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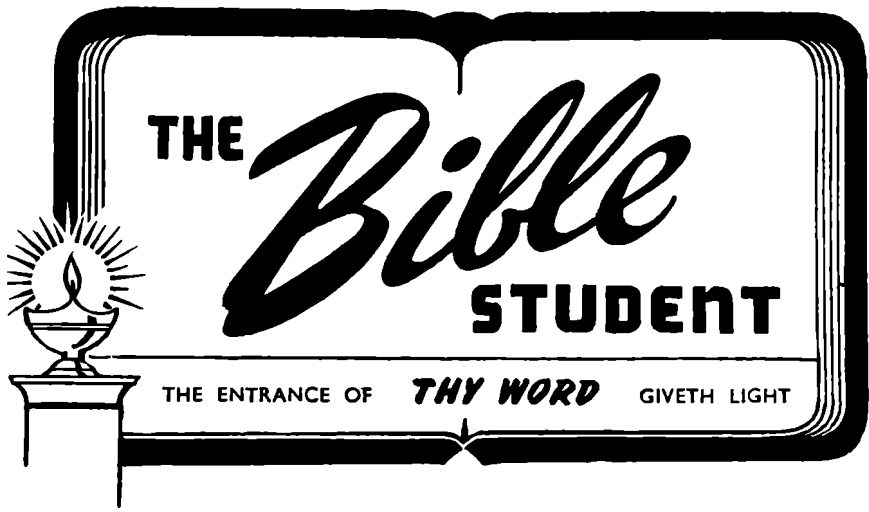
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preparatory symbol of the true inward purification by the Spirit which Messiah Himself would effect at His coming.

v. 28—*These things were done in Bethany beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.*—Nothing more is heard of the deputation. The paragraph ends with a note on the locality where the conversation took place. The most authoritative texts agree in calling the locality 'Bethany beyond Jordan'—so called, of course, to distinguish it from the other Bethany near Jerusalem. This is one of several examples of the Evangelist's care to distinguish places and persons bearing the same name. But the A.V. reading Bethabara goes back to the time of Origen, who preferred it on geographical grounds. That his preference was based on local information is suggested by the fact that the oldest form of the Syriac Gospels (that exhibited in the Sinaitic Syriac palimpsest) has the same reading. Bethabara means 'the house of the ford'. The identification of the place is uncertain. It was evidently in Peraea (the region of Transjordan which at that time formed part of the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas); it has been identified by some with the Beth-barah of Judg. 7:24; by others with the Beth-nimrah of Josh. 13:27. The latter name is represented in one of the Septuagint editions by *Baithanabra*, a form which might yield our two variants here, Bethany and Bethabara.

(*To be continued*)

THE NECESSITY OF THE CROSS

MARTIN A. HOPKINS, TH.M., D.D.

¹A rationale of the Atonement is an absolute necessity for a rational faith, and no other sort of faith is Scriptural, or worthy to be called faith. To believe in the Cross without having any theory of the Atonement, without knowing how and why the Cross saves, is to believe that we are saved by magic. The anti-intellectualism of the twentieth century may be satisfied to say:

¹ Our first contacts with Dr. Hopkins were when he was Principal of the North China Theological Seminary, Tenghsien. The subject he deals with in this article needs to be kept in the front rank of our theological studies just as much as ever.—Ed.

'I know not how that Calvary's Cross
A world from sin set free;
I only know its matchless love
Has brought God's love to me'—

and take pride in the simplicity of its piety! But there is no Scriptural backing for such a position. The Bible tells us definitely just how we are saved, and demands of the humblest believer a clear grasp of the elements of the plan of salvation. I have heard it thoughtlessly said by those who ought to know better that the Prodigal Son's theory of the Atonement was good enough for them, meaning by this that God simply forgives sin upon confession and repentance without any atonement. To use the silence of this parable with reference to the Atonement as a proof that no atonement is necessary, is to degrade this matchless parable and make our Lord contradict Himself in His teachings. By this sort of exegesis the parable will also prove that there is no such thing as regeneration, sanctification, or any other great doctrines of the Christian Faith, for it mentions none of these!

When the Christian doctrine of the Atonement is so woefully misrepresented, it is no wonder that a great criminologist has said: 'The Christian doctrine of the forgiveness of sins possesses this evil influence because it disseminates the grossly erroneous notion that repentance absolves a person's responsibility for the immorality of his past conduct. It would be difficult to find a more anti-social and unmoral doctrine. The dogma of the forgiveness of sin still gives currency to the belief that the effect of an act can be wiped out by repentance and remorse alone, or by the absolution which follows penitential acts, despite the fact that the biological and psychological sciences have taught us that the effect of any act, whether sinful or otherwise, upon the organism and personality are indelible.'¹ But the Bible nowhere teaches that God forgives sin upon the simple condition of confession and repentance. These are necessary, but in addition an atonement for sin is an absolute necessity. 'Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission' is writ large on the pages of both Testaments. Sin must be punished in the person of the sinner or in the person of his substitute before it can be forgiven. 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be

¹ *Criminology* by Parmelee.

lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him may have eternal life.' The Cross was an absolute necessity for salvation from sin.

I. Theories of the Atonement

For more than eighteen centuries the Cross has challenged the ablest intellects of Christendom. Many minds, with many different viewpoints, have propounded a great variety of theories of the Atonement. Dr. B. B. Warfield, in a very comprehensive article on Atonement in 'The New Shaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopaedia,' has the best classification of these theories I have yet seen. 'Perhaps as good a method as any other,' he says, 'is to arrange them according to the conception each entertains of the person or persons on whom the work of Christ terminates. When so arranged they fall naturally into five classes which may be enumerated in the ascending order.'

1. Theories which conceive the work of Christ as terminating upon Satan, so affecting him as to secure the release of the souls held in bondage by him. This theory, known as the triumphatorial theory, had considerable vogue in the Patristic age and continued so for a thousand years. 'But it would be unfair to suppose that such theories represented in any of their forms the whole thought as to the work of Christ of those who made use of them, or were considered by them a scientific statement of the work of Christ. They rather embody only their author's profound sense of the bondage in which men are held to sin and death, and vividly set forth the rescue which they conceive Christ has wrought for us in overcoming him who has the power of death' (Heb. 2:14, 15).

2. Theories which conceive the work of Christ as terminating on the moral and spiritual nature of man, so affecting him as to bring him by an interior working upon him into participation with the one life of Christ, the so-called 'mystical theories.' Such theories emphasize the work of Christ *in* us to the neglect of His work *for* us. They are not really theories of the Atonement so much as they are theories of the Incarnation. Those who hold such theories usually teach that the Incarnation would have taken place even if man had not sinned. The death of Christ sets free His vitality and makes it available for men. 'The blood,' says Bishop Westcott, an advocate of this theory, 'is the energy of present human life made available for others. Christ became

man under such conditions that He could die even as men die, and in dying make the virtue of His life accessible to the race.'

3. Theories which conceive the work of Christ as terminating on man, in the way of bringing to bear on him inducements to action; so affecting man as to lead him to a better knowledge of God, or to a revolutionary change of heart and life with reference to God; the so-called moral influence theories. The essence of all these theories is that they transfer the atoning fact from the work of Christ to the response of the human soul to the influences or appeals proceeding from the work of Christ. The work of Christ takes immediate effect not on God but on man, leading him to a state of mind and heart which will be acceptable to God, through the medium of which alone can the work of Christ be said to affect God. At its highest level, this will mean that the work of Christ is directed to leading men to repentance and faith, which repentance and faith secure God's favour, an effect which can be attributed to Christ's work only mediately, that is, through the medium of the repentance and faith it produces in man. Accordingly it has been quite common to say, in this school, that 'it is repentance and faith which change the face of God'; and advocates of this class of theories sometimes say with entire frankness, 'There is no Atonement other than Repentance.'

4. Theories which conceive the work of Christ as terminating both on man and God, but on man primarily and on God only secondarily. The outstanding instance of this class of theories is supplied by the so-called rectoral or governmental theories. These suppose that the work of Christ so affects man by the spectacle of the sufferings borne by Christ as to deter men from sin: and by thus deterring them enables God to forgive sin with safety to His moral government of the world. The first one to advocate this theory was Grotius. Briefly stated, his theory is as follows: Although God can remit the entire penalty of sin without any satisfaction or penal infliction, as far as His own inward nature is concerned, He cannot prudently do so as far as the created universe is concerned. On the grounds, therefore, that the interests of the creature need it, and not on the ground that the attributes of the Creator require it, there must be an atonement in order to remission. So many and so great sins cannot be remitted with safety to the interests of creation, unless God at the same time give some kind of expression to His detestation of sin. The sufferings and death of

the Son of God are an exemplary exhibition of God's hatred of moral evil, in connection with which it is safe and prudent to remit that penalty, which so far as God and the divine attributes are concerned, might have been remitted without it.

'In these theories the sufferings and death of Christ become, for the first time in this conspectus of theories, of cardinal importance, constituting the very essence of the work of Christ. But the atoning fact here, too, no less than in the moral influence theories, is man's own reformation, though this reformation is supposed in the rectoral view to be wrought not primarily by breaking down man's opposition to God by a moving manifestation of the love of God in Christ, but by inducing in man a horror of sin, through the spectacle of God's hatred of sin afforded by the sufferings of Christ—through which, no doubt, the contemplation of man is led on to God's love to sinners as exhibited in His willingness to inflict all these sufferings on His own Son, that He might be enabled, with justice to His moral government, to forgive sins.'

5. The doctrine of satisfaction, according to which the work of Christ terminates primarily on God, and secondarily on man. According to this doctrine Christ once offered Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice in the guilty sinner's place to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God. 'According to it, our Lord's redeeming work is at its core a true and perfect sacrifice offered to God, of intrinsic value ample to expiate our guilt; and at the same time is a true and perfect righteousness offered to God in fulfilment of the demands of His Law; both the one and the other being offered in behalf of His people, and, on being accepted by God, accruing to their benefit; so that by this satisfaction they are relieved at once from the curse of their guilt as breakers of the law, and from the burden of the law as a condition of life; and this by a work of such kind and performed in such manner, as to carry home to the hearts of men a profound sense of the indefectible righteousness of God, and to make to them a perfect revelation of his love; so that by this one and indivisible work, both God is reconciled to us, and we under the quickening influence of the Spirit, bought for us by it, are reconciled to God, so making peace—external peace between an angry God and sinful men, and internal peace in the response of the human conscience to the restored smile of God.'

With the exception of the triumphant theory which came early in the history of the church, the other theories have largely resulted from a revolt against the doctrine of satisfaction from several different points of view. The revolt against the doctrine of satisfaction, I feel, in most cases has arisen from a failure to understand it on the part of those who reject it, or from a failure of those who hold it to express it in all its profoundness and comprehensiveness. The revolts against it are in reality revolts against one-sided caricatures of it. The doctrine of satisfaction in its fulness comprehends all that the other theories emphasize and adds something of its own, that makes it not only a satisfaction theory but a satisfactory theory in which the mind and heart can rest. 'The various theories have seemed to be exclusive, or at least mutually antagonistic, largely because they have taken partial views of the whole subject, and have emphasized some one feature of the whole content. All serious theories partly express the truth, and all taken together are inadequate fully to declare how the Dayspring from on high doth guide our feet into the way of peace.'

In 1033, just a thousand years after the crucifixion of Christ, Anselm of Canterbury was born. He became one of the most attractive figures and the leading theologian of the mediaeval church, and indeed of the church of all ages. His book *Cur Deus Homo* was the first real attempt at a systematic statement of the atonement. He grounded the necessity of the atonement in the justice of God, and in the heinousness of sin. While there are defects and deficiencies in his theory, to him is due the honour of blazing the way along which every serious effort to penetrate deeper into the mystery of the Cross has followed since his day. About fifty years later Peter Abelard was born, and to him is due the origin of the moral influence theory of the atonement, which makes the work of Christ terminate on man and only indirectly on God. Anselm's theory was fully developed at the time of the Reformation. The profoundest single statement on the atonement that I have read was made by John Wessel, a pre-Reformation reformer. He wrote in Latin: '*Ipse Deus, Ipse Sacerdos, Ipse hostia, pro se, de se, sibi satisfacit.*' Christ Himself God, Himself the Priest, Himself the Sacrifice, for Himself, of Himself, and to Himself made satisfaction.

(Concluded in next issue)