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VOLUME III—SIN AND ATONEMENT

Corrections and Additions

Page	Line
9	2 up sp. circle
9	1 up " after center
14	5 . after architecture, begin new sentence
14	6 ; after manner, do not begin new sentence
14	13 up omit !
15	2 sp. categorical
15	14 omit teaches, insert shows
17	2 up omit either
20	3 up sp. opportunity
24	3 sp. enmity
24	8, 9 fo-rensic
29	12 up sp. chastity
30	13 up sp. affects
32	5 up insert the before wisdom
33	4 sp. restitution
33	7 up sp. affected
34	12 , after experientially
34	2 up "But,"
38	15 Jeremiah's warning,
45	4 up indent
46	10, 11 omit all " "
48	13 sp. analogy
48	10 up ¶ There are those
53	9 up " after book
55	9-7 up "Christ died for our sins" (I Corinthians 15:3) when we should have died. He therefore
58	5 up omit and
59	11 omit historical
62	13 . after reference
62	3 up omit revealed, insert maintained
67	10, 9 up substitute ' ' for " " Put sentence in " "
71	11 sp. has
72	6, 7 au-dience
73	6 sp. Forgiveness
75	6 up sp. Revelation
84	11 up Revelation 13:8
89	3 up " after believe
89	2 up omit Believe and insert Believe
94	14 omit , after utterly
101	7 " after fire
102	6 up chapters plural
103	1 insert for himself after answer
103	11 up sp. Beelzebub
103	7 up clear-cut
106	9 up sp. believe

THE LAMB OF GOD

BY

J. Oliver Buswell, Jr.

President of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.

COMPLETE IN FIVE VOLUMES

I. BEHOLD HIM!

“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD”

II. WHAT IS GOD?

“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD”

III. SIN AND ATONEMENT.

“THAT TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD”

IV. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“THAT TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD”

V. UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

“THAT TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD”

SIN AND ATONEMENT

THE LAMB OF GOD: VOLUME III

"That taketh away the sin of the world."
—JOHN 1:29.

By

J. OLIVER BUSWELL, JR., D.D., LL.D.
President of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.

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CHAPTER I.

THE SIN OF THE WORLD*

NO ONE knows what sin is until he knows something of what God is. The world is full of sin, but the natural man, out of fellowship with Christ, does not know his sinful condition.

This truth came to me as a distinct shock when I first read of it in missionary literature. I had always heard of the lost and dying heathen in their wretchedness and in their sinfulness, and had imagined them as consciously stretching out hands toward us for help. "The Dynamic of Service," by Paget Wilkes, opened my eyes to the situation as I believe it really exists among those who have not come under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. They are lost, they are wretched, they are in a miserable condition, they are to be pitied, but they do not know their wretchedness.

A missionary from Africa recently said to our young people, "Drive down a stake anywhere in the heart of Africa. Take a circle fifty miles in radius about that location. You will probably include as much human happiness in proportion as you would if you should drive a similar stake and inscribe a similar circle with the city of Chicago as its center. Humanity easily adjusts down-

*The Author's article, "The Nature of Eternal Punishment," in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for October, 1925, contained part of the material presented in the following chapter.

ward and becomes satisfied with almost any condition of life. The filthy, the squalid, the poverty-stricken, are often found to be quite satisfied with their situation, provided only that there is a certain bare minimum of physical provision.

I once told a barber, who was cutting my hair, that I was a minister of the gospel, that it was my business to tell people that Christ died to save them from sin.

“What is sin?” he said.

I tried in simple language to tell him what sin is in relationship to the holiness of God.

“Sin! I don’t do no sin,” was his perfectly sincere reply. I happened to know that the man was profane, immoral, dishonest, a sinner in many ways, but he was unconscious of his sinful condition.

A speaker, addressing a group of young people not long ago, referred to the wretched poverty in a certain area, and contrasted that situation with the comfortable wealth of a nearby city. In a very familiar shallow stream of thought, this speaker then drew the conclusion that the wealth ought to be divided up among the poor. Some of those present happened to be familiar with the actual conditions described. Some of us knew that many of those in wretched poverty did not care, but were quite contented with their slovenly existence. If this is true in the economic and physical world, it is also true in the moral world. The natural man is well described in the Scriptures as “dead in trespasses and sins.” (Ephesians 2:1)

The Holy Spirit Brings Conviction.

It is a particular and special function of the Holy Spirit of God to bring the conviction of sin upon men.

“And he [the Holy Spirit] when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believed not on me.” (John 16:8, 9)

The crying out of the lost world for the knowledge of the gospel is a very genuine fact. Our missionaries do well to emphasize such appeals as come from heathenism (heathenism in America, as well as in foreign lands). Such consciousness of sin, such realization of the need of the gospel, such appeals for the message of salvation, are always the result of the specific work of the Holy Spirit of God in the hearts of men.

In bringing the conviction of their lost condition to the consciousness of men, the Holy Spirit usually works through the printed Word of God and the testimony of sinners saved by grace. I should not deny that God can save souls apart from human testimony and apart from the written Word. He sometimes works without these factors so far as we can trace the influences of his grace. There seem to be a very few well authenticated records indicating that God does not always confine himself to the usual method. Admitting this, nevertheless we wish to emphasize in the strongest terms that God's usual and almost universal way of bringing conviction of sin is through the instrumentality of the propagation of the gospel by the messengers and by the Book.

It is only as men are confronted with the fact of the holiness of God, and that usually in the regular course of the propagation of the gospel, that men know what sin is.

“Our God is a consuming fire.” (Deuteronomy 4:24, Hebrews 12:29)

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:31)

Four men stand out in the history of God's people as conspicuous examples of the consciousness of sin. Not one of them was what the world would call a great sinner. Luther was zealous for works of righteousness, but when he became conscious of the holiness of God's law, he became conscious at the same time of the deepest sinfulness within himself. Augustine, according to the standards of the society in which he moved, was not a great sinner, but as he contemplated the holiness of God, he found within himself depths of iniquity of which few men have ever been conscious. Saul of Tarsus was “zealous for the law,” eagerly pursuing the way of legal righteousness, “as touching the law, blameless.” After his conversion, he described himself as “the chief of sinners.” (I Timothy 1:15) With reference to his own nature, he said, “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” (Romans 7:18) “Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24) St. Paul states that it was the holy law of God which wrought in him this consciousness of sin.

“And I was alive apart from the law once; but when

the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death: for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me." (Romans 7:9-11)

Isaiah, so far as we know, was a man of excellent character and had evidently been filling the office of a prophet in Israel for some years, when he received the vision described in the sixth chapter of his prophecy. It was a vision of the holiness of God which convicted him of his natural sinfulness.

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up: and his train filled the temple. . . . Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." (Isaiah 6:1, 5)

Isaiah learned the inadequacy of human works of righteousness. Of those who seek to stand before God upon their own merits, he says,

"All their righteousnesses are as filthy rags." (Isaiah 64:6)

Definition of Sin.

The late Professor James Orr, in his book, "God's Image in Man," defines sin as "anything which absolutely ought not to be." Another source gives us a fuller and more explicit definition.

"What is sin? Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." (W. S. C. 14)

Sin is to be contrasted with a categorical imperative. Life is full of hypothetical imperatives,—if one wishes to sail toward the wind, he must set the rudder and the sails thus and so; if one wishes his house to stand, he must obey the laws of architecture; but one may not wish to sail in such a manner. One may choose to build a house which will not stand for long.

Life is full of mandatory imperatives. Political potentates use the word “must” in the enactment of laws; the subject must do thus and so, or penalties will follow.

There is only one categorical imperative, that is, the moral law. The moral law does not say, If you wish to do right, then follow these precepts. The moral law does not say, You must do thus and so, or penalties will follow (though the moral law is frequently accompanied by mandatory law). The moral law does not say, “if” or “must”! the moral law says “ought,” there is no alternative. An artist may take a vacation and may merely daub his colors about, without ceasing to be an artist. A musician may produce unmusical sounds, without ceasing to be a musician. But a good man may not cease being a good man for a single instant without becoming a violator of the moral law. The moral law may be violated, but it may not be altered in its essential nature. A man may do what he ought not, but what he ought to do remains unchanged.

Thus far, we find the natural philosophers of the world have proceeded. Immanuel Kant is the great exponent of the categorical imperative. Socrates and the

Greeks generally failed to anticipate Kant's teachings and did not see that the "ought" is catagorical, and not merely hypothetical or mandatory. (See "Readings in Ethics," by Clark and Smith, pages 15-20, 34.) The definition quoted above from Professor Orr recognizes the truth which is to be found in secular philosophy.

The moral law, however, for a Christian, does not merely stand upon the basis of an impersonal categorical imperative. Professor Orr did not imply a merely impersonal "ought" in his definition. The other definition cited above* carries us forward into the distinctly Christian view of the moral law. The "ought" for the Christian is the revealed will of God. This source which we quoted teaches that the Scriptures principally teach (1) what man is to believe concerning God, and (2) what duty God requires of man. These two points of Scriptural teaching form the two divisions of the source. The second division develops exactly the thought which we are seeking to present at this point.

"What is the duty which God requireth of man? The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

"What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience? The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

"Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended? The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments." (W.S.C. 39, 40, 41)

Many able Bible teachers believe that Saint Paul

*From the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

had in mind exactly this thought of the moral law as the revealed will of God, summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, in the teaching which is found in Romans 7:7.

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law; for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”

President Robert McQuilkin, D. D., developed this theme in an admirable way in an address delivered recently to young people. Saul of Tarsus had measured himself by the ten commandments. Facing the commandments one by one up to the ninth, he had not been convicted of his sin. He had not worshiped gods other than God. He had not worshiped idols, had not taken the name of God in vain. He had not broken the law of the Sabbath. He had honored his father and mother. He had not stolen. He had not committed adultery. He had not murdered. He had not borne false witness against his neighbor. But when the law said, “Thou shalt not covet,” the inner sinfulness of his heart was revealed and he knew that before the Author of the moral law he stood condemned.

From this point Saul of Tarsus would have been more deeply convicted by the teaching of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. As a matter of fact, Saul of Tarsus was not only guilty of violating the tenth commandment, but every other one of the ten, as Christ interpreted them. In its nature, anger is the same thing as murder. The lust of the flesh is the same, in nature, as

adultery. From this more penetrating analysis Saul of Tarsus would have been condemned by every one of the commandments, not only by the one which most expressly refers to the inward attitude of the heart.

Sin Not Only in Action, But in Nature.

In our study of the definition of sin, we have shown that it is contrasted with a moral imperative, categorical in its nature, and that this imperative is not impersonal, but is the will of God, or more specifically the revealed will of God, which is summed up in the decalogue. Before the moral law every one of us stands condemned, as that law is interpreted by Saint Paul and by our Lord himself.

“Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? No mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed.

“What doth every sin deserve? Every sin deserveth God’s wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.” (W. S. C. 82, 84)

“For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

This fact leads to the further teaching as clearly developed in the seventh chapter of Romans, that sin is not merely a matter of action, not merely a question of deliberate conscious choice. Sin is also a matter of character. There is the “sin that dwelleth in me” antecedent to any overt act, either in thought, word or deed.

It happens that a number of my personal Christian

friends and a considerably larger company of Christians with whose general activity I am somewhat familiar, deny that sin exists in human nature as such, apart from sinful actions. Not a few of these good people limit the word "sin" to deliberate, purposeful, conscious actions only.

One hundred years ago great revivals occurred under the leadership of Charles G. Finney. In spite of his greatness as an evangelist, he insisted upon teaching that sin is only a matter of conscious action, that sin does not reside in the nature of man. Finney's "Systematic Theology" is the basis of a great amount of erroneous teaching upon the definition of sin among Christian people today. For the sake of those who may have come under this influence, we take the liberty of reviewing several facts which throw light upon this situation.

(1) Finney was not, and did not claim to be, a theological scholar. In his autobiography he states that he never learned to read the Scriptures in the original languages. In his young manhood the scholarly orthodoxy with which he came in contact lacked evangelistic emphasis. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," (Acts 16:31) seems to have been left out of scholarly Christian teaching within his horizon. Finney, therefore, refused to study theology, and worked out his system of doctrine to the best of his ability with the use of the English Bible only.

(2) Finney's denial of sin in human nature as such, is inconsistent with much of his preaching. In his autobiography, he shows clearly that he regarded man as

“totally depraved” or as completely and hopelessly lost apart from the grace of God. Justification by faith apart from works of the law was very prominent in his preaching. One even wonders whether the fallacious definition of sin did not elaborate itself in Finney’s thinking after his greatest years of usefulness, when he unfortunately, after mature years spent in practical evangelistic work, moved into a more academic atmosphere. Finney tells us in his autobiography that it was some years after the great Rochester revival that he was led to write out the substance of his “Systematic Theology.” The definition of sin as involving only deliberate conscious action, and not resident in human nature itself apart from conscious choice, certainly has the savor of academic atmosphere rather than of the practical evangelistic campaign.

Charles G. Finney is by no means the only influential person who has taught that sin does not exist apart from the free exercise of deliberate conscious choice. Immanuel Kant, with his strong emphasis upon the will, in his system of ethics went so far as to deny all moral obligation apart from ability to perform the said obligation. That there can be no “ought” without an equal “can,” was his positive dictum.

Let us hasten to say that we do not deny the connection between ability and obligation. It seems almost impossible for us to think of an “ought” without some kind of ability implied. The wounded soldier at the point of death never incurs moral blame because he does not heed the command to move forward against the

enemy. Nevertheless, we wish to deny Kant's dictum that there is no "ought" without a "can."

Truly we do not blame the wounded soldier who gives "the last full measure of devotion" and cannot rally to the charge, but if it is discovered that he incurred his death wounds through heedless disregard of orders, the moral case appears in a different light. We do not blame the man who exerts himself to the best of his ability and fails to rescue a companion from a dangerous situation. If the man, however, has through a period of years weakened his physical powers by dissipation, again the situation appears in a very different light. The student who cannot pass in a given subject may not be deserving of moral blame, if throughout the entire course of his education he has honestly applied himself, but if his inability in the final examination is due to a previous moral laxity, the case is different.

In other words, while we deny that without a "can" there is no "ought," we may admit that an "ought" implies at least a "could have." I think it is this conception which Professor Cornelius Van Til intends to convey in one of his unpublished mimeographed lectures. We certainly affirm that man ought to keep the moral law, and at the same time we positively assert that he cannot keep that law. Professor Van Til reminds us however, that the federal head of the human race, before sin entered into his nature or into the world, had a full opportunity of obeying the commandment of God, but turned away from God in deliberate rebellion.

That the Bible, throughout, regards sin as far deeper

than merely the actions of men, is clearly brought to a focus in the seventh chapter of Romans. Strangely, indeed, Finney neglected to discuss this chapter in connection with his long argument on the definition of sin. There can be no possible doubt about Paul's conception of the situation.

“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practice. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” (Romans 7:14-24)

Sin in Human Nature.

(a) Judicial Penalty.

(b) Hereditary Corruption.*

At the present time among Bible-believing Christians there is very strong emphasis upon individual salvation. The evangelistic note is one fact over which we rejoice in the midst of our modern religious confusion. There have been times in the history of the church when those who sincerely believed the Bible did not stress evangelism and individual salvation. In our day a very considerable portion of the organized church is not made up of Bible-believing Christians, but among those who do believe the Bible to be the Word of God, there is very generally this wholesome evangelistic emphasis. Wherever the Bible is preached and believed, men are invited to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ [as individuals] and thou shalt [individually] be saved." (Acts 16:31)

There is in the Scripture another truth which devout Christians today in large numbers overlook or try to explain away. In many different passages, the Bible teaches that God from some points of view deals with humanity as a whole as being in some sense autonomous; or deals with races as a whole in their racial autonomy. This fact should not be construed as in any sense contrary to the offer of individual salvation to "whosoever will." The two truths are supplementary, not contrary the one to the other.

In the scriptural account of the origin of sin, it is very clear that the first man was regarded as in some sense representative of, and responsible for, humanity.

*Compare the excellent treatment of this subject in Hodge, "Systematic Theology," volume II, Part I, chapter 8.

The first ethical commandment recorded in the book of Genesis might indeed be taken as an individual commandment only, but we see from subsequent Scripture references that the commandment refers not only to the individual but to the entire human race.

“And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2:15-17)

In this passage we see humanity in the image of God in “knowledge, righteousness, and holiness,” given the opportunity of exercising free will. Man is free. There is nothing in himself to prejudice him toward the evil. God has warned him not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The fact of the warning makes it clear that man in righteousness was not intended to remain in ignorance. It was not the tree of knowledge, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil of which man was forbidden to eat. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents the possibility of knowing evil by doing evil. The tree of life represents the opportunity of continued and eternal fellowship with God in righteousness. Man of his own free will chose to disbelieve God’s warning, to disobey God’s commandment; chose the path of deliberate rebellion.

The consequences of this act of sin are clearly de-

scribed in terms of the solidarity of the human race as indicated in God's statement to the Tempter.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and *her seed* he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel."
(Genesis 3:15)

The consequences of the sin of Adam are sometimes in the Scripture regarded in a judicial or forensic light.

". . . through one man sin entered into the world . . . for that all sinned . . . the judgment came of one unto . . . all men to condemnation . . ." (Romans 5:12, 16, 18)

From these and other Scripture references, it seems clear that God in a certain sense regarded Adam as "the federal head" of the human race. The warning against sin before sin came into the world was in the mind of God in the nature of a definite arrangement of things with humanity, a covenant with the race.

"What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created? When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil upon pain of death.

"Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created? Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created by sinning against God.

"What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from

the estate wherein they were created? The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

“Did all mankind fall in Adam’s first transgression? The covenant being made with Adam, not only for him himself, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.” (W. S. C. 12, 13, 15, 16)

The fact that all mankind sinned in Adam “and fell with him in his first transgression,” is brought out by the aorist tense of the verb “sinned” in Romans 5:12. Paul did not say, as the King James translation has it, “all have sinned,” but “all sinned.” In the context it is very clear that he meant that all sinned in a certain sense when Adam sinned, “sinned in him.”

The consequences of Adam’s sin upon the human race ought to be regarded from two aspects, (1) sinful guilt, and (2) hereditary corruption.

“Into what estate did the fall bring mankind? The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

“Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell? The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in, the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

“What is the misery of that estate whereinto man

fell? All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. (W.S.C. 17, 18, 19)

In an extended passage which the reader is urged to examine carefully (Romans 1:18-32) Saint Paul describes the condition of the Gentile races as such. They ought to have known God. They are without excuse (verse 20). They preferred to worship the creature more than the Creator (verse 25). They refused to have God in their knowledge (verse 28). For all of this, the Gentiles considered as a whole were in the condition of paganism in the time of Saint Paul. Three times over Paul says, "God gave them up" (verses 24, 25, and 28). Paul goes forward with the argument, showing that the Jews also as a people are under the wrath of God. He concludes

"All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."
(Romans 3:23)

In the Ephesian epistle Paul also describes the natural condition of the Gentiles considered as a whole.

"And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world . . . wherefore remember that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh . . . were . . . strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:1, 11, 12)

In the Ephesians letter also Paul refers to the Jews

as being similarly, though through a somewhat different history, under the 'wrath and curse' of God.

"Among whom we [Jews] also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and [we Jews] were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest [you Gentiles]." (Ephesians 2:3)

The fact that God regards the human race as a whole, and individual races of men in their own autonomy, as in a sense units with which He deals judicially, has been variously construed in the history of theology. Very few have followed the suggestion of Jonathan Edwards (based upon his peculiar philosophy) that every individual member of the human race was in a realistic (or idealistic?) sense actually present in Adam as participating in his sin. It has seemed better to use the illustration of a covenant or contract in accurate conformity to the language of the Scripture itself. The world is full of illustrations in which one man forms a contract or covenant for those whom he represents. The Bible contains the word "covenant" in many striking instances. (See for example, Galatians 3:15, 17). The word "covenant" is the most familiar and the most scriptural word with which to describe any arrangement which God makes with a man or men, in which the interests of a group of men are involved.

Unfortunately there are Bible-believing Christians in the world today, who are unfamiliar with this phase of Bible teaching. I have made the acquaintance of some

who are quite rebellious at what they call the "covenant theology." To them the technical terms of theology seem to imply that there was a mere legal fiction whereby Adam was arbitrarily taken as a contractual representative of a people who had no real representation in the transaction. Such friends we urge to consider the matter more carefully in the light of Scripture and in the light of the actual facts in human life.

The word "covenant" is legal and forensic, but the covenant with Adam is by no means a legal "fiction." God's collective dealing with the human race corresponds with the actual constitution of the human race. Those who are familiar with the terms of modern psychology may be helped by the suggestion that the federal view of humanity in Adam corresponds to the actual and true "Gestalt"; or in simpler language, the federal view of humanity is one of the true ways of looking at the situation. The solidarity of the human race is an actual fact. There is much foolishness in the modern academic discipline called "social psychology." But social psychology does call attention to certain facts. There is such a thing as the autonomy of a group. The federal view of the human race corresponds to a factual group relationship.

Let the questioning reader also remind himself that the scriptural statement in regard to the sinfulness of the entire human race through an original act of sin corresponds to the actual facts as they reveal themselves in the world. That "which is commonly called original sin" is not only "the guilt of Adam's first sin," but also

“the want of original righteousness and the corruption of his [every man’s] whole nature.”

All the goodness and beauty and truth in the world, and they do certainly abound, are due doubtless to the fact that in the providence of God the sins of the race have been partially restrained and their evil effects averted. But, however pleasant the world may be, the fact remains that every individual comes into a world which has been polluted by his ancestors and their neighbors. God gives us much happiness in this life; but compared with what He set before us and desired for us, this is a poor, spoiled world.

The great evils in the world, inherited from the past, are “putrefying sores,” healed just enough over the surface so that polite society may ignore them, or refrain from mentioning them. Nevertheless their poison infects every individual of the entire social order. Sometimes it almost seems that clean living and moral chasity are but a thin tissue covering a ghastly ulcer. I have lived for weeks at a time in the same barracks with men who did not even wear the mask of decency. Their morning greeting was a licentious jest. Their speech all day was lewd and blasphemous. Their last word at night was of some unclean thing.

“Every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5)

I have seen Christian men living in such an environment, struggling against its insidious evils, “fighting the good fight of faith,” and by the grace of God the sinews of their souls were strengthened so that they

stood out as great spiritual giants in the midst of moral pigmies.

Sin is everywhere in the social order. It leers at us from billboards, and flirts with us from the stage and the screen. Sin stands at every business man's elbow, and is present on every social occasion, even in our homes. The social heredity of sin is a vast ocean across the path of every child born into the world. Every voyager's life is, without his consent, ventured upon a sea of evil. Many, many ships with God's help cross in peace and safety and happiness; but we cannot deny that many ships are lost.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5)

This hereditary sin of the world effects the whole being, the very nature of every member of the human family. The Rev. Joseph Kyle, D. D., LL. D., quotes Joseph Cook as follows (Bibliotheca Sacra, July, 1922):

"Joseph Cook was wont to say that a clock might be made of the finest materials, and be the product of the finest workmanship but if in the adjustment of its delicate parts there was an error, or if some disorder had overtaken its mechanism, so that it *would not keep time*, that it was 'totally depraved' as a clock."

Kyle goes on to say,

"Man was made in the image of God—the only crea-

ture that shares this likeness—was made to glorify God and to enjoy him forever in fellowship to which no other creature may aspire; but since these faculties and capacities which give him likeness to God and make such fellowship possible have been subjected to sin's power to disorder, he cannot in his natural state serve the purpose of his Creator."

The fearful disease of sin eats from within as well as from without. It is the saddest day in the life of a man when he discovers that his own inward nature is going out in response after the degrading temptations of his environment. Yet so subtle is the hereditary evil of the world that all of us, the reputable and the fallen, inevitably make this discovery.

When we become conscious of our corruption and know what manner of men we are, we realize not only that there is disorder in the race but that this disorder is sin and is worthy of the wrath of God. Modern psychology has at last become conscious that there is something wrong with the race to which we belong. Those familiar with abnormal psychology will know the phenomena of which I speak. There is a fundamental disorder in human nature which psychology, especially psychotherapy, is obliged to recognize. Professor Cornelius Van Til, in a recent address in Philadelphia, pointed out the difference between the psychological attitude toward these facts, and the attitude of the inspired writers of Scripture. In psychology there is an admission of some kind of natural maladjustment, natural disorder. According to the Bible, and according to the

conviction which the Holy Spirit produces in the hearts of men, this disorder is not original in nature as at first created, but is abnormal. It is not a maladjustment primarily. It is a fundamental rebellion of the race and every member in it against the law of God. It is not mere disharmony, it is sin. The child of God, looking into the facts of his own life, and of human nature in general, can use nothing less than the words of Saint Paul in describing this situation.

“We . . . were by nature the children of wrath.”
(Ephesians 2:3)

“And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practice such things.”
(Romans 2:2)

“But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” (Galations 3:22)

“For we . . . laid to the charge of both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin.” (Romans 3:9)

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God.” (Romans 3:19)

“For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!” (Romans 11:32, 33)

A young man had once done something which was very wrong. He came to his pastor for prayer and

counsel. He was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He confessed his sin to the Lord, he acknowledged his sin to the one against whom he had done the wrong since this was involved in making such resitution as he was able to make. The pastor noticed however that the young man's life was changed. There seemed to be a deep sobriety which the pastor mistook for defeat and remorse. Therefore he called the young man into his study again for further conference.

"Do not be morbid," the pastor said. "Trust in Christ for victory. That which you did was very wrong, but you have done what you could to make it right. Now live in victory through the grace of Christ."

The young man replied, "Yes, I have victory through Christ. I am trusting in him. I rest completely upon the promises of God,—

"If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9)

"But, pastor," said the young man, "this experience has effected my life very deeply. I see now how utterly I need the grace of God. I am not so much concerned about the thing I did, though that was bad, but I have found out what kind of nature I have. I have discovered that I *had it in me* to do that kind of thing. To be the kind of person I am by nature is far worse than merely to have done the thing I did. I do trust in Christ for

salvation and for victory over sin, but I have come to learn how completely dependent is a natural sinner saved by grace, upon the power of Christ for that salvation and for that victory."

The scriptural doctrine of original sin will not appear so difficult to one who looks into his own heart and finds what manner of person he is by nature. When I know that I am a sinner apart from anything I have ever done my reason demands some explanation. The only satisfactory explanation ever offered is that the race to which I belong is, both judicially and experientially under the curse of sin.

Some years ago I had a delightful time in Arizona at a Bible conference with Christian Indians and missionaries to the Indians. We spoke very respectfully to the natives of the fact that they are "the original Americans." The race question was not a cause of difficulty but sometimes a cause of amusement; at other times the ground for interesting discussions.

I asked some of the Indians to tell me what race they thought I belonged to. They knew I was a white man but did not know that I had the special privilege of being born of Scotch descent.

Then I began to tell the Indians of the general race from which I had sprung. "The founder of my race," I said, "was a thief and a rebel, a man who stole the fruit from his master's garden." Their eyes opened at this. They have traditions of great heroes as the founders of their respective families. but I continued, "The ancestors of my people once knew the living God but

preferred to worship four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth. The ancestors of my people did not like to retain the living God in their knowledge, so that God gave them up to 'a reprobate mind.' My race, when God sent the prophets, stoned them and put them to death. My race is the one that was represented by those who spat in the face of Jesus Christ, fashioned the cross, and drove the nails into his hands and feet." You should have seen their faces as I concluded the description and told them, "I belong to the worst people under the sun. My race is the human race."

There was deep comprehension in their faces. One stalwart, dark-skinned native, who had been saved out of the depths of heathenism into the glorious light of the gospel, spoke for the others in saying, "Me too belong, human race."

At the last meeting I ever attended of a certain ecclesiastical organization of which I used to be a member, I heard three addresses on "Evangelism." The first speaker gave a helpful message. He really seemed to believe that a man is lost and needs a Saviour, that evangelism is the business of the church. The second speaker began by a definition which of course included a stark contradiction. "Evangelism," he said, "does not mean revivalism. Revivalism is a thing of the past. Revivals depended upon the doctrine of total depravity." Then he laughed and sneered and said, "The doctrine of total depravity has been well characterized as 'theological halitosis'." Practically all of the ministers and elders in that organization, supposed to be a court of

our Lord Jesus Christ, cheered quite heartily at the end of this address.

The third speaker was but an echo of the second. "Thank goodness," he said, "we are done with revivalism." And he, too, was cheered by the ministers and elders.

I am afraid some of our churches are "done with revivalism." Revivalism does depend upon the doctrine of total depravity. Unless we truly believe that men are hopelessly and totally lost without the blood of Jesus Christ, revivals are not likely to occur.

One of the greatest truths of the Bible is that given as the reason for the second commandment.

"For I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing loving kindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:5b, 6)

The same commandment is repeated in Deuteronomy 5:9. The same thought is expressed in the words of Jehovah in Moses' vision recorded in Exodus 34:6, 7, and in Moses' words to Jehovah recorded in Numbers 14:18. Four times in the Pentateuch is it definitely stated that God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. This statement is repeatedly found to be true in our human experience. The sins of the fathers do most certainly affect the lives of the children.

I once heard of a physician who so rebelled against

the Scripture teaching on the subject of original sin and racial corruption, that he gave up his Christian testimony, left the church, and declared that he would have nothing more to do with the Christian faith. "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children" was a doctrine which he would not accept.

The story is that as this physician went on about his work in the hospital, in his office, in his calls in the homes of his patients, not a day passed but the teaching of the Bible against which he rebelled was exemplified before his eyes and under his scientific observation.

At length he came to the point where he said to himself, "This thing is true, whether it is in the Bible or not. The sins of the fathers do most certainly affect the lives of their children."

Then his reasoning followed a course something like this: If this is a fact in life which I had not observed until I found it in the Scriptures, but if the Bible gives a true statement of the fact, perhaps there may be something in the Bible by which to interpret the fact. The physician began to read his Bible again and was at length led in a truly understanding way to accept not only the fact of hereditary sin, but to accept God's remedy.

Ours is not the first and only generation to rebel against the Scriptural teaching on the subject of original sin and racial corruption. In the time of Jeremiah the people, who were themselves in rebellion against Jehovah and thoroughly responsible for their wretched condition, sought to blame God for his administration of the world. "It is not fair," they said, "that God

should punish us for the sins of our forefathers." As Jeremiah sought to warn them of their depravity and rebellion, and sought to call them to repentance, they refused entirely to heed his warning, refused to repent, but rather took up a taunting proverb,—“The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.”

Jeremiah spoke out very sharply against the injustice of this proverb.

“In those days they shall say no more, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.” (Jeremiah 31:29-30)

Israel did not heed Jeremiah’s warning; for Ezekiel, his junior contemporary, was met with the same taunting proverb, even when Israel was in captivity. Even there, they blamed God and blamed their forefathers, rather than turning in repentance to accept God’s mercy. Ezekiel had to say

“The word of Jehovah came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:1-4)

The individualism of Jeremiah and of Ezekiel is

not at all a contradiction of the emphasis which Moses places upon racial solidarity. The sin and corruption in the race is, indeed, a judicial punishment for racial rebellion, but God has provided a remedy. God has always stood ready to deal with the individual on the basis of atonement.

“Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21)

were preached in the Old Testament just as truly as in the New. Although the name, the person, and the work of Christ were not explicit, yet symbolism was there in the Old Testament revelation, and the call to repentance and faith was clearly sounded out by the prophets. On the basis of the atonement which God promised in the Old Testament and accomplished in the fulness of time, as recorded in the New Testament, God offers an adequate, yes a full and abundant salvation to all members of our fallen and accursed race.

Christ Removes Hereditary Guilt.

A very important part of the work of Christ on the cross was to take away all the penalty of racial guilt. Sin inherited in the race is just as evil as voluntary sin. A congenital disease, or one contracted without individual conscious purpose, is just as loathsome as though it had been contracted by the deliberate act of the afflicted person. Hereditary sin is, in accordance with Professor James Orr's definition, “that which absolutely ought not to be,” and in accordance with the fuller definition quoted above, is “want of conformity unto, [and] transgression of, the law of God.” We are

born in sin. We are "by nature the children of wrath." "In Adam all die." In our natural state we are utterly condemned and unclean.

However, in the finished work of Christ on the cross, we have a complete removal of the guilt of hereditary sin. Charles Hodge (Systematic Theology, volume I, page 26) argues this case effectively on the basis of I Corinthians 15:22. He shows that those who die in infancy, although born in a lost and accursed condition, are nevertheless born in a system in which Christ has removed all the guilt of hereditary sin. He argues convincingly that, not having committed any other form of sin, it is reasonable to suppose that they are saved, not because sinless by nature, but because the blood of Christ has been shed for them. The text upon which Hodge bases his argument, "for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive," seems to me to furnish adequate support for this conclusion. Physical death is the result of Adam's sin. Christ will conquer death at last by the "resurrection both of the just and unjust." (Acts 24:15) Some object, however, on the grounds that here in the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians, Saint Paul is talking directly about the resurrection, and not about the guilt of sin. Admitting this for the sake of the argument, we have a still more explicit and direct statement in the fifth chapter of Romans.

"So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's

disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous." (Romans 5:18, 19)

Could there be any more direct and explicit statement in any language than that which Paul gives us here. The guilt of hereditary sin is removed by the blood of Christ. Complete pardon has been purchased and is freely offered to "whosoever will receive it."

Hereditary Sin: A Warning.

With the atonement of Christ in view, we see that the fact of racial sinfulness now becomes a providential means of warning. Many a man has been brought face to face with Christ as his only hope of salvation, when he realized that sin in his own life would affect the lives of his children. This curse of sin as a fact in human experience, is a part of what Paul has in view when he says, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

In the McAuley Water Street Mission one night I heard a testimony which illustrates in a remarkable way the manner in which the visitation of sin from one generation to another is turned by the providence of God into a warning of the necessity of salvation. I heard a redeemed man testify that he had been a wretched drunkard. His ten-year old son was ashamed of him. The little fellow had heard of the Rescue Mission as the place where Jesus saved sinners and kept them from a wicked life. He sought out the Sunday School and found Christ as his Saviour. Then the boy

began to bring home his Sunday School papers and Scripture tracts, with the ultimate result that the father himself was led to Christ and gloriously saved.

Involuntary Sin.

The reader who has followed the Scripture thus far presented will not find it difficult to recognize the fact that sin is not merely a matter of our deliberate, conscious actions. We have shown that sin is an inward corruption in our nature. We must now call attention to the fact that in the things we ourselves do there are involuntary actions which must be regarded as sin.

We do not deny that there are degrees of blame attaching to deliberate, conscious, purposeful sin, and to hereditary sinfulness and involuntary sin. The Scripture clearly indicates a distinction in God's attitude toward the latter.

"The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." (Acts 17:30)

"For the law worketh wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression." (Romans 4:15)

"For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:13)

"Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth." (John 9:41)

"If I had not come unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin." (John 15:22)

“And that servant, who knew his lord’s will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.” (Luke 12:47, 48)

“Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous? Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.” (W. S. C. 83)

Sin Is Sin.

“What doth every sin deserve? Every sin deserveth God’s wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.” (W. S. C. 84)

A young man once came to my study in a spirit of rebellion against God. He blamed God and his heredity and his environment for the sinful condition into which he had fallen. Over and over again the young man said, “I am not to blame. It was in my circumstances. It was in my nature that I should be what I am. How can God hold me responsible?”

My reply was, first, that the only justifiable attitude toward hereditary sin and involuntary sin is the attitude of repentance. Sin is sin, no matter how we become involved in it. A disease is a disease, whether contracted by one’s own conscious action or not. A fall is a fall, whether one was pushed down into the gutter or acci-

dentally slipped. The only right attitude toward disease and toward the filth of the gutter is that of loathing. The only right attitude toward sin in any form is the attitude of mind which turns from it unto God.

In the second place I sought to show this young man that his responsibility was not so much in the nature of responsibility for his sinfulness as responsibility for his attitude toward the remedy. Pile up as high as possible all the excuses that could be made for the natural sinfulness and the involuntary sins of humanity. Altogether apart from such excuses there remains the clear-cut responsibility for accepting Jesus Christ as one's personal Saviour from sin.

The fifty-first Psalm gives the only justifiable attitude toward sin. The Psalmist refers first to his own responsible actions and then to his natural hereditary sinfulness. With reference to the latter aspect of sin, he definitely indicates repentance and the acceptance of the grace of God.

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom. Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Psalm 51:5, 6, 7)

One who inadvertently injures another must apologize and make restitution to the best of his ability, otherwise he makes himself responsible for his accidental wrong doing. In our own hearts we know something of

the "exceeding sinfulness" of sin. If we do not repent of sin in every form, we are among those

"Who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them." (Romans 1:32)

Conscious, Voluntary Sin.

Many of those who are inclined to deny that sin is in our nature and in our involuntary conduct, are nevertheless willing to admit that we are guilty of the wrong we do in conscious volition.

There is however, a very prevalent, mechanistic philosophy which denies all sin by denying all freedom and responsibility. "Mechanism" is the theory that everything in the universe operates by purely mechanical principles apart from personal volition. "Determinism" is the same thing, as applied particularly to human conduct. The theory of necessity or "necessitarianism" is another term to describe the same philosophy. Against determinism I should urge three points.

In the first place the Scripture uniformly regards man as free and responsible in his moral choices. Christ pleads with Jerusalem:

"How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not!" (Luke 13:34)

The words, "I would . . . and ye would not," are not a mockery but represent the genuine attitude of the God of the Bible.

God's foreknowledge is complete. We emphasize the scriptural teaching on the doctrine of election "according to the foreknowledge of God the father," (I Peter 1:2). In strictest harmony with this great truth we insist also that "The Lord is . . . long suffering . . . not wishing any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9)

We do not mean to imply that man is able of himself to will to do the will of God. The "willing" as well as the "doing of his good pleasure" must be "energized" within us by the power of God himself (Philippians 2:13). Our salvation is not of ourselves, "not of him that willeth but of God that showeth mercy." (Romans 9:16) What we now insist upon is that the Bible everywhere holds man responsible for his moral choices. Man is himself responsible for accepting or rejecting the grace which is freely bestowed upon him in the gospel. If when the Spirit convicts us "in respect of sin and of righteousness, and of judgment," we accept his offices in enabling us to believe in the gospel and to will to do the will of God (John 7:17), we are then saved not *because* we believe but *if* we believe, *because* of the goodness of God. On the other hand, if we refuse the offices of the Spirit when he convicts us especially of the sin of "not believing" in Christ, we then are lost *because* of our own responsible choice of unbelief. This thought is more fully developed in Chapter 3 of this volume.

"He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already *because* he hath

not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)

Our second objection to the philosophy of determinism is that man is himself conscious of his moral choices. Responsibility for sin is immediately given in our consciousness. This fact is substantiated by the fifty-first Psalm in its reference to conscious sin. .

“*For I know my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight; that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*” (Psalm 51:3, 4)

A third objection to determinism is the observable fact that men behave differently when they accept the deterministic philosophy. This would seem to constitute valid evidence for the fact that men are not entirely determined by heredity and environment, but are in part free and responsible. In Mohammedan lands belief in complete fatalism, which is the equivalent of determinism, becomes a very evil moral factor. Those who accept such views commonly excuse themselves for all manner of iniquity on the ground that “it was the will of Allah.” In American education we see on every hand the results of the deterministic philosophy as applied to sociology and psychology. When young people are taught that they are merely mechanical dummies, that the stimulus and response arc explains everything, that they are not individually responsible for moral conduct before God the righteous Judge of the world, there is an inevitable immoral reaction in their behavior.

We do not mean for a moment that man is free in all of his actions. We admit that a large part of human conduct is determined by heredity and by environment. This is clearly indicated in Biblical teaching. All that we insist upon is that within certain areas God has constituted man in such a way that man himself is the originating cause of his own responses.

We have sometimes compared free will to the creative power of God. The exercise of free will is not creation, because it is a relationship and not an objective substance which comes into being. Nevertheless we feel that man made in the image of God, has within himself that which bears a certain analogy to God's creative power. As God of his own free will "spake and it was done, commanded and it stood fast," (Psalm 33:9) so God has endowed man with the power to initiate certain courses of procedure within the materials and forces which already constitute his being. This realm of freedom may be a very small fraction of the totality of human behavior, nevertheless it is the determining factor in responsibility. There are those who in all sincerity oppose the doctrine of free moral responsibility in the interests of ethics. They construe freedom as the ability to do anything at any time, or at least as the ability to choose freely between certain alternatives within the limits of moral action at any time regardless of previous choices. Professor Fullerton in his introduction to philosophy expresses much agitation about this question. He says that he does not wish to have as a neighbor anyone whose moral acts are not

completely determined by heredity and environment. Nobody could know what such a person might be going to do next. This fear is expressed not only by unbelieving philosophers but by some devout Christians as well.

The Moral Choice, Progressive and Permanent.

The difficulty is, I believe, with a false definition of freedom and responsibility. So far as my knowledge extends, no one who really believes in free moral responsibility has ever defined freedom as it is defined by those who hold to the philosophy of determinism. No one really supposes that man is free to choose just anything at any time regardless of his previous choices. No one supposes that even within the limits of moral decisions, the decision of today is independent of the decision of yesterday. We hold that there is genuine and absolute freedom within certain areas of human life, a freedom for which God himself in his infinite foreknowledge holds man absolutely responsible. When this freedom has once been exercised in an act of choice, this choice is then a fact in the situation. All future choices must be made in the light of the choice that has been made. A moral choice frequently is a specific act, but it almost always involves a process of choice, becoming more and more fixed and definite until the crisis of the choice is passed. When a decision has finally been made the individual is no longer free as though he had not exercised his freedom.

This may be illustrated in a simple way. In my

childhood I was very fond of the violin and debated whether I should become a violinist or a missionary. The choice for the Lord's work and against devoting full time to music was faced many times over a period of years during which the two possibilities were genuinely before me. The decision was finally reached in such a way as to be irrevocable. I cannot now decide to be a musician. Such music as I have is that of an amateur and always will be so until I join the heavenly choir. My freedom has been exercised, my choice has been made.

There was a period of time when the decision though foreknown of God was still indeterminate, a period when the available time for study and work was divided in greatly differing proportions between preparation for the ministry and the study of music. That period is now in the past. If I were Professor Fullerton's neighbor he need not in the slightest degree be worried for fear I might wake him up at midnight by practicing the violin. William MacDougall's chapter on "The Development of the Sentiments" (Social Psychology, older edit.) is very suggestive on this subject. Free moral agents, if morality means anything, must be characterized by an underlying consistency in their choices. This is true, even though, because of variety and intricacy in human experience, this consistency becomes apparent only over a comparatively long period of time. The scriptural teaching on the progressive and permanent nature of the moral choice is developed in chapter three of this

volume in connection with the question of faith and destiny. It is there made plain by Scripture references, as we have stated here, that man is a sinner not only involuntarily and by nature, but by deliberate conscious choice. The moral choice involves a process as well as a crisis, but is nevertheless free and responsible in the sight of God.

The Old Hymns.

Sin can only be understood in the light of Calvary.
“Upon that cross of Jesus mine eyes at times can see
The very dying form of One who suffered there for me;
And from my smitten heart with tears, two wonders
I confess,—
The wonders of his glorious love and my own worth-
lessness.”

One regrets sincerely the tendency of modern publishers to take the very heart out of such great songs as this. In some of our modern hymnals “my own worthlessness” is toned down to the more or less innocuous “my unworthiness.”

In a Bible conference not long ago my heart rejoiced at the singing of a grand old hymn of the church, but when I read from the modern hymnal, my soul was sickened by the insipid and pointless words which had been substituted for those in the original. “Prone to love thee, Lord, I feel it, prone to serve the God I love,” the words of the modern variation simply are not true about me. On the other hand, many a soul has

sobbed his way to Calvary in the original words of the hymn.

*“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for thy courts above.”*

CHAPTER II.

THE ATONEMENT

HOW CAN a just and holy God justify a sinner without violating his own holiness? In the Mosaic code we have an elaborate symbolism, which in the light of the cross we understand as an answer to this problem. Moses himself seems to have been more or less overwhelmed by the question of the forgiveness of sin. Israel had grievously rebelled against God. Disciplinary punishment had been inflicted. Moses now intercedes for his people.

“And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. (Exodus 32:31-33)

In this record we have one of the broken sentences of Scripture, a sentence broken off with a sob. The teaching of the forgiveness of sin is in the Pentateuch implicit in symbolism, but not as explicit as in the New Testament.

A sinful man cannot offer a satisfaction for sin.

“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” (Psalm 49:7)

There is in the nature of God that principle of holiness which must be vindicated by his justice.* This fundamental problem is very present in the mind of Paul. It is clearly stated in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. How is it that God can be righteous in "passing over the sins done aforetime"? How can he "himself be just and the justifier" of sinners? In other words, how can a holy and just God declare a man to be just who is not just, or make a man just who is a sinner? Paul is very clear and explicit in answering the question.

"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:23-26)

Justification for the unjust is possible only through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

"Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist? Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time." (W. S. C. 27)

*See in Vol. 2, Chap. 1, our discussion of the holiness of God.

The death of Christ issued not in defeat but victory. It was itself a victory over death. Of this his resurrection, his life following his death, is a guarantee.

“But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” (Romans 5:8-10)

The reference to salvation by the life of Christ, in Romans 5:10, is parallel to the reference to the resurrection, in Romans 4:25. The resurrection of Christ proves that his death was a victory, vindicates the offering of himself as “a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us unto God.”

“It . . . was . . . written . . . for our sake . . . who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.” (Romans 4:23-25)

We were under the penalty of death, but “Christ died for our sins.” (I Corinthians 15:3) When we should have died, he, therefore, took our place as our substitute. This is the teaching found in the epistles of Peter.

“Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,

even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God." (I Peter 1:18-21)

"Who [Christ] his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (I Peter 2:24, 25)

In the history of the church there have been various attempts on the part of devout men to state in clear and concise terms the doctrine of the atonement. No one expects that all the meaning of the cross can be comprehended in any theological formula. No great volumes of theology could contain the statement of all that Christ has accomplished for us in his death and his resurrection. One is not saved by mere intellectual understanding, but by faith in Christ.

The story is told of a simple man who sought to unite with the church, but who was at first refused because he could not explain his Christian faith. The interview with the elders who were examining him was about to end, when one of them asked the simple-minded man, "Why do you desire to receive the communion and unite with the church?" The man replied with tears in his eyes, "I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all. But Jesus,

my Saviour, is all in all." He was received and lived his life with a simple but clear testimony.

I do not agree with the moral influence theory of the atonement set forth in Henry van Dyke's interesting book, "The Gospel for a World of Sin." I believe, however, that he describes Christian faith when he says, in effect, "Though I do not understand what Christ did, I believe with all my heart that what he accomplished in his death and resurrection was precisely what was necessary for my salvation." If I have correctly interpreted Van Dyke's view, I believe he states the position of many simple Christians who do completely trust in the Lord, but who have not been adequately instructed in the teachings of the Scripture.

Professor H. R. Mackintosh, of Edinburg, in his book, "The Christian Experience of Forgiveness," takes very inadequate ground in regard to the cross. He says frankly that he has no rationale, he has no theory, no doctrine of the atonement. He simply does not know how our sins are taken away, but he says very earnestly that in all the religions and philosophies of the world there is no other fact like the fact of the cross. He states forcefully that whenever any broken soul contemplates Calvary and truly believes that what was accomplished there was necessary and adequate for his salvation, that broken soul experiences forgiveness.

The three examples cited above are concessions to the fact that the doctrine of the atonement in its full elaboration is not an absolute essential for salvation. Admitting that, we nevertheless insist in the strongest

terms that a reasonable apprehension of the atonement is absolutely necessary for the preaching of the gospel. There are some simple souls and some great minds confused by distracting issues in our times who are doubtless saved through faith in the shed blood of Calvary's cross. These, however, are by no means competent to teach the church. One cannot believe in Christ without some content of faith. As Dr. Machen puts it, one cannot "believe with an empty head." One must have some apprehension of what was accomplished on the cross, in order to preach the gospel with any degree of effectiveness. Anyone who thinks theology unnecessary ought to read again the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle to the Galatians. There you have in the strongest terms not only the fact of the atonement, but the meaning of the atonement set forth. After reading these two epistles, one should study the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here the atonement of Christ is carefully set forth in detail, in terms of the Old Testament Levitical ritual. A simple mind or a distracted mind may, as a matter of fact, believe in Christ without much content of theory, but no one who really believes in Christ can continuously ignore the doctrine of the atonement. When we seek to understand the teachings of the Scripture on this great subject, we are engaged in a very necessary and important activity. We are following the very best example of Christian service.

History of the Doctrine.

It is not our purpose in this work to review the history of the doctrine of the atonement in any detail. The

popular reader who desires a brief summary will find it in encyclopedia articles. Both the Hastings and the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia have rather good articles on the history of this doctrine. Strong's "Systematic Theology," pages 728-766, gives a fairly adequate review of its history, but Strong's own theory is very unsatisfactory. Hodge, "Systematic Theology," volume II, part III, chapter IX, is very excellent and Hodge develops the scriptural doctrine of the atonement in an admirable and lucid manner. Our purpose in presenting a review of certain historical developments in the history of the doctrine of the atonement is to form a background in the reader's mind against which the plain teachings of the Scripture may be set forth.

Patristic Theory.

In the Scripture, the atonement of Christ is referred to as a ransom.

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
(Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45)

"For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times." (I Timothy 2:5, 6)

The manner in which, and the person to whom, the ransom is paid are matters not developed in detail in the Bible teaching. We might suggest that the best interpretation is paralleled in Paul's Epistle to Philemon, with reference to the thief, Onesimus, who had been saved.

“Or if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account; I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it.” (Philemon 18:19)

We have sinned against God. We are therefore in debt to him. We have violated his righteousness. Our sin against God is infinitely wrong. The atonement of Christ has satisfied that principle of justice within the triune God which vindicates his holiness. In that sense the goodness of God through the operation of his grace has paid our ransom and set us free. In all of this we are on rather simple and obvious grounds in accordance with the New Testament teaching.

Unfortunately, some of the early fathers of the church misconstrued the Scripture teaching in regard to the ransom and elaborated a rather fanciful theory. Man was supposed, according to this theory, to be in the grip of Satanic power which God in some way recognized. The ransom, namely the death of Christ, was exacted by Satan in exchange for his prisoners, who were the elect of God. Christ paid the ransom to Satan and then the transaction having been finished, because of his power, he arose from the dead.

This, of course, is a perfectly intolerable theory. There was an element of truth in the ransom theory of the atonement, but insofar as that theory went beyond the Scripture, it went far astray. Man is, indeed, in the power of Satan, but by no rights which God recognizes. A ransom may be paid by a human government to an enemy for the exchange of prisoners, but only because of inability to set the prisoners free without the pay-

ment of ransom. God is under no necessity whatever to show any consideration to the kingdom of Satan.

If some institution of vice gets control over the life of a young man, through weakness a ransom may be paid for his life, but the payment of such a ransom is a very questionable procedure. Surely this kind of a ransom payment was not involved in the death of Christ. His atonement pays our debt and satisfies God's justice and holiness but shows no consideration to the kingdom of Satan.

Theory of Supererogation.

The medieval church, following the teaching of Anselm, developed a rather commercial view of the atonement, on the theory that a sum of merit or virtue could be administered by ecclesiastical authority. Anselm, a great theologian of the medieval church, in his work, "Why the God-Man," set forth the scriptural doctrine of the atonement in quite adequate manner. He showed, among other things, that the death of Christ, because of the infinite dignity of his person, is an infinite satisfaction of justice. The Roman Church took Anselm's theory, modified it and added to it the thought that saints and martyrs may also store up a sum of merit by works of supererogation. The infallible church, according to this view, may then dole out to individuals merit from this sum of merit stored up by Christ and the saints. From this theory grew up the whole system of the sale of indulgences.

There is an element of truth in the theory of atonement under discussion. There is indefinite virtue in the

atonement of Christ. We suggest, however, (1) that the idea of supererogation is itself inconsistent. How can any work be conceived of as being better than good? Christ's work on our behalf is perfect, infinitely meritorious, but should not be regarded as "more than good," which is the suggestion carried by the word supererogation. (2) Protestant theology must deny that the merit of Christ can be transferred to a sinner by ecclesiastical authority. Christ's righteousness is, indeed, imputed to us. The reader is referred to the elaborate discussion of this question in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. (See also II Corinthians 5:19-21) But this imputation of his righteousness is by faith alone, not by the administration of ecclesiastical power.

*The Governmental Theory.**

A very popular theory of the atonement among poorly instructed Christians at the present time is that developed by Hugo Grotius (1583-1645). Grotius was a great jurist. The legal analogy which he developed has appealed to the popular mind in a surprising way.

The essence of Grotius' theory of the atonement was that the death of Christ vindicates God's righteousness by an outward demonstration, not by an actual transfer of guilt. The government of God must be upheld. The dignity of his law must be revealed. God does not wish to punish sinners who will repent, but he does not wish to allow the dignity of his law to suffer. He therefore

*This is substantially the theory of the atonement taught in Charles G. Finney's "Systematic Theology."

puts to death the Sinless One, his Son, to show the antagonism of his law to sin. The opposition of the law of God to sin having thus been demonstrated, God turns and simply excuses sinners.

The following illustration was given me by a student whose pastor preached the atonement of Christ in the terms of the governmental theory of Hugo Grotius:—In a certain community in England, someone had been stealing sheep. A certain farmer was brought before the judge, accused of being the thief, but the farmer was able to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that he was innocent. The judge then said, “Very well, you are innocent. But someone has been stealing sheep. The law despises a sheep-thief. I shall therefore imprison you in order to reveal to this community how much the law despises a stealer of sheep.”

Our reaction to the governmental theory leads us to suggest that it reflects very bad government and is a very bad theory. What kind of government is it that punishes an innocent man simply to keep up appearances? Did Christ die merely to keep up the outward demonstration of the power and authority of the law of God? The death of Christ upon the cross was surely more than a mere demonstration in appearance of something which was not actually accomplished. There is “ontological necessity” for the atonement of Christ, or else the whole Christian world has been deceived in its estimate of the importance of the cross. There must be an actual bearing of our penalty, if our guilt is to be removed. If Christ did not actually die for us, bear

our sins in his own body on the tree, there still remains the fear of retribution under the absolutely righteous government of God.

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:4-6)

The Moral Influence Theory.

In almost every age of church history there have been some who taught that the death of Christ is effective only as an heroic example or as producing a certain moral effect in the lives of those who turn to him for salvation. This is sometimes called the Socinian view, but it has developed in the teachings of other prominent leaders who are not recognized as Socinians.

With regard to the usual form of the moral influence theory, we have two remarks to make. In the first place, if the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is only an example to stimulate us to greater endeavor, the message which tells us of his death is not good news, is not gospel in any sense of the word, but is rather a message of despair. Christ is holy, but I am sinful. Christ is undefiled, but I am corrupt. If my hope of salvation is in the copying or imitation of his example, or is in re-

sponding to the stimulus of the story of his death, then there is no salvation for a sinner like me. The only good news possible for a member of the race to which I belong is the news that Christ has borne our sins, has actually removed our guilt.

Another form of the moral influence theory goes slightly deeper than the mere teaching of example, but is nevertheless inadequate. There have been those who sincerely trusted in the finished work of Christ upon the cross, who believed that somehow his death, the shedding of his blood, is their only hope, but who nevertheless denied an actual removal of guilt through the bearing of the penalty by Christ as a substitute. This type of theory holds that the death of Christ in some mystical way removes the pollution of sin. This type of theory ignores the question of guilt and ignores the fact that the holiness of God must be vindicated by his justice. Perhaps the best example of this type of theology is found in the writings of Peter Waldenstrom. This good man reacted very strongly against the dead formalism of the state church in his native land. Such writings of his as are available in English, and such treatises in English as have been prepared by his disciples, indicate that Waldenstrom mightily preached salvation through the blood of Christ. Many believed and were saved. The constructive part of his message, the removal of the pollution of sin by the blood of Christ, was effective in evangelistic efforts. A very considerable movement has grown out of his work. Waldenstrom, however, denied

that Christ bore the penalty of our sin. He refused to accept the penal or substitutional doctrine.

So far as I can understand the Waldenstrom movement, it leads in two opposite directions. Though Waldenstrom himself was very clear in his belief in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the writings of some of his followers are frankly modernistic and Unitarian. This group points out that his theory of the atonement is that of the Unitarians. It is the moral influence theory, although with some recognition of a supernatural, mystical element in that influence.

Another group of Waldenstrom's followers have continued with his evangelistic zeal, the earnestness and the warmth of his life, the opposition to coldness and formalism, but have frankly gone back to the orthodox view of the substitutional atonement.

The reader who has been at all affected by Waldenstrom's laborious attempt to explain away the penal element in the work of Christ and so to interpret the Scripture as to leave out the fact that Christ bore our guilt, will find great help in the reading of Charles Hodge's *Analysis of the Scriptural Doctrine of the Atonement*, "Systematic Theology," volume I, part III, chapter VII. The reader will inevitably be impressed that the orthodox theologian is not straining the plain sense of the Scripture as Waldenstrom did, but is merely bringing out the clear teaching contained therein. Not only did our sins fall upon Christ, but he died for our sins when we were under the penalty of death. He is, therefore, our substitute.

Substitution.

I was teaching a Bible class in New York City two years ago, giving an exposition of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians and conducting a discussion. The hour had almost gone when some special reference was made to the substitutional atonement as indicated by the Greek prepositions. An elderly man arose in the class and said, "May I draw a diagram on the blackboard indicating the nature of those prepositions?" I gladly gave my consent. The elderly scholar then drew a hanging sword suspended by a hair ready to drop at any moment, which he called the sword of Damocles. "That," said he, "is the curse under which we are. The preposition indicated is 'hupo'." He wrote this preposition below the point of the sword.

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under [hupo] a curse, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." (Galatians 3:10)

The next preposition is "huper," which literally means "over," but is translated "for."

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us [over us]." (Galatians 3:13)

This scholar, then, wrote in the preposition "huper" over the preposition "hupo" but under the suspended sword.

"The next preposition," he said, "is 'ek' which means 'out of.' Christ hath redeemed us from [ek] the

curse of the law.” This elderly scholar then indicated by an arrow labeled with the preposition “ek” that Christ by coming in over us, between us and the curse and by thus bearing our curse, has taken us “out from under,” or “out of” the curse of the law. “There!” he exclaimed, “You have the substitutional atonement. The word ‘huper’ could mean nothing else than substitution under the circumstances.”

The hour was up. We sang the doxology and I dismissed the class with a prayer of praise. The elderly scholar who drew this diagram on the blackboard was no less a person than Professor A. T. Robertson, the greatest New Testament Greek scholar of our generation.

The central doctrine of the Christian church down through all the years, the center of the stream of evangelical Christianity, is the doctrine of the substitutional atonement. It is very adequately expressed in the following words.

“Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery? God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

“What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer? Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

“How doth Christ execute the office of a priest? Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

“Wherein did Christ’s humiliation consist? Christ’s humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

“What is justification? Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.” (W. S. C. 20, 23, 25, 27, 33)

The Biblical doctrine of the atonement is the hardest part of Christian truth for the natural mind of the world to accept. The Bible teaches justification by faith. The world says, “We do not care what you believe; we care only what you do.” The Bible teaches salvation by a substitute. The world teaches salvation by individual character. The Bible teaches salvation by the sacrifice of a perfectly sinless life in the shedding of blood upon a shameful cross. The world teaches salvation by a gradual process of bloodless, Christless education.

“Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.” (I Corinthians 2:14)

A Freshman's Experience.

During my freshman year in the University of Minnesota, I had the privilege of attending the Student Volunteer Convention at Kansas City. One of the chaperones of the party was a professor of philosophy in the university. I well remember that night on the train going down to the convention, discussing theology with this philosophy professor. He was very courteous and willing to talk. As I remember the incident now, I must have seemed very impertinent, but I believed with all my heart that Jesus Christ shed his blood for my sins, died as my substitute on the cross. I could not keep silent. This professor had no such conception of the Christian faith or of the cross. Christianity to him was a way of life, a mode of life. He did not realize that Christ had said, "I am the *Way*."

I asked about the universality of blood sacrifice as an indication that the mind of man realizes its guilt and gropes for some kind of expiatory offering. The professor did not accept my interpretation. I am not sure now that the argument based upon heathen altars and upon the universal conception of mankind is worth pursuing, but at least I was in accordance with the Scripture in emphasizing that "apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22)

To this the professor replied, "Why must there be the shedding of blood? Why does not God merely forgive sin, as the state pardons a criminal, or as we are required to forgive one another?" To this I sought to

reply by testimony and Scripture, but my words were not very effective. As the evening wore away the professor finally said very kindly but somewhat wearily, "When your mind is more mature this doctrine of blood will not appeal to you. You will come to have a more ethical conception of Christianity, apart from this bloody sacrifice."

I wish to testify that if my mind has in any way matured with the years which have passed since then, the conception of the necessity for the bloody sacrifice as matured with me. I believe more profoundly than ever that "apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission."

After college days I met a similar problem in theological study at the divinity school, not only in the classroom but on the campus and in conversations with older students. Very few believed that "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7) Scarcely anyone believed that Christ died for our sins as our substitute. I well remember the withering effect of the polite and courteous scorn of an older man who said one day, "Yes, I used to believe what you believe. I have gone through that stage, and have come to more mature conceptions of the Christian message."

I did not doubt the message of the cross, the doctrine of the substitutional atonement, but I began to pray very earnestly for forceful and effective words in which to present this great truth to the modern generation of unbelievers. When the message of the cross was first preached in New Testament times, those who heard

had a background of Old Testament knowledge which prepared them to accept the truth of the atonement. The Passover lamb, the high priest, the sin offering, all the wonders of the Levitical ritual were in the minds of the hearers when the early apostles preached the gospel in the synagogues. Even the Gentile portion of the audience was made up largely of those who had familiarized themselves with the Old Testament.

Our modern religious world is in the densest, grossest ignorance in regard to Old Testament symbolism. There is an almost complete lack of background upon which to receive the message of the cross. The pagan darkness in many so-called Christian communities can be equaled in this respect only in the heart of heathendom. I well remember a chilling experience which came to me in my early ministry. I had always worshiped among those who were quite familiar with the Bible and who had a deep responsive attitude toward Old Testament symbolism. In my first year in the divinity school I began to serve as a student pastor in a new community. As I sought to exalt the Lord I used the familiar phrase, "our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ." (I Corinthians 5:7) I felt as usual a sense of reverence in the use of this wonderful symbolism. Suddenly I became conscious of the fact that my audience was not following me. They were listening respectfully but they had not the slightest idea what I was talking about. I felt that in their minds they were saying, "Why refer to the passover in a Christian church? It is only a peculiar custom among the Jews in the Ghetto." Prob-

ably none of the young people in the audience that day, and few of the older ones, knew that the passover sacrifice is one of the most important symbols by which the atonement of Christ has been presented in the Christian church.

Forgiveness and Substitution.

In my attempt to bear testimony for the Christ of the cross in the midst of the gross ignorance of the modern, nominally Christian world, I thought much about my conversation several years before with the philosophy professor. His question, "Why does not God merely forgive sin as the state pardons a criminal or as we are required in the Scripture to forgive one another?" kept repeating itself in my mind. I felt deeply that there was something unfair, or perhaps I had better say, "unreal," about the question. Do we really "merely forgive" one another? Does the state "merely forgive" a criminal? Is there not involved an element of which the professor did not take notice? After all, is not substitutional* suffering a part of all genuine forgiveness? When one man forgives another, does he not in a very real way suffer in the place of the one forgiven?

In a chapter by Professor H. R. Mackintosh of Edinburgh, in "Studies in Christian Truth," a little book which was circulated among the United States chaplains during the World War, I found this thought very briefly suggested. I was greatly disappointed in reading his

*Professor John B. Champion, "More Than Atonement," page 145f, seems to deny the substitutional atonement.

work, "The Christian Experience of Forgiveness," published in 1927, to find that this suggestion is not carried forward, is not even mentioned.

The thought that forgiveness involves substitutional suffering led to another consideration which had impressed itself upon my mind years before. As a child I remember hearing my father and another minister discussing the doctrine of the atonement. The question was raised, "How can a third party come in between God and man with any true ethical significance?" The answer in the course of their discussion was, Jesus Christ our Lord, the eternal Son of God, is absolutely at one with the Father in the plan and execution of the atonement. It is quite wrong to regard Christ as a third party.

A Third Party?

Those who truly believe that Jesus Christ bore our guilt and removed our penalty by his death on the cross, sometimes speak as though God the Father alone embodies the principle of righteousness or justice toward man the sinner; then Jesus Christ, a third party, embodying the principle of mercy, comes in between the righteous God and the sinful race. Third party substitution is, I believe, a fundamental difficulty in some of our orthodox preaching today. The idea of third party substitution is not found in the Scriptures. It is very unfortunate that it has crept into some of our evangelistic illustrations. If *A* sins against *B*, the penalty is not transferable to *C* in any orderly government, and the Scripture does not so present the matter.

It is a very important principle in Christian theology that justice or righteousness is as truly a part of the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ as it is a part of the nature of God the Father. At the same time, mercy and love are as truly of the nature of the Father as they are of the nature of the Son. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." (John 3:16) Love is characteristic of the Father. Justice and the pouring out of wrath are at the same time characteristic of Christ, the Son. Professor Elsie Storrs Dow expresses this thought in saying that the most terribly wrathful expression in all the field of literature is found in the phrase, "the wrath of the Lamb." (Revelation 6:16) We are prone to forget that Christ is One whose countenance is

"... as the sun shineth in its strength." (Revelation 1:16)

"In righteousness he doth judge and make war and his eyes are as a flame of fire . . . out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he ruleth them with a rod of iron. He treadeth the wine press of the fierceness of the Almighty God. And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelations 19:11-16)

We speak correctly when we refer to Christ as "the meek and lowly Jesus," but we must not forget the other side of his nature. The strongest invective to be found in any literature in the world is found in the language of our Lord Jesus Christ. Any broken sinner who came

to him in repentance found forgiveness, but righteous indignation always characterized his attitude toward sin, especially the sin of hypocrisy. The merciful Christ is just as truly an embodiment of the principle of righteous justice, as of love.

It is a very important matter in our Christian thinking that the "one mediator between God and man" (I Timothy 2:5) is himself both God and man. He is "God manifest in the flesh," the eternal Son of God from all the ages past. He is the One sinned against. He is, at the same time, man. He became man in the incarnation. He represents our race in offering a perfectly sinless sacrifice to satisfy that principle of justice which is essential to the nature of the triune-God.

In our discussion* of the holiness, justice, and goodness of God, we developed very briefly the relationship between these three moral attributes. We regarded holiness as the essential moral attribute of God, from which justice and goodness are derived. Justice must vindicate God's holiness. Goodness (not his being good in himself, but his manifestation of goodness toward us) manifests his holiness in redeeming love. Let us dwell at greater length upon the principle herein involved.

The Sin Must Fall Upon the Sinner.

If anyone should wish to invent a moral world in a vacuum, if any ethical theorist might desire to set down on paper his picture of what a moral universe might be, he would inevitably include in such a universe the principle that the consequences of sin ought to fall upon the

*Volume II.

sinner himself. This arrangement would seem to appeal to the moral sensibility of everyone. If there could be a world in which one who struck a blow in unrighteous anger would find that the blow fell upon his own head, that kind of a world would be regarded as involving at least one necessary moral principle.

Restitution.

Now in the actual world as we find it, the consequences of the sin upon the sinner are not always apparent. They are very indirect, and sometimes do not seem to be present at all. Moreover, sin injures others. Sin in the actual world does affect the sinner through penalty, as we shall see in a moment, but it sometimes seems to fall upon others far more than upon the sinner himself. The principle of restitution therefore appeals to our moral sensibilities as being right. If anyone has done wrong, he ought to make good the wrong in so far as it is possible.

Penalty.

Restitution, however, will not satisfy the demands of justice. No one can completely undo a wrong. Sin against God is an infinite wrong, and cannot in any way be undone by any subsequent good behavior. Restitution being inadequate and the sin actually falling upon others as well as upon the sinner, penalty is a universally necessary moral idea. The sinner ought to be punished for his sin. The penalty is not made up of the actual consequences of the sin in every case, but penalty is rather a forensic, judicial, governmental conception. A righteous government ought to punish a criminal.

Vindication

This punishment is not merely for the sake of reform. It may not involve reform in any sense. It is not merely for the warning of others, though it ought to accomplish that result. The punishment ought to be a vindication of righteousness in opposition to sin. Thus far, the moral sensibilities of the majority of those who admit any distinction between right and wrong, would be in agreement, at least in abstract principle.

Justice Without Mercy.

This infliction of penalty leads us only to the point of justice without mercy. This is the ground on which we stand in reading the sixty-ninth Psalm. This Psalm does not in its every part refer to our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse five, there is confession of sin, which could not possibly be put into his lips. There are certain elements in this Psalm, however, which refer to him by analogy and are so interpreted in the New Testament. Compare, for example, verse twenty-one with John 19:28-30.

“They gave me also gall for my food; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” (Psalm 69:21)

“After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.” (John 19:28-30, cf. Matthew 27:34)

At this point in the Psalm, pursuing the course of justice without reference to mercy, we find one of the most terrible curses that has ever been pronounced in any language.

“Let their table before them become a snare and when they are in peace, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let the fierceness of thine anger overtake them. Let their habitation be desolate; let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they tell of the sorrows of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of life, and not be written with the righteous.” (Psalm 69:22-28)

This curse represents the path of justice. If we had never heard of the substitutional atonement, if we had not known of the cross of Christ, if we did not know of the “Lamb of God,” the Messiah-Redeemer, God in the flesh, who was to come to take away sin, we should have to say this curse is inevitable. There is no other way. Sin ought to fall upon the sinner. It falls upon another. Restitution is impossible. Penalty therefore is the only possible response of a moral universe to a sinful act.

Forgiveness.

We must now suggest another principle which we believe must be conceded by every serious student of

ethics. If it is true, as we have said above, that the consequences of sin ought to fall upon the sinner, that since sin injures others, restitution ought to be made in so far as possible, that since complete restitution is impossible, penalty ought to be inflicted upon the sinner, that this penalty is primarily for the purpose of the vindication of righteousness, if all these principles are admitted to be true, we should submit one more principle which we believe must be accepted without reservation. The person sinned against may forgive the sinner, but in this case the one who forgives suffers for the sinner as a substitute. The one who forgives does not suffer as a third party. The guilt is not artificially transferable, but the one who forgives bears in his own person the penal consequences of the sin of the one who is forgiven.

Calvary.

Turn, now, to the record of the crucifixion of our Lord. When God came down to earth to dwell among us, he lived a marvelous life of helpfulness and kindness.

“We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

But although there was a time of popularity in the life of our Lord, yet eventualities worked themselves out. We, the human race, rejected him. Jew and Gentile together, we spat in his face, we buffeted him, we drove the spikes through his hands and through his feet. We lifted him up between heaven and earth upon a shameful cross, not knowing that he was our “mediator

between God and man." We, the race of humanity, plaited the crown of thorns and pressed it down upon his brow.

Then, as though to make the deed more terrible, we mocked him and challenged:

"And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him; for he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach. (Matthew 27: 40-44, cf. Mark 15:29-32)

Let us pause for a moment to analyze the significance of this railing challenge. What would it have meant if Jesus Christ had come down from the cross,—if he had done as a mere man would have done? If Jesus Christ had come down from the cross, it would have meant that the simple course of justice without mercy must be pursued. The goodness of God could find no way to deal mercifully with sinners. Jesus had said but a few minutes before,

"Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?"

But Jesus had immediately added,
 “How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that
 thus it must needs be?” (Matthew 26:53, 54)

If Jesus Christ had come down from the cross, it would have meant a manifestation of his wrath and power against sin, and the invoking of the twelve legions of angels. Yes, all the angels of heaven would have come from the battlements of glory to hasten to this earth. The whole race of humanity should then have been swept into eternal punishment.

In this incident we have all the details contemplated in the sixty-ninth Psalm, but here the situation stands forth in greater clarity. Jew and Gentile together, the whole race of humanity participated in the murder of God's Son. As he hung upon the cross, mankind representatively mocked him and challenged him to display his power against their awful deed. It would have been perfectly right and just in that instant if the angels of the glory had suddenly appeared in flaming wrathful vengeance, if the curse of the sixty-ninth Psalm had broken over the heads of humanity, if the entire human race had been plunged forever into the “lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.”

Instead of the curse, however, Christ died in our place as our substitute. He forgave the lowest sin, the all-comprehensive sin of humanity. Those who murdered him should have been put to death, but instead he died in their place. In the one word “forgiveness”*

*The suggestion that forgiveness involves substitutional suffering will probably be helpful to the student who is not thoroughly familiar with Old Testament symbolism. However, the Levitical ritual is God's divinely prepared means of

we have more of substitutional suffering than in any great system of theology that has been developed. Christ forgave our sin on the cross. This forgiveness is not dependent upon the textual evidence for Luke 23:34, "Father, forgive them." The entire incident is the act of the triune God in forgiving sin. Substitutional atonement is thus once and for all accomplished on this earth in the fulness of time.

I believe that all human sin is typified and comprehended in the act of murdering God's Son. As I contemplate Calvary I know that in me, that is, in my sinful nature, there are those elements which would have mocked him. I might have been one to spit in his face. I might have been one of those who drove the spikes through his hands and through his feet. Yes, there is that selfish egotism within my old nature such that I might have been one to shout and deride him, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross!" It was my sin that crucified my Lord. When he died, forgiving, he died in my place, as my substitute.

Let us emphasize once more that the atonement is an act of the triune God. God the Father gave his Son to die, "for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." (John 3:16)

Jesus Christ the Son, the God-man, is the mediator "who gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be borne in its own time." (I Timothy 2:6)

presenting the message of the cross. There is no substitute for a thorough knowledge of God's revelation. The reader who has been somewhat helped by our suggestion is urged to begin at once a careful study of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Old Testament passages therein alluded to.

The Holy Spirit of God is also definitely active in the atonement. It was in the power and through the agency of the Holy Spirit that Christ accomplished his work here upon earth in making atonement for sin, as is indicated in the following Scripture.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who *through the eternal Spirit* offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:14, cf. Matthew 12:28)

I believe, also, that all the goodness of God, all the mercy, all the love, all the forgiveness of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, is once and for all not only revealed but accomplished in the death of Jesus Christ. In the mind and purpose of God, Christ is “the Lamb slain,” and the names of the redeemed have been “written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life of the Lamb that hath been slain. . . .” (Revelation 1b:8) Calvary is the accomplishment in time, not only the revelation but the actual transaction, by which the righteous God justifies those who are not just in themselves. It was thus as our substitute that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

*“Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?”*

*“Was it for crimes that I have done,
He groaned upon the tree?”*

*Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!*

*"Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ, the mighty Maker died,
For man, the creature's sin."*

An Application.

We are led to conclude this chapter on the atonement with a special application of the atonement of Christ to the conduct of our Christian lives. Forgiveness between man and man is not merely a matter of overlooking slight inconveniences. When we say in our ordinary conversation, "Never mind, it does not matter," we are not expressing true words of forgiveness.

"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, *even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*" (Ephesians 4:32)

Although the fact cannot always be made apparent in the study of the details and circumstances, yet between Christians, genuinely to forgive one another is to bear one another's burdens and be willing even to suffer substitutionally for the sin of others against us, as Christ has borne in his own body our infinite sin against God.

If one is inclined to say, "But the sin was so great I cannot forgive," let him be reminded that Christ commands us to forgive. As Paul said to Philemon, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I

will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides," so Christ said to us, "Ye ought also to forgive one another."*

One who is born again by the power of Christ will forgive, will be characterized by the spirit of forgiveness. One who is not so characterized does not give evidence, so far as the eyes of man are concerned, of having been born again.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14, 15)

Our forgiveness and our suffering for others does not in any way atone for their sin against God. We cannot be the Son of God dying for the world.

*"No angel could our place have taken,
Highest of the high, though He
The loved one on the cross forsaken,
Was one of the Godhead three."*

But we must represent the Son of God who died for the world. How dare we who have been forgiven refuse to forgive one another? How dare we preach a crucified Christ and refuse to live a crucified life? This is evidently what Paul meant when he said,

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and

*The forgiveness of sins does not eliminate the necessity for moral government and law enforcement in this world. Discipline and correction are not in the slightest degree contrary to the Christian spirit of forgiveness. All spirit of revenge, however, must be taken out from the Christian heart when proper Christian discipline is inflicted. "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." (Romans 12:19)

fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Colossians 1:24)

*"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my Lord;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.*

*"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."*

CHAPTER III.

HOW DOES THE ATONEMENT APPLY TO US?*

THE GREATEST question confronting every individual in the human race is the question of his destiny. That question is to be decided at the cross. All those who are by faith included in the finished work of Christ are saved from wrath and destruction and are destined to the inheritance of the sons of God. All those who are not by faith included in "the redemption purchased by Christ" are "under the wrath and curse of God." They remain in the condition of sin and misery which we have described in our chapter on "The Sin of the World."

"What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31)
What must I do to be lost? Nothing, for,

"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36)

Only Believe.

The crux of this whole matter, the hinge of destiny, is faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. As we have

*"How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ? We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

"How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ? The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

said elsewhere, one is saved *if* he believes in Christ, *because* of the goodness of God. One is lost *if* he does not believe, *because* he does not believe. Let us now give more careful attention to the scriptural teaching on this very crucial point.

The heart of it all, I think, is given in the following marvelous passage of Scripture.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

To my mind this is the heart and center of the entire Christian message. There are those who object to this interpretation, on the ground that the cross is not specifically mentioned. I feel, however, that they are mistaken, that the cross is most clearly implied in the word “gave.” The only sense in which God gave his Son is that he gave him to die upon the cross of Calvary in our place as our substitute. In this wonderful evangelistic text we have the simple appeal to men to put their complete trust and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ. There can be no mistaking the meaning of the word “believe in John’s usage. The reader is referred to my article on “The Ethics of ‘Belief’ in the Fourth Gospel,” in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January, 1923. In that

“What is effectual calling? Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

“What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin? To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

article I studied every case in which the word "believe" occurs in John's usage. John does not mean intellectual belief. That is always taken for granted. He means a positive spiritual reaction of man's whole being in utter surrender to, and dependence upon Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour.

The verses just preceding John 3:16 refer to Old Testament symbolism.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." (John 3:14, 15)

This is a reference to the incident recounted in Numbers 21:5-9. Israel had sinned. The Lord sent among them serpents which symbolized their sin. Many died from the bites of these serpents. The people, therefore, came to Moses, indicating their repentance from sin and asking him to intercede for them. Thereupon God commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass and hang it on a pole, thus signifying that God somehow would deal with the sin question. The Lord then commanded Moses that everyone who would look to this serpent hung upon a pole, should live in spite of the serpent bite with which he was afflicted.

Christ has become sin for us, has borne our sins in his own body on the tree as our substitute.

"Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our be-

"What is faith in Jesus Christ? Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

half; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (II Corinthians 5:21)

This is the meaning of the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the third chapter of John. Whoever will look to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith believing shall in him have eternal life. The purpose of God in Christ is further expressed in the seventeenth verse of the third chapter of John.

"For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him."

John also seeks to explain the crucial necessity for faith in Christ.

"He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, *because* he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." (John 3:18-21)

What could be more plain and clear? There is one reason for the lost condition of those who are to be lost.

"What is repentance unto life? Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience." (W.S.C. 29, 30, 31, 85, 86, 87)

It is simply "because" they have "not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Another reference which makes faith in Christ the crux of destiny is found in the sixteenth chapter of John. When the Holy Spirit comes, Christ says, (as he came upon the day of Pentecost, empowering the church for evangelistic work) he

"... will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: *of sin, because they believe not on me.*" (John 16:8, 9)

Hosea similarly indicates that the attitude of the heart toward God in faith is the crux of the whole question of destiny.

"It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help." (Hosea 13:9)

It is not the question of hereditary sin which determines destiny. Christ has settled that question, so far as guilt is concerned, on the cross (see Romans 5: 18, 19). It is not the question of individual deeds of wrong, individual sins, even those which are conscious and deliberate, which determines the destiny of the individual. There is just one question before every lost member of the human race. What will you do with Christ? (Cf. Matthew 27:22)

God has always dwelt with men on one simple question, that of faith. There is no other basis on which God will deal with sinners. There is no other question worth talking about with one who has not accepted Christ as his personal Saviour. In the Garden of Eden God did

not give man a great body of moral precepts but one simple command, disobedience to which would bring him under the condemnation of death, but obedience to which would bring him into harmony with God's purpose. The tree of life symbolizes Christ. If man had partaken of that instead of rebelliously disobeying God, things would have been very different.

God has always dealt with men according to one simple principle. Abraham, full of shortcomings according to perfect standards of righteousness, yet believed God's promise and "it was accounted unto him for righteousness."

Moses actually sums up the entire law in terms of the simple relationship of the heart in faith to God. (See Deuteronomy 30:11-14) He declared that the commandment which he had given is not too hard for men. It is not a matter of a strenuous code which men must perform,

"But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart that thou mayest do it." (Deuteronomy 30:14)

Paul in his great argument on justification by faith apart from works of the law quotes this saying of Moses', and then immediately adds,

"That is the word of faith which we preach, because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:8, 9)

These great texts from the Old Testament, indicating one question which God sets before sinful humanity, all represent types of Christ. In the fulness of time Christ literally came into the world, became sin for us, was lifted up from the earth like the serpent representing our sin in order that all men might be drawn unto him and believe. Christ is, and in type always has been, the great single test which God has for the world. God says to mankind not "Do this," or "Do or do not do a thousand things related to the moral law," but in the person of his Son he says, "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:29) 'Spit upon me, smite me, crucify me, and I will forgive (Luke 23:34), but reject me utterly, and finally when the Holy Spirit has convicted you of sin, and I will reject you.'

The following paragraph is quoted from an article of mine written some twelve or thirteen years ago.

The clearest teaching on the love of God, eternal life, and eternal punishment, is to be found in that matchless passage of Scripture, John 3:16-21. Here we have the highest light contrasted with the deepest shade. I truly believe that the world does not half appreciate the light because it shrinks from looking into the shadows. The great redemptive purpose of God, including all the world, is here revealed to man, but there are those who continue to hate God's Son. Turn over the rock that lies on the damp earth, and the crawling things beneath it cover themselves in the crannies of the dark ground, but a bird which might

happen to have been imprisoned under the rock, would struggle to rise up into the light. I cannot help wondering as I write, what would take place this moment while all is dark, if suddenly a great light should blaze forth over this city of Greater New York. How many men now engaged in crime would crawl for cover like worms burrowing into the ground. And how many others, like birds with broken wings, would seek their safety in the open light. When the books are opened before the Great White Throne, there will be those who will be made very miserable by the light of the Saviour's countenance. For them his very presence,—and he is omnipresent in the universe,—will be eternal torment.

One day our Lord will appear in fiery judgment in the clouds of heaven. The crucial importance of faith in him and acceptance of the gospel message of the cross will then be apparent.

“At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” (II Thesalonians 1:7, 8)

All the many passages in the Scriptures which teach justification by faith apart from works of the law verify our contention that faith in Christ, not our sins collectively or individually, is the point on which our eternal destiny turns.

There are some who accept the scriptural teaching

on the doctrine of justification by faith but who feel that for those who do not accept Jesus Christ it is incorrect to say that the cause and ground of their lost condition is their rejection of Christ only. In supporting this view they cite the statement which Paul makes in both the Ephesian and the Colossian letters.

“For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no man deceive you with empty words: for *because of these things* cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience.” (Ephesians 5:5, 6, cf. Colossians 3:6, Romans 1:18, Revelation 20:15, 21:8, 22:15)

We suggest, however, in the first place that it is the “sons of disobedience” or “sons of unbelief” who are referred to as subject to the wrath of God for the particular sins mentioned in the context. The word “disobedience” is “apeithias” and is interchangeable with the word “unbelief” in New Testament usage. When one rejects Christ he is condemned on that ground and on that ground alone, as John said, “Because ye have not believed.” (John 3:18)

This is not contrary to the fact, secondly, that in rejecting Christ the sinner rejects that which covers his sin. He thus makes himself responsible again for his inbred guilt and corruption and for his individual sins.

The atonement of Christ is, as Saint Augustine said long ago, “sufficient for all, but efficient only for those

who believe." Divine forgiveness through the atonement of Christ covers all sin of every kind.

"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (I John 2:2)

"But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

To reject Christ is to reject the atonement. Thus although the ground and reason for eternal punishment is rejecting Christ alone, yet those who reject Christ are thereafter also guilty of all their sins and are on that account also then subject to the wrath and curse of God. We are morally accountable to God for our sins, but sins do not constitute the reason* for eternal punishment.

Divine Judgment Upon Works.

There are indeed certain passages of Scripture which indicate divine judgment upon works, but in all these cases from the context it is clear that the works, that is, the sins or deeds of righteousness, are regarded solely in the light of the question of faith in the blood of Christ. Not the works in themselves, but the works in connection with faith, or rather faith in itself, is the basis of the judgment.

*"Unbelief is shown to spring from a radically wrong attitude of man's nature towards God, for which even the name 'hatred' is not shunned. Unbelief is called 'the sin,' not, as is sometimes imagined, as if under the regime of the gospel all other sins were discounted, and a totally new record begun in which only faith and unbelief would henceforth be decisive factors. Underlying the phrase 'the sin' is rather the recognition that in unbelief the deep inherent character of sin as a turning against God reveals itself. . ." (Vos' "Old and New Testament Biblical Theology," page 249)

Jesus in his apocalyptic discourse (Matthew, chapters 24 and 25) describes a judgment scene in which all nations (neuter plural noun) are gathered before his throne and he judges them (the masculine plural pronoun refers necessarily to individuals—it would have to be neuter plural to refer to nations as such) according to their treatment of his “brethren.” Whatever one’s interpretation of this teaching, it cannot be denied that here we have a judgment whose basis is works on the one hand, and neglected work on the other hand.

In the first and second chapters of Romans, Paul established beyond a question the moral responsibility of Jew and Gentile for sin. We have such sentences as the following.

“[sinful persons] who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them.” (Romans 1:23)

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works.” (Romans 2:5, 6)

In John’s great description of the judgment before the Great White Throne it is stated that “the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works,” and again, “they were judged every man according to their works.” (Revelation 20:11, 15)

Here we also read the words of Jesus,

“Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is.” (Revelation 22:12)

I believe that the above Scripture abundantly establishes our moral responsibility for sins. This is the basis on which men shall be judged before God. I must now hasten to add that “works” are not in and of themselves the basis of divine judgment, but works considered as an indication of our moral relation to Christ. We are not saved, or lost, by “works” as such.

“By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory.” (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

Nevertheless, this faith must be fruitful, or God will judge it non-existent.

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away.” (John 15:2)

“Faith, if it have no works, is dead in itself.” (James 2:17)

This faith, however, must evidence itself in works. “For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. . . . If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Romans 8:5, 9)

Christ saves us from sin and that must make a difference in our works.

*“He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good*

*That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by his precious blood."*

In the judgment scene described in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, though works are the basis of judgment, yet it is positively stated that these works are considered as an indication of the moral or spiritual attitude of the individual toward Christ.

"Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me." (Matthew 25:45)

No one could doubt that for Paul the real basis of God's judgment underlying every other question is faith in Christ. As a matter of fact everyone would be lost, if works in themselves were the basis.

"By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." (Romans 3:20)

"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Faith in Christ is the underlying basis of divine judgment.

"But now apart from the law, a righteousness of God hath been manifested . . . even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe." (Romans 3:21, 22)

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)

In the judgment scene from the twentieth chapter of Revelation (discussed above) there can be no doubt that works are considered merely as the indication of

faith. Paul and John both conceived the Book of Life as containing the names of those who believe in Christ. John carefully notes that though those who stood before the Great White Throne were judged "according to their works," the result was that "if any was not found written in the Book of Life, he was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15)

Accepting Christ, Process, Crisis, and Finality.

Spiritual and moral life is dynamic. It does not for one moment stop moving in one direction or the other. We need to give earnest heed lest we "drift away" (Hebrews 2:1) into a permanent decision against Christ.

"Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts!" (Hebrews 3:7, 8)

This progressive nature of life is one of the strongest evangelistic arguments we have, as shown in the following sayings of Paul.

"As ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification." (Romans 6:19)

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." (Galatians 6:7, 8)

In the following references we have the same thought.

“Sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death.”
(James 1:15)

“They go from strength to strength; every one of them
appeareth before God in Zion.” (Psalm 84:7)

“But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light
that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”
(Proverbs 4:18)

Nothing but the regenerative power of our Saviour can stop the downward trend of sin. If we accept him, we are “converted,” faced in a new direction, and begin the ever developing life of righteousness in his strength. If one finally rejects him, one will never repent, for sin is fully as dynamic as righteousness. There is no other hope but Christ. To accept Christ is to put one’s permanent trust in him as one’s personal Saviour. If one has done this, though his life may show much vacillation and he may at times be a “prodigal,” yet the decision is not reversible.

Perseverance of the Saints.

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints or “eternal security” as it is sometimes called, should never be preached apart from the doctrine of the sovereign grace of God in election. The reader will find the chapter on the perseverance of the saints in Charles G. Finney’s “Systematic Theology” very helpful. The fact is that Finney had so many weaknesses in his Systematic Theology, this doctrine was so hard for him to accept on account of these other weaknesses, that when he did accept the Scripture teaching on this point he found it

necessary to answer a great many questions which have troubled others. This chapter is the best part of Finney's theological work. It was the doctrine of election which cleared up the doctrine of eternal security for him.

The progressive nature of the moral choice from the point of view of human experience is a supplementary truth which corroborates our faith in the sovereign grace of God as expressed in the doctrine of election.

The converse of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is that if one consciously, deliberately, voluntarily rejects Christ in this life, though he is left absolutely free from outward compulsion, he will never reverse his decision. There is an essential, moral consistency in the free will of man as God has created us.

On one occasion Jesus said, "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." (Mark 3:29) In the verses immediately preceding this one, we find that the scribes had said of Christ, "He hath Belzebub, and by the prince of demons casteth he out demons." Christ had been evidencing himself as the Son of God, and the Spirit by which he worked, as the Holy Spirit of God. The issue before the scribes was clear cut and unavoidable. The evidence was all there. They simply chose to blaspheme and reject the Christ and the Holy Spirit by which he worked, and with him, they were rejecting the God who sent him. It is a clear and flagrant case of rejecting God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Christ calls it "eternal sin."

This is evidently the "sin unto death" (I John 5: 16, 17) which cannot be forgiven because it is essentially a refusal to accept forgiveness. The impossibility of forgiveness is not based on God's arbitrary withdrawal of grace after a certain point. Christ died for those who he knew would not accept him. He "tasted death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9) God's word to Noah, sometimes rendered "My spirit will not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3), is clearly a mistaken rendering, and does not fit the context (see margin of A. S. V). The basis of the impossibility of forgiveness is not God's Spirit ceasing to strive. The fact of eternal punishment indicates that in some way God's wrath continues to "strive" with man. This of course is not a striving for man's salvation but a type of striving which vindicates God's holiness. Man's refusal to be forgiven, in its necessary eternal consistency, is from a human point of view the basis of the fact that one who rejects Christ "hath never forgiveness."

I must pause here to anticipate an objection. Are there not examples of men who lived sinful, ungodly lives until they reached an advanced age, and who then repented and showed the "fruit of the Spirit" in their living? There certainly are. I have heard hundreds of testimonies of such men in churches and rescue missions, and in my army experience. I believe that I have always detected in these testimonies a thought something like this: "I should have come to Christ before; I should have sought him more earnestly; but when at last I was found by him, then I accepted him. I had never really

understood before that.” In other words, delayed conversion may be due to delayed evangelization, and does not necessarily imply that those thus converted had previously been in a state of complete voluntary rebellion against Christ. One who is in such a state will never repent.

God was very long suffering in the days of Noah (I Peter 3:20), giving men full opportunity to repent, but when it became apparent that “every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually,” God sent destruction upon the earth. The common translation of Hebrews 12:17 is very misleading. It sounds as though Esau sought with tears to repent, but was prevented arbitrarily. The gender of the pronouns in Greek, however, makes it clear that it was “the blessing” which Esau sought with tears, just as it is recorded in the Genesis narrative, and not a “place of repentance.” To seek for a place of repentance is practically to repent, and those who are guilty of eternal sin will never repent.

The passage in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is probably the clearest commentary we have on the words of Jesus in Mark 3:29.

“For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son

of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." (Hebrews 6:4-6)

This passage, I firmly believe, does not describe any who ever really accepted Christ as their personal Saviour from sin, but those who, like Judas and many others are "without excuse before God," have had an adequate opportunity to know the blessings of life in Christ, and have rejected him. It is as though one stood in the very doorway of a brilliantly lighted room knowing and in a measure understanding and participating in the joy of fellowship within. This is the condition of one who has been brought up in a Christian home or who has had the joy of Christian friends and knows the power of God in their lives,—perhaps one who has actually engaged in Christian work without truly believing in Christ. If any such turn their backs upon the Lord and go out into the night, "it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance."

Satan's soliloquy in Book four of Milton's "Paradise Lost" represents with remarkable truth, I believe, the condition of a soul in eternal sin. He thus addresses himself:

*"Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then, or what, to accuse,
But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
Be then his love accursed, since, love, or hate,*

To me alike it deals eternal woe.

"O, then, at last relent! Is there no place

*Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission:*

*"But say I could repent, and could obtain,
By act of grace my former state; how soon
Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore!*

*"Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
And heavier fall:
So farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear,
Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;*

EVIL, BE THOU MY GOOD. . ."

The Scripture is positive in the teaching of the essential moral consistency of the human soul.

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead." (Luke 16:31)

"For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of. (Romans 11:29)

"He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness yet more; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy yet more; and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness yet more; and he that is holy, let him be made holy yet more." (Revelation 22:11, A. S. V. Margin)

A minister in conducting the funeral of a Christian man, began speaking in a very informal way,—*"We are here in the home of our friend,"* he said, *"in the house in which he has lived for many years. We have been in this house frequently. Usually our friend has been*

with us. Sometimes he has been away. Today he is not here. He has departed. On any previous occasion we might have asked, 'Where is he?' and one of us might have replied with another question,—'In what direction was he going when last you saw him?'

"Today, I bring you these two questions: Where is he? In what direction was he going when last you saw him?"

The one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has made a decision involving a crisis. This decision, this crisis brought about by the miracle of grace, gives a direction to the whole of life thereafter.

Similar remarks might be made about one who has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a definite direction in the path of sin. Man by nature is a sinner. Squarely in the path of every sinner, however, there stands the cross of Christ and the offer of salvation through the gospel message. If one goes deliberately on past the cross, he is himself individually responsible for his lost condition. This responsibility is absolute, and God will so regard it in eternity.

"At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, and in a day of salvation did I succor thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (II Corinthians 6:2)

"Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Hebrews 3:15, 4:7)

How Can Sinners Believe?

At this point in our thinking an error becomes very

natural. We are likely to say that since our destiny is determined at the point of our decision for Christ, our decision must be a matter of merit or virtue for which God gives us credit. I remember a time in my own life when I held this view. I started preaching during my freshman year in the university. The experience was very good for me and did not, I hope, do very much harm to the people who listened. I remember well a certain sermon of mine which I regarded as a masterpiece. I thought I had discovered a new truth which no one had ever dreamed of before. I chose as my text Ephesians 2:8, "By grace through faith not of works *but*." I did not realize that the "but" was not in the text. My sermon was really based upon the "but" rather than the text itself. The brilliant new idea which I had conceived, the idea for which the ages had been waiting, the conception which would solve all the problems of theology, was that although we are not saved by our good works, nevertheless faith itself is a meritorious work for which God gives us credit.

I am heartily ashamed as I remember that sermon. My masterpiece! It seems to me now that I must have said something to the effect that God had sent his Son to die for our sins and rise again for our justification. Then he had set before us a proposition saying, "If you will be so good, out of the kindness of your hearts, as to believe in him, I will give you credit for your virtue and save you on that account."

I really do not believe the sermon did much harm. God's good people who come to worship from Sunday

to Sunday gather a tremendous amount of immunity to bad preaching. The people did not know what I was talking about and I am sure I did not know, either.

Luther's Sermon.

Not long after the preaching of this "masterpiece," I had occasion, in the course of the fulfilment of an assignment in a class in public speaking, to read a sermon of Martin Luther's. The assignment was to read some address delivered by some great historic character and to report to the class upon its outline and material. I thought if I should read some great sermon I should not only fulfil the public speaking assignment but learn something about homiletics as well. This was not a bad idea. Some of the richest literature we have is contained in the sermons of great servants of God of years gone by. Here we find deep spiritual truths presented in popular form which are not difficult to assimilate.

In my father's library I found a collection of great sermons which included one by Martin Luther. He was certainly a great historic character. To read his sermon and report to the class would fulfil my assignment. I began to read, when to my tremendous surprise I found that Martin Luther had preached on my subject; and I had thought that the world had waited for me to discover that brilliant idea, faith considered as a work of merit! I read a few paragraphs only to find to my chagrin that Dr. Martin Luther did not agree with my treatment of this subject. As I read along, my arguments seemed to fall into nothingness. All the brilliance of my "masterpiece" faded away. I became rebellious at first, and

then was humbled. Before I had finished reading Martin Luther's great sermon on "Faith Considered as a Work of Merit," I had changed my mind. My "masterpiece" was a failure. I came to the conclusion that I had made a serious blunder. I thank God that if I had to make a mistake like that, I made it early in my experience. I discovered that Christ had to do all the saving if a sinner like me was to be saved at all.

Soon after reading Martin Luther's sermon, I went back to my little church in North Saint Paul with a very different message. I told them about Luther's treatment of the subject I had tried to treat shortly before. I told the people that I had made a great mistake in my interpretation of the Scripture. Then I preached a simple message on "Sinners Saved by Grace." The beauty of it is that that Sunday morning the people knew what I was talking about. Members of the race of Adam, although they may not all admit it, know well enough what we mean when we say, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."

*"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling."*

*"Jesus paid it all,
All to him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow."*

In the natural man there is not goodness enough to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the first place, the

Holy Spirit must "convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment," of the sin of not believing in Christ. In the second place, it is God who "energizes within us both the willing and the doing of his good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13, original translation) Apart from the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and apart from the sovereign grace of God no lost sinner would ever believe in Jesus Christ.

The Natural Man.

The natural man is like the captain of a ship sailing the seas to a port of his own choosing, by a chart which he has drawn, by the use of navigation instruments which he himself has devised. From day to day he paces the bridge of his vessel and gives orders to the crew, mumbling to himself the words of a popular humanistic poem, ". . . my unconquerable soul . . . I am the master of my fate. . . I am the captain of my soul. . . My head is bloody but unbowed. . ." Thus he mutters to himself, thinking he is in control of the situation, but all the while the crew below in the vessel are disobeying orders. Mutiny and rebellion prevail everywhere under the calm surface. This is a picture of the natural man of the world in his own self-righteousness and self-esteem.

The situation usually leads to a development in the course of time. Finally that rebellious crew break loose. The captain is seized, bound, beaten into unconsciousness, and lies helpless on the deck of his vessel. The rebellious crew hold revelry with fighting and dancing

as the unguided ship flounders in the trough of the waves. The captain lies helpless, but in his delirium he still mumbles to himself, "My head is bloody but unbowed . . . my unconquerable soul . . . I am the master of my fate . . . I am the captain of my soul. . ."

In the picture as we now have it, the crew represents the old character, the old nature, the old Adam, as Saint Paul calls it, which is within us. The captain represents our own self-consciousness, which usually carries us forward with self-confidence through our humanistic philosophy. Man, no matter how badly beaten, is usually quite well satisfied with himself.

Suddenly there appears in the distance a sail. The pilot-ship it is! The pilot approaches rapidly. By his force he boards the helpless vessel. He holds back the rebellious crew. He bends over the unconscious captain, who still mumbles to himself in his delirium, "I am the master of my fate . . . I am the captain of my soul."

"Captain," the pilot calls into his ears, "Captain, you're beaten—you're lost. Let me take control."

There is no response from the helpless man, who still mumbles, "My unconquerable soul." The pilot administers restoratives, "energizing" the helpless form. (Philippians 2:13) The pilot by his skill rouses the helpless man to a consciousness of his condition. (John 16:8, 9) In the energy supplied by the pilot, the helpless man is forced to come to a decision.

"Captain," the pilot calls into his ears, "you're lost, you're helpless, you're beaten. Your crew is in mutiny.

Your vessel is helpless. Let me take control. Put the ship in my hands!"

Let the reader judge for himself. If the captain accepts the offer of the pilot, is there any credit due to him? Has he in any way added to his salvation? He is saved *if* he accepts the pilot, but not *because*. He is saved simply *because* the pilot has saved him.

On the other hand, if the captain says 'No,' and rejects the pilot's offer, who is to blame for his lost condition?

I never had the privilege of studying under Dr. Benjamin Warfield, though I have been greatly helped by his writings. An older friend of mine, who enjoyed the privilege denied to me, told me that as a student he was perplexed about the place of faith and the nature of faith in the beginning of the Christian life. One day, he said, Dr. Warfield rather abruptly asked him, "If you are saved, is there any credit to you?" "No," the young man replied, "I am clear about that. There is no credit to me if I am saved."

"Well, then," said Dr. Warfield, "if you are lost, who is to blame?"

"I, alone, am to blame," said the young man, "that is quite clear."

"Very well," said Dr. Warfield. "Think that over!"

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