

THE LIVING PULPIT,

OR

EIGHTEEN SERMONS

BY EMINENT LIVING DIVINES

OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

WITH

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE EDITOR,

BY GEO. W. BETHUNE, D. D.

EDITED AND PUBLISHED

BY REV. ELIJAH WILSON.

~~~~~  
ELEVENTH EDITION.  
~~~~~

PHILADELPHIA:
C. SHERMAN & SON, PRINTERS,
S. W. CORNER OF SEVENTH AND CHERRY STS.
1861.

CONSISTENCY OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

BY

GEO. JUNKIN, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF WASHINGTON COLLEGE, VIRGINIA.

For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.—HEB. ii. 10.

MAN is a creature of sensation before he is capable of reasoning and moralizing. His first pains and pleasures are those resulting from the exercise of his merely animal senses. His ear, his eye, his taste, his touch, his smell, first awake his soul to consciousness, and let in the light of joy upon the hitherto darkened mind. After these he is competent to reason, and then capable of moral sensibilities. What period of time, and what amount of enjoyment, are written out in the records of his conscious felicities, before he experiences the higher happiness of his rational and moral nature, it is impracticable to determine. They will vary according to the infinitely varying characteristics of the physical organization and of the mental and moral structure. It is obvious, however, that in all cases they are very considerable. Infant humanity reaps a large harvest of harmless joys from the wide fields of na-

ture, and habits of reliance upon these, as its chief good, become strongly fixed at an early period. These habits are often encountered in subsequent efforts to develop the higher faculties of the soul. We find it extremely difficult to give a reflective turn to the current of thought; to lead the mind away from the external to the internal; to divert the affections from the pleasures of mere sense, to the deeper flow, and more enduring satisfaction, of spiritual contemplations.

Here lies the philosophy of the general fact, that within the sphere of religion, the externals, the mere outward drapery, dazzles the eye and arrests the attention, whilst the inner, spiritual substance, passes unnoticed. Children in years and knowledge see with the eye and hear with the ear, while with the heart they understand not. Let religion put on an outward gorgeous ceremonial; let her appear arrayed in purple and scarlet; let her head wear the jewelled coronet; let her majestic service be accompanied with all the enchantments of choral and instrumental harmonies, and the undeveloped mind will hail her with exquisite delight; but let her appear meek and lowly, humble and unadorned, and there is no beauty seen in her; she is as a root out of a dry ground, despised and rejected of men.

Thus the Church, in the period of her nonage, was attracted by the splendid and imposing ritual of the Levitical dispensation. The visible symbols, the gorgeous embellishments, the outward solemn pomp and parade, filled the eye and the ear, and captivated the imagination of a people not yet grown to maturity in the things of the Spirit. From this

state of necessary pupilage, under tutors and governors, the Church must, however, pass; but the transition will, of course, be accompanied with strong emotions and a violent struggle. Like the incipient efforts of the youthful mind to take in an abstract thought, and to reflect upon its own actions, the Israelite turns away with difficulty from the venerable and long venerated rites prescribed by Moses, to the unostentatious simplicity of Gospel institutions. David's Lord, in becoming David's Son, has laid aside the external appliances and trappings of worldly grandeur; and, therefore, to the carnal Jew, he is what he seems to be, and consequently is treated with contempt. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" This is the stumbling stone, this the rock of offence over which the great body of the Israelites fell and were broken. We have Abraham to our father, we had Moses as our leader, and David as our king: the brazen altar, the golden candlestick, the gilded tabernacle, the glorious ark of the testimony, the gorgeous temple, the outstretched wings of the golden cherubim, the solemn choirs, and all the majesty of that magnificent service—oh, how shall we abandon this, all this, for Him who was born in a stable, cradled in a manger, crucified at Golgotha!

Entrenched behind these prejudices lie the great body of the Hebrew people, Paul's brethren according to the flesh. Behind these fearful barriers had the apostle himself lain, in all the confident security of individual and national self-righteousness. Therefore did he feel and fear for them; and, therefore, against these apparently impregnable bulwarks did

he direct the first discharge of his heavenly artillery. Well aware that, whilst these prejudices remained, no arrow could penetrate the breast, he opens up to them at once the true dignity of the king Messiah, as found in his personal character, not in his external decorations. By presenting the pre-eminent grandeur and glory of the Son of God he aims to remove the offence of the cross. This he does in the first chapter, where he introduces him as Prophet, Creator, and King, and demonstrates, by abundant testimonies of Scripture, his lordship over the universe.

Now, if the Son holds pre-eminence over all intelligent nature, and if all the angels of God worship him, how much more should we reverence his teachings, and bow to his supreme authority! And if we should neglect either, how can we escape the fearful consequences?

From this practical inference, the apostle passes over to the objection so naturally recurring to the Hebrew mind: If the Messiah stands thus pre-eminent above all created intelligence, how came he to the degradation of the manger, the cross, and the tomb? How is it possible to reconcile such contradictory states? If he be the Son of God, and Lord of the universe, why hangs he on a tree? If God were his Father, wherefore did he permit the painful, humiliating, and contemptuous treatment of his only begotten and well beloved? Physical evils have their root in moral causes; could such sorrow and anguish, as he endured, be without a cause? How can such extremes be brought together without impeaching the love, the wisdom, and the justice of God?

To this the apostle presents the testimony of acknowledged Scripture. The eighth Psalm is universally allowed to refer to the Messiah. This the Hebrews maintained; and here is proof that the Son must be, *for a little time, lessened in comparison of the angels, in order that he may suffer death for every child of God.* The humiliation of Christ is not a bald fact, detached from his moral and legal relations; not a mere arbitrary freak in the Divine government; not an outburst of popular phrenzy outside of the Divine economy; not a spontaneity, having neither antecedent nor consequent. On the contrary, it is a part of the Divine plan of universal government; which plan embraces eternity and all its contents, minute and magnificent. It is a link in the endless chain of causes and effects, by which Jehovah

“Hangs creation like a precious gem,
Though little, on the footstool of his throne.”

The mystery of the Word made flesh loses its paradoxical character the moment its legal relations are understood. Should it appear that, for an adequate reason, the Lord of glory bowed the heavens, and came down, and veiled his divinity in human flesh; should ends be answered, by this amazing transaction, in the moral government of the universe, meet and worthy of the Governor, then our amazement must cease, all that is paradoxical must pass away, the harmony of the divine attributes be displayed, and God stand justified, in all his acts, before the intelligent universe. And this is our position, “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom

are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

An act, or work, is said to *become* a person, when it is such as people of good taste would generally expect from his known character and condition. It implies suitableness, propriety, and consistency; and pre-supposes a usual order of things. A dress is *becoming* when its texture, material, colour, and form, are such as is ordinarily found on persons of the same rank, in such circumstances. Gorgeous attire were unbecoming at a funeral; good works, Paul tells us, are the modest apparel "which *becometh* women professing godliness."

"For whom are all things," marks the final cause—on account of whom—for the manifestation of whose glory. "By whom are all things;" this covers the work of creation and government—by whom the universe was made, and by whom it is sustained, directed, and controlled. The phrase, "bringing many sons unto glory," has reference to the Captain of Salvation, as the object of the action described in the expression, "to make perfect through sufferings;" this last means, to complete, to finish up—as on the cross He said, "it is *finished*"—completed, brought to a close—all the bitter ingredients of the cup are exhausted.

"Bringing many sons unto glory," is delivering men from degradation, shame, and sin, and conducting them to holiness, and happiness, and heaven. The term "Captain" is descriptive, also, of the work; it means a leader in the way—one who goes before, and directs, guides, and draws others onward in the

same way. "These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

The doctrine of our text then is, that *the great work of man's salvation, by the sufferings of Christ, is consistent with the character of God, as the Creator, Governor, and Proprietor of the universe.*

In the discussion of this subject we must consider,

I. *The work to be performed*—bringing many sons unto glory.

II. *The means of accomplishing this work*—the sufferings of Christ.

III. *The consistency of these two combined, with God's character as Creator, Governor, and Proprietor of the universe.*

I. The work—bringing many sons unto glory.

They are at a distance from glory. All mankind are by nature in a degraded and ruined condition—those who are to be brought unto glory equally with others; and a rescue from this is implied.

This degraded state involves condemnation under the law; and of course the first movement towards leading them to heavenly glory, is their deliverance from condemnation. Until such deliverance is effected, they cannot take the first step in the way to glory. How this can be effected we shall see in its proper place.

But again, the state of heavenly glory is unattainable except as the reward of holy obedience. Life and eternal joy are positive blessings, and can be conferred only in consequence of positive compliance of the divine law—"if thou wilt have life, keep the commandments." These two pre-requisites regard

the legal relations of those who shall be brought unto glory; other parts of the work regard their moral qualities.

The spiritually dead man cannot walk in the way of life. These sons must be made alive before they can follow the Captain of their salvation. "Ye must be born again." Renovation to spiritual life must take place.

No unbelieving and impenitent man can see God's face in peace. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." True faith and sincere repentance belong to this work.

The state of glory is a state of purity; into it nothing unclean can enter. Be ye holy, for I am holy. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. These sons must be sanctified before they can enter the gates of glory.

Heaven is the home of active benevolence. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." But the heart of man is naturally at enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. This work involves, therefore, the slaying of the enmity, and the shedding abroad, in the heart, of this heavenly love.

The entire persons of these sons are to be brought unto glory; not the souls only, but also the bodies. This work, then, includes the resurrection of the bodies, and their entire transformation into the likeness of his glorious body. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we

shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

II. *The means of accomplishing this work*—the sufferings of the Captain of their salvation.

When the law has pronounced its sentence there is no evasion ; it must be executed. Justice is an essential attribute of God ; his law can pronounce none but a just sentence, and all the holiness of his character is pledged to its execution. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." If Jesus has pledged himself to bring many sons unto glory, he has therein pledged the removal from them of the sentence of condemnation, which can be effected only by enduring it. "Die, he or justice must." There is no other method of breaking the yoke of bondage, and letting the captives sold under sin go free. That this method is practicable, the Scriptures abundantly testify. In verse 14, it is very explicitly stated, as the object of the incarnation, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." So in chapter ix. 15—"That by means of death, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness ; by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Peter ii. 24. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. liii. 6. So throughout the typical sa-

crifices of the old law, this is the leading thought—the death of Christ, our passover, procures exemption to us from death. No language of man, no symbol, no figure of speech, can ever be devised to express this master idea more clearly, fully, or forcibly. The sons who are to be brought into glory are condemned and ruined; their leader in the way of life must and does place himself under their sentence, and meet the penal claims of God's justice. For this reason he must become incarnate. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood" (of humanity). "he also himself likewise took part of the same."

This doctrine is not incidentally taught, not occasionally to be met with in the Bible, but it is pre-eminently *the* doctrine of the book. It is all pervading; it is the alpha and the omega. Take it out of the Bible, and it is no longer the book of God; strike it out of the system, and the sun is gone—darkness reigns. Annihilate the law of gravitation, and the material universe is a chaos; annihilate the doctrine of atonement, and the moral universe is a chaos. "Other foundation can no man lay."

But we have seen many other items in the work; many other stones are necessary to the building besides the foundation; therefore, the relative position of this doctrine of atonement has much to do in enhancing its importance. The foundation stone in an edifice may be rough, unsightly, and buried beneath the earth; it may have less labour bestowed upon it than others, but in importance it is inferior to none. This, however, may not be owing to its intrinsic properties, but to its relative position. Without it the

house cannot stand; all the other stones must fall; or rather, could not rise into an edifice at all. So the atonement is indispensable as a pre-requisite to all the other doctrines of salvation. But for this, the doctrine of justification through the righteousness, that is, the active obedience, of Christ imputed to the sinner, and received by faith alone, must remain a cold and dead abstraction. No man can be justified by the perfect righteousness of the Son of God, and by consequence receive life eternal, whilst he abides under condemnation, and so in death. He cannot be both condemned and justified, dead and alive, at the same time. Eternal life can be given as the reward of obedience only; the obedience of Christ in our nature. This, and this alone, entitles the believer to life; but before he can possibly receive and enjoy it, he must be delivered from condemnation imposing death. He must be pardoned; and pardon, that is, the lifting up and removing of his sentence of death from him, can be effected only by Christ's suffering under the law for him. When Christ takes away sin by the sacrifice of himself; when he unites the sinner to himself by faith, and applies to him the blood bought pardon, then the merit of his positive righteousness becomes actually available; the sinner puts on the spotless wedding garment, and stands justified and complete in him. This relative position of the two doctrines of atonement, and of justification proper, is referred to by our apostle, in Rom. iii. 24: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"—the redemption, the releasing, by paying the proper price. Death is the *medium* through which

his righteousness becomes actually efficient to our justification.

Now, as with this, so it is with all other parts of the work under consideration. Still, it will be kept in mind, that these two, *atonement* by Christ's death, and *righteousness* by his obedience, regard man's legal relations; the other parts enumerated regard his moral character; and yet they stand in the same order of subsequence to the former. Of course, I speak not of order as to time, but as to nature. Could we, however, mark time here, it would most probably be found, that what I have called the natural, and might perhaps more correctly call the logical order, was also the order of actual succession as to time. But as this is only partly practicable, it is not necessary to affirm it here.

Thus regeneration is dependent on the atonement of Christ, because the mission of the Holy Spirit, who alone can change the heart and new create the soul, is dependent upon the Saviour's intercession; and all his power, as our advocate with the Father, springs from the perfection of his work whilst on earth. Had not he finished this work; had not he been made perfect through sufferings, he could not have risen from the dead, nor ascended to glory, nor appeared as our advocate, nor sent the Spirit into the soul for regeneration and conversion. This chain of relations Peter uses in his pentecostal address, and with it he binds the yoke of Christ upon the necks of three thousand of the former servants of Satan. This same chain the Saviour throws around his hearers at the first sacramental supper, where his longest recorded address was delivered. "It is expe-

dient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John xvi. 7. The entire work of the Holy Ghost, then, in the regeneration, conversion, faith, repentance, holy living, love, joy, peace, of the sons of God, unto their entire sanctification and glorification, is dependent upon the finished atonement of the gracious Mediator. So, also, is the final and grand act of raising them from the dead, and presenting them before the presence of the Father's glory. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain;" but "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him." But for the perfection of his sufferings, he could not rise from the dead and ascend to his glory, much less lead his many sons thither. How inconceivably important is this finishing operation! How transcendently glorious are the issues from death! What hopes cluster around the cross of Calvary!

These, all these, must pass away, and black despair for ever brood upon the human spirit, unless he drink the bitter cup, and cry "it is finished!"

III. We proceed now to the main topic of our text—*The consistency of accomplishing this work by these means, with Jehovah's character as Creator, Governor, and Proprietor of the universe.*

The salvation of lost man is a display of divine love under a peculiar form—that called mercy; the extension of the highest favours to persons the most undeserving. It is the outgoing of goodness, and, if viewed alone, must command universal admiration, and call forth praise from all, and gratitude un-

bounded from the favoured race. As to its consistency with God's benevolent character, there can be no question. If Jehovah were all love, all goodness, all benevolence, we have in this work its counterpart. But he hath not so revealed himself to us, either in his works or in his word. Other attributes belong to his nature. Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, whilst mercy and truth go before him. His providence teaches the same lesson. Evils innumerable are visited upon men in this world, and a dread surmise springs up in the mind, unaided even by a revelation, that the present are not all the evils man may possibly endure at the hand of his offended and insulted Creator. But this idea is no longer vague and undetermined when we open the sacred volume. Here it shines forth with terrible clearness; all doubt passes away; God is holy, just, and true; he will punish crime; he will vindicate the claims of justice.

Two views divide mankind on this subject. One theory assumes as its basis, the principle of infinite benevolence: God is good, benevolent, and merciful. This is the controlling attribute of his nature; indeed, they virtually deny him any other, and say there is no such attribute as justice *essential* to his nature; it is a *contingency* in the Creator. He may exercise justice, or he may omit its exercise; he may punish crime, or he may omit its punishment. Vindictive justice belongs not to God. It is blasphemy, in the opinion of these men, to represent God as angry; as a vindictive Being, marking sins as they occur, and pouring his wrath sooner or later upon the culprit. This, in their estimation, makes him

malevolent and revengeful. But such philosophers have closed the Bible, and shut one of reason's eyes. They forget that it is written, "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." "The wages of sin is death." "God is angry with the wicked every day." "The Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain." To this class of men, more benevolent than God, he addresses a severe rebuke—"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

They also close the eye of reason, and therefore see not that justice is as necessary an attribute in the government of God as in that of man. As man cannot exist without justice, as society would instantly run into utter chaos and ruin, so is this glorious attribute indispensable in the Divine government; and God has exhausted human language in order to enforce a due apprehension of this idea upon the human understanding. But still there are multitudes who will not believe it, even upon the innumerable testimonies written in God's holy Word. But their unbelief does not make the testimonies void; nor shall their unbelief last for ever, for "the Lord trieth the righteous, but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." Psa. xi. 5, 6. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. xxv. 46. 41, God is a *just* God, and a Saviour. Justice is an at-

tribute essential to his being; love or goodness is so also; but mercy, which is the flowing forth of love toward transgressors, is a contingency. It is not necessary to the being of God, that he extend his boundless goodness to any particular class of sinful beings, or to all sinners. But if he in sovereignty do so extend it, his justice must be satisfied; its claims must be met. The question before us is not, whether the salvation of men is consistent with the Divine character; on this there is no dispute; but whether the accomplishment of this work, *by the sufferings of Christ*, be consistent. Does the exposure of the only Beloved to shame, and ignominy, and death, comport with the dignity of the supreme Governor? Assuming the scriptural facts, that God did send his Son into the world, expressly that he might obey and die under the curse of the law for lost men; that God did put into the hands of the Captain of Salvation the bitter cup of Divine wrath, and when he cried and prayed that it might pass, if possible, the Father did not remove it; that it pleased the Lord to bruise him; to make his soul an offering for sin—this undeniable scripture doctrine, this suffering of Jesus, by express appointment of God the Father, is this consistent? Can it be reconciled with his character as Creator, Governor, Proprietor of all things? The affirmation is Paul's assertion, and the proof now demands our attention.

1. It became him as Creator. The character of the maker is seen in the thing made. As long as men reason from cause to effect; as long as like causes produce like effects, will they judge of the tree by its fruits. It is on this principle that history

teaches. From a man's actions we infer his character. This, too, is the productive principle of all the inductive sciences. We note things as they appear, classify them, and infer the laws of nature from her works. This standard of judgment is safe; and, therefore, it is universally relied on. Our business, then, is to view the work of salvation in the method here contemplated, and then to inquire whether the attributes, or powers, or qualities displayed therein, are such as become the Creator, God. And we see, first, the highest manifestation of justice: he would not spare even his own Son.

Again, truth shines forth in connection with justice, as it is a fulfilment of the Divine declaration, that sin should be punished.

And, again, love is conspicuous: God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to die for the lost.

Again, mercy to rebels, a modification of love, is pre-eminent. Here we have such an exhibition of Divine perfections as cannot be found in any other work of the Creator. We merely name them now, as in a moment they will come up in another relation.

2dly. Under the administration of a perfect government, suffering bespeaks previous wrong-doing. Painful endurance must have its origin in transgression of law. No moral being can be made to endure physical calamity, but in consequence of moral evil. This truth is assumed as an element in morals. All men acknowledge it—feel it, as it were, and instantly, upon seeing a person suffer peculiar calamity, begin to seek for its moral cause. “Who

did sin, this man or his parents?" "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance (justice) suffereth not to live." The only error, in reasoning here, is the not keeping in mind the sin of nature; original sin, as the general cause of all calamity, and in supposing that God's government, like man's, was always specific, and every particular calamity was a precise infliction for some particular sin. But the general idea is the same, which lies at the foundation of all moral government. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" "the wages of sin is death;" "sin shall not go unpunished."

Sufferings do fall sometimes upon persons who have not themselves, individually, transgressed the law. God, in his providence, does visit the iniquities of fathers upon their children. Did not Israel groan under calamities unutterable, for the sin of David in numbering the tribes? Is it any thing new for the fearful scourge of war to fall upon a whole people for the sins of their rulers? Have not thousands of millions of widowed mothers and fatherless children, been crushed under calamities too dreadful to endure, to gratify the pride of kings, and maintain the figment of their blood-stained honour?

But all these cases involve the fact of some pre-existent relation; some connection between the parties affected, in consequence of which the calamities were brought about. In many cases we are unable to understand the reasons of the connection, and perceive how the results necessarily follow. But this, by no means, disproves such connection as jus-

tifies the Divine government. Human ignorance is not an adequate condemnation of Divine justice. It may be right that the children suffer in consequence of the father's crimes, though we may not be able to explain it. Yea, we must admit it, or charge God foolishly, which is to turn atheist. When the Psalmist saw the wicked prospering, he could not reason out the case, and was tempted to deny God's just administration, until he went to the sanctuary, and learned from revelation the doctrine of a future judgment. So must we admit the facts of providence, and fall back upon the revealed explanation, that he does visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, of the rulers upon the people.

Now, whilst we maintain the personal, spotless purity of the divine Redeemer, we must find some way to account for the fact of his sufferings, without charging the universal Governor foolishly. There must be a reason for his laying upon him the iniquities of us all. Such connection between Christ and his people does exist, as renders it right and proper, and every way befitting the attributes of the Divine character, to visit the Captain of Salvation with the perfection of sufferings. All the difficulties of the case vanish before the light of the glorious truth, that God, in eternity, appointed the Son as a covenant head of his people; a surety who voluntarily guaranteed their deliverance from death and introduction to eternal glory, by meeting all the requirements of law on their account. The Scriptures accordingly assure us, that believers were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; that he became the surety of a better testament;

that he freely offered himself as the head of his body, the Church. "Lo, I come to do thy will; O God I take delight." Now it is this covenant relationship, voluntarily entered into by the glorious Mediator, which constitutes the just reason why the Father laid on him the sins of a ruined world, and why, in the fullness of time, he endured the unutterable anguish of the curse for crimes that we had done. These countless heavy woes fell on him, as the necessary and legal consequences of his suretyship.

Here we have the principle, and the only principle, by which we can "justify the ways of God to men." This covenant of grace, which no created intellect could have devised, which no human wisdom could have discovered, which could originate only in the bosom of everlasting love, and find its way to created minds only by supernatural revelation—this everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure—this alone solves the mystery, and makes known *how* God can be just, and yet the justifier of the sinner that believes in Jesus. On the cross of Calvary justice and mercy meet together, righteousness and peace, the righteousness of God and the peace of man, embrace each other. When Jesus said, "It is finished," the sword of God's justice was bathed in heaven; the command, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd," was fulfilled, and yet no injustice is done. This blow is no *injury* to the Shepherd, although he himself had *personally* done no evil, but always felt and acted out the principle, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Still, "it pleased the

Lord to bruise him." How *can* this be? Because Jesus, "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Now the position before us is, that this smiting and its effects, under these circumstances, are becoming in God, the universal Governor, for whom, and on whose account, all things were made.

That its effects are so, is manifest on its face, for the perfection of government consists in promoting the greatest good, and preventing the greatest evil; that is, in the perfect administration of justice. But this work of saving men secures to them the highest happiness, and for the longest duration, even for ever and ever.

Nor let it be objected, that he does not save all; some go away into everlasting punishment, for we have no question as to what he did not do; our question is whether the thing he did be consistent with good and wise government. And this we affirm with confidence. In saving men by blood no injustice is done to them, nor even to those whom he does not bring unto glory; they receive nothing at his hand against which they can complain; but, on the contrary, infinite blessings which they personally have not merited. Let it not be objected, again, in reference to this last, that giving what a man is not entitled to is not justice, any more than withholding what he is entitled to. This is true, but it is not *in*-justice. It is not a matter against which complaint can lie as a wrong thing; no, not even from a third party, to whom similar benevolence is not extended. "Is thine eye evil, because I am good? may not I do what I will with mine own?" is the most reasonable reply of the Master to such objection.

Besides, the *benevolence* displayed in this salvation, does not, properly speaking, spring from governmental power, but from sovereign love. Pardon is not an act of governing power, but of sovereignty and benevolence.

The greatest evils are also prevented. Sons brought unto glory sin no more. Their deliverance from physical is not more perfect than from moral evil, and both are perpetual and eternal.

So the smiting of the Shepherd, under the circumstances, is proper; for the Shepherd stands, in the eye of the law, as the head of his body, the church—the sons brought into glory. He became their surety, and, by necessary consequence, their failure devolves upon him the whole legal responsibilities of their guarantee. From these he could not shrink. Justice demanded of him what she had a right to exact from his people. The law rightly held them responsible to death, and it rightly exacted death from him; so, conversely, he having met the rightful requisition, having died the death, has a rightful claim for their exemption from death.

This transaction is equally consistent and becoming the universal Proprietor, for whom are all things.

The final cause of the universe, is the glory of its Creator—"for thy pleasure they are and were created." "The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever." This being undeniable, the manifestation of mercy, heaven's darling attribute, promotes this end in a very high degree; yea, "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." There is no higher attribute of Jehovah

than his love, none holier than his justice ; there are no two that to created reason seem more at variance. Man sins ; the trembling culprit stands self-condemned, heaven-condemned, before his Judge ; the arm of Almighty justice is raised ; the terrible blow that must smite the wretched sinner down to an everlasting hell is just ready to descend : when lo ! Love, divine love springs forward—"Father Almighty, forbear ! On me let the stroke of thy vengeance fall : smite the Shepherd !" The fiery blade is seized, and its burning point turned in upon the bosom of the innocent victim. Love bleeds—the languid head droops : "It is finished"—the agony is over—the curse exhausted. Mercy rises from the tomb, a lovely form, a new attribute, heretofore unknown in the universe of God. Angelic messengers, now for the first time beholding in its fulness the glory of their God, escort the heaven-generated, but earth-born stranger to the realms of day. The song of salvation swells from myriads of golden harps, and all heaven is filled with the echo of the beloved name.

In conclusion, let us glance at the bearings of this stupendous fact in the Divine government upon the destinies of the moral universe.

It is the act confirmatory. The nail that fastened Christ to the cross, gave the rivet of unchangeability to government throughout all its departments, human and divine.

It is confirmatory, in that it exhibits to all the intelligent creation, the highest evidence it has ever had, perhaps the highest it can have, of the immutability of Divine justice, and so of the stability of the moral system. The government of God is

not, as man's too often is, one of mere expediency; it is based on fixed and unalterable principles, and will remain the same for ever. Here and now, if ever, justice must relax. Had it been possible, this cup would have passed from the Saviour's lips without his drinking it: for never was such an appeal made by intelligent nature under suffering—"Oh my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It did not pass; thereby giving confirmation, full and perfect, to the unchangeableness of justice.

We may therefore expect that human governments will be stable, regular, fixed, and efficient, in proportion to the people's knowledge and practice upon the great doctrine of atonement—of salvation by the sufferings of Christ. To this facts correspond. In what countries do we find the best governments, the most justice, the freest, and the purest, and the happiest people? What says history? What is the testimony of the present? One voice comes down to us through the long line of ages; one voice rises up from the world's whole surface—that voice directs us to Calvary. Where the doctrines of Christ and him crucified are most known, there are to be found the freest, and happiest, and best governed nations. "These have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." How deep then the debt, and how solemn the obligation, of all free nations, to the true evangelical church of God! How happy the people who wear the yoke of Christ!

This confirmation extends to the lost portion of our sinful race, who go away into everlasting fire.

That justice unchangeable, which upholds the Divine throne, falls as a crushing weight upon all who aim at tearing down this throne, and grinds them to powder. They are sealed up in endless death; but the sufferings of Christ do not produce this. Will the justice, which yielded not even to his strong crying and tears, relax, in order to let go the rebel who, to all the sins of his life and nature, adds the crowning one of unbelief? Shall *he* escape who tramples under foot the Son of God, and puts him to an open shame, accounting his precious blood an unholy thing? Shall not double vengeance fall upon his soul? He puts away from himself, by a wilful and deliberate resistance, the only salvation which infinite love ever provided; how then can he be saved? He seals his own condemnation, and justice confirms the deed for ever.

Still more obvious is the confirmation of God's redeemed in the joys of eternal salvation. Perish they cannot, for justice immutable has no claim against them, and has proclaimed the fact in raising Jesus from the dead; and trumpet tongues of thousands of angels have heralded the glad tidings throughout the universe. His blood has washed away the guilt of all their sins, and procured a full pardon. His sufferings procured him admission to his throne of glory in the heavens, sent the Holy Spirit down, created their hearts anew, sanctified their entire soul and body, arrayed them in his own glorious righteousness, and filled all their soul with heavenly love. Thus redeemed, regenerated, justified, and sanctified, how can they be kept from glory?—Where is the power to reverse the sentence passed

upon them, and turn them back to perdition? "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

To fallen angels, the sufferings of Christ in the room of his people afford fearful evidence of the hopelessness of their case. If God spared not his own Son, if justice could not relax to save him, how shall it abate its demands to save them? This may account for the deep interest Satan and his demons felt in Christ's mission and work; their eagerness to know whether this Jesus was the Messiah, and whether he could be diverted from his purpose to satisfy justice, by his death; and for all their machinations to thwart his plans for leading his sons to glory.

Is Jesus a confirming head of moral influences to the holy angels and the entire universe? By confirming head is, of course, meant, not that he redeemed angels, but that his sufferings stood in such relations to the Divine government, and to them under it, as to put an end to their probation, and place them beyond the possibility for ever of falling, as Diabolus and the demons fell. Until the resurrection of Christ, the conception is, that the holy angels were in a probationary or trial state, liable individually to sin, as Satan did, as Adam did, and perish under God's wrath. But after he had finished his work, and ascended to glory, that state ceased, and the Divine power and protection henceforth secures them for ever, as it does the saints redeemed;

so that they can go no more out, and are subject no more to the dread possibility of sinning, but rest in the ineffable felicity of a full assurance of life eternal.

To the affirmative of this question my mind strongly preponderates, and for the following reasons :

The language of the text seems to imply it. "It became Him for whom are all things." In this precise relation, as *universal Proprietor* and *Governor*, there was a suitableness and propriety in putting the cup into his hands. But where is the ground of this propriety, if the other parts of the universe are uninfluenced by it? How could they be uninterested in the glory of their Governor? But if they are to be both influenced and interested, it is difficult to see any other way, than that this glorious transaction confirms the Divine government and them in the blessedness of its protection.

Again, this idea corresponds with the interest felt by the holy angels in the concerns of Christ and his Church. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Do not they watch over the camp of Israel for good, and combat the legions of hell? Did not they herald the advent of their Lord Creator as our Lord Redeemer? Did they not guard his steps from the manger to the cross? Did they not cluster in embattled phalanx there, marking with intensest interest the agony in which he died? Did they not, on wings of light, bear the glad tidings of his resurrection to the regions of immortal day? Did they not now, and for the first time, learn from

the Church below the manifold wisdom of God, and understand those things into which they had long desired to look? Let it, then, be supposed that these heavenly hosts were, till this hour, on probation, and not assured that Satan might not yet prevail, and they fall and perish; but that now confirmation came, and their destiny is for ever safe. Oh! what a moment of joy to them! With what glad emotions they hail the rising of the Sun of Righteousness! The mystery of redemption is unveiled, and the mystery of confirmation thrills through the boundless universe!

My third reason for favouring this idea, is found in its own magnificence. It seems to me the brightest ray which shines from this Sun of Righteousness. It enhances the riches of his mercy, and magnifies the glory of his cross. "Our earth's aceldama—this field of blood"—becomes the battle-ground on which is decided the fate of the universe. The groans of Gethsemane, and the agonies of the cross, establish the throne of Jehovah Jesus, and put into his nail-pierced hand the sceptre of dominion over the entire realm of nature, and all the creatures of God worship him. Surely "it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."