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## I. BURNEY'S SOTERIOLOGY AND THE CUMBERLAND THEOLOGY.<sup>1</sup>

DR. BURNEY'S book is, on several accounts, worthy of the attention of the Christian public:

1. Along with a world of sophistries it occasionally exhibits a real truth in a vivid light.

2. It is a most virulent attack on the penal and substitutionary theory of the atonement, and presents a "new theory" of the atonement, which would suit, with only a slight modification, a Unitarian.

3. Its author's position makes the book worthy of consideration; for he is, perhaps, the most distinguished and honored teacher in a great church; and the doctrines of that church can, because of its numbers and aggressiveness, no longer be looked upon with indifference.

4. The production of such a book in such a quarter presents an excellent example of "the logic of events." Our Cumberland brethren set out, in 1810, with the rejection of the doctrine of predestination, professing to receive remaining Calvinism in its integrity. The reader of this volume will see evidence only too good that the Cumberland Church has already moved far out of Calvinism and into Pelagian Unitarianism, or, if not into it, hard by it, and only kept out by gross and ridiculous inconsistencies.

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<sup>1</sup> *Atonement.—Soteriology.* The sacrificial, in contrast with the penal, substitutionary, and merely moral or exemplary theories of propitiation. By *S. G. Burney, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Systematic Theology in Cumberland University.* Nashville, Tenn.: Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House. 1888.

I. Our author is aware that the doctrine of the atonement has many vital connections; and that the adoption of his theory involves our modifying our notions of "the divine attributes, the essential characteristics of moral government, the nature of sin, moral retribution, confession, repentance, faith, regeneration, justification," etc., (p. 132). Accordingly, he proceeds to treat of certain of God's attributes, of moral government, and of sin, before advancing to the more immediate discussion of the great subject of the work.

§ 1. The *proton-pseulos* of his whole system is in his conception of justice. On p. 14, in arguing against the Anselmic theory of the atonement, he teaches that if justice is predicable of God in the same sense in which love is, then

"Both attributes are immutable, and reconciliation is impossible; for justice requires satisfaction prior to any act of love; but for God to satisfy justice is itself an act of love. This clearly demonstrates the utter absurdity of founding the necessity of the atonement in the divine attributes." And pp. 133, 134, "God's purposes are to him the rule of his action. . . . Justice, as a divine attribute, is simply God's integrity to his wise and benevolent purposes. Justice and right are coincident."

(1.) He teaches us here that justice, taking that term in its usual orthodox sense, cannot be an attribute of God, because, forsooth, judicial wrath and benevolence are incompatible, "for justice requires satisfaction prior to any act of love." This is not true, and is a *petitio principii*. That justice requires satisfaction prior to any act of love which does not satisfy justice, is a less objectionable statement.

That benevolence and judicial wrath are compatible affections is beyond a doubt. Righteous human anger and benevolence are frequently felt for the same object at the same moment; *e. g.*, Paul had as deep and tender philanthropy as any living man. He would have been willing to have made any righteous sacrifice to secure the repentance of Alexander the coppersmith, but with a holy wrath he prayed (2 Tim. iv. 14), "The Lord reward him according to his works." When, in the court of war, Washington as a judge condemned Major André to death, he did not necessarily cease to feel benevolently towards him. Paul could entertain along with a holy wrath a true feeling of benevolence.

Washington's exercise of judicial wrath was not incompatible with his exercise of benevolence. There is no incompatibility between justice and love, as the experience of many an honest judge can affirm. On the contrary, there can be no such thing as perfect ethical benevolence without perfect justice, whether in God or man.

Dr. Burney seems to think that the text, "God is love," teaches that God cannot be justice in the same essential sense. But what, then, do the words of Isa. vi. 3, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God," mean? What the words of Heb. xii. 29, "For our God is a consuming fire?" Judicial wrath and benevolence are compatible. These texts show it. Justice and love are each essential attributes of God.

(2.) We ask, What about the rectitude of God's purposes? The author identifies justice and right. These terms with him have the same content. Justice as an attribute of God is his fidelity to his purposes; right in God is fidelity to his purposes. But may we not ask whether these purposes are *just* or *right*? It is to the purpose or intention of a man that we go to find out his morality. Apparently, our author will not permit us to ask whether God's purpose is right. Common sense, however, will ask; and if it concludes, as it must, both from philosophy and revelation, that God's purpose is right, it will ask further, "What made it right?" And it will look for the necessary cause of a right purpose in a right nature, of a just purpose in a just nature.

Further, it seems clear that if Dr. Burney is right, then God might have made what we call the moral law—the decalogue—very different, nay, the opposite of what it is; and that the distinction between the "perpetual moral" and the "temporary positive" precept would be reduced to a worthless superficiality. *God is just essentially.*

(3.) According to this teaching God's justice is merely his fidelity to his purposes, faithfulness in making things work out his original purpose.

Now, the author himself says (pp. 157, 158), "The fact that the human mind was created in the image of the divine mind seems to authorize the inference that there is at least some similarity in their moral attributes. Hence, that justice, truth, love,

mercy, etc., in the human are generically the same as they are in the divine." This is the truth. But now the query arises, Is justice in the human nothing else than faithfulness to his purposes? Napoleon was long faithful to his purpose to be emperor of France, and to subjugate all remaining Europe, if possible. Was he just, and *this* his justice? One of the most persistent of all rational beings is the devil. Is he just? And to take a case where the purpose is "wise and benevolent," were Washington's justice and his fidelity to his purpose not to resign his command during the winter of Valley Forge identical? Consciousness says that the trait of persistence along a determined line of action is different from the trait of justice, that justice (if your action affects aught else that has rights) qualifies you in the very formation of the purpose, while persistence, or fidelity to the purpose, qualifies you in relation to the purpose already formed. These are different. God is just as well as faithful.

(4.) The author seems to *out-Socinus* Socinus himself. And it is remarkable that, if our memory serves, he does not refer to Socinus. Their views as to God's justice are very like. Socinus, indeed, seems to have been hardly so hard-mouthed in denying God's justice. He says, "There is no such justice in God as requires absolutely and inexorably that sin be punished. There is, indeed, a perpetual and constant justice in God; but this is nothing but moral equity and rectitude, by virtue of which there is no depravity or iniquity in any of his works";<sup>1</sup> that is, if there is any distributive justice in God, it is a mere effect of divine volition. God is not moved thereto by any necessary attribute. Our author, when he denies justice in any sense of God as an essential attribute, is more consistent than his spiritual progenitor; yet, practically, Socinus and he are at one on the justice of God.

(5.) This colossal slander of God lying at the base of the fabrication of this soteriology necessarily renders the whole scheme unworthy in the highest degree.

§ 2. Our author's notion of God as a moral ruler may be inferred. It is in substance:

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<sup>1</sup> *Praelectiones Theologicae*, C. 16, quoted in Shedd's *Theology*, Vol. II., p. 365.

“The moral law is a ‘concreation’ in the human mind. Its abrogation would involve the destruction of the mind. Its relaxation would involve fundamental changes in the mind.

“God is just or true to his own purposes as revealed in the constitution of the human mind, and his word, both affirming that the soul that sinneth it shall die.” (P. 134.)

“This is the aspect of divine justice or law that imperatively requires . . . some plan by which the sinner can be changed from a rebel against justice or law to a state of submission to law or God. The restoration of the rebel to obedience is by necessary consequence the removal of penalty, just as the cure of disease is the removal of its painfulness.” (Pp. 135, 136.)

(1.) According to this teaching, the Almighty having endowed us with the “concreated” moral nature, by his arbitrary will, is going to see that we do not walk contrary thereto without suffering. The infinite giant will have his purposes, of which neither moral good nor moral evil may be affirmed, carried out. There is, therefore, a plan to change rebellious creatures.

(2.) We learn here that the moral nature of man is the result of God’s purpose; that purpose our author must hold to be non-moral. Can there be more in the effect than was in the cause? It would seem, then, that our moral natures are non-moral.

(3.) If God’s plan can be best accomplished by abrogating in the case of any individual man the moral law, even if it does cost that man his mind, he may do so and be perfectly just in doing it. Does not his justice consist in his “fidelity to his purposes?”

(4.) We deny that the “restoration of the rebel to obedience is by necessary consequence the removal of penalty.” If sin and disease are analogous in certain respects, they differ in this primary one, viz., that sin is an act, at least, a *nisus*. There is spontaneity in all sin, even in “states” of sin. But disease is a product. It lacks spontaneity. If you destroy the product you destroy its phenomenon, painfulness. But though you cause an agent to stop acting in a sinful way, you do not destroy the bad effects of his previous sin, for which he is still responsible. Or if the doctor object, and say there is a physical *nisus* in disease, then we say that painfulness is not the *only* effect of the disease, and foulness of disposition is not the *only* consequence of sin. Though that be taken away, other consequences are to be answered for. If it be so, that one who sees no righteousness in God, the moral ruler, can-

not *see* it; that is a proof that he should rectify his creed at that point.

(5.) He who denies the essential justice of God can frame no other than an unworthy picture of God's moral government. He beholds the government of an almighty giant, himself uncontrolled by essential righteousness, over non-moral beings. This is worse than the hell of fatalism. Such is the second stone in the foundation of the "new theory." And *it* is from the Socinian quarry.

§ 3. A few quotations will show the doctrine of the moral agency of man set forth in this volume. In speaking of the Anselmic theory of the atonement (p. 43), the author says:

"It was but natural that he should construct his soteriology to meet the requirements of Augustinian anthropology. In brief, his soteriology may be regarded as the natural product of a false anthropology, false views of human freedom, and false conceptions of the nature and possibilities of the moral law." And p. 219: "Substitution requires the doctrine of moral necessity." On p. 63: "Our first parents were created holy, but not innocent and upright." And again, p. 356: "To be born in a state of fitness for heaven is impossible, because it presupposes a concreated righteousness, which is a *contradiction*."

Worthy of attention, as giving an insight into the author's practical psychology, is the statement (p. 64):

"Certainly we should distinguish between an inclination to sin and the act of sinning. The first is a state of sensibility, and the other is an act of the will."

(1.) It is evident that he who makes such statements is to be recognized as the fellow of Socinus, Scotus and Pelagius, and of the first water, in respect to human freedom; that he has never made the distinction, *necessary* in order to any true understanding of the human will, between the passive susceptibilities of feeling and the soul's active appetencies; that, in short, he is ruled by a superficial sensational philosophy. The limits of this review forbid our more than pointing out these facts.

(2.) It is amusing to hear our author speak of the moral nature of man, since he tries to destroy all basis therefor; for though there is a difference between natural and moral good, if one holds to the non-righteousness of God, that he is not essentially righteous, such an one cannot make the distinction. He therefore can allow no moral nature; nor should he speak of moral agency.

(3.) It is a puzzle to understand how God could have "created

our first parents innocent and *upright*—in character, of course—yet, not have created them righteous in character, and so have accomplished that “impossible” thing, that “contradiction,” “a conated righteousness.”

(4.) Such anthropology is a *logical prius* to the view given of the moral government of God, and is so far a fitting third foundation stone of the “new theory.”

§ 4. Sin is not a debt, but a crime” (p. 138).

“To make sin strictly a debt, and nothing but a debt, secures some polemic advantages in favor of substitution.” (P. 139.)

Having made this remarkable statement, our author proceeds, in the course of several pages, to knock down this light-weight straw man, and to pummel him with much self-satisfaction very thoroughly. In the meantime he tells us that “We get the word debt in the Lord’s prayer only by taking a word *literally*, which was evidently intended to be taken *tropically*” (p. 139); and describes sin further as “a crime against objective and subjective law, against God and the sinner himself” (p. 142); and as “a self-degradation and forfeiture of the good which the beneficent law of God is intended to conserve” (p. 145).

(1.) It may be granted that, in the Lord’s prayer, sin is called debt tropically; but would our Lord have used a *trope* unless it were fit by reason of a real similarity in some particular? Hardly. “This use,” says Dr. Broadus, (*Com on Matt., in loco*), “is perfectly natural in itself, since an obligation to God which is not duly met becomes to us a sin.” The sinner is a debtor to God. This is not saying that he is an exact analogue of a pecuniary debtor. He is a *moral* debtor.

(2.) This aspect of the sinner as a moral debtor is studiously hidden. Evidently, like Scotus, Dr. Burney thinks it is hidden even from God. He ignores the relation of the sinner to the penal sanction of the law, or his obligation to punishment.

(3.) The result of sin to the sinner is simply a “self-degradation and forfeiture of the good.” In this he is like Socinus and Scotus, though in his notion of the effect of Adam’s sin on his race he is more like the lower Arminian school—*e. g.*, like Whitby.

(4.) This view of the nature and consequences of sin, though

so evidently false, is the one that coheres with the author's doctrines of God's non-righteousness, of moral government, and of man's freedom.

These four doctrines are the four corner-stones on which the new theory of soteriology is to be erected. They are rotten. They are *sand* already. It cannot stand.

II. After the preliminary consideration of the previously exposed doctrines, our author states the issue, viz.:

"Does Christ save us by suffering the punishment of our sins in our place, or by delivering us from our enmity against God, and restoring us to a loving obedience?"

The form of this statement is objectionable, but we waive the objection. Dr. Burney affirms the latter alternative, and proposes to support his affirmation "by an appeal to known facts of human nature, and facts given in the Bible."

§ 1. He argues, *first*, from "natural or human atonement:"

"The offender, seeing his folly, may repent—that is, turn from his offensive purpose. . . . The act of outward confession has in itself no merit, no virtue, to propitiate. It is only the revelation to the other party of repentance or change of purpose and feeling in regard to him.

"Hence it is sufficiently clear that this repentance, this change of purpose and feeling, this self-reconciliation, is the propitiating, or favor-producing power, which gives to the offended party ample ground for both real and declarative pardon. . . . As disobedience to fraternal law necessarily involves condemnation, so repentance, which is a return to obedience, necessarily insures release from condemnation, or gives sufficient grounds for this release." (P. 154.)

"In cases where a mediator intervenes, what the mediator really does is not to take the place of one or both parties, but to help the offender to return to his duty, and to do just what the law of fraternal peace requires him to do, and to induce the offended party to accept this repentance as the condition of forgiveness. From these common sense truths it is clear that the *propitiation* is simply in the *repentance* or in the *obedience*, and not in any suffering endured by the offender or any impossible substitute." (Pp. 155, 156.)

. . . "Then it fairly follows that the law of human forgiveness, as revealed in nature and in the Bible, is generically the same as the law of divine forgiveness. That God should make confession the absolute condition of forgiveness in reference to man, and punishment the indispensable condition of forgiveness in reference to himself, is a thing in itself inconceivable." (P. 158.)

1. He misstates the nature and conditions of human forgiveness.

(1.) While bringing forth these views Dr. Burney has much to say—good, even if it is old—about the evils which come of failing to forgive upon confession. The nature of confession he also



states truly. But while he has apprehended that there is an important connection between repentance and forgiveness, he has failed to perceive the true nature of that relation, and also to comprehend correctly the nature of human forgiveness.

(2.) He has completely misapprehended the relation between repentance and forgiveness. He makes repentance to be a "favor-producing power," a sort of moral efficient of forgiveness by any well-constituted moral agent. It "necessarily insures release from condemnation, or gives sufficient grounds for this release." His mental condition here is much like that of those philosophers who will have it that our first truths are the products of experience, whereas, they come on *occasion* of experience into the consciousness from the mind's own constitution. They confound occasion and source, or efficient cause. He confounds occasion with the sufficient ground and with efficient cause. The three are severally different. It would be morally unfit to forgive, in the fullest sense in which we can predicate forgiveness of man, our fellow, unless he were repentant; but it does not follow that repentance is the ground of forgiveness, much less that it produces forgiveness. The real ground of forgiveness is the unevadable obligation to love our neighbor as ourselves, together with God's express prohibition of retributive functions to us, and enjoinder of forgiveness upon us. Repentance does not propitiate for the past. It does not repair. It is a cry of guilt. It grounds no right in the offender to the forgiveness of the offended, though it is the occasion necessary thereto.

(3.) But neither does Dr. Burney catch correctly the nature of forgiveness. Let us ask what it is that we can properly say that we forgive in him who trespasses against us. An example will elucidate. We suppose the following: You have a dear friend. He is cruelly murdered, and four results follow, viz., (*a*), natural resentment springs up in your mind against the offender; (*b*), you suffer loss—companionship, succor in distress—at the hands of the malefactor; (*c*), a stain attaches to the character and reputation of the murderer; (*d*), the murderer is under obligation to punishment for his crime. You feel it; he feels it; all upright men who know of his act feel it.

Now, if there be mingled with your resentment unrighteous elements, which is likely to be true,—if you wish to make the murderer suffer for selfish gratification, you should lay aside those elements at once. Indeed, you never should have had them. The personal element in your righteous resentment you should lay aside when you know that the murderous purpose has ceased to be operative in the murderer. As for the loss which you have sustained, so far as remuneration is possible, you know yourself to be entitled to it at the hands of the murderer. And if he is truly repentant, he will do his utmost to repair all possible of reparation. But he may be naturally unable. And whenever the criminal has confessed repentance, and has shown it to be genuine, that his character is as strong and pure as it was before the misdeed, you are bound to forgive him in the fullest sense of which man is capable. You are bound to lay aside resentment, to remit impossible reparation, and to treat him in accordance with this repentant character. The grounds on which you are to do this have been stated already. But you can forgive nothing else. You still feel that he has violated a righteous law, and should suffer therefor. You will find no more personal satisfaction in the thought that he suffers than in the thought that any other guilty man suffers. But you feel that he ought to suffer. He feels it. You never think of releasing him from obligation to punishment; that does not come into your concept of private forgiveness. It is a matter you leave with God or his vicegerents. *Human pardon does not consider the criminal's obligation to punishment.*

(4.) We may remark, in passing, that while the mediator must be equally the friend of both parties, yet he sometimes does take the place of one of the parties; *e. g.*, a son forges a note; he repents; his father intervenes, suffers the necessary financial mulct, and reconciles the parties.

Thus we see that the nature and conditions of *private* human forgiveness are not at all understood by Dr. Burney. This of itself would be sufficient to vitiate his conclusions.

(5.) It is in place here to call *particular* attention to the fact that our author tacitly assumes that the relation of God to the sinner in the divine government is like that of one sinner to

another. He refuses to see any analogy between the relation of a righteous human ruler to his subjects and God's relation to the sinner. He asserts (p. 136), that "to interpret divine law by human law leads to false notions of God and his law, of sin, of retribution, and of the plan of salvation."

This mere assertion he does not support by any argument. It is impossible of proof. Of course, in arguing from human governments, allowances must be made for imperfections of every kind. But if God stands related to the Mosaic law as the Bible claims, there is an imperfect analogy between human and divine government. The light of nature, as Bishop Butler has so powerfully shown, teaches us the same truth. Further, we are justified in claiming that the *analogy is strong*, that human government is, in spite of its imperfections, a part of the divine government; for Paul teaches that a ruler "is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Now, "human governments do *not* regard repentance as the sufficient condition for remitting penalty." No judge does. The so-called pardoning power of government is not a pardoning power. It is a justifying power. He who is said to be pardoned is declared not to have violated the spirit of the law, the letter of which condemned him. Or, in the light of new evidence he is seen and declared not to be guilty. Thus this true analogue teaches the utter insufficiency of repentance in order to remission of penalty.

2. Our author demolishes his own argument from the "nature of human atonement," by his subsequent teaching about the nature and conditions of divine forgiveness. He had said (p. 158), in the chapter on "Human Atonement":

"While the laws of forgiveness are, in relation both to human and divine, generically the same, they are in their *accidents* specifically different."

On page 313 he raises the question:

"Why is not repentance of itself a sufficient ground of forgiveness of sins against God?"

And answers:

"This is one of the most important, and withal one of the most difficult, subjects connected with the whole subject of the atonement." (P. 313.) "I have found it exceedingly difficult to satisfy some students that any propitiation at all is necessary." (P. 314.)

He then proceeds to say :

(1.) "It does not follow that because repentance is a sufficient ground of forgiveness between man and man, that it is therefore a sufficient ground of forgiveness between man and God." . . . (2.) "What is required in order to deliverance from sin against God is not a mere change of an accidental state of the passions, but a change of the heart from an inborn constitutional bias." (P. 314.) (3.) "No repentance is sufficient ground for so radical a change. In fact, repentance is no part of its ground at all, but only its condition. . . . Repentance is the grant of Christ the *quickening Spirit*, without whose influence repentance unto life is impossible." . . . (4.) "But even if repentance . . . was possible, it could not be accepted as a ground of forgiveness, for nothing, absolutely nothing, is acceptable unto God which is not sanctified or separated unto him."

(1.) We may remark, by the way, that after teaching the student that justice, in the common acceptation of the term, is not an attribute of God; that there is no obligation to penalty attending sin; that the absolute condition and sufficient ground of human forgiveness is repentance; that human and divine forgiveness are generically one in character, it does not seem strange that Dr. Burney should find it hard to convince any of his thereto more docile pupils that any propitiation was necessary in order to God's forgiving sin. The student can see no need for the fifth wheel. Out-and-out Unitarianism pleases by greater consistency.

(2.) It is worthy of special notice how different a thing our distinguished author makes divine forgiveness from human forgiveness. "Deliverance from sin against God is . . . a change of the heart from an inborn constitutional bias to evil." By the phrase, "Deliverance from sin," he means "pardon." On page 277 he says :

"To pardon sin in such a sense as to save the soul . . . is to regenerate, new create the soul itself. This done, the penalty ceases, as pain subsides when the disease which caused it is removed."

What folly, then, to argue from the laws and conditions of human forgiveness those of divine forgiveness! Certainly, according to this description of God's pardon, the two kinds of forgiveness are wholly unlike. Why, then, suppose the laws of their performance "generically" alike? When man forgives his fellow, he works no change in him. Our author himself teaches that human forgiveness is a laying aside of indignation by the offended as against the offender. This is a defective view, how-

ever. Remark the following: There is a man named John Hall in New York city. There is one bearing the same name in the mountains of West Virginia. I prove (*a la* Burney) that John Hall of New York gets drunk every Saturday night by showing that the mountaineer does. *They have the same name.* Afterwards I assert that John Hall of New York is a very different sort of man. This last assertion may be true. But what of my reasoning?

(3.) Not only are the acts represented to be absolutely, in respect to essentials, different. *The absolute conditions or grounds of the two acts he represents now to be radically different.* He says that *repentance* is no sufficient ground; that it is not any part of a ground of God's forgiveness. The absolute condition, the sufficient ground of human forgiveness, is, he says, the offender's repentance and confession. But no internal change of any kind is posited as the ground of the divine. The real grounds are thus now declared to be wholly unlike. What force can there be in the author's reasoning from human atonement to himself.

3. It is in place now to consider the grounds alleged by the author to be those on which God pardons:

"If he (man) could by an act of will put himself into a state of thorough consecratedness, then he would be his own sanctifier, atoner and saviour." (P. 316.) "By virtue of this one sacrificial offering (Christ) all humanity is so sanctified that every man may bring his offering before the mercy-seat, or to Christ, his great Highpriest, and find acceptance. This is the new and living way. You should note the important fact that this sanctification of all humanity by this sacrificial offering does not affect the moral or legal condition of men. The atonement made for the altar did not affect the altar itself, but only its relation to God. . . . But as the atonement for the altar rendered it acceptable to God, so every human being is rendered so far acceptable to God that he may consecrate himself to God through Christ." (Pp. 317, 318.)

"I do not use the word sanctification in the sense of moral purity or sinlessness, but in the strict Bible sense, viz., separateness from worldliness and appropriation to God and sacred uses." (Pp. 339, 340.)

(1.) We are taught here that the "sanctification" which Christ effected, (and which, if a man could accomplish, he could be his own "atoner and saviour," *which is*, therefore, the essential ground of pardon,) is simply *a setting apart or appropriating to God*; and that it is just such sanctification generically as that by which holy places, utensils, and the like, were set apart. Christ mediates cer-

tain influences, helps us to certain graces, but if we could only sanctify ourselves, we could obtain pardon.

This sanctification does "not affect our moral condition." It does "not affect our legal condition." Wonderful to say! It affects our "relation to God," nevertheless. What sort of relation? Evidently a non-moral one; evidently, also, a non-legal one. But what sort?

Seeing the ground of divine forgiveness as Dr. Burney sees it, what of his argument from the nature of human forgiveness? It has "gone glimmering."

(2.) The author says (p. 202):

"You wish to know the authority for the assertion, that Christ by his sacrificial death did sanctify, set apart, or appropriate humanity to God in such a sense that each individual can come to God by faith in Christ, and be accepted through faith in him. This authority is clear and explicit. Heb. xiii. 12."

But the authority is not "clearly and explicitly" there. In order to show it to be in the text our author would have to show that the term "sanctify" has only the meaning "to set apart to God," in the Bible, in the Book of Hebrews, and in this chapter. No one of which things has he done, or can he do. It is well known that the term "sanctify" has at least two senses in the Bible (there seem to be four distinguishable uses): (*a*), To consecrate, or set apart to a holy use (Ex. xxviii. 41; Matt. xxiii. 17); (*b*), To purify, or make holy (John xvii. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 11; 1 Thes. v. 23.) In the Epistle to the Hebrews the word seems to be used in a more comprehensive sense, viz., to *expiate guilt* and to *relieve of pollution*.<sup>1</sup> This comprehensive sense is evidently the one here. The denotation of the *τὸν λαόν* being that of God's spiritual Israel, is much less than the position which the text is advanced to sustain requires. Besides, his interpretation gives a revolting caricature of God.

We utterly deny the existence of any such ground of divine forgiveness as Dr. Burney would find in this figment of "sanctification" which differentiates his scheme of soteriology from that of Socinus.

(3.) We cannot but observe, incidentally, that he misstates the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Owen on *Hebrews*; Dabney's *Theology*, p. 661; Sampson on *Hebrews*.

relation of the sinner to Christ's sacrificial work. This his leaning to Pelagianism allows.

So far we have seen that Dr. Burney misunderstands the nature and conditions of human forgiveness, misunderstands the nature and conditions of divine forgiveness, and that *his representations* of the two make them so different that there can be no reasoning from one to the other by analogy. We have also seen that this figment of "sanctification" alone saves him from the Socinian view of Christ's death in its baldest form.

§ 2. In supporting his position from "facts given in the Bible," our author begins with the "Bible usage of the word atonement." He makes the first requisite, in order to arrival at the truth, to be to "lay down all the dictionaries which reflect the vices, as well as the virtues, of the theological authors of the last eight or ten centuries." He then says:

"The word atonement often occurs in the Old Testament, but only in a few instances do the contexts give any distinct idea of what constitutes the atoning power. In these few instances, however, we have clear proof that it does not consist in penal suffering, but in placating or pleasing God by fidelity to him." (P. 164.)

The instances given are Lev. xvi. 11-20; Ex. xxx. 11-16; xxxii.; Deut. ix.; Num. xvi. 41-48; xxvi.

Let us suppose that Dr. Burney is arguing with one who holds that physical death is not the result of sin; that it is not, therefore, awful in God's sight; that the uncleanness of the holy place was not owing to sin in the people; that the holy place was not regarded as contaminated by sin; that, in fine, holds with the Doctor, *apparently*, a sort of gnostic conception of the flesh to be the biblical conception. To such an one only will Dr. Burney's explanation of Lev. xvi. 20 appear in the least plausible.

As for Ex. xxx. 11-16: The reason why the "poll-tax" is called an atonement, *כִּפּוּר*, is easily explained. A perpetual sacrifice was ordained. For this service a legally-imposed tax for the temple revenue was necessary. This explains how this contribution serves for expiation (verse 12). It served this purpose indirectly by serving "for the permanent expiation of the people by means of the offerings."<sup>1</sup> With it offerings were purchased.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schaff's *Lange, in loco*.

Ex. xxxii. : Moses' proffered atonement was not accepted. (See Ex. xxxii. 33-35.)

Num. xvi. 41-48: Here, according to Dr. Burney, the divine anger was turned away by Aaron's heroic obedience to the supreme law of love; and we have atonement without substitution. Rather we have a turning away of the divine anger by an official intercession by Aaron. His intercession, which was typical, was grounded on the sacrifices, also typical, which as high priest he offered. The intercession thus grounded is by an easily understood metonymy called atonement.

Num. xxv.: *Pulpit Commentary*: "The signal example thus made by Phineas of a leading offender was accepted by God as an expiation, and the exterminating wrath which had gone forth against the whole people was arrested." He makes atonement in destroying life. (Cf. *Perowne Com.*, Psalm cvi. 4.) There was more in the act than bare fidelity to God. Nor can the author prove, as he asserts, that Phineas was at this time a regularly consecrated priest, formally set apart to the office of mediator. But we pass the point, and without claiming to have ourselves a perfectly satisfactory notion of this unique atoning act. Were this instance favorable to Dr. Burney, it, standing alone as it does, would be utterly insufficient as a foundation for his theory.

We deny that these cases warrant any one's asserting that atonement consists in placating God by fidelity, and not in satisfying divine justice by penal suffering. The penal explanation is the most worthy of God in every case.

The true conception of atonement is conveyed in Lev. vi. 2-7, and iv. 13-20. From these passages we learn that forgiveness consists at least in the non-infliction of suffering on the trespasser, that the essence of the atonement is in the penal death of the animal, or rather in that of its antitype. It is *shed blood* that expiates. The transgressor's life is saved by the *destruction* of other life, by *substitutionary sufferings*.

Our author, however, having satisfied himself apparently as to the scriptural meaning of the word atonement, proceeds to set forth his conception of the Messianic atonement, or *sanctification*



rather. This figment has already been stated. It only remains to notice how Christ achieved this sanctifying work.

This holy being is represented as plunging under the impulse of unspeakable love into the vortex in which mankind is, and as winning by his heroic and self-denying exertions in behalf of man God's pardon for man. "Such heroic suffering," says he, "commends itself to all that is godlike in humanity, . . . knowing that such suffering does commend itself to all that is divine in men, we may very well believe it to be a sweet smelling savor to God. . . . All the atonements named in the Bible were made by obeying the law, not by bearing its penalties.

"If punishment is pleasant to God, then we must believe that he is equally well pleased with the state of affairs in pandemonium and paradise." (Pp. 211, 212.)

*I. e.*, This God, who has no essential justice, is pleased with the compassionate conduct of the great Rescuer. The Saviour by his magnificently heroic conduct atones or sanctifies.

After the remarks already made on God's justice, it would be puerile to apply ourselves seriously to the refutation of the unworthy twaddle contained in the above quotation.

Nor is it necessary to illustrate at length the arguments by which our author endeavors to rebut the penal theory and to establish the "non-penal." In the main, the objections which he brings against the penal or vicarious theory of the atonement are but those brought by his forebears, the Socinians or Pelagians or semi-Pelagians; *e. g.*, that satisfaction and remission are inconsistent; that the vicarious theory makes out God vindictive; that imputation is immoral and a fiction; that the notion of penal sacrifice is self-contradictory. All these objections have been exploded time and again. They have no force save in the mind of a Pelagian or Unitarian. And in the main, the positive arguments for his position are blocks which have evidently been hewn by a son of the same mothers.

He adds in this work, to unsound anthropology and unsound theology, unsound and unfair exegesis. As an instance of this let us examine his interpretation (?) of Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45:

"The decisive word is *lutron*, a ransom, supplemented by *anti*. . . . The engrossing idea of ransom is deliverance, and the word itself is indifferent to the means by which the deliverance is made. It may be by almost any means whatever except by "penal satisfaction," which, of course, were it possible, would not be ransom or deliverance from evil, but the endurance of evil by a substitute.

Again, the word *for* (*anti*), it is suggested, requires us to believe that there is a commercial value between the so-called penal sufferings of Christ and the souls of many. To this I reply that there is no known standard of valuation between penal sufferings and the souls of men. The penal explanation of the text involves two assumptions which render it worthless: first, that the death was penal and substitutionary; and secondly, that penal suffering actually ransoms or saves. If these gratuitous assumptions are true, then of course Gehenna is, or will become, "a land uninhabited." On the contrary, if we reject the idea of penal ransom, then we readily see how Christ, by giving his life in the interest of humanity, becomes the ransom of all that obey him." (Pp. 298, 299.)

(1.) Suppose God's redeemed do vicariously suffer in the substitute, are they not ransomed from personal suffering by him? and is not this true "ransom, or deliverance from evil?"

(2.) Notice the caricature in what is said about a "commercial value between the so-called penal sufferings of Christ and the souls of many." Caricature is one of the outstanding characteristics of the author's method.

(3.) He says, "The penal explanation of the text involves two assumptions," etc. Dr. Burney calls these "assumptions" "gratuitous," and therein begs the question in dispute.

(4.) His inference from these "gratuitous assumptions" is an "apple of Sodom," that has been touched into dust and ashes a hundred times. The sufficiency of Christ's atonement is one thing, the personal appropriation of it is quite another.

(5.) He teaches that *anti* means *in the interest of*. This is wholly "gratuitous."

Morison, a most reverent, scholarly and honest commentator, worthy of admiration even by those who are displeased with slight Arminian tendencies, says:<sup>1</sup> "He came to present to the divine justice what would afford a sufficient guarantee for the authority and honor of the law, in the event of the liberation of the guilty, and what would be fitted to have a wholesome ethical influence upon the hearts of the liberated. The preposition translated *for* (*anti*) does not mean *for the benefit of*, or in behalf of. It properly means over against, and here represents the ransom as an equivalent for the persons for whom it was paid. Substitution is implied, equivalence is expressed."

<sup>1</sup> *Commentary, on Mark x. 45.*

Says Dr. Broadus (*Com. Matt. xx. 28*): "The preposition rendered 'for' (*anti*), necessarily means 'instead of,' involving substitution, a vicarious death." And calls attention to *antitutron* in "who gave himself a *substitutionary* ransom." (1 Tim. ii. 6.)

"In these two passages the preposition (*anti*) *for* indisputably denotes substitution. Passages like Matt. ii. 22, 'Archelaus reigned in the room (*anti*) of his father Herod'; Matt. v. 38, 'An eye for an eye'; Luke xi. 11, 'Will he for a fish give him a serpent? prove this.'—*Shedd*.

Such are the means by which the "new theory" has been commended to the reading public. Our author has set forth a false notion of God, of moral government, of human freedom, of sin; has started with false views of human forgiveness and of divine; has made grievous errors in arguing from the conditions of the one to those of the other, and has misinterpreted the facts of the Bible to accommodate his own prejudices. And yet the book is of most pernicious importance. It will have an immense influence on a great mass of poorly educated preachers. It will add an increment to the velocity with which Cumberlandism is moving toward Pelagian Socinianism. It is important also as an index to outsiders of the extent of this movement already. We have been informed that Dr. Burney's hand, rather than that of any other, has given shape to those articles of the new Confession of his church which relate to Christ's atoning work. If so, the wording of those articles must be interpreted from his standing point. His view of the atonement is the prevailing view of the church? Those articles may, to him who has not had previous acquaintance with Dr. Burney's theological views, be remarkable only for vagueness; but when read in the light of a knowledge of the author's tenets, we see, not only that Calvinism has been utterly forsaken, but that an atonement more like the Socinian than any other is the church's possession. See § 31 of the *New Confession of Faith*, in the light of Dr. Burney's teaching.

They seem to hold to the divinity of Christ. Dr. Burney himself does, by a happy inconsistency. But their disciples will be less inconsistent. They will soon deny the necessity for the figment "sanctification," which, according to Dr. Burney, God has,

arbitrarily and not from essential justice, decreed in order to pardon.

And there is logic in the movement. The rejection of the "offensive doctrine of predestination," implied unsound psychology and defective views of sin, was an expression of false theology, involved a false soteriology. Start a stone down hill, and the tendency is for it to go on.

We would that our brethren in the Northern Church could see and read their own future in Cumberlandism, if they reject predestination.

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