

The Vicarious Element in Parental Government.

BY N. S. BURTON, D. D.

"That there is a vicarious element in the system of government under which we find ourselves is manifest in the course of events in the world, and is a prominent doctrine of scripture. Four facts stand out in human experience so prominent as to be unquestioned: (1) The good suffer in this world in consequence of the sins of the bad. (2) The bad are benefited by the good deeds and lives of the good. (3) The bad are sometimes saved from the natural and just consequences of their sins through what the good do for them or suffer on their account. These facts are not accidental or exceptional, but are of such uniform and frequent occurrence as to indicate a divine purpose. The scriptures teem with examples. The Egyptian Potiphar was prospered for Joseph his servant's sake, and the blessing of God was upon all that he had in the house and in the field. God declared that he visited the sins of the fathers upon the children, and blessed the children of the righteous for their fathers' sakes. When God sent judgments for national sins upon the Jewish nation the righteous few suffered with the sinful many, and when the nation was brought to repentance and prosperity restored, all shared alike in the prosperity. Similar facts meet our eyes all around us to-day, so that to fail to recognize a vicarious element in providential government would seem impossible.

The same element is equally apparent in family government. The ideal family is not one in which every transgression and disobedience receives its just recompense of reward. Very far from it. As human nature is, such a family could not long survive. But the highest ideal family is one in which when one member sins all the members suffer, and when he repents all the members forgive him and rejoice together, in which all the members strive together to promote the highest well-being of all. The parent pardons his penitent child because he himself suffered when the child sinned. The supreme law of the family is not, "his just deserts to each one," but "the highest good to all." The error of the elder brother of the prodigal was that he mistook the nature and end of the family, and thought only of ruler and subject or master and servant. The single word "son" in his father's reply swept away the foundation of his charge of injustice or partiality. The relation of father and son is not that of ruler and subject or of master and servant. "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad."

Thus it is manifest that the vicarious element characterizes alike the government of the family and the providential government in the world. If we call the one parental we must call the other so also.

This element does not exist in civil government. The reason is that its purpose and functions are wholly different from those of the family. Governments are instituted among men for the protection of the rights of the citizens to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They subserve this end by dealing out even-handed justice without fear or favor. The more exactly and promptly they do this the more perfectly do they answer the end of their creation. The whole world admires and approves the conduct of the father in welcoming back his penitent son. But was such a thing ever known that a nation or a civil government gave such a welcome to a criminal returning, however penitent? He might come back with confession of his guilt, but instead of the ring for his hands and the shoes for his feet there would be handcuffs and manacles, and prison-fare instead of festing and dancing; and this is because it is the function of civil government to maintain justice and protect loyal citizens, rather than to save transgressors. Civil government has no vicarious provision for the pardon of penitent transgressors. When it bestows pardon it is on the ground that there has been some injustice or severity in the sentence of condemnation. Such is not the ground for forgiveness in the family or under the gospel dispensation. God's early proclamation of himself was: "The Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." No civil ruler would ever make such a proclamation as that.

Civil government differs from parental radically. The ends of the two are different, and are to be attained by different methods. One is destitute of the vicarious element. The other is permeated by it. We are not called to justify God in establishing such a system of government, but to recognize it, and to conform our ideas of righteousness to it. The gracious purpose of God is plain, to afford to all the best possible opportunity why to secure their highest well-being. Under it one who falls by transgression has a chance to rise again, as he

could not under righteous law. In the human family if one member sins all the members suffer, but chiefly the parent. He is the chief sin-bearer of the household. So it is the father who welcomes back the penitent prodigal. In God's great family on earth, while all the members suffer in consequence of the sins of each one; (and those most who are purest in heart), Jesus Christ is the great sin-bearer, and He it is who has power on earth to forgive sins. The earthly father forgives his penitent child because he still loves him, and has suffered for his sin, and Christ forgives us because he loves us and gave himself for us.

The chief reason why some have rejected the doctrine of the atonement is that they have been unable to adjust it to their idea of righteous government. Sin, they say, not only deserves punishment, but it is the guilty and not an innocent substitute that deserves to suffer. And if our ideal of the divine government is patterned after human civil government, the objection is fatal. But civil government is not the only form of government authorized by God. Before there was a civil government there was the family. Why should not the family be taken as the human copy of the divine government? A father who should rule his children as a righteous king rules his subject would be regarded as a heartless tyrant, and a king who should attempt to govern his kingdom as a loving father governs his family would soon see his kingdom come to an end. Righteousness is something higher than mere justice, as righteous character is something higher than mere commercial honesty. Righteous conduct is conduct in harmony with the relations in which God has placed us. A righteous ruler is one who so rules as to promote the ends for which civil government exists. A righteous father is one who so conducts the administration of his family as to promote the ends for which the family exists. The righteousness of which Paul speaks in such passages as Rom. 1:17, 3:22, and 10:3, is not mere justice or equity, but character or conduct suitable to the relations under a vicarious system of government.

When God made man in his own image endowed with the power of choice, he knew that he might abuse it and choose evil. He therefore established over him such a government as left his recovery possible in case of fall by evil choice. He not only bound the race together, but he appointed Christ the head of the race, to be sin-bearer for the race. Christ tasted death for every man, and we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. It is Christ as the sin-bearer that gives character to God's government in the world, and the earthly family is but an imperfect miniature of God's great family.

If God's government in the world is, by reason of the redemption wrought by Christ, parental, what is the relation to it of those who have not accepted Christ? It is certain that a child cannot release himself from the obligation to love and obey the father, though he may, by sin, forfeit the rights of sonship. The revelation of the love of God made in the gift and sacrifice of Christ, assures us that God desires not the death of any sinner. He will not put any unnecessary hindrance in the way of his return. Righteousness in God is not mere legal justice. This might not forbid the disinheritance of the transgressor. But righteousness in God implies conduct in harmony with his own nature. And with the relation established between himself and man. God, who is love, cannot do anything inconsistent with love, and if "love good-will regulated by righteousness," God is righteous when "mercy and truth meet" in the pardon of the penitent.

The purpose of God's government is to save men, not merely from falling into sin, but to save them from their sins. If this can best be done by dealing with transgressors as still children (however unnatural) then it is righteous in God so to deal with them. If a son can not by his unfilial conduct release himself from filial obligation, and if the parent do not release him, then the relation still exists, and righteousness requires the parent to chastise the son for his disobedience. If righteous chastening fail to bring him to repentance by the rights of God's goodness and forbearance, and long suffering treasures up to itself wrath against the day of wrath.

Ann Arbor, Mich.—Standard.

A Dusky Saint.

REV. WALTER CALLEY.

When I told a friend that I intended to write the unvarnished facts about my black heroine, he warned me against it. He said the average person would believe it was an improbable romance. Afterwards, when I heard Jan Maclaren say that the incident in his stories criticised most severely, because it could not possibly have happened, was the one absolutely historical fact that he had embodied in his sketches, my trepidation was increased. If she does not appear to you as much of a heroine as she does to me, remember that I have not dared to give

the story its full rich natural coloring for fear you would think it fiction and not fact, and I am very desirous that you should believe it, for such facts help us to nobler conceptions of human nature and enlarge our own souls.

I first saw her in a crowded prayer-meeting. Her black face stood out prominently in marked contrast with the scores of white faces all about her. She was short and stout, her hair was of the woolly kind, her forehead retreated, her nose was well spread out, her lips were thick and looked as if they were turned inside out. She seemed so out of place that I could not keep my mind from her, and my eyes would involuntarily follow my mind. Above the hymns and the prayers the grotesque face and figure would force themselves; she was the one discordant note in the symphony of praise. My theory had been that there ought to be no distinction between black and white in the house of God, but that night I did feel that she would be more comfortable in a church where her negro brethren worshipped. Of course it was her comfort entirely that I was thinking of. I was just beginning my pastorate, and made a mental note of the fact that this was one of the things to be straightened out.

I soon discovered that it would be an easier task to depose the Board or deacons, excommunicate the Sunday School superintendent, change the articles of faith, abolish the covenant and get the sexton to appreciate the qualities of pure air, than to have my black parishioner transplanted to another church. The truth is I never tried it. I have always been ashamed of my thoughts that first prayer-meeting night. It has been hard for me to recall what she looked like. There is no face that looks up at me from a congregation of loving people that is more beautiful than hers. I suppose it is still black, but it is so lighted up with a divine glory that I see soul back of it and forget it, or black has grown comely. Indeed I cannot tell you how it is, only I know it is so. Once I could not keep my eyes away from it, because of its grotesqueness; now I cannot keep them from it because of its radiant beauty.

Let me tell you what wrought this change, not in her, but in me.

A few years ago a young Christian minister, loved and honored, a man of beautiful character and full of the Holy Ghost, was lying upon his death bed. He had no property, and it took an unwavering trust in God for him to leave his wife and four children to the uncertainties of widowhood and orphanhood. A black servant was by his bedside, and as she stood there she read his thoughts in his wistful face. Bending over him she whispered: "Nevah min' about Miss 'Lizabeth and dem bressed chillun. As long as I got dese han's dey will nevah want. You just go to sleep on Jesus' bosom an' when you wakes up ovah yander, watch for us, fer we'll all be a comin' up dar an' a surprisin' you one of these days." He put his hand in hers, and as the tears stole down his cheeks a great peace came into his heart, for he knew God was speaking to him through her.

He fell asleep soon afterwards, and immediately after the funeral this black servant went out into the city and sought work. She found it in the large offices as scrub-woman. That night she went home wonderfully happy, and when the minister's widow talked to her of the future and suggested that the family must be separated and that mistress and servant must part, she laughed aloud. When she was remonstrated with for her unseemly conduct, she exclaimed: "You can't get rid of me dat way, no how. I's goin' to keep you an' de chillun right in dis house. I kin do 'it an' dat's what's a goin' to be done." The frail woman, so stricken with grief, tried to expostulate, but she was overruled. Sarah started to the city early the next morning, and came home in the evening and placed a pile of silver on the table before her mistress. There were three dollars. She had worked twelve hours on her hands and knees and had been given twenty-five cents an hour.

The black servant and my heroine are one. This is the story as it was told me that changed me, that in my soul transfigured her. Years have gone since she undertook her heroic task. She is still engaged in her service of love. She has cared for her charges and has educated two of the daughters. She says they shall all have a good education. If some one were to offer to relieve her of her burden she would regard it as an injury. How happy she is in her work! How proud she is of "her chillun." How gentle and considerate she is of her widowed mistress. If that household were permitted to choose the next canonized saint, the view would be unanimous for dear old Sarah. A few weeks ago she prayed in one of the meetings. This was her prayer. "Oh, thou God of heaven an' earf, thou hast been so merciful to thy servant an' given her much, an' she has been so unworthy of it, for her heart is often proud an' selfish. Do thou deah Lawd forgive thy servant an' give her moah of de spirit of Jesus, for his name sake. Amen."—The Commonwealth.

Charlie Coulson, A CHRISTIAN HERO

Two or three times in my heart, and twice before deep conviction.

During the American War States Army, and after were many hundred times amongst whom was twenty so severely that they required whose legs had to be amputated both their arm and leg who had been but three being too young for a soldier. When my assistant surgeon wished to administer chloroform, he turned his head as to receive it. When the doctor's orders, he said: "When I came to his bedside do you refuse chloroform?" battlefield you were so far from worth while to pick you up, large blue eyes I thought you who might at that moment did not want you to die on it brought here, but you have you are too weak to endure form, therefore you had better He laid his hand on mine, said: "Doctor, one Sunday school, when I was nine and heart to Christ. I learned to trusting Him ever since, and strength and my stimulant; you amputate my arm and would allow me to give him looked me in the face, saying about five years old my mother her arms around my neck, an' praying to Jesus that you ma strong drink; your papa died to a drunkard's grave, and I will that you should grow young men against the bitter years old, but I have never tasted tea and coffee, and as I am, I go into the presence of my father there with brandy on my stomach.

The look that boy gave me that time I hated Jesus, but I turned to his Saviour, and when I saw Him to the last, there was some heart, and I did for that boy any other soldier—I asked his chaplain. "Oh, yes sir," was

When Chaplain R. came he a having often met him at the taking his hand, said: "Well, you in this sad condition." "he answered. "The doctor offered declined it; then he wished to also declined; and now, if my S to him in my right mind." "Y said the chaplain; "but if there away, is there anything I can gone." "Chaplain, please p-pillow and take my little Bible mother's address; please send it and tell her that since the day I let a day pass without reading a and daily praying that God would no matter whether on the march the hospital." "Is there anything you, my lad?" asked the chapla a letter to the superintendent of School, Brooklyn, N. Y., and t words, many prayers and good an never forgotten; they have follow danger of battle and now, in my dear Saviour to bless my dear old all."

Turning towards me he said, ready, and I promise you that while you take off my arm and let me chloroform. I promised, but to take the knife in my hand to without first going into the next room stimulant to nerve myself to perform. While cutting through the flesh groaned, but when I took the saw the lad took the corner of his pillow that I could hear him utter was, Jesus stand by me now." He kept groaned.