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### THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

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I AM to deal with the most appalling fact to be discovered in all the vast range of the universe of God; a fact that holds within its awful compass the sum of all the woes. Out of it, as from a seething Stygian pool, all evils flow; and back to it, as to a bottomless pit, they all return; for in that strangest phrase that ever was spoken by our Lord, there is the revelation of the very essence of Hell's despair, "*guilty of an eternal sin.*" That argues an eternal Hell. Certain deluded brethren are once more advancing the baseless theory of "Conditional Immortality" and its corollary the "Annihilation of the wicked." Here is a phrase that discovers the absolute unscripturalness of the conception. In the very nature of things an Eternal Sin predicates eternal immortality, eternal consciousness, eternal responsibility, and cannot mean eternal nothingness.

For various reasons, some of which are good, some are bad, but none of which should be held indifferent, this subject is one from which most of us are disposed to turn away. If the heart is what it ought to be, or even in some fair measure is right with God, then sin in its every phase and relation is hateful, abominable; and hence even to think of it is not a pleasant exercise. And, on the other hand, if that triad of evils, the world, and the flesh, and the devil, sway the mind, one is loathe to enter into judgment upon sin; for he knows that he must find much in himself which he is unwilling to discover. In such case, if sentence is passed at all, it will be of the nature of compromise, which is but additional sin. There are yet in the world, it must be confessed, those, whom we all too much resemble, who

"Compound for sins they are inclined to do  
By damning those they have no mind to."

Nothing of all the various phases and aspects of sin more signally illustrates its many-sidedness in character and its manifoldness in power than does the fact that we most dislike to know the real demerit of the sins which we are the least averse to practice. And nothing more clearly reveals the cunning craftiness of him by whom sin came into our world than does his success in making men dishonest with themselves, and willing to have the truth hidden from their eyes, or their eyes blinded to the truth. The attitude of mind and spirit that alone is fitting in our study is that to which one is brought, when, the Spirit of God helping his infirmity, he prays: "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

John Calvin's saying is true: "Consciousness of sin is the first step to Salvation."

Of course this paper will not attempt a solution of the great mysteries involved in the origin of sin and its entrance into our world. The historical character of the first chapters of the Book of Genesis is recognized as positively and definitely as is that of any other portion of the Book, or for that matter, of any portion of the entire Bible; and the credibility of the record is just as readily acknowledged. While mystery is here, one principle must be steadfastly maintained, namely: that God is not—God cannot be—the author of sin; and equally absolute is the conviction that "God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man." Respecting the first mystery that presents itself, namely: "Why was the existence of sin tolerated in the creation of a God at once eternal, self-existent, and infinite in wisdom, power, holiness, and benevolence?" Dr. A. A. Hodge has said: "It is obvious that God has permitted sin, and hence it was right for Him to do so. But why it was right must ever remain a mystery demanding submission and defying solution."

Respecting a second mystery that confronts us, namely: "How could sin originate in the will of a creature created

with a positively holy disposition?" it may be said that, in the case of Satan and other angels "Who kept not their first estate," speculation is presumption. The Bible has told us nothing, and there is no other possible source of information. In the case of Adam and Eve, God permitted Satan to tempt them—this fell within His purpose of probation—and He permitted them to yield; but he neither caused nor approved of the sinful conduct of either party. Satan fell untempted—there was no tempter—and so fell hopelessly. In this respect Adam's probation differed from that of the angels. The test to which the man was subjected was the simplest and most gracious and advantageous that could be proposed. It was not that he must do some great thing, but simply to refrain from taking the fruit of a single tree. The probation was designed to confirm the holy character that was his by creation, "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall," and had it been maintained in spite of Satan's onslaught, the covenant condition of life would have been fulfilled; and sin had never desolated our world—the fair work of God and the goodly heritage of man. Beyond these simple representations the Bible does not lead us, and the reasoning of understandings which never in this life shall wholly be relieved of the dark shadow cast by sin, can never reach an indubitable conclusion.

In this discussion there will be no further reference to the Philosophy, nor to the Psychology of Sin; not that these disciplines are held in light esteem, for that such methods of study as these employ have a well established *rationale* is most willingly acknowledged. But the space that is allowed for the presentation of this theme, and the object that is sought to be attained alike forbid entrance upon such lines of study as they mark out. I have chosen to deal alone with the Theology of sin, and the term "Theology" is employed with set purpose. Theology is the "*Doctrine of God*," and if it be that in truth, it is *God's Doctrine* as well—the teaching of God's Word. The phrase, "The Word of God," and the term "Theology" are not antagonistic in significance; although some false teachers would seem to make them so, and some good

men, with more zeal than knowledge, would seem to think them so.

In the light of Scripture statement what representation may be offered touching the *Nature*, the *Extent*, and the *Effects* of Sin?

### I. *The Nature of Sin.*

As to the first inquiry, it may be noted that a definition of Sin was framed by Campegius Vitringa, a representative of the Dutch School of theologians, two and one-quarter centuries ago, which has had all but universal recognition by evangelical teachers the world over. In its English form it reads: "The nature of sin is disagreement of act, habit, or state of a man with the divine law." Four distinguishing features mark this classic definition. It recognizes a perfect standard of moral character, in the law of God; it supposes rational and voluntary agents as the subjects of this law; it requires not only outward compliance in the act, but also inward conformity of the heart and constant agreement in the life of one who would be held guiltless; and it reckons divergence from this perfect and unchangeable standard, whether by excess or defect, by omission or by commission, to have the character of sin. Will the Bible Doctrine of Sin justify the length and breadth and depth and height of meaning that are comprehended in the brevity and simplicity of this definition? Let us see. Sin according to the Bible view has two inalienable characteristics, namely: *Guilt*, or ill-desert, liability to punishment; and *Corruption*, or defilement. Emphasis is laid upon the first of these in all the sacrifices involving the taking of the life of the offering, especially in the sin-offerings, whether these had general or individual reference. The essential parts of the ritual in such sacrifices were five in number: the presentation of the animal at the altar; the imposition of the offerer's hands; the slaying of the victim by him whose sacrifice it was; the disposition of the blood by the priest, and the burning of the body upon the altar, or "without the camp." In every such sacrifice, throughout all the centuries of the Legal Dispensation, there was the acknowl-

edgment of *guilt*; and, in the death of the victim there was implied the vicarious submission to the penalty that was due to sin in the person of the offerer. In the rivers of blood that were thus poured out at the altar's side, from the day when the skins of the first substitutes were torn from their bodies to furnish a covering for the nakedness of the guilty pair in Eden, unto the day when the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom in token of the uncovering of the new and living way, consecrated by the blood of Jesus into the better paradise, witness was borne to the *guilt of human sin* and the *single way of expiation*. On the Great Day of Atonement the ritual provided was peculiarly significant in its emphasis of the guilt of sin, and also of the defilement that was ever an attendant. It was on this one day of all the year that the High Priest might enter into the Most Holy Place within the vail and no other man must be within the tabernacle on this occasion. First of all the High Priest must provide for himself a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. Then having divested himself of the splendid robes which he was wont to wear at times, he washed his flesh with water and put on the linen garments especially furnished for this service. Next the offering for the people was selected, two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering. Before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle the lot was cast upon the two goats determining the part each victim must sustain in making atonement for the people. Then the bullock of the sin-offering for the High Priest and for his house was slain, and, the way of entrance into that within the vail having been prepared through the cloud of incense smoke from the coals of the censer, the blood of this victim was borne within and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat eastward and before the mercy-seat seven times. Returning to the outer court the High Priest slew the goat of the sin-offering for the people, repeating the act of sprinkling the blood on and before the mercy-seat. So was atonement made for the holy place and for the tabernacle of the congregation, "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their trans-

gressions in all their sins." Next passing out through the vail once more, the High Priest took of the mingled blood of the bullock and of the goat and put it upon the horns of the altar, and sprinkled it round about, to "cleanse it and to hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." This part of the ritual having been completed, the High Priest now laid "both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and (confessed) over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and (sent) him away by the hand of a chosen man into the wilderness." This done he put off the linen garments in the holy place and left them there (as did his great anti-type leave the linen clothes and the napkin in the sepulcher), the work of the atonement was finished. And again washing his body, he clothed himself in the garments "for glory and for beauty," and offered the two rams for a burnt-offering for himself and for the people; while another, selected for the service, carried the bodies of the sin-offerings without the camp and burned them. Adding yet more to the already multiplied significance of the ritual of sacrifice, the chosen man who led away the scape-goat and that one whose office it was to burn the bodies of the victims must wash their clothes and bathe themselves in water, at the conclusion of their service before they might return to the camp. Five lives were offered in token that the doom, which justly threatened priests and people alike, had not fallen upon the guilty principals, because their innocent substitutes had been devoted to receive the stroke of death. And the blood sprinkled round about the altar and before the mercy-seat, bore witness that nothing associated with the fallen sons and daughters of Adam could have such holy character as to escape the defiling touch of sin. In this connection it must be remembered also, that these most significant ceremonies must be repeated year by year continually, and multitudes of others having the same gracious purpose must be performed throughout long centuries of time, because "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin;" nor could cedar-wood

and hyssop and scarlet and the ashes of the heifer cleanse from the touch of death, which is Sin's first-born. What must be the guilt and the defilement that sin has brought into our world and fixed upon us every one, which seas of blood and countless hecatombs of beasts could not remove! But light has risen in the gloom. There is a "bright light *in the clouds*," to employ Elihu's figure, and the winds of heaven's grace have passed revealing the light and driving away the blackness. Utterly insufficient as were the types, they served the blessed purpose of pointing to the all-sufficient anti-type, Who, "by one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

*The Scripture terms by which sin is designated and described also serve to reveal its character.* Even a superficial review of these terms will make it manifest that sin's manifoldness is surpassed only by its heinousness. There are certain specific terms in the Hebrew Scriptures whose equivalents have passed into all translations, which mark distinguishing characteristics of sin. One of these is derived from the verb which means "*to miss.*" "*to err from the mark,*" referring to the failure of an archer or a slinger to strike that at which he has aimed. Hence follows the idea of one's "*making a false step,*" "*a stumbling,*" etc. The Greek equivalent preserves the figure as well as the significance. Hence in both Testaments we have the very suggestive conception of sin as a "*missing the mark.*" Another term denotes "*iniquity,*" "*perversity,*" emphasizing the "*wickedness*" of sin. "*Transgression*" is yet another phase of sin, the rendering of a very common term. "*Rebellion,*" "*Lawlessness,*" and "*Unrighteousness*" also very definitely set forth particular aspects of this one great and ruinous effect of the breach of the covenant in Eden. Besides these designations we have many more of less specific, but not less suggestive character; such as "*trespass,*" "*disobedience,*" "*backsliding,*" "*ignorance,*" "*infirmity,*" "*offence,*" "*error,*" "*fault,*" and others that may be classified with these. There are also lists of concrete sins, and particular classes of sinners found in the Scriptures which illustrate



the many-sidedness of this evil principle, so hateful to God and so harmful to man. In the closing verses of the First chapter of the epistle to the Romans there are more than thirty words and phrases indicating kinds of sin and varieties of sinners. To these may be added the adjectives that are employed to like effect by the inspired writers. Men are said to be "corrupt," "vile," "impenitent," "effeminate," "unclean," "fallen," "lost." Figurative speech abounds, since the plainer terms are insufficient to tell all that God would have us know of the evil nature of sin. We read of "the motions of sin," "the body of sin," the "body of death," the "old man," the "flesh," "the evil heart of unbelief," "blindness of heart," of the "law in the members," of "alienation from the life of God," of a "condition past feeling," of "being without understanding," and of that state so detestable to Jesus Christ which He describes as being "neither cold, nor hot, but lukewarm."

There is an illuminating representation of human nature in its fallen state in one of the golden texts of the Scriptures, viz., Romans 5:6. "When we were yet weak, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Here is sin that is *infirmity*, and sin that is *ungodliness*. Weakness and wickedness are thus declared to be distinguishing characteristics of those for whom Christ died. It will be profitable for us all to go with the Holy Spirit into the picture gallery of God's Word where hang the portraits which He Himself has made representing the sin that is *infirmity*, and the sin that is *ungodliness*. Here on the one hand is the collection illustrating what it is to be "without strength." Our Lord had it in mind when He described the sad condition of the Church of Laodicea, as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Pride would turn the faces of these portraits to the wall, especially as it thinks of them as hanging in churches—they are too like ourselves. But for the great love wherewith He loved us He will not have it so, until we shall have learned to estimate ourselves aright, reckoning our own righteousness as "filthy rags," and "all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, our Lord."

For the representation of "*wretchedness*" a leper stands as the model: God's own chosen type of sin in all its loathsomeness and hopelessness. It is the picture of a living death. "*Misery*" finds all of suggestion that is needful in look and lineament in the Gadarene, possessed by a legion of demons. He dwells among the tombs. Rattling the broken fetters with which his fellows vainly sought to bind him, crying and cutting himself with stones, he is a torment to self, a terror to all others. For "*poverty*," look at poor Prodigal, the Hebrew swineherd, in the far-off country, feeding his unclean charge. He has not a friend, and not a follower now save these. He has been served as the world always serves its dupes. "*Blindness!*" Here is one like poor Bartimeus, sitting by the wayside begging the pittance that barely serves to keep his soul within its darkened tabernacle. He can have no thought of light or beauty; for he knows only dull, dense, monotonous night. The sinner is like Bartimeus, "blind from birth," but unlike him, blind to his blindness. Though the Sun of Righteousness, which gives both light and sight be shining, he apprehends it not. "*Nakedness!*" Here is the poor outcasts' uncared-for babe, disowned, forsaken, left in the open field to die where it was born! a sketch by the hand of Ezekiel, that master in the portraiture of sin; not a color, nor a touch, nor a shade wanting, to picture the pitiable nakedness of the soul that has not put on Christ.

Turn now to the collection that represents the sin that is *ungodliness*. It is in two groups, and is catalogued by Paul in Col. 3:5, and I Cor. 6:9, 10. It is sufficient to read the titles of the portraits in these repulsive groups. "Anger, Wrath, Malice, Blasphemy, Filthy Communication, Falsehood, Uncleanliness, Inordinate Affection, Covetousness." That is the Colossian group; and this is the Corinthian: "Idolaters, Fornicators, adulterers, Sodomites, thieves, drunkards, revilers, extortioners." What a forbidding exhibition of fallen humanity! Yet their faces bear the likeness of friends! And every sketch is from life! For as Paul addresses the "saints and faithful brethren in Christ" at Colosse, and points them to those

dark sins, he says: "In the which ye also walked, while ye lived in them." And as he bids the "Church of God" at Corinth, the "sanctified in Christ Jesus," to look on that demon-visaged group of sinners he says: "and such were some of you!" Mark this, the sorrowful, pity-compelling aspect of sin; and this, its guilty, judgment-inviting character, and magnify the grace of God who could love us "while we were yet sinners!" Who, while saying of the least offensive of all sins conceived in the mind of Satan and cherished in the heart of man: "My soul hateth it!" says also to the most unworthy creature that sin has ruined and grace has reclaimed, as He bends over him, lifts him out of the horrible pit, sets his feet upon a rock, establishes his going, and puts a new song in his mouth: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love!"

## II. *The Extent of Sin.*

But in what measure has this sum of all evils affected our race? Are the Corinthians and the Colossians exceptions? What is the extent of sin? Let the Scriptures give answer. David and Paul join their testimony, and the harmony of their witnessing is perfect. Alike they had been let down into the black abyss so deep that the foulness and the dreadfulness of sin, when once they had been delivered from its power, could never be minimized by any after representation. Though in the peculiar character of their experience in sin they had little in common, the exceeding sinfulness of its every phase, and the world-wide comprehensiveness of its sway over the sons of men were melancholy facts that were ever present to their minds. Paul, in the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans, quotes the Psalm to which the Psalmist in Spirit gave *two* places among the Songs of Zion, the fourteenth and the fifty-third; and at the same time the great apostle repeats his own inspired testimony touching both Jews and Gentiles, proving "that they are all under sin." Thus do inspired representatives of both Dispensations announce the momentous truth that "all the world (is) guilty before God." Jesus Christ declared this same solemn truth to Nicodemus when He said: "That which is

born of the flesh is flesh," and once more do these two witnesses agree together, linking their testimony to that of their Lord, when David confesses the sin of his nature with tears as he walks through the Valley of Humiliation: "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" while Paul, pointing the Church at Ephesus to that ill-favored company, the "Children of disobedience," mingles penitential sighs with grateful praise as he recalls the past, saying: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and *were by nature the children of wrath even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).*" Eph. 2:3-6. Such is the testimony of the Word of God. Everywhere and always is the witness one and the same: "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*"

And more: Not only is the apostasy *universal as to the race*, but also is it *complete as to the individual*.

Of our fallen race even before many centuries had passed it is said: "God saw that every imagination of the thoughts of man was only evil continually." The condition has not changed. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, so they that are in the flesh can not please God." (Rom. 8:7.) The ruin of sin is utter; the depravity of fallen human nature is *total*. "Total depravity means the entire absense of holiness, not the highest intensity of sin. A totally depraved man is not as bad as he can be; but he has no holiness, that is, no supreme love of God" (Shedd). Joseph Cook was wont to say that a clock might be made of the finest material, and be the product of the finest workmanship; but if in the adjustment of its delicate parts there was error, or if some disorder had overtaken its mechanism, so that it *would not keep time*, that it was "totally depraved" *as a clock*. Man was made in the image of God—the only creature 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 can not in his natural state serve the purpose of his creator; and the depravity is total, if it exists at all. There can be in the very nature of things no moral depravity that is less than total. When the "will is averse to the holy law of God, biases the understanding, deceives the conscience, leads to erroneous moral judgments, to blindness of mind, to deficient and perverted sensibility in relation to moral objects, and to the inordinate action of the sensuous nature," what other phrase will describe the condition? That is corruption of the entire soul.

### III. *The Effect of Sin.*

Is it a matter of wonder that the one offense in Eden entailed total depravity as a dread heritage upon all and that every son or daughter of Adam—save that One Who was born without sin—should be chargeable with the total guilt that was thus incurred by the covenant head of our race? Let it be remembered that there is no such thing as the *divisibility of guilt* in such case, even as there is no such thing as the *divisibility of righteousness* in the case of believers in Jesus Christ, in virtue of their relationship to Him—the Second Adam. This is the blessed gospel antithesis: "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."

*But now, more definitely, What as to the Effect of Sin?*

God said to Adam as He announced to him the conditions of his probation, and the probation of the race of which he was the covenant-head and representative: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The man failed, and the judgment fell. He was driven out of the garden, away from the presence of God with whom he had lost communion, and whose favor he had forfeited. Nor was he alone in his misery, for all

mankind shared in his dreadful doom, and even the ground was cursed for his sin's sake. "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." So does Paul announce the lamentable sequel of the Edenic sin, and witness to the fulfillment of the threatened sentence of doom. Neither the inspired apostle, nor any other thoughtful student of God's word finds difficulty in the fact that the physical life of Adam and Eve was long preserved. They became liable to death, and were banished from the garden where was the Tree of Life that was in some sense associated with the immortality of man's physical organism; so that the dust must in time return to the earth whence it came. In this sense the body did die at once. Spiritual death, in the most literal sense, was the inevitable and the immediate consequence of the fall. The life of the soul is dependent absolutely upon fellowship with God, and separation from the life that is His at once brings death to the soul. The sentence involved eternal death as well, if judgment should not be averted, for this must follow if spiritual life be not restored. It is to this part of the sentence—death spiritual—Paul refers when he writes to the Ephesians: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Out of this dread condition of death flows every ill that flesh is heir to, and there is one fearful ending to this "old way that wicked men have trodden." "The way of the transgressor is hard." To this stern truth Jeremiah witnessed in one of his first messages to Judah. This was the heavy tidings which this prophet, so staunchly true to God and yet so tenderly loyal to his people, spoke out of a heart that was as heavy as it was constant: "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and a bitter, that thou has forsaken Jehovah thy God." And yet again, to the unspeakable grief of

his own great soul, he said: "Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness; for it is bitter, for it reacheth unto thy heart."

The helplessness and hopelessness of the sinner, as well as heinousness of his sin, appear in two cries which have come down to us from times long past. Job, prostrate in the dust, buffeted by Satan and tortured by men, gave utterance to this almost despairing speech: "How can man be just with God? If he will contend with Him he cannot answer Him one of a thousand. . . . If I speak of strength, lo, He is strong, and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? . . . For He is not a man as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there a days-man between us, that he might lay his hand upon us both." The other speaker is one whose agonies of conscience the prophet Micah has recorded. This is the burden of his inquiry: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" These are not the questions of one who exaggerates his own helplessness, or protests against the greatness of God's requirements; but rather of one who realizes that soul redemption is precious, and that the poor victim whom Satan has robbed and sin has bound is absolutely destitute. . . .

O the disabling, impoverishing, heart-breaking effects of sin. And yet, the desperate condition of the lost soul and the vastness of its need, the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the dreadfulness of the doom which is its just due, are all best seen, not as we look upon the baseness and the vileness, the helplessness and the wretchedness that are the heritage of iniquity; but rather we contemplate the infinite worth of the provision that has been made to meet our want and to cleanse our guilt. Not what we are, nor what we reckon sin at its worst to be, but what Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ has done

suggest the measure of the loss that has come upon our race through sin. Keep in mind the fact that the principle which rules in the Kingdom of Grace, as in the Kingdom of Nature, is not that of unnecessary expenditure, but rather that of strict and rigid economy. Nature abhors waste. She is not a niggard, neither is she a spendthrift. He whose word could multiply loaves and fishes until the food that five men might eat and yet be hungry sufficed to satisfy five thousand, nevertheless gave commandment to gather up the fragments that remained of the miraculous feast, that nothing might be lost. In the great work of redemption there is likewise evidence of the "hiding of His power." There is no such thing as prodigality even in the bestowment of the riches of grace. There is abundance, but there is not extravagance. How vast, therefore, must the need of our fallen race have been in the light of the "unspeakable gift; Jesus Christ, the Lord our righteousness." And had there been but one of all the myriads of lost souls to be delivered from going down to the pit, the ransom-price must have been the same; all the years of service, and sorrow, and suffering, and shame, that lay between His birth in a hired stable and His burial in a borrowed tomb. The depths of human wretchedness may be fathomed only by a sounding line that is long enough in turn to stretch away to the infinite heights of the worthiness of Jesus Christ. The exceeding sinfulness of sin may be apprehended only as we contemplate the amazing sacrifice, which, in the judgment of infinite wisdom, was necessary to effect atonement for its guilt and to purchase redemption from its power. Right well might Job despair if he must trust to human wisdom, or to human provision, to find answer to his inquiry: "How can man be just with God?"

There is a scene in Scripture story which may serve to suggest, by way of contrast, to what extremity of perplexity one must be driven if he walk by sight and not by faith. As Abraham and Isaac went up to the slope of Moriah, Isaac with the wood on his shoulder, Abraham with the heavier burden which God would have him bear, the unsuspecting son addressed the anxious father thus:



"My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" And Abraham, "believing in hope," although the father-heart must have been breaking at thought of what the father-hand must do, made answer: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." As that was true of the offering that was laid upon the altar on Moriah, so is it most profoundly true of the sacrifice that was made on Calvary. Men furnished the fire and the wood; the Lamb of sacrifice was God's. Human hands framed the cross, and drove the nails, and thrust the spear-head into the Redeemer's side. Human hands plaited the crown of thorns and pressed it down upon His quivering brow; but will any one say that the Jews and the Romans helped to save themselves, or helped to provide redemption for the world, when they crucified the Lord of Glory? Let a man do his utmost now to save himself, it will be seen at the last that he has succeeded only in allying himself with those whose unenviable distinction it is, that they pierced the heart of infinite Love. Men can not provide against the doom of sin, or rescue themselves from its baneful power. In making the effort they but add to their guilt. They tread underfoot the son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. What an awful crime may be laid to the charge of "Legalism," the spirit that rejects the salvation that is of grace, and seeks an unattainable salvation by personal merit or good works. The task is wicked, and it is as profitless as it is evil.

O, the exceeding sinfulness of sin. O, the black enormity of guilt. O, the hopeless destiny, the certain and eternal doom of him whose transgression is not forgiven, whose sin is not covered.

While it is not within my plan to present the remedial system which God has provided in the riches of His grace, in concluding I can not refrain from pointing simply to the Cross of Calvary, the empty tomb in the garden, and the glorified Christ who is seated at the right hand of the Father; and from proclaiming this glorious gospel truth: "Him Who knew no sin God hath made to be

sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Following the example of Paul, in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, I have sought to hold up to your view *Sin* in all its desperate guiltiness and defilement; that his inquiry might spring to your lips, and also his exultant answer: "Who shall deliver us from this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."