word applied to christian subjects is not, of course, to be

condemned, because it is new. Neither is a pagan word to be always cast

out. But a word both new and pagan, made staple as in application to an

old, divinely ordered, staple institution of Scripture, like that of

sacrifice, must be admitted, I think, to wear a suspicious look. It

should certainly have been carefully questioned, before it was

baptized, into the faith, as I very much fear it was not.

But the baptism is passed and we have the word upon us. The only matter

left us for inquiry therefore, relates to ideas themselves, and I

propose, that I may cover the whole ground of the subject, three

questions,--

I. What is expiation?

II. Is it credible as a fact under the divine government?

III. Is there any such thing as expiation supposed in the Scripture

sacrifices?

I. What is expiation? It does not, I answer, simply signify the fact

that God is propitiated, but it brings in the pagan, or Latin idea (for

it is a Expiation is an evil given to buy the release of an evil. Latin

word,) that the sacrifice offered softens God, or assuages the anger of

God, as being an evil, or pain, contributed to his offended feeling.

That Christ has fulfilled a mission of sacrifice, and become a

reconciling power on human character, has been abundantly shown. And

this change thus wrought in men, we shall also see, is the condition of

a different relationship on the part of God. But an expiatory sacrifice

proposes a settlement with God on a different footing; viz., that God

is to be propitiated, or gained over to a new relationship, by very

different means. The distinctive idea of expiation is that God is to

have an evil given him by consent, for an evil due by retribution. It

throws in before God or the gods some deprecatory evil, in the

expectation that the wrath may be softened or averted by it. The power

of the expiation depends not on the sentiments, or repentances, or

pious intentions connected with it, but entirely on the voluntary

damage incurred in it. According to the Latin idea, "Diis violatia

expiatio debetur"--when the gods are wronged, expiation is their

due--and the understanding is that, when the wrong doers fall to

punishing themselves in great losses, it mitigates the wrath of the

gods and turns them to the side of favor.

Now it is in this particular idea of expiation, the giving an evil to

the gods, to obtain a release for other evils apprehended or actually

felt, that A pagan corruption of the Jewish cultus. the sacrifices of

all the heathen nations were radically distinguished from the Jewish or

Scripture sacrifices. And the pagan religions were corruptions plainly

enough, in this view, of the original, ante-Mosaic, ante-Jewish

cultus--superstitions of degenerate brood, such as guilt, and fear, and

the spurious motherhood of ignorance, have it for their law to

propagate. As repentance settles into penance under this regimen of

superstition, so the sacrifices settled into expiations under the same.

And the process only went a little farther, when they fell, as they did

the pagan world over, into the practice of human sacrifices; for since

the gods were to be gained by expiatory evils, the greater the evil the

more sure the favor; and therefore they sometimes offered their

captives, sometimes their sons and daughters, sometimes their kings'

sons, and sometimes even their kings and queens themselves; believing

that in no other manner could they sufficiently placate their envious

and bloody deities. Expiation figured in this manner, not as a merely

casual and occasional part of religion, but as being very nearly the

same thing as religion itself. For as even Tacitus could say, that "the

gods interfere in human concerns, but to punish," what could they think

of doing, in religion, but to expiate? The classic and all pagan

sentiments of worship, being thus corrupted by the false element or

infusion of expiation, the later Jewish commentators and Christian

theologians finally took up the conception, laying claim to it as a

worthy and genuine property in all sacrifices, whether those of the

law, or even the great sacrifice of the gospel itself. And now there is

nothing more devoutly asserted, or more reverently believed, than our

essential need of an expiatory sacrifice, and the fact that such a

sacrifice is made for our salvation, in the cross of Jesus Christ.

It is a matter of justice I gladly admit, and, for the honor of the

gospel, I should even like to make the Expiation not so defined, yet so

understood. concession broader still, that the advocates of Christian

expiation do not define it in the terms I have given. They do not seem

to have drawn their thoughts to any point close enough to yield a

definition, but only understand, in general, that when they speak of

expiation, they mean a bloody sacrifice. And yet they do mean, if we

take their whole mental content, something more; viz., just what I have

described. How we commonly use the term in other matters than religion,

may be seen, for example, when we say of a murderer who has been

executed, that he has expiated his crime; or of any one who has done a

dishonorable deed, that the shame in which he lives, is the bitter

expiation of his fault. We always show, in such modes of speaking, that

the matter of the expiation is conceived to be an evil, a pain, a loss.

And our religious impressions are cast in the same mold. We never speak

of good deeds, or sentiments, or sacrifices of love, as expiations.

Nothing is expiatory that does not turn upon the fact of damage, or

pain, or self-punishment. Neither is there any difficulty in

discovering, from the manner in which theologians speak of expiation,

that they think of God as having some evil, or pain, or naked suffering

offered him for sin, and that, on account of such offering, he may

release the evil, or pain, or suffering his unsatisfied wrath would

otherwise exact. Thus, taking the mildest form of superstition, it will

be maintained that God's wrath is to be averted by sacrifice; that is

by something given to wrath, that is wrath's proper food; which can of

course be nothing but some kind of pain, or evil. Sometimes the

expiation will be conceived under moral conditions, as a transaction

before God's justice; the assumption being that, as God is just, he

must, of course, lay upon wrong doing exactly the evil or pain it

deserves, and can only release it by having other pain given him in

direct substitution. Sometimes it will be conceived that God is

maintaining a good law for the world, which he can do only by annexing

evils, in a way of penalty, that fully express his abhorrence of sin,

and that such evils can be released only by giving him others, in which

he may express the same abhorrence. But in all these varieties we have

plainly enough the common element of expiation; viz., an evil given for

sin, which is to avail as being an evil. It is not conceived, as in the

Scripture sacrifice, that the sinning man is to come bringing the

choicest, most beautiful lamb of his flock, that, in offering it, he

may express, and in expressing feel, something which God wants him to

feel, and for his own benefit show; but the pagan idea prevails; the

sacrifice it is claimed, must be an expiation--some evil brought, that

is to work on God by deprecation, or self-punishment, or painful loss.

Nor does the moral absurdity of putting any such heathenish

construction on the Scripture sacrifices deter at all from doing it.

Still, as there is sin, there must be expiation, and that is made, not

by offering up a child, or a magistrate, but by the property loss of a

sheep--felt as a great evil, or pain, by the soul! A kind of expiation

more fit to kindle God's wrath than to soften it; for the more it is

felt as an evil the meaner and more heartless the sacrifice.

Having distinguished in this manner, what an expiation is, we proceed

to inquire--

II. Whether expiations for sins, taken as defined, are admissible under

the divine government?

And here I do not undertake to say that nothing can be asserted under

the word, which is worthy of respect and acceptance. Thus if a sinner

of mankind, oppressed with a sense of inward ill-desert and shame,

should seek out voluntarily some mode of expense, or pains taking, in

which, considered as a punishment of himself, he might prove and

express, and, by expression, exercise a clean repentance before God,

and, doing Possible good sense of expiation. this, should call it

making expiation for his sin, God might properly enough accept his

unenlightened sacrifice; not however because of the evil brought him in

it, but because the guilty sufferer came thus, trying honestly to

trample his sins and put God in the right concerning them. Such uses of

the word are admissible, but in the sense of expiation above defined,

the sense which belongs to it whenever we speak of expiatory sacrifice,

where giving God an evil not deserved, we expect Him to be placated in

regard to an evil deserved,--in such a sense expiation has no character

that makes it approvable by intelligence, or endurable by a true

sentiment of God's worth and justice.

If it is a mere feeling in God which is to be placated by an expiatory

sacrifice, then we have to ask, is God such a being that, having a good

mortgage title to pain or suffering as against an offender, he will

never let go the title till he gets the pain-if not from him, then from

some other? Such a conception of God is simply shocking. [101]

But the title to pain, as against offenders, it will be said is simply

what is demanded of them by justice, Not demanded by justice or

consistent with it. and what he, as the eternal guardian of justice, is

as truly bound to inflict, as they to suffer. God therefore has no

option, he can not release the foredoomed evils, or pains, save as they

are substituted by compensative evils. But suppose it to be so, and

that God, as ruler of the world, is bound to do by every man just as he

deserves. What means this inflexible adherence to the point of 4esert,

when, by the supposition, he is going to accept, in expiation, an evil

not deserved? He is going, in fact, to overturn all relations of

desert, by taking pains not deserved, to release pains that are. Is

this justice? or is it the most complete and solemn abnegation possible

of justice? To get a pain out of somebody, is not justice; nothing

answers to that name, but the inexorable, undivertible, straight-aimed

process of execution against the person of the wrong doer himself.

So of punishment, regarded as the penalty ordained for the enforcement

of law, necessary to be enforced for the honor and due authority of

law. Doubtless if something better can be done, in given circumstances,

than to literally execute the penalty, something that will keep the law

on foot, clothe it with still higher authority, and make the dread of

its penalty felt as being even more imminent than before, a

qualification of vindicatory justice so prepared will do no harm. But

to remit a punishment or pain deserved, in consideration of a similar

punishment or pain not deserved, accepted by an innocent party, so far

from being any due support of law, is the worst possible mockery of it.

It belongs to the very idea of punishment, that it fall on the

transgressor himself, not on any other, even though he be willing to

receive it. The law reads "do this or thou shalt die," not "do this or

somebody shall die." A fine, or a debt, may be paid by any body; but a

punishment sticks immovably to the wrong doer, and no commutation,

expiation, or transfer of places can remove it.

In the story of Zaleucus often referred to as an illustration, nothing

is shown but a very sorry fraud practiced on the law. The father

finding his Story of Zaleucus. son guilty of a crime, whose prescribed

penalty in the law is that the malefactor shall have his eyes put out,

contrives to get off his son with the loss of one eye, by consenting,

in a most fond paternity, to lose one of his own eyes, in substitution

for the other. But the law did not require, for its penalty, the loss

of two eyes; it required the putting out of the two eyes of the

transgressor; that is that he be reduced to blindness for the rest of

his life. After all, this old historic myth, so often celebrated as an

example of rigid and impartial justice, is only an example of bad law,

or of a very tenderly parental sophistry enacted for the evasion of

law.

Much better and more solidly true to law is Cromwell's answer in the

case of George Fox. The facts are given by Fox himself in his Journal.

[102] He was lying Cromwell and George Fox. in prison, at the time, in

a basement pit, inexpressibly filthy, called Doomsdale. And he says:

"While I was in prison in Lancaster, a friend went to Oliver Cromwell

and offered himself, body for body, to lie in Doomsdale in my stead, if

he would take him and let me have liberty. Which thing so struck him

that he said to his great men and council, which of you would do as

much for me, if I were in the same condition?' And though he did not

accept of the friend's offer, but said he could not do it, for that it

was contrary to law, yet the truth thereby came mightily over him."

It might also be urged that, if expiation were a more feasible and

better element than it is, not derogatory Trinity rightly held,

excludes expiation. to the character of God, not incompatible with

first principles of justice, not a way of compensating law that takes

away its most essential, highest moral attribute as law; viz., the

unalterable personality of its distributions--if, in all these

respects, it were a morally admissible and even wholesome conception,

still there is a difficulty in it, as far as the sacrifice of Christ is

concerned, which is insurmountable. If the gist of that sacrifice

consists in the fact, that Christ in atoning, or expiating sin by his

death, offers the simple endurance of so much evil or pain, we can not

but ask who is Christ, in all that gives significance to his life, but

the incarnate Word of God's eternity? Take whatsoever view of Christ's

person we may, no one can imagine that his sacrifice was simply a man's

sacrifice, a transaction of his merely human nature. Besides the pain

he suffered, that of his agony, that of his cross, was in all but the

smallest, scarcely appreciable part, a moral pain, the pain of his

moral sensibility,--his love, his purity, his compassionate feeling,

that which it was a great part of his errand to reveal, that which not

to have suffered, under such conditions, would have been a virtual

disproof of his greatness and divinity. So far, at least, his pains are

pains of his divine nature. Does then God's right hand offer pains to

his left, and so make expiation for the sins of the world? How many

Gods have we? Not any more truly three, or less simply one, because we

hold the faith of a trinity. Expiation appears to suppose that we have

at least two, one placating the other, and he again accepting the

expiation of sins in the sufferings of the first. Faithfully holding

that our God is one, expiation loses opportunity. There is no place for

it; no such transaction can be had for the want of parties, and the

matter is incredible as being simply impossible.

Holding now these very sufficient objections to the matter of

expiation, or expiatory sacrifice, we should not expect to find it

recognized in the Scriptures. Passing then to the question that

remains, we inquire:

III. Is there any such thing as expiation contained, or supposed to be

wrought in the Scripture sacrifices?

The common assumption is that the sin offerings of the Old Testament

and the offering of Christ in the New are all expiatory, and in that

fact have their value, contrary to all such impressions.

I am able, after a most thorough and complete examination of the

Scriptures to affirm with confidence, No trace of expiation in the

Scriptures. that they exhibit no trace of expiation. I had supposed

that the impression so generally prevalent must be well grounded, but

my suspicions were awakened by observing one or two points where the

impression failed, and was tempted thus to push the inquiry to its

limit. That such an opinion has been so long and generally held of the

Scripture sacrifices, I can only account for, in the manner already

suggested; viz., that there is a natural tendency in all worthy ideas

of religion to lapse into such as are unworthy--repentance, for

example, into doing penance--that the sacrifices could easily be

corrupted in this manner, and, in fact, were by all the pagan

religions; and then that there was imported back into the constructions

of holy Scripture, a notion of expiation, as pertaining to sacrifice,

under the plausible but unsuspected sanction of classic uses and

associations. Nothing could be more natural and it appears to be

actually true. Indeed it is a common thing, even now, to illustrate the

manner and supposed necessity of expiation for sin, by citations from

Hesiod, Homer and other classic writers.

It is impossible, of course, in a discussion of this nature, to go over

a complete review of the whole series of Scripture instances and uses,

but the argument will be tolerably well conceived under heads of

classification such as follow.

1. That Nothing made of the victim's pains. nothing was made of the

victim's death, or pain of dying, in the ancient sacrifices, was

sufficiently shown in the last previous chapter.

2. Expiations are always conspicuous in their meaning. No man could

even raise a doubt of the expiatory object of the pagan sacrifices; no

such Expiations ought to be palpable, and are not. doubt was ever

entertained. In this view, if the scripture sacrifices do not show an

expiatory meaning on their face and declare themselves unmistakably in

that character, if it is a matter of rational doubt or debate, such

doubt is a clear presumptive evidence that their object is somehow

different.

3. The original of the word atone, or make atonement, In the Hebrew

scripture, carries no such idea of expiation. It simply speaks of

covering, or The atonements not expiations. making cover for sin, and

is sufficiently answered by any thing which removes it, hides it from

the sight, brings into a state of reconciliation, where the impeachment

of it is gone. Accordingly it is sometimes translated to reconcile or

make reconciliation; [103] sometimes to pardon; [104] sometimes to

purify, cleanse, purge. [105] It is also true that this word is

sometimes translated, in the Septuagint, by the same Greek word, or a

word of the same root, as that which is translated propitiation in the

New Testament; and it is also true that this Greek word is often

translated into Latin and English, by the word expiation. But to draw

an argument from this, for the fact of expiation in the Hebrew

sacrifices, is to go upon a long circuit of travel, and get nothing

that amounts to evidence at the end. For the classic tongues would

certainly be apt to associate expiation with sacrifice, and the

Septuagint would not be likely to avoid that mistake. Every thing turns

here, manifestly, on the meaning of the original- Hebrew word; and as

the root or symbol of this word means simply to cover, we can see for

ourselves that, while it might be applied as a figure, to denote a

covering by expiation, it can certainly as well and as naturally be

applied to any thing which hides or takes away transgression.

4. Atonements are accordingly said to be made, where the very idea of

expiation is excluded; and Atonements that exclude expiation. sometimes

where there is, in fact, no sacrifice at all. Thus atonements were made

for the sanctifying of the altar; that is, for sanctifying it in men's

feeling; for as it was necessary to the liturgic power of the sacrifice

on the sentiment of the worshipers, that the blood of their offering

should be made to be a sacred thing, so it was necessary that the altar

itself should be invested with a real and felt sanctity. Thus we read,

[106] "Seven days shalt thou make an atonement for the altar, and

sanctify it, and it shall be an altar most holy." To give an example

where expiation is excluded because there is no sacrifice, Moses, when

the people had sinned so grievously, in the matter of the golden calf,

said, [107] "Now I will go ap unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make

an atonement for your sin." He went up accordingly and made

intercession for them, in words of supplication, without any sacrifice

at all and this was his atonement. Plainly enough there is no expiation

in these cases. In the first there is none, because there is no sin

upon the altar to be expiated, and in the second because there is no

sacrifice. The atoning spoken of is a purifying, or a making

reconciliation, without a possibility of expiation.

5. It is a great point that expiations, or expiatory sacrifices, are

certainly not offered where we should expect them to be, if they are

offered at all. Expiations not offered where we should expect them.

Thus in the case just referred to of the sin of the golden calf, where

the sottish convictions of the people have been roused, and their fears

raised into a panic by the terrible judgment of God upon them, Moses

himself speaks of the "atonement" they need for their sin; but instead

of a great and solemn sacrifice of expiation, where, if ever, it was to

be expected, he undertakes their case for them himself, in his own

personal intercession before God. So again, in the great mutiny of the

people that followed the judgment of Korah, where a deadly plague is

falling upon them for their sin, Moses orders no sacrifice of

expiation, but he says to Aaron [108] "Take a censer and put fire

therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly into the

congregation, and make atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out

from the Lord." The plague is stayed; not by expiation certainly; for

it is never supposed that there is any such thing as expiation by

incense. And yet this was a case for expiation, if any such ever

existed. We have another case like it, in the great reformation of

Josiah, [109] where the sacred book is found in the temple, and the

king and people, on a public reading of the book, are put in such dread

of the wrath of God about to overtake them, in the curses of the book

denounced upon their sin, that a grand convocation of Israel is called

to avert the impending judgments. Now again is the time for a great

sacrifice of expiation; and yet there is no sacrifice made, or

prepared; but the king, seeing no better and surer way of deliverance,

takes his position before the assembled multitudes, and requires them

all to join him in a solemn covenant to forsake their evil ways, and

walk in all the statutes of the book. So again, when Ezra is overtaken

with great concern for the nation, on account of the general

intermarriage of priests and people with idolatrous women, he betakes

himself to fasting, confessing, weeping, and casting himself down

before the house of God; the people also weep sore with him; but no

sacrifice of expiation is offered, and no other way of averting God's

anger is thought of, than a general and total forsaking of the sin;

which every transgressor is required to do without equivocation or

delay. [110] Now in all such cases, and they are many, we look for

expiation and do not find it, and what is quite as remarkable, there is

no case to be found where God's anger, in a day of guilt and fear, is

placated, or even attempted to be, by a clearly expiatory sacrifice. It

was not so among the pagan nations, and it could not be so here, if

expiation were any recognized part of the national religion.

6. The requirement of the heart, as a condition necessary to acceptance

in the sacrifices, is a very strong presumptive evidence that no idea

of expiation The requirement of the heart, against expiation. belonged

to sacrifice. At first, nothing appears to be said of the spirit in

which the offering is to be made, though it is not to be supposed that

it was ever accepted, in any but a merely ritual and ceremonial sense,

unless coupled unconsciously, or implicitly, with a true feeling of

repentance. As already observed, there was at first, almost no capacity

of receiving truths and being exercised in states, by reflection.

Spiritual impressions and results of character were to be operated for

a time transactionally only, under liturgical forms of sacrifice. And a

beginning made in this way, connected with a continued drill under

miraculous Providences, was to operate a course of development, and

prepare a more reflective capacity. By and by this will so far be

accomplished, that the prophets and other teachers of the people will

begin to put them in a consideration of their sentiments, and the

amendment of their lives, in their sacrifices. This will bring on

frequent rebukes of hypocrisy in them; and contrasts between mere

heartless offerings and a genuine holiness of life, that relatively

sink the importance of sacrifice, and sometimes appear to almost sink

it out of sight, as a thing of little account. Indeed we are made to

feel, before the prophetic era is closed up, that sacrifice is getting

to be well nigh outgrown, or superseded, by a more reflective way of

exercise, that is moderated and guided by truth.

Now that any such religious progress could have been accomplished under

a training of expiatory sacrifice appears to be quite impossible. The

giving of evils to God to obtain the release of evils, is a practice so

nearly akin to superstition, so barren of all right sentiment, so

little likely to stimulate habits of personal conviction, that we

rather look for a lapse into fetichism under it. Such a kind of

sacrifice requires nothing obviously but the placation of God by a

contribution of the necessary evils, and they may as well be

contributed in one feeling as another. Enough that they are

forthcoming, no matter in what feeling, if only the due penance be

made.. Under a plan of sacrifice contrived to work on the sentiments of

the worshipers, and quicken germs of holy feeling in them, a different

result might be effected,--never under sacrifices of expiation.

To bear out these strictures, and show that they are verified by facts,

I will refer to only a few of the many scripture citations that might

be offered. Thus, taking one example from the historic books, we find

that Saul, an overgrown child of superstition, offers a sacrifice on

two several occasions in his own way, disregarding God's appointed way

and even his special command,--in the first instance, because, in going

to battle, he wants to "make supplication to the Lord;" [111] and in

the second, because, having gained a victory, he wants te honor God in

a grand ovation of sacrifice--whereupon Samuel meets him in sharp

rebuke, saying, [112] "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt

offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold

(this appears to be an already accepted proverb,) to obey is better

than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The same sentiment is reiterated many times by David, [113] testifying

his readiness to yield God what is better than all sacrifice, an

obedient heart. In the Psalm first -mentioned, he uses, out of his own

personal feeling, just the language that is afterwards applied to

Christ, [114] "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears

hast thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not

required. Then said I, lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is

written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God, yea, thy law is within

my breast." As if it were every thing, even at the stage of development

then reached, to have God's law in the heart; sacrifices practically

nothing--"The sacrifices of God a broken spirit." Isaiah holds the same

sentiment in a strain of indignant rebuke, [115] --"To what purpose is

the multitude of your sacrifices unto me saith the Lord? I am full of

the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. Bring no more

vain oblations. Wash you, and make you clean, put away the evil of your

doings from before mine eyes." And for them who will receive such

counsel, he adds the promise of a lustral effect or cleansing that mere

expiations do not even think of--"Though your sins be as scarlet, they

shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall

be as wool." Jeremiah and Amos make the same remonstrance. [116] Micah

turns the point of his rebuke directly down upon expiation itself;

alluding to the manner in which the heathens offer their children, and

suggesting a parallel between the superstitions of his own people in

their heartless ostentations and penances of sacrifice, and the

expiations of the false gods. [117] "Wherewith shall I come before the

Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with

burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased

with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I

give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the

sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, man, what is good; and what doth

the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to

walk humbly with thy God."

When the Prophets, who are the preachers of the old religion, are found

speaking of its rites in this way, two things are evident; first, that

the rites are very much outgrown by the moral and spiritual ideas

developed; and secondly, that no such growth in reflective capacity has

been accomplished, under any stimulus received from the placation of

God by expiatory sacrifices.

7. The uses of blood in sacrifice have no such connection with an

expiatory office, as appears to be supposed in the common modes of

speaking Uses of blood not expiatory. concerning it. Something we say,

must bleed, sin must draw blood before it can be forgiven--"without

shedding of blood there is no remission." The blood is spoken of, and

the bloody rites, and the bloody sweat, and the cross dripping blood,

as if some dreadful inquest were gone forth against the world, and

nothing could sate the divine anger but to see blood flow for a ransom.

Now all such impressions are un.. historic and exactly contrary to the

scripture ideas of blood; they carry, in fact, a strong scent of

superstition. There is no vindictive figure in the scripture uses of

blood. It is not death, but life, that is in it. Hedged about by walls

of prohibition, as regards all common uses, it is made to be a holy

element to men's feeling, that when it is applied, in the offering, it

may seem to purify and quicken every thing it touches. As the blood is

the life, so it is to be life-giving; a symbol of God's inward

purifying and regenerating baptism in the remission of sins. The

associations of blood are to have no such appalling, fateful hue as

expiation supposes, or as they might get from battle-fields, and

scaffolds, and the stains of midnight murder; it is not to be the blood

that cries to God from the ground, but the blood that speaketh better

things than that of Abel--peace, forgiveness, holiness, and life. And

in just this view it is, that blood becomes a type of so great

significance, in the higher uses of the Christly sacrifice itself-it is

used, in this manner, not because it signifies expiation, but because

God's promise, and forgiving, purifying love are in it as an element of

life.

8. It is a fact worthy of distinct attention, that the passover

sacrifice has certainly nothing of expiation in it. The passover not

expiatory. This is the sacrifice that Christ is celebrating when he

institutes his supper, and the blessing of the bread and wine in this

first observance of the supper is probably the closing scene of the

passover observance itself. Here it is that Christ, taking the cup,

says,--"This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed, for many,

for the remission of sins." And again, when it is mentioned at the

crucifixion, as another point of correspondence, "that it might be

fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken," the reference made is to

the passover lamb. [118] And what is a more practical evidence of the

close affiliation of the passover and the work of Christ, the passing

by of the destroying angel, wherever the door-posts are found sprinkled

with the blood of the lamb, is a good and expressive type, or symbol,

of the deliverance of souls by the blood of Christ. And yet there is

clearly no thought of expiation for sin in the passover rite. It is

given simply as a pledge of favor and deliverance to the people, and is

continued afterwards not as an expiatory, but as a commemorative and

partly festive rite. "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and

in the seventh day, [the passover] shall be a feast unto the Lord. And

thou shalt shew thy son, in that day, saying--This is done because of

that which the Lord did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt." [119]

Finding thus no reference whatever, in the rite, to an. expiation of

sin, how much shall we expect to find in the grand passover grace of

Christ himself, taken as a continuance of it, and represented by the

Christian supper taken from it?

9. Observe in, this connection how these rites of blood, or bloody

sacrifice, are connected habitually with all the most joyous and

grandest religious The festivities of sacrifices against expiation.

festivities. All the pomps, jubilees, historic commemorations, public

reformations, national deliverances, are celebrated in rivers of blood,

and lift their joy, by the smoke of burnt offerings, coupled with

processions of music and shouts of praise. In this way, the sacrifices

get invested with associations that make the phrase "sacrifices of joy"

synonymous with sacrifice itself. Thus David celebrates the preparation

made for the building of the temple, in the sacrifice of a thousand

bullocks, and a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, and the people eat

and drink "before the Lord on that day, with joy and gladness." [120]

Solomon again celebrates the dedication of the temple, in a grand

festivity of sacrifice, continued for a whole week, in which twenty

thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep are offered.

[121] Hezekiah's feast of reformation and his passover that followed,

[122] are celebrated in the same profusion of blood, and sacrifice, and

joy. In all which it is sufficiently evident, that burnt offerings and

rites of blood are not associated, whether in the passover institution

or elsewhere, with notions of penal sanction for sin, or contributed as

expiations to avert God's anger on account of it.

10. It is important, as a final consideration, to notice that, where

the rite of sacrifice bears a look of expiation, and the instances are

taken as facts of expiation, a closer examination shows, in every case,

that the impression is not supported by the transaction. The The

sacrifice of Job. sacrifice of Job for his sons may be taken as an

example. As they are feasting, and as it would seem roistering in

excess from day to day, he is afflicted with concern for them, and goes

before God with his daily offering on their account, saying" It may be

that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." [123] But

this, at most, is a supplicatory, not an expiatory offering; for he is

even hoping, it will be observed, that so great sin may not have been

committed; and the mere contingency of sin is certainly no fit occasion

for expiation. As we just now saw, in the case of Saul, sacrifice was

even commonly considered to be a way of prayer.

Besides this sacrifice of Job, I find no other historic instance or

example, where there is even so much as a semblance of the expiatory

character. But there is a complete day's-work of sacrifice

circumstantially prescribed, a great day of atonement, sometimes called

The great called day of expiation without expiation. "the great day of

expiation," sometimes the day, where the remembrance of sins, once a

year, is religiously observed, and where, as it is commonly believed,

expiation is the simple and sole office of the observance. Here, if any

where, the fact of an expiatory sacrifice will be found. I shall

therefore conclude my investigation of this very important question, by

a careful review of the solemnities of the day referred to, as they are

detailed in the record of its institution.

It is a day specially devoted, we shall see, to the guilty and bad

state of sin end the sublime need it creates of a reconciliation with

God. The intention plainly is to make it the most serious and

impressive day of the year; a day of strong conviction and, if

possible, of hearty repentance and true turning unto God. A whole

chapter and a long one, [124] is occupied with a specification of the

observances. But we shall be struck, in the review of them, not with

any discovery of an expiatory element, but with the fact, that every

thing is ordered with such a manifestly artistic study and skill, to

beget, in minds too crude for the reflective modes of exercise, a whole

set of impressions answering to those of the christian doctrine of

salvation; the holiness of God, the uncleanness and deep guilt of sin,

and the faith of God's forgiving mercy. The whole day, from sunset to

sunset, as Jahn describes it, is to be a day of strict fasting. All the

common works of life are to cease, and the people are to have it as a

day in which to "afflict their souls." Not that, by such

self-affliction, an expiatory penance or pain is to be suffered for

sin. The same expression is familiarly used by us in reference to

fasting, with no thought certainly of expiation. It simply means that,

with and by help of it, we may settle our mind into a just impression

of the unworthiness and guiltiness of our sin, and feel it as we ought

in the sorrow of a true repentance. We do not afflict ourselves that

God may be placated by our pains, but we choke down the appetites, we

put the body under by a violent downward thrust, and proclaim a truce

to the strivings of gain, that, in stillness and before God, we may

receive a just impression of our ill-desert as sinners.

Having the day fenced about in this manner, and devoted to such

purposes, all the rites of the day are contrived to give it effect. A

kind of fundamental conception which lies back of all and colors every

thing in the feeling, is that there is a universal, overspreading

uncleanness to be removed,--"because of the uncleanness of the children

of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins." It

is as if every thing handled, touched, breathed upon, or even looked

upon by them, had taken some defilement from them; "the holy

sanctuary," "the tabernacle of the congregation," "the altar," "the

priests," and "all the people of the congregation;" all which are

accordingly to be atoned, or purified, in turn. And the rites of the

day are all so ordered as to produce the profoundest impression

possible of the separateness, or holiness of God; also to encourage the

faith of his acceptance, and of the actual remission; that is, of the

removal or cleansing of, the sin.

The high priest forbidden, on pain of death to enter the holy of

holies, the sacred recess of the temple where God dwells, on any other

day of the year, is this day to go in and be accepted there for himself

and the people. This he is to do, putting the people back even from the

tabernacle of the congregation, that they may not come too nigh, while

their sin is upon them. He is to be anointed and sanctified for this,

with a particular ointment, not to be made or used for any other

purpose on pain of death.h. [125] And the incense he is to offer is

made by a divine recipe, and is to be kept sacred in the same manner,

for this particular use. [126] And the blood he is to sprinkle on the

mercy-seat, and the altar, and the tabernacle of the congregation, is

made sacred, as was just now observed, by a fixed separation, under the

same penalty, from all common uses; because it has in it the sacred

mystery of life. The offerings too, the bullock that is offered for the

priest, and the goat that is offered for the people, are permitted, in

no part, to be eaten, as in the ordinary and more festive celebrations

but are to be carried outside of the camp, or city, and there to be

wholly burned; because they are supposed to bear the taint of the sin

upon them. And to make the impression more complete, that the sin is

taken away, the men who carry out the offerings to burn them, come

back, as unclean, publicly washing them selves for their cleansing.

And, to make the removing of the sin more impressive, it is

dramatically represented, by the introduction of another goat beside

the one that is offered, on the head of which the priest is to confess

and representatively place all the sins of the people, and which is to

be driven out alive, bearing "on him all their iniquities, into a land

not inhabited." And then, as the man who drove out the goat, having

such uncleanness upon him, must be supposed to have suffered defilement

in consequence, he is to return and wash himself, in token of his

cleansing.

And the conclusion of all is, not that certain penalties for sin are

satisfied, or removed by expiation, but that the sin itself is covered,

or taken away. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for

you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the

Lord."

I do not, of course, affirm that every worshiper concerned in the rites

of the day is ipso facto justified, born of God. In all such rites of

the altar, two results are concerned, going along, or designed to go,

together, but under very different conditions. First there is to be a

ceremonial cleansing, which is wrought absolutely, every person

concerned being made ceremonially clean. And secondly, there is or is

designed to be, a moral and spiritual cleansing, wrought implicitly, or

transactionally; every thing as regards exercise and impression being

adjusted to favor, and make it the privilege of the worshiper, if only

he, on his part, will offer his heart to it. If he takes the sense of

his uncleanness with a true feeling, if he is so cast down by it that

he wants to comfort himself in seeing all most sacred things offered

for his sin; if he truly believes that God, in the holy of holies,

receives him, and that what the scape-goat signifies is a confidence

truly given him; then he is more than ceremonially clean; the seeds of

a better life are quickened in his heart. And this is what the promise

signifies; it speaks of a privilege given, not of a fact

accomplished,--"that ye may be clean from all your sins before the

Lord."

There is then I conclude, for that is the result to which we are

brought by this very careful inquiry, no such thing as expiation in the

sacrifices Result, how honorable to the Hebrew Scriptures. of the Old

Testament religion. And I hardly need say how great a satisfaction it

is, and what strength it contributes to the evidences of this ancient,

or ante-christian dispensation of God, to find that it is clear of a

notion so abhorrent to all right feeling, and so essentially

dishonorable to God. And the discovery is the more satisfactory, that

it puts so wide a gulf of distance between this ancient, divine

institute, and the crudities of barbarism and superstition that infest

the sacrifices of all the contemporary and even subsequently developed

religions of paganism; proving, at once, the immense superiority it has

to all such growths of superstition, and establishing, as it were by

incontrovertible evidence, its essentially divine origin.

It is scarcely necessary, after this extended exposition of the Old

Testament sacrifices, to show, by a distinct No expiation, of course,

in the sacrifice of Christ. argument, that there is no such thing as

expiation, in the proper and defined sense of the term, in the

sacrifice of Christ. Only two or three passages occur to me in the New

Testament, that even appear to allow such a construction, without a

look of violence. Thus when Caiaphas [127] "thought it expedient that

one should die for the people," and so "prophesied" verbally, without

inspiration, I think it likely that he was contriving how the murder of

Christ, in the pious pretext of an expiation for the people, was

altogether expedient; and probably enough too, he believed in

expiations; but it does not follow that he would be a reliable teacher

of Christian doctrine. The conception of Paul [128] that "Christ is

made a curse for us," is cited often as a text for expiation. But the

meaning is exhausted, when he is conceived to simply come into the

corporate state of evil, and bear it with us--faithful unto death for

our recovery. The text most commonly cited as a conclusive and

indubitable assertion of expiation, is that which was just now referred

to--"for without shedding of blood there is no remission." [129] As if

the word blood" were to be taken with all our uncircumcised

associations of murder and death and terror upon it, not as a life

giving and restoring word; and as if the word "remission" were to have

our lightest, most superficial, merely human meaning of a letting go;

when we know that, in order to really mean any thing in religion, it

must signify an executed remission, an inward, spiritual release or

cleansing. Suppose then that our great apostle had said, what to him

signifies exactly the same thing, "for without the life-renewing blood

there is no cleansing for sin." It is difficult to speak with due

patience of this unhappy text, so long compelled to grind in the mill

of expiation; turning out, always, in the slow rotation of centuries,

this creak of harsh announcement, that God must have some bloody

satisfaction, else he can not let transgression go!

Sometimes it is imagined, that there is a peculiar and most sacred

impression of God and his law made upon us, by the assertion of

expiation, or penal The supposed effects of expiation remain without

expiation. satisfaction; as for example, in this text. There stands, it

is said, the inexorable, awe-inspiring fidelity of God, and the

conscience-piercing word that tells of the immovable necessity by which

he is holden, wakens an impression of too great power and benefit to be

willingly lost. A theologic friend, whose opinions I much respect, can

not break loose from the dogma of expiation, or penal satisfaction,

though it confessedly infringes somewhat on his rational convictions

and even his moral sentiments, because he imagines, in the impression

just referred to, that it must have some transcendental virtue, which,

without knowing exactly whence it comes, or how it works, proves it to

be from God, Now there certainly is an impression of great value made

upon us by this same text, and it is the deeper, both for the

conscience and the heart, when it is taken with no moral offense of

expiation, or penal satisfaction, included. And yet the reference of it

to God's inexorable fidelity, and the sense of an immovable necessity

by which he is holden, is here made good as before. Here stands, fast

by God's throne, the everlasting must, commanding even righteousness to

suffer, that justifying grace may have its way. For there comes out

here, in grand, appalling mystery, the immovable necessity and

everlasting fact, that goodness in all moral natures has a doom of

bleeding on it, allowing it to conquer only as it bleeds. We can not

even contrive a way for it to be, in this or any other universe,

without having pains to suffer and deaths to undergo. Why, the simple

thought of ascending into good, puts us, forthwith, in a condition of

great cost, and if we should come off without the shedding of blood,

that will at least be a good type of what we are required to suffer.

Our hatred of sin is a pain, our struggle with it painful every way.

Pity is itself a pain, beneficence for pity's sake a state of war. If

we give ourselves to truth, truth is unpopular, and we may have to die

for it. Good in no shape, whether of love or mercy, can press upon

evil, without being maligned, or conspired against; and it is well if

the evil is not exasperated, even up to the point of phrensy and bloody

violence, Good laws and liberties cost blood. Slavery is vanquished and

wild rebellion crushed, only by what years of suffering, and how many

blood-sodden fields of conflict, The inexorable law is upon us--"And

without shed. ding of blood there is no remission." All good conquers

by a cross, and without a cross it is nothing. Ascending hence to God,

we go not above this doom, this inexorable law, but simply go up to the

point where it culminates, and whence it begins. The eternal

righteousness of God has in it this inherent doom of war. It must

suffer, it must bleed, and only so can reign. The cross is in it, even

before the foundation of the world. We have, in our theodicy, all

manner of ingenious showings, but the short account of God's great way

and work is, that goodness and right must propagate goodness and right;

and must therefore create souls capable of goodness and right; which

also, being capable of badness and wrong, will infallibly propagate

badness and wrong. And this is evil--evil to be mastered, cleansed,

forgiven. Evil therefore lowers over the eternal possibilities of God,

and God is linked, in that manner, by a prior, unalterable necessity to

conflict and suffering; so that if the good that is in him will get

into men's bosoms, it must bleed into them. "Ought not Christ to

suffer" "For it became him, [it was even a fixed necessity upon him,]

for whom are all things, and by whom. are all things, in bringing many

sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through

sufferings." And so returns upon us, still again, the same great text

of expiation--"and without shedding of blood there is no

remission"--returns with a face wholly turned away from expiation, and

yet with no abatement of the power. What, in fact, can be more

impressive, than the inherently tragic fidelity of good--that which, at

the summit of omnipotence, will not swerve from being confronted with

evil, and suffering for it, and bleeding to cleanse it?

We are brought on thus, finally, to the conclusion, that expiation is

no Christian idea, and is not contained in the Christian Scriptures.

Excluding Atonement resumed and shown to be at-one-ment. it then, as a

false third meaning given to the Hebrew word cover, we return to the

two others, assigned for it in our English translation, atonement and

propitiation, and resume the discussion of these, at the point where we

left them, in the beginning of the chapter.

To atone, or make atonement then, is to remove transgression itself, or

reconcile the transgressor. It fulfills, in a figure, the original

physical sense of the word to cover; as when, for example, the ark was

covered with pitch. It is such a working on the bad mind of sin as

at-ones it, reconciles it to God, covers up and hides forever the wrong

of transgression, assures and justifies the transgressor. In one word,

constantly applied to it in the atonements of the old ritual, it makes

clean. The effect is wholly subjective, being a change wrought in all

the principles of life and characters and dispositions of the soul.

A passage from the Epistle to the Romans [130] is sometimes cited in

support of a different conclusion--"For, if, when we were enemies, we

were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being

reconciled shall we be saved by his life." This reconciliation denotes

simply a change of condition, it is said, not of character; a being

brought upon the new footing of pardon; for it is something

accomplished "when we were enemies." The reconciliation therefore

signifies the placation of God, and not our restoration to God. What

then remains, following the same style of argument, under the

conditions of time, but to infer that our salvation by Christ is to be

accomplished wholly by his life; that is, by his second life, after the

resurrection? Whereas, if we can take a more dignified way of

construction, we shall understand the apostle to be only raising an

argument of degrees, for the confidence of our complete salvation--For

if when we were yet enemies God undertook our reconciliation by the

death of his Son, much more, being now reconciled, will he stand by us,

since he lives again to finish the salvation begun.

Atonement then, as applied to Christ, is just what is figured so

carefully in the atonement of the ancient sacrifice. For as every thing

about the temple was reconsecrated and made clean, by the sacred things

offered in the sacrifice--the sacred incense burned before the

mercy-seat, and the sacred blood sprinkled on whatever had taken the

defilement of our sin--so the sprinkling of the far more sacred blood

of Jesus, dying as the Lamb of God, in the volunteer obedience of his

vicarious sacrifice, reconsecrates the law broken by our sin,

dishonored and defiled by our defilement, and by its life-touch in our

feeling and faith, purges our consciousness from dead works, to serve

the living God. And as the old sacrifice made a remembrance of sins

every year, and opened a way, once a year, into the holy of holies, so

Christ, by an offering once for all, has made a reconciliation that is

perfect and complete; so that we may all, as being now made priests

unto God and ourselves, enter at all times and with boldness, into the

holiest, by the blood of Jesus. That altar blood, or sprinkling,

purified the patterns of the heavenly things; this other, holier

sprinkling, the heavenly things themselves; viz., God's throne, law,

and truth--every thing defiled by our transgressions--and also our

transgressions themselves.

The true Christian idea of propitiation is not far hence. The pagan

color of the word is taken off; Propitiation and prevailing prayer.

there is no such thought as that God is placated or satisfied, by the

expiatory pains offered him. It supposes, first, a subjective atoning,

or reconciliation in us; and then, as a farther result, that God is

objectively propitiated, or set in a new relation of welcome and peace.

Before he could not embrace us, even in his love. His love was the love

of compassion; now it is the love of complacency and permitted

friendship. This objective propitiation of God answers exactly to

another objective conception, commonly held without any thought of

correspondence. Thus we have a way of saying, as regards successful

prayer, that it prevails with God. Is it then our meaning that it turns

God's mind, makes him better, more favorable, more inclined to bestow

the things we seek? Probably enough many persons think so, and it is

much better that they should, than to conclude, with many others, that

it accomplishes nothing; obtaining no gifts that would not have been

given as certainly without any prayer at all. But the true conception

is this--that God has instituted an economy of prayer to work on

Christian souls and brotherhoods and churches, encouraging them to come

and make suit to him, for the blessings they need. This draws them

nearer to him than before, chastens their spirit, kindles their holy

desires and aspirations, unites them to aims of mercy like his own,

brings them into a more complete faith, bands them together, two, or

three, or many, in a more living fellowship of heart; and so, having

gotten them, by this economy, into a state more configured to

himself--which is the very object for which he orders the world--he is

now able to grant, or dispense, things which before he could not, and

he is prevailed with. Is he then better than before? is he induced to

alter his plans? No, by no means. But he has now new subjects, or

subjects in a new relationship, and if he were now to carry on all the

courses of events, just as if the prayers were not, he would even

violate a first principle of nature, that every event shall have its

own consequences. Prayers are events like all others, and what forbids

that, having their consequences, the consequences should be answers?

God then is propitiated by a change of relationship, that permits him

to greet the souls whom Christ has reconciled, in cordial welcome, as

he otherwise could not --just as he is prevailed with in prayers, that

are Objective propitiation supposes subjective faith. new conditions

prepared for new blessings. And that this is the true conception is

most effectually shown by the standard text itself, in that particular

clause which was reserved to this point of the argument [131] --"Whom

God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood."

The apostle does not say, it will be observed--"propitiation through

his blood"--as the scheme of expiation requires, but "propitiation

through faith in his blood." No propitiation therefore reaches the

mark, that does not, on its way, reconcile, or bring into faith, the

subject for whom it is made. There is no God-welcome prepared, which

does not open the guilty heart to welcome God.

The apostle, in this manner, takes away from the Greek word he uses,

which it must be confessed is commonly used by the pagan writers in a

way that implies expiation, any possibility of such a meaning; for they

have never a thought of any such thing as an expiation through faith;

and, what is more, expiation itself excludes the supposition, that any

kind of moral condition is necessary in the subject for whom it is

offered; the very idea being, that it avails, as being a contribution

of evils to obtain the release of evils; not as having now a state of

faith prepared, as a new receptivity for good. I know not how often

this language of the apostle is, quoted, as if it asserted a

propitiation that is accomplished before faith, and wholly apart from

faith; a placation of God that has respect to no human conditions

whatever--precisely that which he carefully and even formally excludes.

Atonement then is a change wrought in us, a change by which we are

reconciled to God. Propitiation is an objective conception, by which

that change, taking place in us, is spoken of as occurring

representatively in God. Just as guilty minds, thrown off from God,

glass their feeling representatively in God, imagining that God is

thrown off from them; or just as we say that the sun rises, instead of

saying, what would be so very awkward to us, and yet is the real truth,

that we ourselves rise to the sun. The necessity and uses of this

objective language will be considered more at large, in the remaining

chapter, and therefore need not be insisted on here, as in reference to

the single word propitiation.

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[100] Romans v, 11.

[101] Not even Dr. Magee, when asserting expiation, will allow that God

is made placable by it, insisting that He simply appoints it "as the

means by which to bestow forgiveness." And when it is urged that the

expiation can have no use "but to appease a Being who otherwise would

not forgive us," he takes shelter under his ignorance, from a

conclusion so revolting, and answers--"I know not, nor does it concern

me to know, in what manner the sacrifice of Christ is connected with

the forgiveness of sins."--(Vol. 1, p. 19.) When however the crisis of

the argument, at this point, is gone by, he recovers from his ignorance

and is able to assert very positively that the justice of God is

satisfied by the sacrifice of expiation.

[102] Fox's Journal, Glasgow edition, p. 262.

[103] Lev. viii, 15; 2 Chron. xxix, 24; Ezek. xlv, 20; Dan. ix, 24.

[104] 2 Chron. xxx, 18; Jer. xviii, 23.

[105] Ex. xxix, 36,-xxx, 10; Numb. xxxv, 33; 1 Sam. iii, 14; Ezek.

xliii, 20-26; Isa. vi, 7.

[106] Exodus xxix, 37.

[107] Exodus xxxii, 30.

[108] Numbers xvi, 46.

[109] 2 Chronicles, xxxiv.

[110] Ezra x, 1-15.

[111] 1 Samuel xiii, 12.

[112] 1 Samuel xv, 10-22.

[113] As in Psalms xl, 1, and li.

[114] Hebrews x, 6-9.

[115] Isaiah i, 10-18.

[116] Jeremiah vii, 21-23; Amos v, 21-24.

[117] Micah vi, 6-8.

[118] Exodus xii, 46.

[119] Exodus xiii, 7-8.

[120] 1 Chronicles xxix, 21-22.

[121] 2 Chron. vii, 5.

[122] 2 Chron. xxix and xxx.

[123] Job i, 5.

[124] Leviticus xvi.

[125] Exodus xxx, 30-33.

[126] Exodus xxx, 34-38.

[127] John xi, 50.

[128] Galatians iii, 13.

[129] Heb. ix, 22.

[130] Rom. v, 10.

[131] Rom. iii, 28.

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CHAPTER III.

PRACTICAL USES AND WAYS OF PREACHING.

AFTER we have gone over the whole ground of the gospel as a work of

vicarious sacrifice, settled the doctrine, found the meaning of the

Scripture symbols, there still remain some very important practical

questions respecting the modes of preaching and use. Neither can these

questions be dispatched, by what may seem to be the ready and simple

conclusion, that we are to preach and apply to our own lives just what

we have found to be true, neither more nor less. For to preach what is

true concerning a matter, and to preach the matter itself Truth

concerning Christ not Christ. may be very different things. So if we

speak of use, or application to our own spiritual state, we may only

fool ourselves in the endeavor to get our benefit out of what is true

concerning the gospel, when all true benefit lies in a right

appropriation of the gospel itself. As concerning Christ, we have made

up our account of his work, in the conclusion that he is in the world

to be the moral power of God upon it; but it does not follow that we

shall preach him, or receive him, in the most effectual way, by

contriving always how to be in the power, and muster the power upon us.

His truth may be most powerful, when we think least of the power, and

have our mind wholly turned away, in love and trust, from ourselves. If

I have a much honored and powerful friend, by whose great character I

would like to mode, my own, I shall not do it probably by contriving

always, artificially and consciously, how to get his efficacy upon me;

but I shall be much with him, and putting faith in him, I shall breathe

the atmosphere he makes, even as I do the air without contriving how to

live by it; I shall admire his sentiments and his bearing in great

crises of trial; I shall find a pleasure in meeting his wishes, and

doing what I may, to advance the cause that engages him. Thinking

nothing thus of getting a power upon me from his person, I shall be

only the more completely pervaded and molded by his power. A glance in

this direction is sufficient to show, that the preaching and personal

uses of the gospel are a subject widely distinct from the truth

concerning it.

The gospel will of course be preached and applied to use in modes that

have some agreement with what it is conceived to be. Thus if Christ be

accepted Various kinds of preaching. only as a great moral teacher and

reformer, the preaching over of his preaching, as recorded in the four

gospels, will be the main thing, and almost nothing will be made of his

personal life and death, and the reconciling purpose of his mission.

Preaching will be teaching as the Master taught, even as the pupils of

the Academy, the Porch, or the Peripatetic order, followed the school

of their master. The after developments of his mission and the

significance of it, as completed by the cross, and opened by the Holy

Spirit--just that which the apostles received and pub. lished, when

they preached him as the Saviour of sinners--will be virtually ignored.

Precisely what made the day of pentecost will be omitted.

If the gospel is conceived to be merely an array of legal motives

addressed to interest, and so contrived as to cast a preponderating

balance always on the side of right choices, then there will be cogent

appeals to the conscience, and the fears, and the: love of happiness,

and so, to the will-power of the; subjects addressed. And then, for

such as choose rightly, Christ will be shown to have prepared a ground

of forgiveness; and beyond that as the principal account of his

mission, will be conceived to have no particular agency in the

transformations to be wrought. This kind of preaching will take on a

strenuous air, and will sometimes stir great commotions where only

motions would be better. The piety thus resulting will be legal; a kind

of will-work, too little freshened by the graceful affections, too

little enriched by great sentiments, lifted by no inspirations, save

when slipping, by chance, the legal detentions, it seizes the forbidden

fruit of liberty.

Another characteristic mode of preaching is produced by preaching a

formula, supposed. to be the very equivalent and substantial import of

the gospel. And we have abundance of complaints, -from such as mean to

be faithful in this way, that Christ is now so little preached. They

mean that Christ is not preached as an expiation, or a satisfaction to

God's justice, or an exposition of God's abhorrence to sin. The

substance of their complaint is really that a formula is not preached

instead of Christ; that, too, a formula so painfully untrue as to make

itself felt more often as a violation of natural feeling, than as a

saving power upon it. If only this be preaching Christ, it will be a

long time before he is preached in a way to satisfy this kind of

complaint.

The very idea of preaching Christ by formula, even if the true formula

were developed, is a great mistake; for whatever mind, goes into

limitation or incrustation under formula becomes sterile, and the

gospel on which it perpetually hammers will be meager, and weak, and

dry. All the ten thousand flaming truths that are crowding in, as

troops of glory, on the thoughts of a soul in liberty, asking as it

were to be uttered faster than the Sundays will let them, are

suppressed, or shut back, by that inevitable little sentence of wisdom,

which has concluded every thing. I will not deny that some general

account or scheme of the gospel plan may be convenient, for the mind to

fall back upon and gather itself into, for the minting and: due

authentication of its issues. But a formula to be preached, and

maintained as a gospel, is a very different matter--all the worse, if

it has only been received pedagogically, and been set as the hand-organ

tune which the school is engaged to play. Any formula is a necessary

abortion, which is not the formulization of Christ discovered by the

heart, and verified by a deep working Christian experience.

Let us see if we can arrive at some better and more adequate conception

of preaching. Christ is here, according to the doctrine of this

treatise, to be the moral The true kind described. power of God on the

world, so the power of God unto salvation. But if any one should set

himself to preaching only this, turning it round and round, citing

texts for it, and arguing down objections, he would only postpone the

power he undertakes to assert. Christ will be the power, only as he is

himself in that which makes him the power; viz., all that he was, did,

and expressed, in his life and death and resurrection--Saviour of

sinners and Judge of the world. We have seen him, for example,

fulfilling the love principle in vicarious suffering for us; revealing,

in his obedience, God's everlasting obedience to law; adding vigor to

law by his tremendous enforcements; doing honor to God's retributive

justice, by subjecting himself to all the corporate evils it brings on

the human state; and by all these methods, declaring so impressively

the righteousness of God, as to prepare the glorious possibility and

fact of a free justification--these are all great truths for preaching,

greater each of them singly in its power, than the general truth which

includes them all; and yet when these again are subdivided, and run out

into all the thousand facts and subjects included, they will ring even

the more impressively in each one, because it is farther off from what

is general and closer to the concrete matter of Christ's personal life.

The subjects are endless, and the power inexhaustible.

I think we shall best conceive the subject matter of preaching and in

that sense the mode, if we specify three distinct elements which must

be included, and are necessary to the genuine power.

1. There must be a descent to human nature in its lower plane of

self-love and interested motive, and a beginning made with the

conscience, the God's law and justice to be preached. fears, and the

boding expectations of guiltiness. To convince, intimidate, waken out

of stupor, shake defiant wrong out of its confidences, must be

deliberately undertaken and, if possible, effectively done. There must

be no delicacy here; as if God's love and the vicarious ministry of

Jesus were too softly good, to do any so rugged and severe thing as to

punish. Christ's own doctrine of future punishment, Christ as the judge

of the world, all that belongs to God's law, all that will be done by

God's justice, the very dies irae of the wrath to come, must be

faithfully declared, and that in a manner that indicates conviction. Of

course there must be no violence, under pretext of suffering no

delicacy, but a manner of tenderness that indicates due sensibility in

a matter so appalling. The true conception is, that as God's justice is

a co-factor with his mercy, it is to be set forth and magnified and

made real in the same way, and for the same purpose. And no better

model can be taken for this than Christ himself. Nor is any thing more

certain, than that whoever gives in to the feeling that Christ is

outgrown in this matter, has really no gospel to preach--his vocation

is gone. For if Christ did not understand himself here, what reason is

there to believe that he understood himself at all? In this dilemma one

may think he has a gospel, and a specially superlative kind of gospel,

but it will be nerveless and without sound; like the headless drums

that marching children sometimes carry, beating on the rim. God is a

just God, and if he is not shown to be, but only to be a beautiful God,

or a gentle and loving God, sin will be abundantly reconciled to him

staying where it is. There is no salvation here, and no power of

salvation is wanted. There may be a dressing of the soul in what is

called beauty of character, but the character will be only a beautiful

affectation. But we pass to the saving side of the gospel, that in

which the personal power of Christ's sacrifice is specially designed to

operate. And here we shall find--

2. That a very great and principal office of preaching will consist in

a due exhibition of the Christian facts. The facts of Christ's life to

be magnified. The power is to be personal, and will therefore lie in

the facts of the personal life. These facts therefore are pre�minently

the good news that composes the gospel; requiring heralds, or preachers

[precones,] to go abroad and publish it. Apart from these facts, the

great subjects we have spoken of are nothing. They spring out of the

facts and have no basis of reality beside. Hence also it is that in the

Apostles' creed, or first recorded confession of Christ, nothing is

included but the simple outline facts of his life; no other and better

formula being yet conceived or attempted. Here accordingly is the

original and truly grand office of preaching; viz., in the setting

forth and fit representation of these gospel facts.

They begin with the grand primal fact of the incarnation; for it is

only in that, and by that mystery, that the person arrives whose

history is to be entered into the world. Viewed in this light, the

person arriving is not merely a man, but, as we must believe, a

veritable God-man. Taken as being simply a man, the facts of his life

would certainly be remarkable and valuable, he would only be a much

greater and more incredible mystery, considering the morally perfect,

and therefore superhuman character he is in, than he is when conceived

as an abnormal, extra-mundane person, let into the world from above it,

to fulfill a specially divine mission. All the after facts change color

and consequence, accordingly, as they are viewed in one mode or the

other. Considered as the God-man, there is not a single fact, or scene,

in the history which, fitly conceived, does not yield some lesson of

power; the infancy; the thirty years of silent preparation; the recoil

of the poor human nature, called the temptation, when the work begins;

every healing, every miracle, every friendship, every commendation,

every denunciation, the lot of poverty, the hour of oppressed feeling,

the weariness and sleep, the miraculous hem of his garment, the

transfiguration, the prayers, the amazing assumptions of a common glory

and right with the Father, the agony, the trial, the crucifixion, the

resurrection, the appearings and tender teachings afterwards, and last

of all the ascension, followed by the descent of the Spirit to

represent and be himself, according to his promise, a Christ every

where present, every where accessible--no longer limited and localized

in space--in all these and in all he said and taught concerning God,

himself, and us, the preacher is to find staple matter for his

messages. There is almost nothing, even as to his mere manners and

modes, which, if he is truly alive--and no Christian man has a right to

be dead--will not open some gate or crevice into chambers of glory, for

the conscience or the heart.

Here has been one of the great faults or deficiencies in the preaching

of Christ. Too little, by a thousand fold, A great fault of preaching

has been here. has been made of the facts of his life. By some they are

almost never dwelt upon, with the exception, perhaps, of two or three

that could not be utterly passed over; the rest are as if they were

not. Commonly the feeling is not brought close enough to them to find

the life that is in them--what can they signify of importance, after

the main doctrine of all has been decocted? How much easier to preach

the decoction and let the dried herbs of the story go. It might be so,

if they were really dry; but since they are all alive, fresh and

fragrant as a bank of roses, how much better to go and breathe among

them and catch the quickening odors. How little indeed does any

preacher know of the true gospel, who only finds a dull, stale matter,

in the wonderful, morally sublime record of such a character! No good

news will ever go forth out of him. He thinks he has exhausted the

gospel and gotten the whole matter of it in his head, just because he

has gotten nothing, and knows not that there is any thing to get,

besides what his formula contains. He mourns a little, it may be, over

the want of power in his preaching, when in fact there ought to be no

power, because there is no fact in the grand life-history of Jesus that

is alive to him. He fails just where any really high ministry must

begin; viz., in the ability to show forth Christ alive, in the facts

that represent his living personality; thus to raise conviction, thus

to keep interest in a glow, thus to conquer the heart and testify a

Saviour who mediates peace.

I think it would be hardly possible for a preacher of Christ to be too

much in the facts of his life. Only they must be so handled as to raise

great subjects, and kindle the heat of a true fire, as they always may.

The mere doling of these facts, or the setting them off in a garnish of

scene-painting or mock sentiment, or frothy laudation, does not fulfill

the idea of such preaching. Something worthy of God's love, something

deifically great must be found in them, and the feeling must be raised,

that he is personally nigh, rich in his gifts, strong in his majesty,

terrible in his beauty, heavyhearted and tender in the suffering

concern of his love. We come next--

3. To another and more difficult matter, as regards the power of the

gospel in its uses, and the due impression of it, as a way of

salvation; viz., No sufficient gospel without the altar forms. the

right conception and fit presentation of it, under the altar forms

provided for it. For, besides the outward figure of the facts,

occurring under conditions of space and time, and significant to human

feeling in that manner, God has contrived a thought-form, to assist us

in that kind of use which may conduct us into the desired state of

practical reconciliation with himself. In the facts, outwardly

regarded, there is no sacrifice, or oblation, or atonement, or

propitiation, but simply a living and dying thus and thus. The facts

are impressive, the person is clad in a wonderful dignity and beauty,

the agony is eloquent of love, and the cross a very shocking murder

triumphantly met, and if then the question rises, how we are to use

such a history so as to be reconciled by it, we hardly know in what way

to begin. How shall we come unto God by help of this martyrdom? How

shall we turn it, or turn ourselves under it, so as to be justified and

set in peace with God? Plainly there is a want here, and this want is

met by giving a thought-form to the facts which is not in the facts

themselves. They are put directly into the molds of the altar, and we

are called to accept the crucified God-man as our sacrifice, an

offering or oblation for us, our propitiation; so to be sprinkled from

our evil conscience, washed, purged, purified, cleansed from our sin.

Instead of leaving the matter of the facts just as they occurred, there

is a reverting to familiar forms of thought, made familiar partly for

this purpose, and we are told, in brief, to use the facts just as we

would the sin offerings of the altar, and make an altar grace of

them--only a grace complete and perfect, an offering once for all.

According to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the ancient ritual was devised

by God, apart from its liturgical uses, to be the vehicle in words of

the heavenly things in Christ, molds of thought for the world's grand

altar service in Christ the universal offering, regulative conceptions

for the fit receiving and effective use of the gospel.

And so much is there in this that, without these forms of the altar, we

should be utterly at a loss in making any use of the Christian facts,

that would set us in a condition of practical reconciliation with God.

Christ is good, beautiful, wonderful, his disinterested love is a

picture by itself, his forgiving patience melts into my feeling, his

passion rends open my heart, but what is he for, and how shall he be

made unto me the salvation I want? One word--he is my sacrifice--opens

all to me and beholding him, with all my sin upon him, I count him my

offering, I come unto God by him and enter into the holiest by his

blood.

But the principal reason for setting forth the matter of Christ's life

and death as an oblation remains to be stated; viz., the necessity of

somehow Wanted to produce an attitude of objectivity. preventing an

over-conscious state in the receiver. It was going to be a great fault

in the use, that the disciple, looking for a power on his character,

would keep himself too entirely in the attitude of consciousness, or

voluntary self-application. He would be hanging round each fact and

scene, to get some eloquent moving effect from it. And he would not

only study how to get impressions, but, almost ere he is aware of it,

to make them. Just here accordingly it was that the Scripture symbols,

and especially those of the altar service, were to come to oui aid,

putting us into a use of the gospel so entirely objective, as to

scarcely suffer a recoil on our consciousness at all. The sacrificial

offering was in form, an offering wholly to God, even as the smoke

rolls up from the altar and comes not back. The result was that the

worshiper was made clean; that is, according to the political, or

statutory sense; and if, perchance, he was made clean in a deeper

sense, it would be implicitly, just because his mind was going up

wholly to God, with the smoke of his offering. So, when I conceive that

Christ is my offering before God, my own choice Lamb and God's, brought

to the slaying, and that for my sin, my thought moves wholly outward

and upward, bathing itself in the goodness and grace of the sacrifice.

Doubtless there will be a power in it, all the greater power that I am

not looking after power, and that nothing puts me thinking of effects

upon myself.

In this manner coming unto Christ, or to God through Christ, in the

symbols of sacrifice, we make an escape, as it were, from ourselves and

that state of consciousness which is the bane of religion; an escape, I

must frankly admit, which is none the less necessary, when we conceive

that Christ has come into the world, not to expiate sin, but to be a

power upon it; furthermore, an escape which God has provided, to make

him more completely a power. For it is in these symbols that God

contrives to get us out of ourselves into the free state of faith, and

love, and to become the new inspiration of life in our hearts. And

accordingly we should find, in the ready and free use of these symbols,

our best means of grace, if only we could have them clear of

misconstructions that often fatally corrupt their meaning. Oppressed

with guilt, we should turn ourselves joyfully to Christ as the

propitiation for our sins, Christ who hath borne the curse for us,

Christ who knew no sin made sin for us, that we might be made the

righteousness of God in him. We should cry in our prayers; O Lamb of

God that takest away the sins of the world, take away our sins; or

thinking of that sacred blood, by whose drops that fell as touches of

life on the world's grand altar, Calvary, we should cry--wash us, O

Christ, in the blood of thy cross and make us clean; or wanting, in

despair of ourselves, some Helper and Friend to bear the sins we can

not bear ourselves, we should take up tenderly the words of the poet,

if not in his meaning, yet in the meaning which they ought to have--

"My soul looks back to see

The burdens thou didst bear,

When hanging on the accursed tree,

And hopes her guilt was there."

We want, in short, to use these altar terms, just as freely as they are

used by those who accept the formula of expiation, or judicial

satisfaction for sin; in just their manner too, when they are using

them most practically. Indeed, it is one of the enviable advantages of

their scheme that they are able to use them freely; for, when they are

so used, they will not always keep themselves close in the dogmatic

misconstructions put upon them, but will often pour into the heart, in

their true Scripture meaning, as chariots into some pos tern gate that

is not closed. A more subjective gospel, one that looks to effects on

character and the renewing of the life in God, has even a better right

to their use; and they are almost indispensable, to save it from an

otherwise nearly fatal subjectivity.

Nor is there any thing so peculiar in this need of an objective form

for the gospel. We need what is like it Objective terms a first want of

language. every where, and human language is full of it. A very great

part of the terms and expressions of language, and those that are

liveliest and freshest, are such as put into things and facts meanings

which are really not there, but in ourselves. We say that a thing is

painful because we suffer pain from it; putting the pain into the

thing, which is really in ourselves. We say, in the very palpable and

common matters of color, that things are red, blue, white, and the

like, when, as we all know, the colors are in us and not in the things.

Subjectively speaking, we should have to say, awkwardly and

pedantically, that we have sensations of redness, blueness, whiteness,

before the things. We say that a thing has a sweet taste, when the

sweet taste is not in the thing at all, but wholly in ourselves. The

language of Christ, which is about as nearly perfect as it can be,

abounds in these objective representations of subjective facts and

ideas. Glance along the sermon on the mount, looking go farther, and we

get examples like these, "If thy right eye offend thee"--"if thine eye

be evil;" where he has no thought of any thing blamable in the eye, o!

any thing without offending the eye, but only of the lustful, or

grudging soul, that looks through it. "Lead us not into temptation;"

where he means, not that God might lead us into it, but that we need to

be kept from leading ourselves into it. "Lay up for yourselves

treasures in heaven;" where he does not imagine that we have access to

heaven, so that we can put in treasures there, but that we are to get

heavenly treasures garnered in ourselves. Again--"straight is the gate,

broad is the way;" where he seems to say that God's gate of life is

made narrow, and his way of destruction broad. He could not raise any

fit impression, by the real subjective fact, that our perverseness

makes the gate of life narrow and difficult to enter, and the way of

destruction broad and easy; so he puts the case objectively, willing,

even at the expense of an almost seeming reflection upon God, to set us

in a distinct feeling of the fearful alternative we are required to

meet.

To carry these illustrations of the genius of language, and especially

of Scripture language a little farther, and show, on how large a scale,

the forms Hence the Devil, or bad king. of truth are affected by the

instinct of objective representation, I will refer to the devil, or o

diabolos, of the Old and New Testament. Here we have a kind of bad God,

over against the good, who leads the powers of darkness and manages the

interest of evil. But there is no more reason to suppose that God has

created any such being, or that any such really exists, than there is

to suppose that there is a real being called the prince of this world,

or another called antichrist, or two others called Gog and Magog. The

devil is that objective person, whose reality is the sum of all

subjective seductions, or temptations to evil; viz., those of bad

spirits, and those of the corrupted soul itself. These bad spirits,

sometimes called Legion, together with our own bad thoughts, are all

gathered up into a great king of art and mischief and called the devil.

Whether it is done by some instinct of language, or some special

guidance of inspiration, in the use of language, or both, we do not

know; the latter is more probable. But however it came to pass, we can

see that it serves a most important use in the economy of revelation.

In the process of recovery to God, men must be convinced of their sins,

and made thoroughly conscious of their guiltiness, and this requires a

turning of their minds upon themselves in reflection and a state of

piercingly subjective attention to their own ill desert. And yet they

must be taken away, somehow, from a too close, or totally subjective

attention, even to their sins. For if they are to be taken away from

their ill desert and guiltiness, they must be drawn out into a movement

of soul in exactly the opposite direction; viz., in the direction of

faith which is outward. And this exactly is what the grand objective

conception of the devil prepares and facilitates. First, their sin is

all gathered up with its roots and causes into the Bad King conceived

to be reigning without; and then it is permitted the penitent, or the

disciple struggling with his enemy, to conceive that Christ, in whom he

is called to believe, is out in force, to subdue and crush the monster.

And so he is helped away from the torment of a merely reflective state,

even when contending with the sins of his own bosom.

Only two days previous to the writing of this paragraph I was

conversing with a very intelligent and, withal, a truly liberal

Christian friend, who said, as arguing for the existence of the devil,

that he liked to think of such a being, in distinction from thinking

always of his sins, about which he knew very little, and then to hang

his faith on Christ as warring with him, and able to pluck him down;

for this takes in every thing and makes a clean issue, when we do it,

in the simplest manner possible. To which the very obvious reply was,

that for this very purpose God has given us the objective devil of

Scripture to be hated, and conspired against, and by faith cast down,

when the real, multitudinous, inconceivable matter to be thus hated,

conspired against, and by faith cast down, is working subjectively in

ourselves. And, what is more, there is no other conception of the devil

of Scripture that makes him so profoundly real as this; partly because

there is no other that has any look of credibility.

We find then, as we look at language, whether out of the Scriptures or

in, that objective representations are always best for us, most sought

after, and prepared on a very large scale, because they take us away

from mere self-management, and carry us out to rest our hope and faith

in God. If we represented every thing subjectively which is subjective,

we could do it only by using the most awkward and tedious

circumlocutions. In one view, these outward projections of what is

within are not true, and yet they are the more vigorously true for that

reason. Shut up to saying every thing subjectively, our language would

be only a torment.

Any strictly subjective style of religion is vicious. It is moral

self-culture, in fact, and not religion. We The outgoing state is thus

secured. think of ourselves abundantly in the selfishness of our sins.

What we need, above all, is to be taken off the self-center and

centered in God. Ceasing to go by contrivance, we must learn to go by

inspiration; that is, by the free impulse of God in our faith. Hence

the profound importance of the altar symbols, divinely prepared and

fashioned, to be the form of the Christian grace. They compose for us

even a kind of objective religion; that is, a religion operated for us

and before us. In one view they are not true, just as the ten thousand

objective expressions of language referred to are not, and yet there is

nothing so sublimely, healthfully true, in the practical and free uses

of faith, because we are so simple in them, and so completely carried

out of ourselves. Of course we shall be conscious beings still; we must

be conscious always and in every thing we do; but how much does it

signify that we can have an altar and an offering, once for all, where

we can go with our confession, and pay our tender worship, without

thinking, for the time, of any thing but what is before us and is done

for us. Here it is that we drop out self most easily, and come away to

God, in a liberty most perfectly unembarrassed by the habit of our

guilty self-devotion. In the sacrifice we cling to and call our own, we

are respited, and the ceasing from our will, makes us plastic to the

grace that molds us. The new element we are in is peace; we are atoned,

reconciled.

But we encounter, at this point, a very great difficulty, in the fact

that all these Scripture symbols have been so long and dreadfully

misapplied, A great difficulty met. by the dogmatic schemes of

expiation, penal suffering, and judicial satisfaction. Thus, if we

attempt to use them, we are disturbed by the feeling, that neither we,

nor they, will be understood, in any sense that is true. How shall we

venture to speak of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, when even the ritual

sacrifice, on which the figure is based, has been made to signify, not

a confessional offering, or offering of pious devotion, in which the

worshiper is turned to God, but the offering of a substituted victim,

to even the penal account with God, or reconcile God to him? So of all

the other symbols; the lamb is the victim, in the sense that he

suffers; the slaying of the victim is death for death, and the dying of

the victim is pain for pain; when truly nothing was made, either of the

death, or the pain, but only of the offering of some choicest animal,

as a reverently careful act of homage and repentance for sin. The blood

sprinkled here and there is no more the life, that sacred element which

pacifies every thing it touches, but it is the blood of slaughter,

signifying that God is reconciled only when sin draws blood. Even the

bearing of sin by the scape-goat--a beautifully contrived figure, to

signify the deportation of sin--what is it but the certain fact of

theology, that, if sins are to be removed, they must yet be borne by

somebody? In the same way atonement is not the covering of sin, or the

reconciliation of the sinner, but it is that paying for sin which evens

the account. And so of all the lustral figures--making clean, washing,

purifying, purging, sprinkling by the hyssop branch--they only mean

that expiation is complete, and a clean, or even account made by it.

So, too, of the extra-ritual figures. Redemption and ransom are not

figures of release from captivity, but penal satisfactions paid to even

the account of justice. The stripes that heal, too, are become the

stripes that satisfy God's wrath.

What then shall we do with these forms of the altar, when they have

come to be thus sadly disfigured and turned from their true meaning?

Shall we use them freely and rightly, and let such impressions be taken

as certainly will be? Shall we use them with salvos and parentheses of

explanation? That would be awkward and troublesome and besides would

despoil them of all right effect. Shall we then give them up entirely

and let them go? Many, alas, are doing it, contriving how to find a

sufficient gospel in the forms of the facts themselves, described in

the terms of common speech. And the result is, that they preach a

philosophy of Christ instead of the Christian oblation, a Christ who is

to work on souls under the natural laws of effect, and not a Christ to

be our sacrifice before God. We can not afford to lose these sacred

forms of the altar. They fill an office which nothing else can fill,

and serve a use which can not be served without them. It may perhaps be

granted that, considering the advance of culture and reflection now

made, we should use them less, and the forms of common language more;

still we have not gotten by the want of them and we never shall. The

most cultivated, most intellectual disciple wants them now and will get

his dearest approaches to God in their use. We can do without them, it

may be, for a little while; but after a time we seem to be in a gospel

that has no atmosphere, and our breathing is a gasping state. Our very

repentances are hampered by too great subjectivity, becoming as it were

a pulling at our own shoulders. Our subjective applications of Christ

get confused and grow inefficacious. Our very prayers and thanksgivings

get introverted and muddled. Trying to fight ourselves on in our wars,

courage dies and impulse flags. And so we begin to sigh for some altar,

whither we may go and just see the fire burning, and the smoke going

up, on its own account, and circle it about with our believing hymns;

some element of day, into which we may come, and simply see, without

superintending the light.

No, these much abused symbols are indispensable and must be recovered.

It may be a task of some difficulty, yet of much less difficulty than

How to get back the lost symbols. many suppose. It only requires a

little resolute courage here, as always, to retake a battery that is

lost. Let the preacher go before, in one or two discourses, showing

what the sacrifices were not, and what they were; then how Christ,

without expiation, becomes an offering for us, our lamb, our blood of

remission, fulfilling the highest reality of sacrifice, and meeting all

our highest Christian uses, in such molds of sacrifice; and then let

him throw himself on the using of all these altar figures freely,

allowing just such impressions to be taken as there sometimes probably

will be; still going on without any sensitive concern. The result will

be that, in a little while, the abused terms will right themselves and

come into their places, rejoicing as it were in their own redemption,

as the souls they fructify rejoice in the grace they minister by their

use. And this act of reclamation is due to the Scriptures not less than

to our ourselves. Not even the grand Scripture doctrine of

justification by faith can be named in many places, without raising

associations that are painful--such as follow in the train of penal

suffering, expiatory death, literal substitution, judicial

satisfaction, legally imputed righteousness. And this being so, there

is no loyal way left but to retake the whole field, and restore all

these lost symbols to their rightful meanings and places.

I could not excuse myself, in the closing of this last chapter, if I

did not call attention directly to the very Our doctrine ends where the

first age began. instructive and somewhat humbling fact, that we are

ending here, just where Christianity began. After passing round the

circuit of more than eighteen centuries, occupied alas! how largely, in

litigations of theory and formula, we come back, at last, to say,

dropping out all the accumulated rubbish of our wisdom, preach Christ

just as the Apostolic Fathers, and the Saints of the first three

centuries did; viz., in the facts of his personal life and death; and

these facts in the forms of the altar; and withal in his judgment

sanctions, and his second coming to judge the world. If we look at the

effects wrought, these first three centuries of Christian preaching

have never been matched in any other three, and yet they had no formula

at all of atonement, and had not even begun, as far as we can discover,

to have any speculative inquiries on the subject. All our most

qualified historians agree in this, and we can see for ourselves, from

the epistles of Clement and other Apostolic Fathers so called, that no

such inquiries had yet arrived. Is it then to be the end of all our

litigations, theories, and attempted scientific constructions, that,

after our heats of controversy have cooled, and our fires of

extirpation have quite burned away, we come back to the very same kind

of preaching alphabet, in which the first fathers had their simple

beginnings? Be it so, and yet the labor we have spent is by no means

lost. We shall come back into that first preaching, with an immense

advantage gained over these fathers. What they did in their simplicity,

we shall do in a way of well-instructed reason. Their simplicity, in

fact, supposed the certainty of all these long detours of labor and

contest afterwards to come; but we, in our return, come back with our

experiments all made, and detours all ended, not simply to preach

Christ in just their manner, but to do it because we have finally

proved the wisdom of it, and the foolishness of every thing else;

advantages that are worth to us all they have cost.

And what if we shall seem to have proved something else that is more

positive still; viz., that the formulizing God's true formula in place

of all others. industry, in which we have so long been occupied, was

anticipated by God from the first, and that he Himself, to save us from

a task so far above our powers, provided us in fact a formula of his

own. Perhaps I do not mean by this exactly what we commonly mean by the

word, and yet perhaps I do. A formula is a little form, a condensed

representation, by figure, of some spiritual truth; for every spiritual

truth comes into figure and form of necessity, when it comes into

language, or a statement in words. We commonly understand by a formula

what is really never true of it, or is true only to the apprehensions

of ignorance; viz., a propositional statement that conveys the

spiritual truth or doctrine of a subject by words of exact notation. In

this latter impossible sense of formula, there is none, of the

Christian gospel, and what is more there never will be or can be any.

But in the former and true sense, or only possible sense, the altar,

with its offerings and rites of blood, is the very form and formula

that God has provided for the gospel; provided, I may say, by long

centuries of drill, in a liturgy of rites contrived, in fact, to serve

this very purpose. After we have tried our own hand long enough, in the

absurd endeavor to get up a formula, better than God's, in the common

terms of abstraction, shall we not come back humbled and shamed, to

rest in the discovery that the Scripture figures of sacrifice and blood

make up a complete investiture for the gospel, in all its highest

meanings and profoundest mediatorial relationships? Here we have, in

small, all that Christianity is, or can do for us, in the way of our

reconciliation to God. Preaching, and praying, and giving praise in

these words of the altar, we have the gospel in its fullest and best

use, with the advantage that every thing done, in that way of use, is a

confession we are always reciting. In these terms of sacrifice we are

kept fresh in the gospel, and the gospel is kept fresh and vital in us.

It can never die and never be corrupted, as long as our faith keeps up

its confession under these figures, unless the figures themselves are

corrupted by artificial and false constructions put upon them--which is

more than can be said of almost any other creed, on any other subject.

No church, or synod, or council, need be at all concerned for the

gospel, lest it should die for the want of a creed to keep it safe, as

long as Christ is accepted and clung to in God's own chosen forms --the

soul's great sacrifice, the Lamb that bears and takes away its sin, the

blood that sprinkles its foul conscience and makes it clean, the life

that, being in the blood, quickens and hallows every thing. Let this be

the preaching word of the preachers and the repenting and praising word

of guilty souls, and the gospel is safe, even for eternal ages; because

it is a gospel in power. Let any one contrive to make it safe, by any

other guard of orthodoxy, when it is not in power, and he will not be

long in making the discovery that it is gone already. Hither, last of

all, then, we return, and here we raise, in deep sorrow and shame, our

confession.

O, thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, into what strange

places, and how far away, hath our foolish We return to God. conceit

been leading us. We thought we must needs make out for thy dear

Son--dear also to us because he hath come to bring us life--some wisely

framed doctrine, bearing the stamp of our own wise thought and

science--not so familiar and so merely practical as thy choice words of

sacrifice. But we have wearied ourselves in the greatness of our way.

We have raised long controversies, and held learned councils, and

contrived exact articles; and though we have seemed to settle many

things wisely, yet nothing is either settled or wise; but whatever we

devise turns dry, looks empty, disappoints the craving of our wants,

creating after all only such consent as consists in a common discord.

Commanded by thee to build our altar of "whole stones" and "lift up no

tool of iron upon them," we have thought to improve its look, and make

it stronger, by squaring them carefully and hewing them into shapes

more scientifically exact; and now that we have done it, we. perceive

that we have only cut them into our own stale forms, and made them

"stones of emptiness." Mortified in our conceit we return, O God, to

thee, and to thy free word in Christ. We are ashamed that we could go

so far to find so little, and the more that, when we return, every

thing seems to: be found already. Thy cross, taken as our altar, O thou

Christ of God, and thou thyself the offering once for all, for our

sins--what other and more sure confession do we need? We renounce the

foolishness and poverty of our inventions; only be thou our sacrifice,

and let us be offered up with thee in thy offering. We could not dare

to put our sins upon thee, but since thou hast taken them on thyself to

bear them, let us also come and take hold of thy sorrows and pains, to

suffer with thee. Having boldness to enter thus into the holiest, by

thy blood and priesthood, need we more to keep our unity in the truth,

and is there more of truth for us to have, than to go in and out

together with thee, and behold, with faces bowed, the wings of thy

cherubim overspreading the mercy-seat of thy peace? Truly there is no

formulary that can tell so much of thy gospel, as to call thee Lamb of

God that taketh away the sins of the world! For if we come to confess

our sins upon thy head, we have our fearing, guilt-stricken heart made

strong in the confidence, that they are truly taken away. Being thus

made consciously clean, is not thy great renewing power upon us, and

what more is there to be found?

Coming back then to thy own formulary, O God, and having it for our

sufficient confession, let our Christ himself be the mold of our

doctrine, the medium of our prayers, the soul of our liberty, the

informing grace and music of our hymns--wisdom, righteousness,

sanctification, and redemption. Be thy saints gathered speedily. O

Lord, into these; gathered away thus from their distractions into thy

clear unity; away from their own contrived poverties of meaning, into

thy riches and the glorious liberties of thy truth. And so let the

better ages of thy promise come; even as they meet us in the vision of

thy prophet--a fair river of healing, deepening, spreading wide in its

flow, and making every thing to live whithersoever the river cometh;

because it issues, O Lord, from under Thine Altar.

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37. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=85&scrV=10#vi.iii-p16.4

38. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=17&scrV=15#vi.vii-p11.8

39. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=1&scrV=10#vii.ii-p36.6

40. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=5&scrV=23#vi.vii-p11.9

41. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=6&scrV=7#vii.ii-p30.15

42. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=50&scrV=8#vi.vii-p11.2

43. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=53&scrV=11#vi.vii-p10.7

44. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=7&scrV=21#vii.ii-p36.8

45. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=9&scrV=24#vi.iii-p17.4

46. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=18&scrV=23#vii.ii-p30.9

47. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=43&scrV=20#vii.ii-p30.14

48. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=45&scrV=20#vii.ii-p30.5

49. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=9&scrV=24#vii.ii-p30.6

50. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=12&scrV=3#vi.vii-p10.5

51. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Amos&scrCh=5&scrV=21#vii.ii-p36.9

52. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Mic&scrCh=6&scrV=6#vii.ii-p36.11

53. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Hag&scrCh=2&scrV=6#v.iii-p28.3

54. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Matt&scrCh=7&scrV=17#iv.i-p12.2

55. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Matt&scrCh=8&scrV=17#iv.ii-p11.3

56. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Matt&scrCh=23&scrV=23#vi.iii-p17.6

57. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Matt&scrCh=25&scrV=6#vi.iii-p17.20

58. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=John&scrCh=1&scrV=29#v.ii-p15.2

59. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=John&scrCh=1&scrV=29#vii.i-p38.2

60. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=John&scrCh=5&scrV=27#vi.iii-p17.28

61. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=John&scrCh=6&scrV=51#vi.vii-p28.8

62. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=John&scrCh=11&scrV=50#vii.ii-p49.3

63. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=John&scrCh=12&scrV=32#vi.iii-p17.12

64. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=John&scrCh=16&scrV=8#vi.iii-p17.16

65. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=2&scrV=9#vi.iii-p18.5

66. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=2&scrV=12#vi.iii-p17.22

67. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=2&scrV=12#vi.i-p10.2

68. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=2&scrV=16#vi.iii-p17.24

69. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=3&scrV=22#vi.vii-p15.2

70. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=3&scrV=22#vi.vii-p15.9

71. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=3&scrV=22#vi.vii-p41.3

72. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=3&scrV=25#vi.vii-p5.3

73. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=3&scrV=28#vii.ii-p56.3

74. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=4&scrV=3#vi.vii-p17.3

75. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=4&scrV=20#vi.vii-p17.3

76. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=4&scrV=25#vi.vii-p17.7

77. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=5&scrV=10#vii.ii-p53.2

78. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=5&scrV=11#vii.ii-p2.3

79. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=5&scrV=18#vi.vii-p15.5

80. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=5&scrV=18#vi.vii-p17.5

81. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=7&scrV=11#vi.iii-p17.14

82. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=8&scrV=26#iv.ii-p10.3

83. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=10&scrV=3#vi.vii-p15.7

84. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=11&scrV=22#vi.iii-p17.8

85. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=6&scrV=11#vi.vii-p17.11

86. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=5&scrV=11#vi.iii-p17.10

87. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=5&scrV=17#v.ii-p20.2

88. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=2Cor&scrCh=6&scrV=1#iv.iv-p21.2

89. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Gal&scrCh=1&scrV=4#v.ii-p18.2

90. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Gal&scrCh=2&scrV=20#vi.vii-p28.4

91. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Gal&scrCh=3&scrV=13#vii.ii-p49.5

92. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Gal&scrCh=3&scrV=13#v.ii-p19.2

93. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Eph&scrCh=5&scrV=25#vi.vii-p28.5

94. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Col&scrCh=1&scrV=20#vii.i-p44.2

95. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1Tim&scrCh=2&scrV=6#vi.vii-p28.6

96. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1Tim&scrCh=3&scrV=16#vi.vii-p17.9

97. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Titus&scrCh=2&scrV=14#vi.vii-p28.7

98. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=2&scrV=17#v.ii-p21.2

99. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=6&scrV=10#vi.vii-p16.9

100. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=8&scrV=6#vii.i-p14.2

101. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=9&scrV=9#vii.i-p14.4

102. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=9&scrV=13#v.ii-p22.2

103. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=9&scrV=14#v.ii-p22.2

104. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=9&scrV=14#vii.i-p4.2

105. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=9&scrV=14#vii.i-p42.2

106. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=9&scrV=22#vii.ii-p49.7

107. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=10&scrV=6#vii.ii-p36.4

108. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=10&scrV=19#vii.i-p43.2

109. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Heb&scrCh=12&scrV=36#v.iii-p28.2

110. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Jas&scrCh=2&scrV=13#vi.iii-p16.6

111. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Jas&scrCh=5&scrV=6#vi.vii-p12.5

112. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Jas&scrCh=5&scrV=9#vi.iii-p17.18

113. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1Pet&scrCh=2&scrV=24#v.ii-p16.2

114. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1Pet&scrCh=2&scrV=24#vii.i-p41.2

115. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1Pet&scrCh=3&scrV=18#v.ii-p17.2

116. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1John&scrCh=1&scrV=7#vii.i-p40.2

117. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1John&scrCh=1&scrV=9#vi.iii-p31.4

118. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1John&scrCh=1&scrV=9#vi.vii-p16.7

119. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1John&scrCh=4&scrV=9#v.ii-p15.4

120. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=1John&scrCh=4&scrV=9#vii.i-p39.2

121. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3?scrBook=Rev&scrCh=1&scrV=5#vii.i-p45.2

122. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.iii-p19.2

123. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iv.ii-p12.3

124. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iv.i-p12.3

125. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.v-p15.1

126. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.9

127. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p28.3

128. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.13

129. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.4

130. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.14

131. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p12.3

132. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.3

133. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p16.2

134. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p16.5

135. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p12.2

136. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.8

137. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p12.6

138. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iv.i-p13.2

139. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p18.2

140. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p22.2

141. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.11

142. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p16.3

143. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.10

144. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.5

145. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.12

146. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iv.i-p13.3

147. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.v-p38.2

148. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.v-p38.3

149. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vi-p12.2

150. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vi-p16.3

151. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iv.ii-p3.2

152. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iv.ii-p11.2

153. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p28.2

154. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p11.3

155. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.ii-p11.2

156. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p9.2

157. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-p2.1

158. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iv.i-p11.2

159. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vi-p15.3

160. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vi-p16.2

161. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vi-p19.1

162. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vi-p19.2

163. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p4.2

164. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p44.1

165. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.i-p15.2

166. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.i-p24.2

167. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.ii-p12.2

168. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.ii-p12.3

169. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p8.1

170. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p8.3

171. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p20.2

172. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-p15.1

173. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.v-p37.2

174. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.v-p38.1

175. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.iii-p8.2

176. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.ii-p17.2

177. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.iii-p35.1

178. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p33.2

179. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p9.1

180. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.v-p28.2

181. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.i-p25.2

182. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.ii-p47.1

183. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p13.15

184. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p8.2

185. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p11.1

186. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p11.2

187. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p11.4

188. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p12.1

189. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p12.2

190. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p13.1

191. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.iii-p5.2

192. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p44.2

193. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p11.5

194. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.iii-p9.2

195. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vi.vii-p10.2

196. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#vii.i-p13.2

197. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-p15.1

198. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iv.i-p11.3

199. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#v.i-p20.1

200. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#i-Page\_i

201. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#i-Page\_ii

202. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#i-Page\_iii

203. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_iv

204. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_v

205. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_vi

206. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_vii

207. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_viii

208. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_ix

209. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_x

210. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_xi

211. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_xii

212. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#ii-Page\_13

213. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_14

214. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_15

215. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_16

216. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_17

217. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_18

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219. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_20

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221. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_22

222. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_23

223. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_24

224. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_25

225. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/vicarious/cache/vicarious.html3#iii-Page\_26

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