ARTICLE VI.

DR. SAMUEL D. COCHRAN ON "THE MORAL SYSTEM AND THE ATONEMENT."

BY THE REV. GEORGE F. MAGOUN, D. D., IOWA COLLEGE, GRINNELL, IOWA.

IF there is no moral system of God in the moral universe, then there is no atonement. There can be none. The word evidently, in this case, would be without such significance as it has ever had. For an atonement is itself a general system, plainly not a mere arrangement for an individual or certain individuals; and it can only be such in relation to a wider general system within or under which, for some sufficient reason, it has become necessary or wise. But as this reason is purely moral, viz., sin, and as the atonement must be of necessity a moral transaction, and this of an unparalleled kind, the system in relation to which it is effected can clearly be no other than a moral system. A moral atonement within and in behalf of a physical or a merely psychical system would strike thinkers as an absurdity.

If a writer, then, like that of the able and weighty volume before us,[1] would have any appropriate basis for a

[1]Oberlin, Ohio: E. J. Goodrich, 1889. On pages 293 and 294, Dr. Cochran affirms what is affirmed above, in these words:—

"§ 167. THE QUESTION OF THE ATONEMENT ONE OF MORALITY—THE MORALITY OF GOD.

"As we said near the beginning of this work, the question of the atonement is one of fundamental morality—the morality of God, as well as of all other moral beings—the morality of the one universal moral law and moral system. It is a foolish assumption of objectors generally, that God is outside and independent of this law and system, so that His will is free from obligation, control, or limitation by them; that they exist only in and for His rational creatures, if not for man exclusively; and that He can regard them or not in acting towards all or any part of these beings with an abso-

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new handling of the great topic of Christ's atonement, he must find it in a moral system of the universe, fairly, broadly, and thoroughly conceived and developed. Our first business, then, in reviewing so serious and elaborate a work, is with his treatment of the antecedent topic of God's moral system. Of Dr. Cochran's five hundred and twenty-seven compact pages, this topic occupies the first two hundred and fifteen. Those who now repudiate a moral government of God, and displace even eternal, immutable moral law with an easy-going personal relation between man and God, based on no principle but the ready and characterless production of creature happiness —if this can be called a principle—will find in this exposition a body of truth without significance and needless as to human salvation; and doubtless, also, far beyond their lines of thinking, and running too deep for their comprehension. Those, on the contrary, who think, with us, that the Scriptural truths of reconciliation, propitiation, sin-offering, redemption, ransom, mediation, and the like, indicate a system of salvation unique and peculiar to Christianity, will be glad of a discussion of the underlying divine moral system so full and many-sided as is here given.

Dr. Cochran divides his great twofold theme into four convenient and manageable divisions, thus: THE MORAL

lutely lawless freedom of option. It is a horrible assumption; for, if true, He is not a moral being, and can do no moral action. He can administer the law or not, reward the obedient or not, punish the disobedient or not, treat both alike or not, keep truth or not, by mere lawless will. He can be neither just nor unjust, merciful nor unmerciful, deserving of love and honor or not, as He can be no moral actor, and can have no moral character. These objectors have no conception of a real moral system, which is necessarily founded in moral natures, having the law in and from them as a constant obliging mandate and standard. The objections to points connected with the atonement all imply the same assumption respecting God's freedom from the law and the moral system which is noted above, and yet uniformly involve their own contradiction. For, when objectors say, that He is *bound* or *ought* to do this, or not to do that; that He would do wrong, and be wicked and cruel, if He did that, and did not do this, they unawares assume that He is a moral being, that He is under obligation by the law in

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SYSTEM. PART I. The Moral Law and System. PART II. The Mode of God's Existence; Incarnation; Redemptive Plan and Eternal Purpose; Foreknowledge, Election, and Predestination in it. PART III. The Atonement of Christ, an Expiation and a Propitiation. PART IV. Scriptural Teachings respecting the Relations of Christ and the Atonement to Mankind.

The first chapter of Part I., "The Moral System," is entirely given to the Divine Moral Law. This is after good theological precedent. Hardly any of our great thinkers go back of established, universal law requiring right and forbidding wrong, for a basis of atonement. And it is clear that no universal *moral system* could exist without such a law. Quite as clearly it must be the Creator's law. For a system composed of a Creative One and creatures could not take law from one of the latter. A created one giving law original, self-propounded, and absolutely authoritative, to a Creative One and his other creatures is an unspeakable absurdity. All this implies a system as requiring law. If we had made Dr. Cochran's book, therefore, we should have begun with the system of moral beings, rather than with the laws laid by the Su-

Him, and thus that He is in the universal moral society and system."

So, on page 317:—

"The grand characteristic of Christianity is, that it is grounded on, embodies, and unfolds the social character of the law in and from all moral natures, and thus the social-moral character of all such natures. It does this in the mode made necessary by the fact and peculiarity of the sin of mankind; and the peculiarity of their sin springs from that of their nature, which determines their correlation to each other, to God, and to all other moral beings. It sets forth the acting out, on the one hand, of the absolutely *just good-will* of God towards Himself and the universal holy society, and, on the other, of His mercy, the only remnant of good-will possible towards sinners, in such manner and measure towards mankind as must forever be the abiding amazement of all intelligent beings. Hence, to deny any of its essential parts is correspondingly to deny the social-moral character of the law and of moral natures, and logically requires a denial of that character in both; and this involves the assumption, that the design of God in constituting rational creatures is realized in pure individualism and self-centering action."

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preme One among them upon all the rest. He really comes nearer to this than he seems: in chap. i. sect. i., "Origin of the Divine Law," in the fourth sentence, he says, "an *authoritative rule for their* [moral beings'?] *social action*, which by it is ethical or moral." That beings are social, then, is not the same thing with their being moral, and the latter, in a system, implies the former. "All moral beings, simply by being such, are necessarily in an everlasting moral society and system, as all the material worlds, from greatest to least, are in a physical system." This is very strongly put. And it naturally and inevitably follows that the law of God, "not originated by will, divine or human, irreparable and unchangeable by will," is that obedience to which "constitutes all right character and secures all moral good."

Another section recognizes the system thus:—

"§ 6. FOURTH CHARACTERISTIC OF THE LAW.

The law is *concrete and social*. By *concrete* is meant that it is never given as an abstraction, whether called *the idea of right*, or by any other name, but always as an *imperative rule of action in its subject* to render its matter of moral love to its *objects, present or thought of*, unmodified or modified according to the known or supposed good or bad character and deserts of each. By *social* is meant, in addition, that its matter of moral love is enjoined by its imperative *as owed by and due from its subjects to its objects*, as that to which they have a *right* by nature, (unless they have forfeited it by sin) and, if righteous, also by character. It is thus a concrete and social bond, of which one end is, so to say, livingly inwrought by creative art into the immortal nature of every created moral being, assimilating it with God's, and the other end is projected by the imperative in that nature to every like one, *present or thought of*, and fastened to it as having the right or rights mentioned to the love it enjoins, if not forfeited; and, if forfeited, is even then fastened to it as an object of good-will, however modified, as far and as long as it is capable of good, or not utterly lost—that is, while its gracious probation lasts. The whole rational universe is thus interbound into one society, with God as its Center and Head, as all the unnumbered worlds and parts of the material universe are interbound by the physical force of attraction with its law, as if it were concrete and social, in their relations to each other and their vast center. As the marriage law binds the pair united by it to render constant, pure, faithful love to each other, as that to which each has a sacred right in their relation, thus intertying them to perfect reciprocity of natural and moral debts and dues, so this law of laws in all moral beings, by its concrete and social character, spiritually intermarries them all, as it were, to

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each other and to God, and Him to them. Its bond is essentially the same between each one and himself *objectized* to himself, tying him to render its matter of moral love to himself, as if owed by and due to himself, as if another. How unspeakably grand and beautiful is this social, moral, immortal constitution of the natures of the ever-augmenting, intelligent universe! How it surpasses that of the whole material creation!"

So in the next section, the condition of the authority or "imposing imperative" of the divine law is said to be "*always the presence in* fact or *in thought of one or more* of like nature, *or of self objectized;* such presence always *occasioning an intuition* that he or each of them had a natural right, unless forfeited by sin, and, if [himself] obedient, a moral one also, to the love enjoined by it [the moral law]." It is shown here how ethical justice is involved, and due to the good, to the evil of our race, and to self; also how this is forfeited, and how ethical justice to others balances and restricts obligation in such cases. Here, deep in the universal moral system, the author finds the foundation of grace and the possibility of divine atonement. But this we can more succinctly notice later.

The author's view rejects any idea of right as "apart from and independent of the social law." If his readers question aught here, it will be the proper application of the term "social law" to self even as "objectized." As to the eternal authority of the law of right, whether regarded as social or "impersonal," in some sense, no matter to how many it is related—one or more,—we can hardly think that any one who takes interest enough in themes so high and pure as to read what Dr. Cochran has said, will question it. Nor will the following be disputed (chap. i. § 12. 3.):—

"Every human moral agent has direct knowledge, *by intuition of his moral reason*, of the spiritual nature (and its essential qualities) of every other moral being, present or thought of, as the same in kind as his own. He sees the bodies of others, hears their voices, and touches them; but he neither sees, hears, nor touches their spiritual natures; yet, without an instructor or any process of reasoning, and not by instinct, by which irrational creatures have their kind of knowledge of each other and of man, but by this intuition, he knows what instinct never could, the *moral nature* and its essen-

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tial qualities of every person he meets or thinks of, how he ought to act morally, what character he ought to possess, that he has in him the same imperative law which is in himself, that this law is the one only standard of right or wrong action or character for him as for himself, and even for God, and that he is equally as responsible and accountable as himself."

These various statements show how fundamental to all the reasonings and expositions of this volume are the existence of a moral *system*, in distinction from a fortuitous concourse of beings morally endowed, but not systematically related to each other, and the true nature of such a system. This is assumed and implied even more than it is stated. And if an astronomical or other physical system could not be maintained or carried on by its author without laws in the removed and lower sense in which the word is used of physical uniformities; if a political or scholastic system could not be continuously worked save under regulations that bear the more correct and real meaning of law, as a rule of intelligent and required conduct, surely a moral system cannot go on helter skelter, now this way now that, with no binding relation to principles commanding compliance. It would be an accident if anything morally right was done in it, and equally an accident if the wrong was done. So the system would be an immoral one in disregarding the sacred distinction between right and wrong. The universe could only escape the sorest of all possible injuries if the members of it had no moral nature at all. If there is nothing to regulate them by the principles and rules their moral nature affirms, why should they have one? Why these recognized in them, if not in the system and the management of it by its author? Is an ethical creature to supply the lack of one in the Creative nature? We dwell a little on these elementary points because we have fallen upon times when the vital and necessary meaning of law in all proper significance of it, in any other sense than mere uniformity of facts, is widely and disastrously ignored.

We have, then, man a moral being in a universal moral system from which he cannot escape, and under a moral

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Lawgiver, as necessary to such a system, if it be a fact at all. Instead now of affirming in a general way that disorder has come into the system by sin, Dr. Cochran proceeds to show just what he conceives the law to require of every member of the system, preparatory to showing the necessity of an atonement for any and all who do not render it. And, after recognizing that love meets the requirement towards all other moral beings, and that God has "an aggregate of rights to the supreme moral love of all his intelligent creatures," and that the wrong done to him by not rendering it is immeasurably beyond any and all other wrong, he thus characterizes what is due under moral law more analytically (chap. ii. § 13.):—

"Mankind have always, *natura duce*, substantially agreed in defining ethical justice as rendering to all their dues—all to which they have a right and claim by nature or otherwise. [So] Cicero....Because men have these ideas or intuitional affirmations of all natural and moral rights and dues, and of all expressed by the terms, obligations, owing, paying, deserving, rewarding, wages, debts, claims, and equity, the imperative in each of them is to render pure good-will or moral love to all others....To say that the terms named, wages excepted,....are used figuratively, and are derived from the market and human courts, is to reverse the order of facts. The market and courts have derived them and their meanings from the source of them both, which is the quality of ethical justice in the law given by moral reason. These and other like terms in all languages express the same ideas, those of the natural and moral rights and duties of men, and attest their recognition of these ideas as involved in, and the basis of, all business transactions and mutualities of treatment. They express the ideas all men have of either the great primary principle of ethical justice in the law, that of the mutual due and debt of moral love, or special applications of that principle to men in particular relations of business or those of a directly moral or religious kind. They express these normally or literally as the only terms by which they can be expressed, and are therefore in origin and common use utterly independent of all markets and courts. They are no more figurative when one speaks of the *due* or *debt* of love, gratitude, honor, respect, obedience, or any like action or treatment, or of *owing* or *paying* any of these, or of *deserving* or having a *claim* to a *reward*, or of *paying* a penalty, or of getting his *pay*, using these terms in a moral or religious sense, than when he uses them in business or in courts. If they are figurative, thus used, what terms could express the same ideas of most of them normally or literally?

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§ 14. THE LOVE ENJOINED ON EACH TO GOD, AND TO ALL HAVING RIGHTS TO IT, IS JUST LOVE.

The love therefore enjoined upon each one by the imperative of the law, to God and to other moral things, present or thought of, who have not forfeited their right or rights to it by sin, is *just love—just good-will both in quality and in end, because it is a will to render them all their dues according to all the rights they have.* This discloses clearly the concrete and social nature of the law and of moral beings. For, if they have a right by their common nature to each other's moral love, by which it is mutually due and owed, it is, on this ground alone, simple ethical justice in each to render it to each, and positive injustice not to do so; and if, in addition, they have, by obedience or right action, the moral right or rights of good desert, or desert of reward in kind at least, to each other's love, so that it is morally as well as naturally due to each from each, it is, by such addition, also purely ethical justice in each to render it to each, and additional positive injustice not to render it to him, because not rendering it is doing the opposite. This does not show that justice is love, but that it is an essential quality of the law, of all action by it towards others who have rights, and of all moral nature, the bond inherent in all these which ties all to render such love to God and each other. And, since by this bond every one is thus tied to render this as due from him to each and all, *he cannot really render it to any, if not in principle and spirit to all—to God, if not to man—to man if not to God—to any number of men, if not to all as due by the manifest character and deserts of each.* Rendering it to one because it is his due by right or rights involves doing the same in principle and spirit to all, and is therefore *justice* to all; and doing the opposite to any number involves the same universality of principle and spirit, and is therefore *injustice*, not to that number only, but potentially to all moral beings. As, by this quality of justice, the law is impartial and universal, so must the love be which it requires; and so must the injustice be of withholding it from any as entitled to receive it. Conscience has always taught mankind that selfishness or injustice against one is potentially against all, and the involved contrary, that true moral love to one is potentially to all, as it proves a heart to love all and to wrong none.

§ 15. HOW THE INTUITION OF THIS QUALITY OF JUSTICE IN THE LAW AND IN OBEDIENCE HAS LED MEN TO CHARACTERIZE THEM.

It is this quality of justice in the law, ever clear and immutable in all conscious minds, which has caused mankind in all ages to characterize it as a *straight line*, (orthos, rectus, recht, right)—obedience to it as having the quality of *straightness*, or of being *straight* action, (righteousness, rectitude) —disobedienee to it as *crooked* or *twisted* action, (wrong)—and the character formed by disobedience to it as not *straight, lacking straightness*, (unrighteousness)—also the character formed by obedience as *uprightness*, as if the law were a perpendicular *straight line* and disobedience as *departure* or *deviation* (sin), and as *going across* a straight line, (transgression). These conceptions are not consciously invented images or figures. They are giv-

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en by moral reason just as that of a geometrical straight line is by speculative reason. But the conception or idea of *straight* or *right* is never given as either the law itself, or action or character conformed to it, but only as an inherent quality or characteristic of it. But it is important to note that it is almost always action or character, done or thought of, and seldom the law itself, that men characterize as *straight* or *right*. The law in them is the standard by which they spontaneously, and generally even unconsciously, discern and pronounce action or character right or wrong, straight or crooked; and it is its *quality of justice*, not its *matter of love*, that constitutes it this standard. Hence, when action or character is pronounced right, straight, it is not the matter of either of them that is intended, but its ethical quality of justice as conformed to this standard; just as an extended material object is called straight because seen to be conformed to a geometrical straight line. Hence, it is of no importance whether the term *right* be used as an *adjective* or as a *noun*, whether respecting the law, or action or character conformed to it, as it never expresses the actual fact or matter of either of them, but simply its possession of this quality of justice; and Kant speaks truth when he says—"The conception of *straight* contains nothing of quantity, but only a quality." If I say, that is an oak tree, the term oak does not signify the matter of the tree, which is wood, but only its peculiar quality as of the species of trees called oak; and, if I say, an oak is hard, tough, or strong, I do not in the least change the qualitative meaning of the term *oak* by thus using it as a noun. It designates the peculiar kind of tree or wood it is by expressing its quality."

It is easy, after this, for our author to show, *in extenso*, that right is no entity, existing alone and independently by itself, but a moral quality of intelligent, voluntary action—related both to such concrete action and to the law or standard in moral natures. An extended refutation of the ethics of Bushnell's "Vicarious Sacrifice" is here given, on which we need not dwell. The word "social" as characterizing moral law is preferred to "relational," because a connection of any kind, good, bad or indifferent, is a relation, and the quality of justice, with "its matters of moral love," (or the concrete of which this ethical quality is affirmed) is social,—another recognition, by the way, of the fundamental fact of an existing moral system.

"Moral beings [it is here added] are naturally set in a universal society with God and [with] each other, to which they are everlastingly bound and responsible, and from which, though they should take the wings of the morning and fly farther than comet ever flew, even beyond "the flaming walls of the universe," they can never be released as long as they *think* of God or other moral natures."

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This concrete social nature of moral law Dr. Cochran never omits to insist upon and illustrate. This and its mandatory quality are kept in the foreground. So is justice, in the sense of equity, as the essential quality of the love required toward men, and so of the meaning of the requirement. He does not say nakedly, the law of love, leaving the reader at loose ends as to what kind of love is meant, but "the law of *just* or *righteous* love is the only law of reason as of Scripture." Is unrighteous, unjust love required? or even allowed? is characterless love required as character? "*Not love, which is its matter, but justice, which is its essential quality or character*, constitutes it the mighty eternal bond which ties the intelligent universe together." To deny this, would be to affirm that if there be only love, no matter what its moral character, it meets and fulfills the holy moral requirement, and that compared with love of such indifferent character, justice, or moral quality is of no worth or account, or an intruder, even.

Passing to obedience and disobedience of the law as thus identified, our author makes sharp and thorough discrimination between the natural and the retributive consequences of each. Of all his "prolegomena" to atonement we deem this one of the most important, for it sets forth what sort of consequences the atoning death of Christ is intended to remove. He calls some of the consequences of moral action *natural*, "because they are not produced by any agency outside of moral natures themselves, but *by these* as affected by each kind of action." To these consequences the name "constitutional" is often given. "The qualities of moral natures cannot be called retributive causes;" they are simply constitutional. It must be something else, distinct, more than these, which is properly retributive. Conscience, for example, it is well said,—

"never presignifies any of its own effects, happy or unhappy, but always positive, social, divine rewards, or punishments. In the proper sense,

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therefore, retributions are positive rewards and punishments administered by God himself, and different from all the mere natural consequences [within the constitution and course of things], of obedience and of sin. Among these, doubtless, are *confirmation* of the obedient in holiness and its natural results, and *abandonment* of the wicked to sin and its natural results."

In a word, whatever the simple working of our constitution or nature would not bring about but requires the direct, specific governmental agency of God. And the author goes on to show that a moral system and moral government must have social systematic retributions of their own,—natural consequences being purely personal. The end of these retributions, properly so-called, is—

"the complete everlasting good of moral beings in their divinely constituted moral society. The good of each created one in it is balanced by that of every other one, and that of them all is infinitely exceeded by that of God, its Head. As this transcendent good of God and this balanced good of all others is the one aggregate end of the [just and righteous] love enjoined by the law upon each, as owed by him to, and due to him from, every other one by its justice, they are all interwoven, by the sacred reciprocity of rendering the love, into an absolutely perfect and blessed ethical and religious society or solidarity."

If the just love due is not rendered, then retributive suffering, not merely the natural consequences of omission of love, is the substitute that equity and right require of the sinner. And just here what we have adverted to earlier is introduced, viz., that God is "necessarily a ruler, and must rule according to the law."

"As He alone has adequate qualifications of knowledge, power, benevolence, and all righteousness to administer a perfect government over all the moral beings He has made, it is absolutely certain that he must recognize Himself as under the highest obligation His own infinite nature can impose, either to execute perfect justice,—in administering rewards and punishments according to the exact deserts of each as He knows them,—or to adopt for sinners some measure of substitution which will as perfectly secure what is due to Himself and to all the loyal[2] from them, as the infliction of positive retribution on themselves would [secure]. So that as many of them as will return to loyalty, and rely on that measure for forgiveness, will be saved. He cannot deal with any of them as if *dissociated and isolated from the whole society.* For, by their nature and the law, they all

[2] One trait of the author's broad view of the whole system is the recognition of reparation for sin as due to all in the created system of moral beings as well as to God Himself, the Creator.

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stand interlinked in everlasting social connection and responsibility, and He must deal with each according as this organic union and the greatest good of all require."

That is, as was here said at the outset, atonement is itself, and must be, a system, within a larger or universal moral system for angels and men.

Dr. Cochran argues at much length, and with great thoroughness and force, the impossibility of natural and properly retributive results of sin being one and the same. And there is special need of the argument in our time. It grew out of the occasion of his work twenty years ago, viz., the review of the speculations of Dr. Bushnell on the subject. But we cannot follow him here, our object being to eliminate the clear line of his doctrine of atonement. We pass, therefore, the fourth chapter of Part I. In the fifth he makes objection to the view of natural government in Butler's great "Analogy." We suspect that the difference between them is mostly a matter of statement and phraseology; but we are pretty sure that the good Bishop, could he be restored to life and philosophical argument, and have time to learn the new uses of terms in our day would lock horns with our author in his own sober and firm way. *We* now distinguish between constitution and course of things, between natural consequences and governmental ones, as English speech and writing in his day did not. He calls the same things "natural consequences" and "natural punishments." He uses "govern," "governor," in the broad and popular sense—loose of course—of establishing things fitted by God to follow a certain course and also of administering the things He had created or established. Governing is *κυβέρνησις*, a steering power, and Butler conceived God's making anything to act naturally in any way (as man to be social or political [Aristotle]), as one form of steering or influencing his action. It is such *a l' outrance.* So, to him, constitutional consequences, inviting or deterring human action as they do, are the simplest form of governing,

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—and he even conceives that there is something elementarily moral in God's thus influencing men towards discretion and wisdom—even in secular, non-ethical matters,—and away from indiscretion and folly, that is, something moral in God's making such a constitution for such ends, and administering a course of things under it. Dr. Cochran is very strong in the postulate that God's whole creation is for moral ends—no German philosopher's "Ethik" could be more so—and in this we are quite sure Butler would have agreed with him, as we do. But we all distinguish natural[3] consequences from those of positive direct moral government, even natural moral ones, and, indeed, this is the very basis of our author's strenuous contention against the former answering the purpose of the latter in moral government. He is clearly right in this, and Butler clearly does not put the former in the place or in the way of the latter. His exhibition of their concinnity does not confound them with each other. But he asserts that each sort of consequences is fitted, and therefore intended, to "govern" human action, for each does. Yet certain we are that, were he living, no one would scan what the Illinois divine has here said with a more penetrating and profound appreciation than the Anglican.

Punitive retribution, it is now shown (chap. vi), is never disciplinary. If it were, it would be less than we deserve, as discipline always is. It always falls too, (§ 49.)

"as a rule, less severely on the ungodly (Ps. lxxiii. 3–14), than on those He [God] loves, not [being] distributed by any scale of deserts or justice. But retributive punishment proper must be strictly *just*, strictly *distributive*, strictly according to ill-desert in each case, as God knows it, so that, *when executed, distributive justice must be its measure, while public justice, or the greatest good of the universal loyal society and of God, its Head, must be its* END."

And in this, benevolence, which is treated as distinct from both public and distributive justice, requires just what they do. Objection here is objection "against the nature

[3] *I. e.*, "those not produced by any agency outside" of us.

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of moral beings, God included," equally, besides, "against the natural consequences of sin: for God created the constitution of moral beings." "Sin, the supreme monstrosity of the universe, causes both" natural and punitive consequences that follow itself. No need for a thinker or a sinner to go back of it. As to sinners (§ 50.),—

"God's design in constituting them was not that they should sin, and suffer either the natural or the retributory consequencee of so doing, but that they should obey his law and experience the blessed consequences, both natural and remuneratory, of so doing....The question, then, concerning God's benevolence, is simply whether he was benevolent in creating moral beings at all."

What follows is so vital to the basis of fact on which atonement as a fact, rests, that we quote it entire.

"§ 51. DURATION OF THIS PUNISHMENT, AND ILL-DESERT OF SINNERS ITS ONLY MEASURE.

There is no termination to the ill-desert of sin, nor to the due of retributive suffering created by it to God and His whole loyal society. The good-desert of obedience lasts while it does, but ends with it, if it does. But the due of moral love to God and His loyal society from every one is as lasting as his being. Sin is repudiation of this due and of the law which creates it, and is thus in conflict with the nature which gives the law. It is wrong and injury to the universal society, breaking its order and harmony and creating unhappiness and misery in it wherever its contagion extends—assailing its rights and securities—diffusing pernicious influences in it—causing jarrings, schisms, wars, and havocs in it—imperiling the rectitude and everlasting well-being of its probationary members—destroying the possibility of self-recovery in all who commit it, and of the eradication of it and its plague from the universe—causing the whole dire progeny of its natural consequences in all guilty of it—and wronging God supremely by disregarding and trampling upon His rights, claims, interests, authority, and heart. There is no evil in the universe not from it. It is the accursed mother of all curses, including everlasting death and punitive retribution. The only retribution possible is Divinely inflicted suffering, whatever it may be or include. This, we have seen, is *due* from the sinner to God and His universal society. It is his everlasting *debt* to them, because his ill-desert, created by his sin, is everlasting. *Whatever punishment he deserves for his sin, as he commits it, he deserves the same for it as long as he exists;* so that, if, at any time during his probation, he repents and is forgiven and restored by God to the treatment of the holy, *it must be by pure grace, and not on the ground of justice at all—not as, in any sense, deserved by him. Ill-desert is a soul-color that never fades.* That is true of even the ill-desert of wrong done by one man to another in their private relations. Its doer can never main-

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tain that he deserves no retribution for it from the wronged one, and demand *as his right* ,that the latter, or any one, shall regard and treat him *as if* he had not done it. He can no more do so in a week than in a day, in a month than in a week, in a year than in a month, in any number of years than in one, in myriads of ages than in a lifetime. No duration can have the slightest effect in obliterating or diminishing his ill-desert, or in restoring his forfeited right to the wronged one's favor; and, if that one ever restores him to it and treats him *as if* innocent towards him, even if he may have repented, it must be by exercising grace in forgiving him contrary to his abiding, unimpaired ill-desert. How can it be otherwise in respect to the ill-desert of all sinners against God? In its very nature, sin involves an everlasting forfeiture of all right to His favor and desert of punishment from Him, the same as when acted. Like the blood-spot on the hand of Lady Macbeth, the dooming color of ill-desert on the sinner's soul will not out, nor fade. But, besides this fadeless fact of ill-desert, the everlasting rights, interests, and concerns of God and His whole loyal, eternal society absolutely demand the perpetual punishment of irreclaimable sinners according to their ill-deserts, as we have already shown and will yet show more fully; and God, therefore, can be neither *just* nor *benevolent*, if He does not inflict it upon all such sinners or provide some adequate substitution for its endurance by them, on the ground of which He can justly exercise grace towards them during their probation, and forgive all who fulfill the ethical conditions of reliance upon it and return to obedience, on which it is offered to all.

§ 52. TRUE MEANING OF THE WRATH OF GOD AGAINST SINNERS.

The necessity on God to inflict this punishment upon all sinners, unless rescued in the way stated, proceeds, as already shown, from justice in the law as it is in, and emanates from, His own and all other *moral natures*; and the perfect conformity of His will to this quality of the law and of His corresponding emotions, is His *wrath* (ὀργή) against them. This is the only *wrath-principle* which can be ascribed to Him or any other good being. Far enough is His wrath from mere flaming emotions of indignation, or combustion of anger against sinners. It is no ebulliency of emotion or *passion*, but His holy will *with* accordant emotions—His moral disposition, perfect as His nature, to treat sinners deserving the penalty of the law precisely as it requires—that is, *exactly according to their ill-deserts for its social ends*, as already set forth. There is no other rule of retribution possible, conceivable, just, or adequate to these ends, and therefore benevolent, to treat them by; and it is the only one taught in Scripture. If therefore sinners of our race are not saved by grace through a substitution, God can have no room for *counsel* about subjecting them to the penal suffering they deserve, and no *liberty* to do better by them, or at all otherwise, than just as they deserve. The measure of inflicted suffering must be in every case neither less nor more than exactly JUST—that is, exactly according to the measure of ill-desert as God sees it, since deficiency of it would be unjust to God and His loyal society, and excess of it would be cruelty to the sufferer—that is, while

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perfect ethical public justice must be its end, perfect distributive justice must be its measure.

Our author gives the authority of God as moral Ruler its place—but considers it as means in place of end. "Sin not only robs Him of the moral love due Him naturally as a Person..... but it intrinsically and practically denies and wars against all his authority and all his rights."[4] his authority is in order to the securing of his rights. It is not its own end, nor can he punish as if it were, but to secure what is due to him and to his universal holy society. And neither annihilation will secure this, nor probation after death. It lies in the author's path to examine the notion that God has a merely paternal oversight over men, not a moral government—one of the tap-roots of Universalism and Unitarianism—and he roots it up very logically and effectively (pp. 114–122). If this notion comes in to corrupt our evangelical theology, we shall soon have no doctrine of atonement, and no belief in its foundation facts, the fatal character of sin and the certainty of its penalty.

Much of the solid and elaborate matter in Part II of this work will seem to some readers not altogether necessary to its object. Some eighty-nine pages are given to Incarnation, the Plan of Redemption thereby and God's Eternal Purposes in Christ. It forms an instructive and weighty body of theology by itself, and might have been so issued, but for its resting as it does on what has gone before and connecting with what comes after. It is a close-jointed and searching investigation of the scheme of atoning sacrifice for a specific end within God's universal moral system. Yet at the close of an exhaustive discussion of the Trinity here in the initial chapter (xvi.) is a section on How God's Love for Mankind is shown, and another on What the Fact and Doctrine of the Love of God rest on, which lie directly along the way to the sacrifice on Calvary which is made to rest on the Trinity.

[4] Later, pages 100–103, sin is more fully characterized.

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The atonement is made to stand or fall on the Triunity of the Godhead. The showing that this could not have taken place, had God been but one Person, has, no doubt, occurred to many in connection with Paul's hardest of "hard sayings"—quite *obiter dictum*, the bench would say—in Gal. iii. 20, "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one."

The necessity of incarnation to atonement, as a race-interposition, and the necessity of a true theodicy including Christ's incarnate work and the story of his church are here set forth; the forecast of difficulties in bringing men to repentance; and how in His predestinating purpose was God in Christ to meet them; these things are elucidated to prepare the way for the central theme, to which we proceed.

The Atonement of Christ an Expiation for the Sins of the World, and a Propitiation of God towards it, occupies (Part III) a hundred and three pages. The theologically critical reader will turn to this for the author's conception of his great theme, and will prejudge his handling of Scripture in the last of the book, (Part IV, two hundred and seven pages), by it.[5] As the volume began with moral law, so this central portion commences with its demands as to sinners. It had been shown that in a moral system repentance is no reparation for the harm of sin to all embraced in the system. It is often and in various ways affirmed, that repentance, still,—the whole case be-

[5] Dr. Cochran gives two reasons for his philosophical discussions: "One, that the principal recent attempts to subvert these fundamental doctrines have been made on an assumed philosophical basis, and should be met on the same; the other, that we rejoiced in the opportunity thus presented to show that philosophy is not against, but on the side of Christianity, even in its peculiar facts and doctrines, and really demands it as its logical supplement; so that, whoever denies Christianity as a whole, or any of its essential parts, must assume positions at war with facts and truths of sound moral philosophy, from some of which the only logical road leads to the gulf of atheism, or, which is substantially the same, of pantheism." A good example of his ability in this style of work may be seen in his "Brief Theodicy" (pp. 173–188), for which we should be glad to find room.

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ing a moral one,—is the ethical and necessary condition of any benefit from an atonement, if one is made, and the Holy Spirit the one moral, necessary, all-effective agency for producing it. But God is under no obligation to sinners to make a propitiation of himself, the benefits of which they could secure by the change of character in repentance, nor to the members of the universal holy society of his universe. Here a novel argument is made for an obligation to himself, on the other hand, to do just this. The real question is stated as a philosophical one, viz., whether there is an obligation to exercise mercy, when consistent with justice? If there is, it detracts nothing from mercy and grace that he has a law in and from his moral nature itself which creates such an obligation upon him. For his goodness (of which mercy is one form) is "certainly conformity to his eternal moral nature," "free, eternal conformity to the moral law, or to *nothing*." his moral reason, therefore, "issues an imperative to himself." "The obligation to love moral natures, and, as far as practicable, to promote their good for the sake of what it is to them, whether they deserve such action or not, because they are moral beings," is affirmed, as the converse of the obligation to inflict ethical justice, or punishment deserved, if greater good to the moral universe and greater delight and glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost could not be secured by another course. If all love, justice, mercy, are compliance with obligation, the redemptive system is held to be a moral necessity to God's character. If man had never sinned, God would not, could not, have had either the demand for retributive justice or the dictate of mercy. Now he has both.

Man, on his part, is in a condition which makes its own appeal. His moral disadvantages and inherited tendencies are set forth, and also the alleviations of a probation, not like that of angels and Adam at the outset, purely and only legal, but mixed—being gracious as well as under moral law. Both law and grace are akin to a moral

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system. Our author so abundantly sets forth the human moral nature and liabilities that no one can suspect him of denying that there are any now who sin under law (Rom. ii. 6–10), or of holding that judgment will be *only* for our personal attitude towards the historic Christ. Abundantly, and in various relations he recognizes the sad case of our race under heredity, inexperienced, ignorant at the outset of each life, "reason, conscience, and judgment undeveloped," all impulse toward good or imagined good imperilling the soul through sensibility—a crude and dangerous condition that warrants gracious provisions and a gracious probation here, but not hereafter. God is bound by measureless considerations to have a government, moral in nature and end; he has but one; its retributions cannot be executed before death and the end of probation, but must follow them. The atonement, therefore, does not make God merciful and gracious, but is the expression of His mercy and grace in order to save men here and now, offered men with full appreciation of the modifying, mitigating circumstances of the children of Adam as sinners. It was something God alone could devise and God alone could execute, and God only as Trinity.[6] The incarnation and mediation of Christ, the Son, are fundamental, indispensable constituents of it. God as bare Unity is not an atoning God.

In getting now to the heart of his theme Dr. Cochran points out expiation as essential means of propitiating God. "Any imaginable propitiation without expiation would be, on account of all involved in it, enormously dishonorable to him, and noxious to the whole family of Christian truths and doctrines." He approaches his definition of atonement, so laboriously and *in extenso* prepared for, through some exposition of O. T. Scripture, though

[6] So Prof. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 1888. "The explanation of the great subject of the Divine reconciliation lies in the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of vicarious atonement stands or falls with that of the Triune God." p. 408.

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most of it is relegated to Part IV., and through further criticism of Bushnell's views as expiation, which logically exclude propitiation of anyone but sinful man. Contrariwise, our author argues that the reconciliation of God is "first in order," and possible only by expiation; then, as a consequence, that of man. Very thorough work is done here. Dr. Cochran is not one of those who, in professed theology, "worship and serve the creature more than the Creator." He does not make what is needful as to man more so, and more exigently so, than what is needful as to God. As a thinker and expounder he "*sets the Lord* always before his face." It is refreshing to see it in these days of anthropological theologising. We quote now his definition of atonement—

"Christ, in His sufferings and death for mankind [all men], represented and was a substitute for them as sinners liable to suffer retributive punishment for their sins in this life. He voluntarily endured them as substitutional [or vicarious in the true sense of the word], for the punitive sufferings and death deserved by them and demanded by the justice of the law in God and [in] all other moral beings." (p. 259.)

"*Substitution does not imply that Christ suffered the aggregate amount of inflicted pains deserved by all human sinners.* His sufferings would neither have been increased nor diminished, if mankind had been a millionfold more or less numerous than they will be. They must be of infinite value to save one; they can have no more, less, or different value to save myriads, billions, or all. By His one *righteous act* (δικαίωμα, Rom. 5:18), of offering Himself an expiatory sacrifice for all men our Lord *potentially* set aside *conditionally* the condemnation of all and made all righteous (Rom. 5:19). This act had an unlimited, eternal, infinite value, and could have no less, *because of the Divine nature, relations, and character of its actor;* because it was devised and designed by the infinite wisdom of Godhead as the best, if not the only one, possible to attain the necessary ends and means for human salvation—those on the side of God, those on the side of man, those on the side of the universal and eternal holy society, those on the side of justice and law, and those on the side of mercy and grace; and because, by it, as the acme and consummation of His whole mission, He made God known, not to man only, but to 'the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places,' in His full-orbed character, glory, and all moral perfections, as was necessary to secure its ends (Eph. 3:9, 10). This substitutional, expiatory, righteous act of Christ, having this infinite value, is *provisional* for all human sinners, but made *actual* only for those who appropriate it by faith.[7]

[7] We should insert "repentance" here, in accord with the author's expo-

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and thus receive forgiveness 'through His blood' shed in it. How, then, is there any validity in the old, effete objection of infidels, Socinians, and other misbelievers on this essential point, that expiation by the substituted sufferings and death of Christ 'takes clean away the word and fact of forgiveness; for, if the debt of sin is paid, there is no longer anything to forgive'? A debt *provisionally* paid for one or many by another on a stated condition, is actually paid when the condition is fulfilled, not before; and then its payment is a fact; and, when the required ethical condition of faith is fulfilled by any one, God makes the provisional substitution of Christ *actual* for him by forgiving him on the ground of it—that is, by applying it to him." pp. 244, 245.

To be just to the whole view here given we must again quote at length—shortening a few statements:

"§ 134. HOW THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST FOR MANKIND MEET AND STAY THE DEMANDS OF JUSTICE AGAINST THEM.

The substituted suffering of Christ, the Divinely constituted *representative* of our sinful race, propitiates God towards them, because it expiates their guilt—that is, because it provisionally meets and suspends the demand of God's retributive justice against them, *provisionally* for all, *actually* for all of them who appropriate it, and thus gives full flow to the abundance of His mercy and grace towards them. This demand of His justice is in Scripture commonly called His *wrath* (ὀργή). But it is utterly to mistake its meaning to suppose it to be that His infinite sensibility is excited to mere angry emotion or passion against sinners, and that it is entirely optional with Him whether He will gratify it by punishing them, or suppress it, as best He may, and inflict no punishment—being controlled by nothing but His simple will. To conceive it so is to exclude both it and God's action relative to it entirely from the sphere of morality, and to make that action merely a thing of caprice. That His sensibility is occupied with emotions of holy anger against all sinners we hold true; but His wrath against them is vastly different from these. It is the *demand* of His infinite moral nature evoked by their sin that they shall suffer the just penalty they deserve. * * * * * * His wrath, being this demand of His nature or moral reason for the punishment of sinners as they deserve is not mere angry emotions, nor any state at the mere option of His will for keeping or suppressing. But, because He and His holy universe have the right to their penal suffering, thus demanded, He, a Ruler, has none to exempt them [sinners] from it, without or on condition of repentance alone, regardless of that demand. But He has an absolute right, moved by His mercy towards them, to suffer it Himself as a substitute for them, as ex-

sition of it often as "*the* ethical condition" of the benefits of the Atonement, and with our profound conviction that faith itself draws its ethical character from accompanying or (logically) antecedent repentance. Cf. Matt. xxi. 32, *last clause*. On p. 247 Dr. Cochran says repentance *alone* is insufficient, as elsewhere. So say we also.

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plained, and thus to expiate it. Having thus met and satisfied this demand against them, called ὀργή, *wrath*, by anthropopathic figure, He is *ipso facto*, propitiated and reconciled potentially to all, and actually to all who fulfill the prescribed conditions. Thus His mercy and grace are set free to act towards all without any hindrance whatever, except what they themselves [men] make. Justice is perfectly maintained and established inviolate forever, while mercy and grace are at perfect liberty to act in harmony with it for the reconciliation of as many as possible of mankind to God. Such being the nature of God's wrath and of expiation and propitiation, and the mode in which these two essentially identical modifications of the mind and moral relations of God towards mankind are effected, we see that there is nothing arbitrary or capricious in them. There is no deviation from, or disregard of, the demands of His own eternal, immutable, archetypal, moral nature, and of all finite ones created by Him in His own image; no acting as if there were no moral system and social-moral *nexus* of justice, the granite foundation and constituent of that system of mutual rights, dues, obligations, responsibilities, accountabilities, interests, and concerns; no immoral acting as if sin were not positive wrong and injury to Himself and all, the one blight and curse of the rational universe; but a mere personal concern of the sinner, who, therefore, instead of being subjected to the infliction of the social-moral penalty he deserves, should be regarded by God and all others with yearning sympathy for being encircled by the tightening, injuring, often ruinous coils of the train of its natural consequences, thus makit *socially* an utter trifle, and personally a comparatively diminutive evil. All diminution of the badness and guilt of sin is equally of the excellence and good-desert of obedience. But, in this essentially united pair, expiation and propitiation, we see God maintaining the great social-moral law in His own and all other moral natures (with its immutable quality of justice) in absolute integrity, and harmonizing His mercy towards human sinners with the whole social demand of that justice against them.

Expiation and propitiation are here connected as cause and effect. We can now easily understand reconciliation, as it is mutual. The fact of God's making expiation and propitiating Himself through Christ, as "representative substitute," "gives the highest conceivable conception and demonstration of His merciful love." But certain explanations are important.

1. Christ as "representative substitute," did not assume the ill-desert of mankind, or take it from them.

2. Nor did His vicarious sufferings and death include any of the natural consequences of sin.

3. Nor was it the direct design of them to show God's

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abhorrence of sin, etc (governmental view).[8]

We suspect the advocates of this (New England) theory would not admit the phrases "mere rectoral policy," "mere governmental theory," "mere expression of ends," as doing it justice. And would they not largely acccept this (p. 486.)?

"Christ made atonement for the sins of the whole world by substituting Himself to God for all that His sufferings and death might be instead of the penal sufferings and death which they severally deserved and must otherwise endure. And, as theirs [sufferings] must be to meet and satisfy the demand of retributive justice in and from the nature of God and of all other holy moral beings, strictly according to their actual ill-desert as God sees it, so those of Christ in their place must be to meet the same demand provisionally for them all, to rescue them from the necessity of meeting it themselves, and actually for all of them who, during their probation, will fulfill the necessary ethical conditions. He deserved none of them; nor did He assume the ill-desert of sinners to the least degree; but, moved by His infinite merciful love for them as moral natures, He voluntarily assumed to endure their deserved penal sufferings and death, not as punishment to Him of course, but as theirs, to save them from the necessity of enduring it, and from actually enduring it, if they truly return to God."

This is only another way of saying that the blessings of the Atonement like other Divine blessings are provisional. They would not be so, if the Atonement itself were an identical substitution anyway, for all men or for some, for then no ethical condition would attach, nor would men have any probation at all. The sufferings in which this provisional propitiation consisted must be inflicted by God himself, in order to their answering their purpose; but not because cruelty in him demanded blood. But because in no other way could his love be satisfied and effect salvation.

[8] In the exegetical part (III) is inserted an argument against the governmental view, as offered to satisfy the meaning of Scripture. (1) The demand for punishment of sin is made to rest in instituted government, rather than in moral natures. This institution is one of benevolence, but its sanctions are "wholly for its maintenance as a polity." (2) This is in order to express to mankind God's views and ends. (3) The object of the Atonement was to express the same. All which omits the demand of justice in God's nature, lays the expression, in both sanctions and expiation, on men entirely, and secures no effect in God. Contrariwise the effect in Him is first and chief.

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We must here rest our examination of this notable book. A multitude of topics avoided in order to get on faster, may be touched in another paper, with the whole exegetical treatment of the subject, along with comparative criticisms cf other recent works on the Atonement.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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