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I.

LYMAN BEECHER ON THE ATONEMENT—ITS  
NATURE AND EXTENT.

LYMAN BEECHER, *clarum et venerabile nomen*, was President and Professor of Systematic Theology in Lane Seminary, from the time of its full organization in 1832 to the date of his resignation in 1850; and continued to be Professor Emeritus until his death in 1863. In this relation he was truly eminent as a theological teacher, though his services in that line have been somewhat obscured, in the public estimation, by the superior brilliance of his career in the pulpit, and in the more general service of the church. While he was not remarkable for the extent of his reading, or the scope or comprehensiveness of his theology—while indeed lacking in method and system, and apparently impatient of exactness in definition and completeness in demonstration, he was always vigorous, earnest, broad in his theological conceptions, and always powerful in impressing his own convictions on the minds of those who became his pupils. If they were sometimes carried from point to point in his theological cursus, without due respect for logical order or for scholastic completeness in doctrine, they were often more than compensated by the fervors which he enkindled in their breasts, and by the grandeur of his presentation of his favorite topics in the scheme of grace. Though they may not have gone forth from his training as fully drilled in technical issues, as amply supplied with theological

furniture, as the graduates of some other institutions, they certainly went out with souls fired by his teaching, and with minds well endowed practically for the task of preaching the Gospel of Christ. The impress which he made upon them in the class-room, became in most cases a permanent impact, impelling them through life, and making them conspicuously men of grace and men of power.

The manuscript lectures of Dr. Beecher have been donated to Lane Seminary by members of his family, and are now in the library of the institution. Their reading would be a curious study for adepts in the art of deciphering hieroglyphics. It may be presumed that no person has ever read the three volumes through since the venerated teacher himself laid them down. The lectures on the Atonement, here to be presented, were originally written largely by the hand of some amanuensis, and in their original form present no difficulties. But the manuscript bears traces of several distinct structural arrangements introduced at intervals; in the course of which numerals and headings are repeatedly changed, the order of topics varied, lines of thought stricken out or modified, and the general construction so far altered that it seems at times impossible to determine upon the final form of presentation. Many verbal changes also appear, dropping in wherever the vacant space on the pages furnished room; altered phrases are seen along the sides, at the bottom, over the upper line, often leaving the reader in great darkness as to their proper location in the text; and in addition to these sources of perplexity he is confronted by the almost universal lack of dots or crosses, the absence of punctuation, and a certain general indistinctness in the formation of letters which drives him well-nigh to despair. If the writer has failed at any point to get the exact word or sentence, or to catch the precise principle of construction, it has not been for the lack of diligent effort; he trusts at least that no serious mistake has been made in what has been throughout a labor of reverential love.

The lectures themselves, it should be added, present the subject for the most part in an abbreviated form only; much being left to merely verbal, and perhaps *ex tempore* presentation. It is the testimony of his pupils that Dr. Beecher excelled especially in such informal expositions of divine truth, and that the most valuable portions of his instruction broke in upon them at times when, under the influence of some fresh inspiration, he made the class-room fairly glow with the splendor of his teaching. In view of the brevity and inadequacy of the present discussion, the writer has ventured at a few points to introduce further explanations from the published works of the

author. As a compensation, some omissions of explanatory matter have here and there been made.

The publishing of these outlines of what Dr. Beecher once taught respecting the nature and extent of the Atonement, is in no way designed to revive historic differences or to stir up doctrinal controversy. What is sought is simply to bring again into view the teaching of an honored father in the Church, who a half century ago was recognized as a man of remarkable power, but who for nearly twenty years has been asleep in Jesus. It was his intention, as is announced in the preface to the first volume of his Works, to put his entire theological system into print; but the disabilities which have so often prevented the execution of a like purpose by other eminent teachers and preachers, fell into the way and frustrated his desire. His *Lectures on Atheism* and his six magnificent *Sermons on Intemperance*, together with some other valuable productions from his pen, have been preserved in printed form, but his theological lectures, as a whole, will probably survive only as a treasured heirloom in manuscript, in the library of Lane. In these circumstances, it will be of interest to many in our Presbyterian family, whatever may be their individual views of the subject discussed, to read what he wrote on so sublime and vital a theme. As his successor in the theological chair, the writer desires thus both to revive the fading memories of a great teacher, and to preserve the teaching itself in permanent form, for the instruction and edification of other minds. It is one of the irenic features of the times, that the dogmatic differences which once widely divided good men respecting both the nature and the extent of the atoning work of Christ, have been fading away relatively under the brighter consciousness of unity in both thought and experience respecting the great scriptural fact of an Atonement actually provided. And perhaps one of the most important causes tending to this happy result has been the developing capacity of men of different schools and tendencies to study opposite opinions more calmly and candidly, and to appreciate the worth really inherent in that from which they are constrained to differ. In the growth of such a spirit on every side, with all the practical consequences flowing from it, lie both the highest measure of present denominational harmony and also that progressive unification of thought and faith toward which all true men in this day are more or less consciously aspiring. In the hope that they may contribute to such results, these words of Lyman Beecher are here brought to public notice; and may God bless them to this end!

E. D. MORRIS.

## FROM THE MS. LECTURES OF LYMAN BEECHER, D.D.

## THE ATONEMENT

is that system of action by which God sustains the confidence of the intelligent universe in His power and purpose to maintain moral law while He reclaims and pardons the guilty—a system of action designed to augment and confirm the confidence of the loyal, and to reconcile the alienated and make them meet for heaven.

To comprehend the subject it is necessary to consider *first*, the object or end to be attained; *secondly*, the exigencies to be met, or the difficulties to be obviated; and *thirdly*, the adaptations of the Atonement to meet these difficulties, and to secure the end proposed.

## OBJECT OR END TO BE ATTAINED.

The general object or end sought in the Atonement is the pardon and the efficient reformation of sinners, in connection with proper provision for the stability and power of law, and for the maintenance of divine justice.

“An atonement has been made for sin by Jesus Christ, with reference to which God can maintain the influence of His law and forgive sin, upon condition of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and all men are invited sincerely in this way, to return to God with assurance of pardon and eternal life, if they comply.”  
SERMON: *Faith once Delivered to the Saints.*

“The Gospel is not, as some have imagined, an expedient to set aside a holy, just, and good law, in order to substitute an inferior one, brought down more nearly to the depraved inclinations of men. God did not send His Son to betray His government and compromise with rebels by repealing the law which offended them. He sent His Son to vindicate and to establish this law, to redeem mankind from its curse, and to bring them back to the obedience of the same law from which they had revolted. It is the glory of the Gospel that it upholds the moral law and moral government of God, and brings back and reconciles to His holy dominion millions on millions of apostate creatures.” SERMON: *The Government of God Desirable.*

“The Atonement, received by faith, places the subject in such relations to Christ, as that public justice does not demand his punishment, or forbid his forgiveness and restoration to favor. It opens wide the channel which sin had obstructed, for His mercy to flow in; and God, who has no pleasure in the death of the sinner—who never punishes merely because it is deserved, but always because the public good demands it—now, released from the public necessity of

punishment, in the exercise of mercy through the Atonement, freely pardons the believer and receives him into favor." *Lectures on Political Atheism.*

#### DIFFICULTIES TO BE MET AND OBIATED.

Such a scheme of grace involves the complete suspension of government by law over an entire world for a prolonged period without impairing the ultimate efficacy of such government over its subjects, whether loyal or sinful. It involves the administration of a remedial system of justice and mercy for purposes of discipline and reform, which shall so increase the motives to obedience as to secure the actual salvation of innumerable multitudes of our race. It also involves the harmonizing of the universal offer, and the acceptance of absolute pardon on terms within the reach of free agency and consistent with the glory of God, with the proper efficacy of the law upon holy minds, and its powerful restraining influence on the sinful.

Such a scheme of grace must render the actual pardon of all the sins of rebel subjects practicable, without in any way impairing the force of law. It must also render practicable a protracted period of forbearance and of moral discipline, in full harmony with the offered means of grace, and with the strivings of the Spirit. And finally, when these terms and provisions are pertinaciously rejected, it must provide, consistently with law, special reforming influences acting upon a large proportion of the race which shall secure their acceptance of the terms of salvation, and their subsequent preservation and preparation for the holy society of heaven. Each and all of these exigencies must be met, these difficulties obviated, in a remedial scheme. To review:

1. The Atonement is an expedient of divine wisdom and goodness to maintain the empire of law, while a dispensation of mercy is interposed to save multitudes of our race. Human transgression has occasioned the necessity for such an expedient. The execution of law upon the transgressor could not be averted, unless such a new moral influence, such a dispensation of mercy, could be justly introduced.

2. The mediatorial government established by Christ is not a government of strict law, in which rewards follow obedience, and penalties follow transgression. It is rather a mingled state of discipline, in which the wicked often prosper, while the righteous endure affliction. Sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; neither are the rewards of obedience immediately bestowed. The strict action of law is suspended; and this suspension of law is extended through thousands of years.

3. This entire period is characterized by a disciplinary administration of justice and mercy for remedial purposes. A moral influence, unknown under an administration of strict law, and more powerful to produce reformation, is now introduced. The law is placed in the hands of a Mediator; and the providential government of the world is also placed in His hands for the same purpose. The law, by its continuous authority as a rule of right and of obligation, becomes a schoolmaster, leading men to Christ.

4. In this scheme of grace the offers of pardon are made with all sincerity, and are authorized to be made from generation to generation to all mankind, so that if these offers should be accepted, it would be consistent with law and with the glory and safety of the moral universe to accept and restore all mankind to favor. On the nature and universality of these offers, note:

*First.* The apostolic commission which authorized and required the preaching of the Gospel to every creature. In its terms the offer is universal—wide as the sin from which it proposes deliverance.

*Secondly.* This offer must be viewed as sincere. It is expressed in the most unequivocal terms, and is clothed with all the epithets of compassionate earnestness and tender sympathy. God in the Gospel reveals His joy when the overtures of grace are accepted, and His regret and His reluctant punishment whenever they are rejected.

*Thirdly.* Nor can it be said that the conditions of pardon and salvation do not lie within the range of free agency. The acceptance of these reasonable conditions must be possible, inasmuch as the offer creates an instant obligation to accept, enhances the guilt of continuous rebellion, and draws after it a peculiar and a sorer punishment for rejection.

5. The consistency of such offers with the glory of God and with the efficacy of law, and also with the nature of the Gospel as a reforming scheme or agency is obvious. It would be as inconsistent with the character of God to make an offer of universal forgiveness on terms at war with the honor of His law, or with the good of the universe, as it would be actually to bestow such forgiveness in case these terms were complied with. There is the same turpitude in offering a bill providing for the commission of treason, whether the bill eventuate in treason or otherwise. If pardon on evangelical conditions would be inconsistent with the glory of God, were these conditions universally accepted, the offered reward would be a bribe on the part of the Lawgiver to do what would be at war with His own glory, and with the honor of law and the prosperity of the moral universe. Whether accepted or rejected, such an overture would

tarnish the divine character; yet God declares with an oath that He prefers acceptance to rejection.

6. As these offers are universally and wickedly rejected by sinful men, God, who is rich in mercy, by the special influence of His Spirit interposes further in behalf of multitudes of sinners; bringing in an agency which secures their voluntary acceptance of the terms of pardon, and brings to pass their free forgiveness and their preservation and preparation for glory.

Such are the difficulties to be met and obviated in a system of grace. The Atonement, therefore, which declares the righteousness as well as the mercy of God, must furnish such an influence in the sphere of moral government as shall meet all the exigencies found in a plan of redemption. It must reconcile these exigencies with the stability of that government; it must harmonize redemption with the principle of rewards and punishments according to character and deeds; it must provide for a remedial government through a Mediator, having adequate power to restrain, to reconcile, to sanctify, and prepare for heaven. The Atonement must thus comprehend all that God does by Jesus Christ, and through the ministry of His Spirit, which a government of strict law could not do.

#### ADAPTATIONS OF THE ATONEMENT.

Such being the difficulties to be obviated in a system of grace such as the Gospel contains, it remains to consider the method in which the Atonement provided by Jesus Christ meets these exigencies. Here note the following considerations:

1. As preliminary, it should be noted again that the permanent government of God over the moral universe, both anterior and subsequent to the remedial scheme introduced by Christ, is a government of rewards and punishments administered according to character upon the strict principles of moral law. Thus, the angels who kept not their first estate, encountered immediately, and will forever endure, the curse of the law they had violated. They are exiled forever from the abodes of the loyal; they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Here we have the first example of the divine conduct in illustration, or exposition, of the principles of law, and also of the divine purpose in respect to the maintenance of law according to these principles. The law was in heaven, and still is and will forever be administered there, according to the character and the deeds of its subjects. Under such a system, sin does not remedy or rectify itself. Suffering and defeat do not reconcile enemies, neither does God under such a system interpose to reform them.

In like manner, as soon as man sinned, the curse entered and fastened itself upon him according to his deeds. All the declarations and implications of the Bible prove him to have been involved by sin in death, spiritual and eternal, as well as temporal. Hence, what the remedial system provided in Christ proposes to do, is to stay or suspend this curse, and, if possible, to secure the pardon and reclamation of the sinner, while still sustaining the dominion of law. This remedial scheme not only saves from spiritual and eternal death, but also restores the sinner to spiritual and eternal life. And when this result is secured, this gracious scheme closes, and the government of law resumes its place. When the joint labors of the Godhead cease in a redemption finished, that government returns with a complete vindication in what Christ has wrought—established more fully than ever in the confidence of all holy minds, while its fearful curse follows the incorrigible and the unbelieving, whether men or angels, forever.

2. After the close of the mediatorial administration, the government of the universe will continue forever to be, as it was in the beginning, a government of intelligent beings in the exercise of perfect freedom, under the simple influence of moral law. But this influence will be vastly augmented by the disclosures of the remedial system—by the accumulated results in holy character secured by the antecedent scheme of grace.

3. The efficacy of a government of law to form and maintain holy character and holy action depends on the relative amount of the good promised, and of the evil threatened. Promises never fulfilled would be powerless, and threatenings never executed would be unavailing, either to excite to obedience or to deter from sin. This is an obvious truth, confirmed by experiment, both in the family and under every form of evil administration.

4. Again: the influence of law with respect to this certainty of reward and penalty will depend on the known attributes, character, and purposes of the government itself. If that government be benevolent, holy, wise, powerful, and immutable, there can be no hope for impunity in sin, and the influence of law will be unbroken and unlimited. But if it be impotent, weak-minded, wavering, the main-spring of authority is broken, and the hope of reward and the fear of punishment are alike paralyzed by uncertainty. To sinful minds, doubt at this point is as powerful to cancel the proper influence of law as open unbelief; such doubt materially impairs the power of law to assist the soul in maintaining rectitude under temptation.

5. The evidence as to the character and purposes of God in His



moral government is not intuitive merely: it is external, manifest, conclusive. Mind, so far as we know, is not an object of immediate mental apprehension: it is perceived only through the medium of experience. Its character also is discernible only through the medium of declarations and deeds. Design is the only evidence of the existence of mind either around us or above us; and the character of such minds, as holy or sinful, is evidenced only through such design. So God makes Himself known to us, as we make ourselves known to one another, by His declarations and His works. Should He as supreme Ruler violate any principle of His law, the evidence of His attachment to that law, and of His purpose to maintain its claim upon us, would disappear. He must show His regard for that law by adhering at every point to its principles, and by giving adequate evidence of such adherence. It is the ultimate end of God in His government, as in all His works, to glorify Himself—not indeed to add anything to His own excellence, but rather to manifest to intelligent minds His being and power, wisdom and goodness, by the exhibition of the permanent laws and policy of His government.

6. If adequate evidence of the divine character and purposes in the sphere of moral government can be found only in a proper administration of rewards and penalties, according to the character and desert of the subjects, then any temporary departure from such administration must be attended with most ample evidence of attachment to the law, and of the divine determination to maintain it in ultimate supremacy. On any other principle the confidence of His subjects in God and His government must fail. A physical government can be sustained by simple power; but a moral government can be sustained in full supremacy only by such a course as will be consistent with the divine character and declarations. Hence, if God suspends for a time in behalf of a race the simple administration of law, and introduces an administration of grace and reformation, there must be, if the confidence of the loyal is to be sustained, ample evidence on the following points:

*First.* That the suspension will be local and temporary only—a universal and permanent abandonment of government by law would be revolution and anarchy.

*Secondly.* The obligations of law must be neither waived nor relaxed, even while the administration of mercy takes the place of an administration of justice. In systems of reformation among men, laws remain as the rule and motive, while discipline is in operation.

*Thirdly.* The attachment of God to His law, and His purpose to maintain it, must be made manifest by increased evidence. To illus-

trate the capacity of the Atonement to furnish such evidence, we must not look at it simply or separately, but must take in the entire comprehensive proof. We are not to judge of its adaptations to make manifest the divine character or purpose as to law, from its temporary effects in any particular period of the experiment, or from any partial views of the scheme of grace. We are rather to form our judgment from its permanent influence as a whole: as affording such illustration and proof to the universe of mind when all is seen through eternity. Nor are we to judge of its adaptations from its actual results in some diseased minds; for these adaptations may be inherently wise and powerful for good, and yet be perverted by obdurate depravity to the temporary and limited increase of sin. The actual conduct of sinful subjects under good laws is no evidence of the proper tendencies of those laws. Suppose that some do make the Atonement the occasion for presumptuous hope of immunity in sin: this result flows, not from any tendency in the system of grace, but from the character and habits of sinners themselves. And if the Atonement can thus be made the occasion of sin, much more may the law be made such occasion. The law, like the Gospel, may and does become a savor of death.

*Fourthly.* To secure complete evidence of the character and purpose of God in His government and grace, we must consider all the proofs of His attachment to law, exhibited anterior to the remedial system introduced in the Gospel. The Atonement is strictly a part of a great complex system; and we must, in estimating it, consider all that preceded, all that attends it, and all that follows its development and conclusion. We know, for example, that a portion of the first and noblest order of intelligences have revolted from God, and that as rebels they have been and ever will be treated according to strict law. Now, this is strong and terrible evidence, not only that God will never mitigate the penalties of that law, but also that, if anywhere an administration of clemency and reformation is interposed, this will involve no variableness or shadow of turning in Him, as to His love of holiness, or His hatred of sin, or His purpose to maintain the law as the bond of perfectness in the universe.

*Fifthly.* If in such an administration of clemency and reformation anything is done for the avowed purpose of maintaining the full authority of law, that action, whatever it may be, becomes a confession that the law alone cannot save, and an evidence that God will not save in any way which would impair such authority. And if this action carries with it the most stupendous exhibition in respect to the existence of God in three persons, the most illustrious signs of

His benevolence, and the most amazing display of His self-denial, then it becomes the highest attestation of His character and His purposes in the case.

The redemption of sinners by an Atonement is a stupendous exhibition of the Holy Trinity. We here see the three personal agents in the divine nature, each consecrating Himself voluntarily to the work of human redemption as the most illustrious of all the divine works, and so combining their joint action that it eventuates both in the maintenance of the moral law and in the salvation of sinners. The nature of this work is illustrated in the part spontaneously assumed by each Person in the Godhead. The Father acts as the guardian of law and justice; the Son provides a substitution of moral power equal to that which would be gained by the execution of law; and the Spirit by His ministrations exerts a moral influence sufficient to reconcile, sanctify, and save innumerable multitudes of souls. What shall we say of the Atonement, since in order to maintain the full authority of law, it thus required the largest possible sacrifice on the part of the Father, the greatest self-denial and suffering on the part of the Son, and the most unwearied activity on the part of the Spirit, in order under a system of grace to restrain, instruct, convince, convert, and sanctify self-ruined men? If all this was done, that the law might be magnified and made honorable, and that God might be just while He pardoned penitent rebels, how can intelligent minds, spectators of the scene and properly acquainted with its meaning, distrust the immutable purpose of a holy God to maintain His law and His government at whatever sacrifice?

7. The meritorious cause of pardon in this scheme of grace is found in the perfect obedience of Christ rendered to the law, and in His suffering a full equivalent, as to moral effect, for the execution of the curse pronounced by the law upon sin. Christ consented to the endurance of the curse in His own person and by His sufferings, in order that God might teach the universe through such sacrifice that He will by no means clear the guilty.\* What is the language

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\* The Atonement comprehended all that was necessary to its full influence in sustaining law and in exerting the requisite moral power on both sinful and holy minds. Two kinds of influence were needful here: One, public and universal; another, individual and specific—an influence suited to persuade and restore diseased minds. The elements in the Atonement designed to secure such two-fold influence are: (1) the perfect obedience of a human nature; the man Christ Jesus being in all respects a sinless human person. (2) The intense suffering of the human nature in Christ. The agony endured was not the agony of God, but in respect to sympathy and humiliation and sacrifice the divine nature suffered with the human. Such suffering was necessary to supersede the suffering of the sinner; it was necessary that God might forgive sin on evangelical terms. Christ bore the curse of the law not liter-

of this transaction? An entire suspension of government by law was about to take place, and this was to be succeeded by an administration of mercy. Such a transaction was enough to still the moral pulse of the universe. To hold the confidence of His moral subjects, in the presence of such a transaction, God the Father did not deem it unworthy of Himself to furnish the highest possible evidence that He would not permanently set aside His righteous law. Hence He gave His only Son, to assume the nature of man, to obey the law personally, and to bear its curse, in order that God by this obedience and suffering might certify the universe that not a jot or tittle of His law should fail. And if we look at the conditions of pardon through grace, the testimony becomes still more convincing. The Atonement avails not to save the incorrigible. There must be repentance; there must be conviction and confession of sin; there must be affectionate sorrow for transgression, especially as committed against God and His government and subjects—a sorrow in which the sinner takes all the blame upon himself and forever magnifies and justifies the law. What greater evidence could God afford the highest intelligences in the universe, of the immutable stability of His law, and of His purpose never to surrender its holy claims?

8. It should be added that the penitent cannot return to God as the guardian of law and be accepted in his own person, and on his own account, even if his obedience to the law after his conversion were perfect. He must not only come to Christ and accept Him as his advocate; he must commit his soul to Christ, and leave his cause entirely in His care. He must cease to be his own, and give himself away entirely to Christ to be perfected simply by His merits—in virtue of what He has done to honor and sustain law by His obedience and death.

9. Though the soul be thus both penitent and believing, still it cannot enter heaven until it is brought through grace into perfect conformity with the law. The glorious law is not given up, even to secure

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ally, but vicariously. There was no necessity for a literal endurance of the penalty, nor could there have been any gain in such endurance. By His vicarious death, Christ magnified the law and made it honorable, as truly as the condemnation of the sinner would have done. (3) The indwelling and sympathy of the divine nature in Christ. Though dwelling in the form of a servant, He was truly God manifest in the flesh. The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him. He reveals first, a perfect intimacy of interest in the law and of high determination to maintain it; secondly, the deepest kindred sympathy with the condition of fallen man; and thirdly, an example in which the whole Deity shared, of immeasurable self-denial and of voluntary sacrifice for human sin. The influence of such a manifestation of the Godhead is potent past measurement. It disarms fear; it induces conviction; it revives and justifies hope; it persuades men toward reconciliation; and in the hand of the Spirit it actually secures repentance, faith, and obedience.—NOTE IN MS.

his admittance there. It relaxes nothing of its claims, or its estimation as a rule of rectitude, in making men meet for heaven; nor can any one attain that blessed state till he is perfected according to the requisitions of holy law.

10. When the remedial system is ended in the complete salvation of those who believe, law will still hold its everlasting sway; the government by simple law will resume its position, greatly enhanced in power through the atoning and mediatorial work of Christ. If we add this to the preceding facts, we cannot doubt the attachment of God to His law, or His purpose to maintain that law, even while suspending its application under the system of grace.

11. This fact is still further illustrated in the final union of all who reject the salvation graciously provided, with the rebel angels in their abandonment to the everlasting penalties of violated law. God is determined to maintain this bond of perfectness, even by such eternal condemnation where His remedial system has failed to save. The magnified and honored law will take its course, as the great conservative power in the moral universe; and eternity will only accumulate new evidence of its right to rule, and of its power to bless the holy and to smite transgressors. And then only will the remoter adaptations of the Atonement be seen in the completed triumph of good, in the ransomed church, in the increased confidence and joy of all holy minds, and in the exclusion of all sin forever from the loyal universe.

#### RELATIONS OF THE ATONEMENT.

In contemplating the relations of the Atonement, we may consider first its bearings on the moral universe in the following particulars:

1. It contains manifestations such as the entire moral universe may appreciate, of the unity and the triple personality in God, of the existence and nature of His moral government, of the evil of sin, and especially of the holy purpose of God to maintain His moral law.

2. It contains peculiar evidence such as all worlds may apprehend, of the personal benevolence of God toward the guilty, and of His mercy as seen in the work of redemption regarded as an application of the Atonement and of the true nature of election and reprobation, the rewards of grace, and the eternal punishment of the incorrigible.

3. It furnishes to all created minds new occasions for confidence in God, and in the general stability and blessedness of His government; and also fresh augmentation of motives fitted to prevent the occurrence of revolt among His loyal subjects in other worlds.

4. If the preservation of minds created holy were an act of power,

this could be accomplished at the time of their creation as well as at any later period. But if the preservation of upright mind is to be secured by knowledge and motive, knowledge and motive must exist before they can be used to this end, and they must be made known in order to be availing. Now, the influence fitted to deter from sin and also to uphold holy minds throughout the universe flowing from the fact of the fall of angels and men on the one side, and from the disclosure of the character and government of God in connection with the Atonement and redemption on the other, is a thousand-fold greater than any other conceivable form of influence.\*

But we are specially concerned with the relations of the Atonement to our world, and to the human race. Here we may note :

1. That the Atonement in its nature and adaptation is sufficient to render it consistent with the claims of the divine law to pardon all men, upon evangelical conditions of repentance and faith. The evidence it affords of the righteousness of God, is universal evidence ; and the legal difficulties in the case are removed for all as really as for any one, upon the same terms.

2. It is sincerely desired by God that all should accept salvation on these terms:—this is sincerely preferred to their incorrigible impenitence, and to their consequent ruin. The Gospel actually believed and obeyed by all is sufficient to render their pardon and acceptance practicable, through the Atonement.

3. It is on the ground of the universal sufficiency of the Atonement that the universal offer is made, and also that an universal obligation is created to accept the overtures of grace. Christ is represented as having died for all, or for the world, in view of the sufficiency of the Atonement to maintain the empire of law, though all men, the entire race, should accept salvation on the terms prescribed.

It must be admitted in general that the Atonement has laid an adequate foundation for the pardon of all men upon evangelical conditions, and also that the offer of salvation through Christ is a universal offer. We are reduced to the alternative of supposing this offer to be made without any ground, or on ground that is real and sufficient. There is a distinction to be made here between the uni-

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\* Dr. Beecher followed his lectures on the Atonement, if we may judge from the order in the MSS., with an extended discussion of the theme here introduced. In his later teaching he may have substituted the latter for what is here given. The theme was a favorite one, and the discussion of it would be read with deep interest, especially by those who ever heard him, in the height of his eloquence, set forth as he alone could do, the wonders and glories of redemption. In his imagination the transaction on Calvary—the historic mystery of the Cross—was the one central event in which all worlds were together interested, and which would be the peculiar theme of study and of praise to all moral intelligences in all worlds, forever.

versal sufficiency of the Atonement and its sincere offer on the one hand, and its universal acceptance and actual application on the other. God has not made provision for the actual regeneration and salvation of all men, but He has made provision for the actual pardon of all who repent and believe. And if all men should spontaneously repent and believe, as they ought to do, there is no doubt that all would be pardoned and accepted and saved.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.\*

1. There is no need of an Atonement to avert the punishment of sin: God is too good to punish. *Answer*: He is too good not to punish, provided the confidence and happiness of the intelligent universe depend on the maintenance of His moral as well as His physical law. As well might we infer that God is too good to punish by constitutional or natural sanctions; that He will not permit intemperance or lust to work out their retributive results in the loss of character or property, health or social enjoyment or position. As well might we say that God is too good to punish nations by providential judgments, such as blasting and mildew, sword and pestilence. As well might we declare that benevolent magistrates will not punish, when crime is proven. The same cause in the same circumstances would produce the same effects. A God who is too good to punish would be too good to maintain harmony and order and benevolence in His moral system.

2. God is almighty; and He therefore could sustain the influence of law and the happiness of the universe, while forgiving sin, if there were no Atonement. *Answer*: The Scriptures declare that He could not do this. What the law could not do, and what God by the law could not do, He sent His Son to do. If the existence of mind and of moral law is indispensable to the greatest good of the universe, and if under such a system free agents sin, as they may do, then an Atonement for such sin is also indispensable. It would be a derelic-

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\* In his lectures as in his discourses, Dr. Beecher followed largely the method of the older divines of New England. He first stated his propositions, then justified them by certain formal lines of argument, and finally illustrated and confirmed his reasonings by the statement and answering of objections. It was on this latter point that his greatest vigor was often shown. He was probably less successful in calm, synthetic, constructive demonstration than in such defence and assault. He often rose to the grandest heights of persuasive eloquence just when he began to fancy himself surrounded by keen antagonists, and when he faced them in the lists with parry and thrust and logical refutation. This natural habit of his mind was doubtless much strengthened by his large experience in seasons of revival, and by his extensive contact with men. In his work as a teacher this often became his favorite method, and in his skillful use of it he often attained in the class-room, as in the pulpit, his most consummate success.

tion in goodness and holiness not to punish. As the law is eternal, and the rebellion perpetual, power, though almighty, cannot change the conclusion that punishment must follow in the steps of transgression. Besides, natural government by omnipotence and moral government by laws and motives are not the same. Power alone can no more produce free agency and accountability, than motives alone can govern the natural world. The influence of moral government over mind is through confidence, affection, hope, and fear; and if the principles of law are once violated, this influence cannot be preserved by mere power.\*

3. Sin is not an infinite evil, and therefore an infinite Atonement is not necessary. *Answer*: This view of sin is sometimes taken by good men, but the Bible does not so describe sin. That sin is not an infinite evil, is a human theory or judgment merely. The evil of sin lies in the happiness it destroys and the suffering it produces; but the happiness thus destroyed is finite, and so is the suffering produced. That suffering is indeed great, and without end; but infinite duration in suffering has never been experienced. It is not the infinitude of sin, but rather the nature of mind, of free agency, and of law, which, according to the Bible, makes an Atonement necessary.

4. God, though sinned against, is not vindictive or implacable, and needs no Atonement to assuage His wrath. *Answer*: The representation of the Bible is that the Atonement did not originate in the exigencies of divine wrath—in any malignant rage on the part of God, but in His love. The wrath of God, His fury and indignation, are metaphorical representations borrowed from the action of human government, in order to set forth the certainty and intensity of the divine administration of public justice upon the incorrigible for the safety and happiness of His government. Similar terms are often used to describe the operation of human government, without implying any malignity, and without excluding the agency of true benevolence.

5. There is no need of an Atonement to reconcile God to man: He has never been unreconciled. *Answer*: If it be meant simply that God is not the subject of revengeful feeling, it is true that He needs no reconciliation. But if it be meant that there is to a holy

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\* "There is nothing in its nature possible which God cannot do; and yet there are innumerable things, in their nature possible to be done, which God will not do, because it would not be possible to bring them in as parts of the wisest and best system; because, without abandoning the wisest and best system, He could not do them. He could, so far as power is concerned, pardon sin without an atonement; but He could not make it a wise and benevolent act, in the administration of the best possible system of moral government."—*Lectures on Political Atheism.*



God no repellant in human character as sinful, the objection is a gross libel upon Him. As well might we say of benevolent and upright magistrates, that they are not opposed to pirates and robbers, and need no reconciliation in view of crime. God is unreconciled to sinners: He can look upon their sin only with hatred and deep abhorrence. No power of language can be added to that in which such feeling is expressed; and the opposite view is itself irreconcilable with the proper doctrine of His benevolence. To say, on the other hand, that God could reconcile sinners to Himself without an Atonement is to say what cannot be proved. It is to assert that law can be maintained while it is transgressed with impunity; and that punishment will reconcile alienated and selfish minds. But the final fact is, that the Atonement is actually used as the instrumentality to reconcile God to man, and to reconcile sinners to God; and this fact shows the Atonement to be in this respect intrinsically necessary.

6. Simple repentance is sufficient to vindicate and sustain law. *Answer*: Facts show conclusively that under the law there is no genuine, adequate repentance. Again, the Scriptures invariably testify that it is the means employed under the Gospel, not the influence exerted under a system of law, by which true repentance is produced. We are also taught that even these means become effectual to this end only through the Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit will not, in fact, regenerate all men. Moreover, repentance alone is not sufficient to offset the punishment due to entire and uniform sinfulness such as exists in man; to admit such a substitution would destroy law altogether. If law could produce repentance—if the effect of law when violated were not rather, as it is, to confirm men in sin, still such repentance would not be adequate to meet the case. The exigencies met by the Atonement cannot be provided for in this way. To pardon all the sins of every subject, if each and all were, in fact, to repent of such sins, would be nothing less than a total repeal of the penalties of law. No human government could act on this principle without breaking down utterly.

7. Good works alone are sufficient to procure salvation; every man performs more good than evil actions; an Atonement in such circumstances is needless. *Answer*: Good actions which do not spring from an obedient heart, are not spiritually excellent. They may originate in selfish motives; they may spring even from hypocrisy. We are not to judge of the motives from the outward appearance. Again, a portion of our acts may be morally right, while others evince incorrigible delinquency. Hence such good works are not a sufficient basis for salvation.

8. Vicarious suffering is inconsistent with both the nature of law and the veracity of God. Law requires that the sinner himself shall be punished, and God declares that He will punish every transgressor. *Answer*: No believer in revelation can urge this objection, because it would prove universal damnation, since the proper punishment of the law is spiritual and eternal death. But further, it is the nature and design of the divine law to secure perfect benevolence in heart and action throughout the universe of mind, through a system of rewards and punishments. For this system, as a general rule, there can be no substitute. But if a remedial system can be found which will secure the same end—which will augment the power of law, and reclaim and bring back to obedience to it innumerable millions of immortal minds—it will be no departure from the end in view to introduce such a system. The design of rewards and punishments is to sustain the moral power of law; and if law can be sustained, and sustained more perfectly by a scheme of grace, the power of law is in the end augmented—its claim is not in the least impaired.

Nor in such an arrangement is the veracity of the Lawgiver implicated; for such a remedial system still declares truly what are the vital principles of law as law, and what under a government of mere law must and will be the issue of transgression. The temporary suspension of law, and the introduction of a remedial system whose effect is to sustain the proper influence of law and to augment that influence through the whole government of God forever, cannot be irreconcilable with His complete veracity. If the true ends of law are answered, it is enough.

Moreover, the penalties attached to law are not so much promises as declarations of demerit—divine declarations as to the certain and unavoidable result in the regular administration of law. They are unavoidable by any process within reach of the transgressor, and unavoidable by God himself in any way which does not secure the effect of their actual infliction. They are thus the pledges of the Lawgiver that He will maintain His law; they show that He will never give up that law, or suffer it to be violated with impunity, or allow it to be averted in any way that will impair confidence in Himself or His moral administration. In the Atonement His character is fully sustained, and the purpose to uphold His law is as really manifest as if the curse itself had been inflicted.

9. If Christ actually bore the curse, redemption cannot be of grace: God is in equity bound to pardon. *Answer*: If bearing the curse means a literal infliction of the very penalty of our sin, and if the merit of the obedience and death of Christ is literally imputed to the believer by legal transfer, there can be no grace in forgiveness. But

the phrase, "bearing the curse," does not mean the endurance of the exact suffering and all the suffering due to sin. The suffering of Christ was vicarious in the sense that what He endured answered the same purposes which the infliction of penalty would have secured in the full vindication of law. But His enduring of such suffering for the sake of saving sinners, does not change the character or the actual deserts of those who are saved through His sacrifice. That endurance does not constitute the basis of a claim in equity, to be urged by them; they still need forgiveness, and their salvation must still be of grace.

10. Human governments remit penalties without an atonement, and without destroying the efficacy of law; it is therefore possible for God to do this. *Answer*: In human governments the remission of penalty is often a consequence of defect in the operation of law; in a divine government, no such defect can exist. Remission of penalty on this ground, or for any reason, does impair the influence of human laws, and affect injuriously the interests of society to just that extent. Were remission to occur on any like grounds in the divine administration, the efficacy of law and the safety and happiness of the moral universe would be impaired in corresponding proportions.

Again: human governments do not pretend to pardon all the sins of all their subjects—the sins of those who have violated all the laws of the State, and are in an attitude of open revolt and enmity, and who, if they were pardoned, would immediately relapse into greater sin against these laws. Were they to do this, law and government would be utterly prostrate. But God offers through the Atonement pardon for all the sins of a world of rebels who have sinned, and sinned only and always, and for all the sins they may commit subsequent to their reconciliation, and in such a way as shall sustain and glorify law while punishment is wholly remitted. This no human government could ever do.

Again: human governments respect only overt action, and do not demand perfect benevolence of heart; and though some degree of right action could be secured by the remission of penalty, it would not follow that the heart could be controlled and kept by that means in perfect unison with righteous law. But the divine government requires perfection of heart as well as life; and the Lawgiver in such a position could reclaim and restore only by processes in harmony with the highest ends of public justice. Human governments also remit penalties within a limited sphere, and for a short time, and for a few transgressions. But it does not follow from this that God could, in the remission here required, perpetuate through eternity and

throughout the universe an influence sufficient to sustain His government over loyal minds. A system that might hold five States, might not avail to govern fifty States. As minds multiply and dominion extends, the value of an increasing moral influence is indicated by every known analogy. So, the suspension of a human law in a few cases without destroying its authority, is no evidence that a law, which is perfect and comprehensive in its claims, and which extends throughout eternity, and is the foundation of all perfect moral society forever, can be sustained in honor while its penalties are remitted. Even if God could do good in some instances, as human governments sometimes seem to do by conduct at variance with the claim of law, still we could not infer that such a course would be admissible on a far wider scale.

11. It would be an injustice to punish the innocent for the sins of the guilty. This is done in the Atonement. *Answer*: It would certainly be unjust to punish the innocent for the sins of the guilty in the same sense in which the transgressor is punished for his own sins: that is, on the ground of personal desert. But there is in this case no transfer of personal character, and therefore no transfer of desert. Such a transaction would violate the fundamental principle of law. If the penalty of the law is to be inflicted, equity requires that the transgressor himself should bear it. The equitable maxim that one shall not be made accountable in law for the crime of another, or bear that crime for another, must not be violated. Were this done, public confidence and the rights and safety of the obedient, and the highest good of the whole, would be subverted. No right principle could require the punishment of an innocent person, as if such punishment were the merited effect of actual sin; the conception is simply a legal fiction in our theology.

Again: it would be still more unjust to require the involuntary suffering of the obedient in order to avert the punishment of the guilty. Personal rights are as sacred as the public good, and they must be guarded if we would obviate public insecurity. The public good can, in fact, be sustained only by maintaining these personal rights. If the divine administration were conducted on the opposite principle, no one could tell how many might be destroyed by such expediency, or who would come next, or where the process of destruction would cease. But the sufferings of Christ were voluntary, and were approved of heaven; they were temporary in duration, and did not involve the extinction of being; they were rewarded by exaltation and glory, high above all created minds, and His happiness was in consequence of them augmented throughout eternity. In human society men are justified in making sacrifices—in encountering self-denial and suffering, as

in times of civil exigency, for the public good. The Father himself has furnished an example of this in giving His Son for the world; and the Son also has given us a like example in taking upon Him our nature in order that He might make expiation for the sins of the race. There may have been no necessity in the nature of things compelling Him to become our deliverer, but He possessed the right to volunteer such deliverance at whatever sacrifice to Himself. In this sense it is equitable that He should suffer vicariously for our sins.

12. The Atonement is contrary to common sense; for common sense does not regard vicarious suffering as necessary or as efficacious in delivering men from the punishment of sin. *Answer*: Common sense and universal experience agree, without any exception, that repentance cannot be a substitute in law for punishment, so that all crimes might be forgiven on this ground. The laws of all nations verify this statement. If it could be assumed that men of themselves may and do repent, and that repentance is sufficient, all men would be sure that they would ultimately repent, and might thus escape every penalty of the law. No government on earth ever admitted such a principle. Though in respect to the individual only, repentance might render pardon expedient, yet the relations of the act to other minds, and to the general welfare, would forbid pardon, the whole world in all ages being judge.

Moreover, the universal sense of mankind is in favor of the necessity and efficacy of vicarious suffering. The worship of God from the beginning has been by sacrifice or propitiation. The pagan world is united both as to the inefficacy of simple repentance, and to the necessity and availing worth of vicarious sacrifice. The main principle of pagan worship universally has been fear; its rites have been chiefly those of deprecation by costly offerings. The power of this conviction has been manifest not only in the prevalence of animal sacrifice, but also in the almost universal prevalence at one time or another of human sacrifices. These are the expressions of conscious guilt, and of the supposed vindictiveness of God and His vicegerents in administration. Even the philosophers, who were above these superstitious fears, and who reasoned only from the value of law, confessed that pardon could in no conceivable way be reconciled with efficient government, and desired and hoped that God would at some time give to man a revelation of the way in which He could be just and yet forgive.

13. The Scriptures do not, in fact, teach the doctrine of vicarious suffering, and of the righteousness of Christ as the meritorious cause of propitiation; they rather affirm the efficacy of repentance and the Christian graces and good works, as the foundation of pardon

through the mercy of God. *Answer* : On both points the Scriptures teach exactly the reverse. In the first case, vicarious suffering is from beginning to end recognized in the Bible as the divine ground of human forgiveness. The sacrifice of animals was an institution of God, early after the fall, as appears from the offerings of Abel and Noah, and also from the patriarchal sacrifices before the Mosaic ritual had been established. As Paul reasons in the Epistle to the Hebrews, these all had reference to sin and forgiveness. The animal sacrifice in that ritual was also a recognition of sin, and a deprecation of punishment, and under the law it availed to avert ceremonial uncleanness and its penalties. The Mosaic sacrifices generally were appointed to avert final evil for moral defilement. The ceremonial law was itself in the hands of a Mediator for spiritual ends; it was both a symbol of the moral law and a symbolical mode of preaching the Gospel. The law entered that the offence of sin might abound, and the Atonement came in, in order that the violated law might, as a schoolmaster, bring men to Christ. So the Scriptures throughout in many ways directly and unequivocally teach the vicarious nature of the sufferings of Christ, and the fundamental relation of these sufferings to human salvation.

In the second place, the offer of pardon upon conditions of repentance through the mercy of God, or in connection with particular graces and good works as the expression of evangelical character, neither proves nor implies that these are or could be acceptable conditions without the intervention of an Atonement. This offer simply teaches that on the foundation which God has laid, and on this alone, can repentance or any act of evangelical obedience secure pardon. The ground of all this merciful intercourse, and of these overtures, is laid in the Atonement. This is so fully taught in the Atonement itself, that it is not necessary, every time the conditions of acceptance are named, to mention also the procuring and meritorious cause—any more than, after faith has been named as the primary condition of acceptance, faith should be named specifically every time other graces are mentioned as conditions. The testimony is overwhelming that without the Atonement God could not possibly exercise mercy. Rather must eternal justice take its course: first, because no true repentance or holy character will be produced on principles of law, and then because—were this result possible—an administration of law could not sustain itself and forgive all sin on such grounds. An Atonement being made, the mercy of God may flow full and abundant, according to His promise, in all the channels opened by an obedient heart and life.

14. The doctrine of justification by faith and of salvation by grace

through the merits of Christ, is inconsistent with the revealed doctrine of rewards and punishments according to the deeds done in the body. *Answer*: The grounds of pardon and the grounds of reward are fundamentally different. From what has been said respecting the principles of perfect moral government, it is clear that no obedience rendered subsequent to transgression can of itself avail in law as a ground of pardon and of restoration to the regular immunities of the government. Though obedience, even perfect, should return to every subject, the sword introduced at Eden would still turn every way to guard against any return to the privileges once forfeited. It is also true that, under law, no such reformation does ensue; no hearty obedience occurs, to be made a subject of reward. Were there a few exhibitions of obedient action, the operation of the curse would still occupy the ground, and completely shut out all place for reward. Before any reward can be given, government by law must for the time be suspended; a remedial influence must be interposed and applied; obedient character must be formed, in order that transgression may be pardoned and the curse averted. All this must be the result of an Atonement; it cannot occur otherwise. But when an Atonement has been made, and the legal liabilities are thus removed, and forgiveness and the application of reformatory influences are provided for, and the soul is prepared to receive and appropriate rewards, then the rewards of law and grace may begin to flow forth exactly as indicated by character and deeds. Hence, in this case, redemption as to its meritorious cause and application is wholly of grace, while reward and punishment here and hereafter shall be given according to deed and life.

15. It is unreasonable to suppose that God would provide redemption for such an insignificant world as this by the incarnation of divinity, and by the substitution of divine vicarious suffering. *Answer*: If by unreasonable is meant simply an event not discoverable by reason, the objection is true; the Atonement is not contrary to reason, but is simply above reason. If it is intended to say that redemption in this way is contrary to the analogies and principles of human government, and is on *a priori* ground improbable, the objection has force; but improbable events may come to pass; they are not impossible or unreasonable. God may surpass the fears of rebels in His displays of wisdom and mercy and power. If it is merely implied that it could not have been expected that the holy and just Ruler of the universe would associate the divine nature with human nature, and in that personal union would suffer and die as Christ suffered and died, then the answer is, that while all this is true, it is not in any sense unreasonable. It is not a process inconsistent with the

divine benevolence or wisdom, if thereby the evils of sin in the universe might be obviated, and the character and government of God clothed with new glory and power. If it is essential to finite benevolence to act disinterestedly for the general good, and even to make great efforts and practice much self-denial for that object, much more must it be inferred from the infinite benevolence of God, that He would make every effort possible; that He would meet any required and practicable suffering which might be demanded for the general good of His moral universe.

Again: if the term unreasonable simply refers to our feeling in regard to the matter, it must be said that the fact that it does not seem to us as if God would do such a thing, proves the Atonement neither unreasonable nor improbable. In a time of drought, men do not feel as if God would give rain; in a time of judgment, they do not feel as if He would remember mercy. A convicted sinner does not feel that God is willing to forgive; Christians, in full view of the promises of God, do not always feel that He will fulfil those promises in their case. So, though it may seem wonderful to us that God should do beyond what we ask or think—as in the work of redemption—it does not follow that such a work is not in strict accordance with His perfect benevolence or with the augmented safety and happiness of the universe.

Once more: if it is intended to imply by the term unreasonable, that the Atonement is so obviously inadequate to produce the result contemplated as to render the scheme too absurd to be believed, we may reply, first, that we do not know enough of the possibilities of a moral government, and the possibilities in the divine wisdom, to say as much as this. And secondly, the adaptations in the case, so far as we can see them, are so much in harmony with the alleged design as to produce in us a conviction of their fitness which falls little short of absolute demonstration. God has done innumerable things which we would not have anticipated before the event. Reasoning simply from His infinite benevolence, wisdom, and power, we could have anticipated nothing but a perfectly sinless and perfectly blessed universe. The fallaciousness of such reasonings is manifest. To infer in like manner that the Atonement is not a measure wisely adapted to the end of saving men and sustaining law because we do not discern such adaptation, is a fallacy equally obvious; a fallacy proven both by closer examination of the doctrine, and by the results experimentally manifested.

16. As an Atonement is said to be indispensable to pardon and sanctification, those who lived and died before the Atonement was made, could not be saved by it. *Answer*: These were saved by faith



in a Saviour promised, and in an Atonement to be made, precisely as we are saved by faith in a Saviour who has come, and in an Atonement already made. The Gospel was preached to Abel through animal sacrifices, and was so explained to him and understood by him, that he exercised the faith of the Gospel, as believers now do. In a word, the same system of redemption runs through the entire Scripture, and the same religious faith is everywhere inculcated and required. The Atonement was an original part of the eternal plan of God; it was made in foresight of sin. Possibly, man would not have been created but for this redemptive scheme. It was revealed to Adam and Eve as a matter of faith, and as the appointed ground of pardon. The sacrifices of animals were of no effect in themselves; they were designed to be symbols of the great sacrifice to be made by Christ. As symbols they had power to prevent presumption, and to sanctify and save through faith; the same power essentially which is now concentrated in the Gospel itself.

17. Other worlds and other orders of intelligence may be injured by the Atonement; they may be led into sin, presumptuously, in the anticipation that a plan of grace may be provided for them also. *Answer*: It is to be remembered that human sin and human redemption are subsequent in time to the creation of angels; they occur only after the probation and moral discipline of angels have already been secured. Moreover, the salvation of man in this way furnishes an augmented evidence of the divine purpose to sustain law, and thus tends to prevent sin wherever it is known. Besides, if angels sin wilfully, in view of the Atonement, they have no right to look for salvation on any like basis.

18. So many opinions prevail, so much uncertainty exists respecting the Atonement, that we are warranted in casting the doctrine aside altogether. If true, it would have been so stated as to preclude all uncertainty and all diversities of belief. *Answer*: The truth and the worth of the doctrine may be tested by its results. Some of these results are seen in souls renewed and in sins forgiven—in multitudes actually saved by the blood of Christ. Observe, also, the intellectual and moral influences of this doctrine: as seen in pure and happy families, formed under it in a world of licentiousness; as seen in nations reconciled to each other through its teaching; as seen in the diffusion of universal and healthful education wherever it is received, and in the development of civil and religious liberty, and the growth of moral purity and stability wherever it is held. It cannot be said that a doctrine which has shown itself capable of producing such results, is either a dim uncertainty or an unimportant opinion. The truth is as central and as vital as the throne of God.