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BUSHNELL ON THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.

This book has had an extensive circulation and has attracted much attention on both sides of the Atlantic. The importance of its theme, and the genial eloquence, poetic imagination, and dashing style of the author, conspire to invest it with more than ordinary interest. Like all Dr. Bushnell's writings, it is in part iron, and in part miry clay. But after a somewhat careful examination, we are forced to say, that, in our judgment, the miry clay sadly predominates.

The author, who is ranked, ecclesiastically, with the Evangelical Congregationalists of New England, has long been noted for the ambitious character of his theology, which seems to have almost equal affinities for the *terra firma* of orthodoxy, and the stagnant pools of Unitarianism.

The volume is, for the most part, only an expansion and defence of the sentiments embodied in a discourse delivered in 1848, before the Divinity School in Harvard University, and afterwards published, along with other discussions, under the title of "God in Christ." Eighteen years do not appear to have improved the theology of this erratic divine.

The views of Christ's atoning work which are advocated in this book have never been embraced by any class of Evangelical Christians. At the present day, there are radically only three theories of the atonement, extant in the Christian world.

1. The Unitarian theory which resolves the atonement into the subjective moral influence of the life, example, and death of Christ, upon the sinner. It denies that sin for its own sake deserves punishment, and that justice, in the ordinary sense of that term, is an attribute of God. It holds, consequently, that there is no righteous barrier to the pardon of the sinner who repents. He is not laid under any penal disabilities by sin. All that is necessary for his salvation is, that a certain amount of moral influence should be brought to bear upon him. This the life, example, and death of Christ supply.

2. The Governmental theory. This maintains also that the efficacy of the atonement depends on the impression made by the death of Christ, not, however, on the sinner, but on the universe. The advocates of this view, while agreeing with those who deny the intrinsic ill-desert of sin, hold, that to pardon the sinner merely on repentance, would be subversive of the order and government of the moral universe. Some expedient must be employed to make an impression upon the universe of the sanctity of law, and of the necessity of punishing sin. As justice is not an attribute of God, but only a form of benevolence, there is no need of any satisfaction to justice. What is necessary is something that will prevent pardon from being regarded as a license to impunity. This has been accomplished by the death of Christ. How the death of Christ can make an impression of the sanctity of law, while it sets the law aside, or an impression of the necessity of punishing sin, while it is an expedient that sin may be pardoned, without any punishment being exacted, is one