

God is distinguished as rectoral, or that which is concerned in the imposition of righteous laws and in their impartial execution; and distributive, or that which is manifested in the righteous distribution of rewards and punishment. The Bible constantly represents God as a righteous ruler and a just judge. These two aspects of his character, or of our relation to Him, are not carefully distinguished. We have the assurance which runs through the Scriptures, that "The judge of all the earth" must "do right." (Gen. 18:25) "God is a righteous judge." (Ps. 7:11, marginal reading) "He shall judge the world with righteousness." (Ps. 96:13) "Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." (Ps. 97:2) Notwithstanding all the apparent inequalities in the distribution of his favours; notwithstanding the prosperity of the wicked and the afflictions of the righteous, the conviction is everywhere expressed that God is just; that somehow and somewhere He will vindicate his dealings with men, and show that He is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works.

As the sense of guilt is universal among men, and as the manifestations of sin are so constant and pervading, it is mainly in its relation to sin that the justice of God is revealed.

As the justice of God is specially manifested in the punishment of sin, it is of primary importance to determine why sin is punished.

One prevalent theory on this subject is that the only legitimate end of punishment is the reformation of the offender.

It is of course to be admitted, that the good of the offender is often the ground or reason why evil is inflicted. A father chastises a child in love, and for its good. And God, our heavenly Father, brings suffering upon his children for their edification. But evil inflicted for the benefit of the sufferer, is chastisement, and not punishment. Punishment, properly speaking, is evil inflicted in satisfaction of justice.

Augustus Hopkins Strong, in his *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1907), Volume I, pp. 290-294, states:

By justice and righteousness we mean the transitive holiness of God, in virtue of which his treatment of his creatures conforms to the purity of his nature -- righteousness demanding from all moral beings conformity to the moral perfection of God, and justice visiting non-conformity to that perfection with penal loss or suffering.

(a) Since justice and righteousness are simply transitive holiness - righteousness designating this holiness chiefly in its mandatory, justice chiefly in its punitive, aspect -- they are not mere manifestations of benevolence, or of God's