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THE ATONEMENT

OTIS COLE



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The Atonement

A Brief Study

By

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Haverhill, Massachusetts



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TO
ALL WHO WITH ME SAY
“Our Father”

FOREWORD.

It was hardly my thought that this little volume would appear in published form when I undertook to set down on paper my convictions concerning the love of God as shown in the long history of Atonement throughout the ages. The manuscript was written in my home at Haverhill, in 1920—written as the peaceful shadows of life were closing about me. The writing is, then, a production of the evening of my life, with reflection back over the past and firm confidence in the future. In the spring of 1921 my granddaughter, Luella Cole Pressey, read over the manuscript and considered it worthy of publication; she has made all arrangements with the printer, has prepared the manuscript for the press, and has looked after all the many details of publication. To her I am indebted. It is my hope that a reading of this little book may make clearer to some who are not yet in the fullness of the light that God is indeed love, that he has shown his love from the dawn of creation and is ever ready to forgive the erring human and to give him a fresh impulse to start anew. From the wisdom of age I can reaffirm the idea that God's love is the most basic principle of the world. If a perusal of this book shall bring to the

"one out of the hundred" a better concept of love and mercy, I shall rest content.

"The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace, both now and evermore. Amen."

OTIS COLE,
Haverhill, Massachusetts.

THE ATONEMENT.

I.

In the beginning thereof—God. In the greatness of its movement and its fruitage—God. The Bible declares the love of God for man; it affirms and unfolds a plan of redemption challenging human interest always. It announces, reveals God, giving something of his thoughts, his ways, his will, his power, and his everlasting love. The story of the advent of Jesus, of his life and passion, with a fourfold record of his teaching concerning the kingdom—republic—of God, makes affluent revealing of his purpose and work for the redemption of man. The beloved disciple of Jesus wrote at a later day a luminous confirmation of that compassionate statement: "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation—an atoning sacrifice—for our sins!"

The real objective in mind in this little volume is this: A recognition that the initiative for human redemption, for atonement, is God's—who began the work of rescue from sin, the rescue of mankind. The entire movement is an outflow of plentitude of love, the love of God. The story of it is a love story of an infinite pathos, beauty, majesty.

The love of God is a wide, wide sea of soundless depth. All divine activities are based on and environed by love. Creation is as really a movement in love as in might and majesty. The cosmical arrangement of the planet Earth for the time-home of man was an exhibit of thoughtful, beneficent love. Man himself

has a native endowment of dignity and worth, uprightness, force, and comeliness. These excellences are a dower of a loving Creator and Benefactor.

Notwithstanding, it is usual in studies of the atonement to magnify the demands of justice as being primarily important and to seek, also, ample provision for meeting the demands by positing necessity for a Sin-bearer who can and does make satisfaction for the offense urged against justice by sin, and that such a bearer of the awful burden of sin—the sin and sinfulness of man—alone can make a valid, adequate propitiation, and so a way of life for those dead in trespasses and sins. The argument further continues: Inasmuch as righteousness and judgment are the habitation of the throne of God, whatever cloud and darkness may hover over the penitent sinner it may be freely forgiven only as atonement is actual, sufficient, and openly manifest by a divine acceptance thereof—acceptance of a vicarious, sacrificial offering, clearly involving suffering, by one good and great enough to assure firm balance in favor of the truth and justice of God, the Ruler of the world. Thus have discussions moved and been exhibited in the Christian centuries.

To escape from the pressure of righteousness and judgment is impossible. God is present and active everywhere; righteousness and judgment are ever making their impress; their source, fount, and mightiness are in Him. From the splendor of truth and rectitude in the Eternal One, these majestic ethical forces forever freely stream.

Normally, man has high estimate of the values of justice and truth and a large regard for their manifest presence in social and civic affairs. Courts of Justice are recognized as centers of dominating interest. To these Daniel Webster once voiced an immense tribute, when he pronounced a eulogy of Joseph Story, late an

associate justice of the Supreme Court. A brief passage has pertinence for this study:

"Justice, Sir, is the greatest interest of man on earth. It is the ligament which holds civilized beings and civilized nations together. Wherever her temple stands, and so long as it is duly honored, there is a foundation for social security, general happiness, and the improvement and progress of our race."

It may not be overlooked by any that the world-order, mayhap the order of the universe, is based in such wisdom and justice and is so wondrously inclusive and complete that adequate retributive forces are hidden in man's environment, in man himself, and that they act promptly. Hence, penal sequences of disobedience, of wrongdoing, recklessness, negligence, of sin, are certainties and may be severities, cumulative, terrible. But it should be noted that men are in peril of undue stress anent what they may deem "justice," may affirm too severe penal sequences for civic and social offenses, may so stress enforcement of harsh statutes as to work social injury. Something may well be said of severities imposed by courts, and more of social pressures and theological thought and statement. Thus Inspector Javert, of Hugo's "Les Miserables," knew Jean Valjean as "a fugitive from justice in breach of his ban," refusing other thought of the man. To Javert, Valjean was ever "the prisoner of the law." Yet the inspector was troubled, for that "prisoner" had voluntarily preserved that officer from imminent peril, from a violent death. As the servant of public order Javert should arrest Jean Valjean. He could not; he had made the astonishing discovery of "the possibility of a tear in the eye of the law, a mysterious justice according to God going counter to justice according to men." He had thought of law as separate from mercy: Penalty was the sole possibility for law-breakers and Jean Valjean had been a

thief! Javert, obedient, resolute, resourceful official and ministrant of justice without respect of persons, had one of the greatest problems in mind, and the solution was not apparent. Presently, according to Hugo, he sought relief by self-destruction. There seemed no place for him in what he was urged to think a topsyturvy world.

Peradventure some thinkers may have had like imperfect, distorted apprehension of the bearings, the quality of justice essential in the remedial arrangements of God in his age-long effort to save mankind from the ruin of sin. Apparently very imperfect concepts of the principles involved have had place in thought and expression. The Apostle to the Gentiles taught that by the deeds of the law alone none can be justified, inasmuch as all are sinners. As will more fully be shown it has pleased God to proffer forgiveness of sins and also a transformation of being to the penitent, rather than to make harsh demands in the name of Justice.

Again, the human race is a venture of the Most High whose righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and whose law is holy and good. Man did not ask to be. Created being anywhere at any time is a venture of the Creator. The creation of man was a great venture in faith; the authorization of the generations of men a venture in responsibility—an inescapable responsibility. Upon each individual in the long succession of personal lives being was conferred; none asked such responsible life here below. None asked the eager and inherent love of living, and some have found the burden thereof too great to bear and have ventured the awful pass of self-destruction, although such venture is banned, its measure unknown.

Man was made in the image and likeness of his Maker; has freedom, limited but real, and so has an imposed obligation to use freedom lawfully, wisely, and

well, with expectancy of rendering in due time a strict account to the Creator and Judge of all. The obligation is based in clear thought of mutual relations and a desired development in rational, well-ordered, ethical life.

Open recognition of responsibility for man was early made by his Creator. In the beginnings of human history and in the Garden where man and his helpmeet, woman, were placed, tragedy appeared. Under pressure of temptation sin entered, and death by sin. Directly a great promise assured a remedy for sin, for its bruise, its hurt. How really and clearly the promise was then apprehended is not known. It was the initial one. Its content was revealed with clearness at a later day.

Advocates of evolution have failed to affirm, at least to accent duly, the essential corollary that all evolvings are sequents of prior involvings of equivalent energy. An involver must be cognized. The principle thus indicated is pertinent to the present study. As already noted the initial promise given in the Eden story including a virile seed of the woman is itself an admission by the Giver of his burden for the disobedient, shrinking man and woman, and also a direct intimation of purpose to deal justly and love mercy even as he would require them and their descendants to do. The mystic phrasing of the divine promise enfolds the subsequent unfoldings of purpose and action, the manifestations of justice, grace, and love in the ages. Full interpretation of the mystic word of promise can be gained by reverent study of the tragic movements in Gethsemane and at Calvary. There the Hero, Jesus the Christ, suffered bruising by the diabolic seed, the devil and his aids—human or other—and there the Adversary received bruising from the puissant seed of the woman, in fulfillment of the ancient word of Jehovah.

It has been urged that injustice was involved in permitting inexperienced beings to be tempted; that the approach of a tempter should have been prevented. But none may overlook the certainty that beings endowed with freedom may originate tempting themselves. Moreover, the criticism falls, if it be shown that fair environment was assured and needful tuition and discipline also. Such guarding was provided: reasonable supervision, companionship and aid in the conduct of life. The Great Companion of all humanity and time was near, was in the Garden. His presence may not have been constantly apprehended. Few men or women have had such clarity of vision, such recognition of the immediate companionship of the Father of all. Apparently some daily converse of God and man had place that far-off early day.

Whatever may be said of the Biblical chronicle concerning the primal man and woman it will be admitted that essential truth is in it. Human behavior was much as modern observation affirms. Incidents, happenings of that early time are like those still apparent in the world. The obligation of obedience then imposed has not been lifted. Thomas Carlyle, in "Sartor Resartus," said, "Obedience is our universal duty and destiny; wherein whoso will not bend must break; too early and too thoroughly we cannot be trained to know that Would, in this world of ours, is as mere zero to Should, and for the most part as the smallest of fractions to Shall."

Law is, however, an essential of orderly, useful, moral life. Law, obligation for good behavior, abides, whatever temptations may appear. Safety, comfort, happiness are normal fruits of obedient conduct of life. Immunity from the pressures of temptation appears in due time as men and women continue in obedience to the laws of God—and his commandments are not grievous. More-

over, generous aids to obedience, to good behavior, to honesty and purity in life are promised, are given as needed if only faith in God be present and active. The just live by faith.

If a further query be raised, as: Who is responsible for the being of a tempter? the response might be: The tempter himself. The Creator of the worlds may not be debited as nothing in the record of creative acts suggests aught thereof. The goodness, mercy, holiness of God forbid. He made man in his own image and likeness. Angels could not have less honor, however they may be other than human. Jesus said the devil was a man-killer from the beginning and in truth stood not because truth was not in him. His falsities were his own.

But further. It is evident God has permitted selfish development of some personalities, albeit sin is ever abhorrent as it has been written that he cannot regard sin with any allowance. More, his patience with sinning people is marvelous. Indeed, it appears, at times, to be limitless, as in the recent World War. There must be an adequate reason. It may be thought, reverently, that permission of evil, of sin, is based in the recognition that angels and men are other than inerrant mechanisms, that with free being, inexperienced being, as well, unwise, wrong choices may be made and evil be loosed for working injury and disaster. Beings *without personal volitional* force might just as well have been created by God! Inerrancy might thus have been historic; but the history would not read like that of the human being with which all are now familiar. God preferred free beings to inerrant mechanisms, knowing well the tragedy involved.

Character is a resultant of activities based in personal freedom of choice under the discipline of probationary life, and is ever in accord with dominant volitional movements. The wisdom and vigor of welcome

discipline are determinative, also the actuality and promptness of obedience. Holy men and women alone meet the real desire of the All-father, and holy character is a resultant of obedience, faith, and love manifest within the charmed circle of the redemption divinely provided.

Once more: If free beings at any time originated sin and then enticed others of like quality, angelic, human, then the shielding of Adam and Eve, or any men or women, from the approach and proffers of a tempter could not make sure continuous freedom from the entrance and hurt of sin, for if one venture over the evil line was ever made another might be. Evidently the creation of free beings involves an immense risk. Here again, appears the marvel of the Creator's faith, his belief in angel and man. Creation was a movement in faith and expectancy!

This imperfect review of temptation and the advent of sin seemed to be essential as leading directly to the study of redemption, of the atonement—the divine remedy for sin. It was posited at the outset that God himself is ever central in the great movement for the saving of man from the hurt of sin, from sin itself. The progress of the divine atonement should be looked at historically, to be adequately understood.

In the Old Testament Jehovah is generally regarded as the Redeemer of Israel. For the most part, the several writers have the chosen people directly in view. The prophecy of Jonah, however, gives a wider outlook and the care of the Most High is affirmed for humanity outside of Israel. Accordant enlargement gradually appeared, as is clearly indicated by the words of Simeon when receiving the infant Jesus in his arms: "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the peoples, a light for the unveiling of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people, Israel."

The Hebrew Psalms are affluent with the thoughts and expressions of the master minds of the chosen race. They form a vital part of the record of manifested love and mercy and of the influence thereby affecting the currents of Hebrew life. Psalm Ninety is credited to Moses: "Yet is man turned to destruction and his years depart as the telling of a tale." The reason given is that man's iniquities and sins, even secret sins, are set in the light of God's countenance. An appalling statement! By the flaming wrath thus apparent the days are soon gone and "we fly away." Yet is there thought of divine mercy and an appeal for grace is made, for wisdom also. Apparently the appeal moves as with an underlying apprehension of a *redemptive purpose*, otherwise how could the writer expect the beauty of Jehovah, God, to rest on man as sunlight and dew on mountain slope, plain, and valley, or the work of human hands be established?

At an earlier date than the writing of this psalm apparently animal lives were offered in sacrifice by man. How early is not clearly stated. Evidently Cain and Abel, the first brothers of record, had some concept of vicarious offerings; the elder brought of the product of his fields, the fruitage of the ground; the younger, a lamb from his flock. Abel's offering was more than his brother's, was superior to it inasmuch as the life of a lamb is higher in grade of being than any plant or vegetable life. In both offerings something vicarious was present, a life was sacrificed. Apparently some teaching had been given or these offerings had not been made. Teaching of the order suggested may have been given with the taking of animal skins for clothing.

A much greater incident now claims attention. Abraham is a historic character casting far shadows like a lofty mountain peak. In his selection Jehovah chose a man with breadth and depth for being the founder of

a family, a people, aye, peoples, with marvelous history continuing without limit, and for receiving in the thoughts of God, revelations of his purpose and will, and from whose seed of promise, in the fullness of time, a woman should appear with such largeness of being as fitted her for the holy service of mothering the Son of Man, the Savior of all, the Son of God.

It is written that Jehovah made a covenant with Abraham, Abram then; the initiative was taken by Jehovah. With intimations of a great future, mystic and involving a harsh trial and discipline of his posterity, Abram was bidden to prepare selected beasts and birds, slay them, divide the bodies of the beasts and place the pieces in a dual rank with a lane for passing between, the birds not to be cut in pieces, yet arranged in like manner. Abram was to guard the unusual display from the hovering birds of prey. When the sun went down a deep sleep fell upon the watching man, also, a horror of great darkness and in it the mystic words of prophecy from the mouth of the Lord with the passing of a smoking furnace and a flaming torch between the pieces of beasts and birds. With such impressive symbolism was the first covenant with this notable patriarch made and sealed.

At the making of a second covenant when Abram was ninety and nine the name was changed to Abraham—the father of a multitude. A son was promised and Isaac was in due time born. The lad attaining manhood his father was divinely bidden to offer him in sacrifice to God on Mount Moriah. Apparently this added, most severe testing was met without exhibit of paternal weakness and terror. At the climax of reverent obedience Jehovah bade him see a substitute, a ram in the thicket nearby. It is enough to say here of this marvel of discipline that it was a most remarkable and significant adumbration of a later and greater exhibit of love and obe-

dience, of the offering up of the Son of God, freely for all mankind, on a Roman cross.

The life-story of Isaac subsequent to this striking devotement by his obedient father, his own filial obedience withal and the wonderful deliverance from death by divine intervention and love, adds nothing directly concerning sacrifice or the work of redemption save the passing to his son Jacob of the prophecy and promise. It is every way noteworthy that Jacob was divinely guarded and blest. Fleeing the wrath of his brother he lodged for a night on the slope of a hill using one of the stones of the place for his pillow. Sleeping, he dreamed. In vision a ladder joining earth and sky appeared with angels ascending and descending. Waking, he recognized the presence of God which he had failed to discern as the evening shadows had closed about him. Troubled, yet presently welcoming the gracious Presence, he was impelled to worship.

One of the noblest hymns of Christianity was inspired by this wonder-story of ancient days. The second stanza illumines story and singer:

Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down;
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee
Nearer to Thee!

Whether at the burial of a beloved ruler of a great people, or on the deck of a sinking steamship, this fine hymn of Mrs. Adams be sung, it is ever adequate as an outpouring of human need, sorrow, pain, at the nearness of death. By the historic incident in the life and discipline of the patriarch and by hallowing impulses of the hymn made more melodious by music with like uplift, the high purposes of God in the interest of humanity are advanced.

The times of Joseph, first-born of Jacob and Rachel, while accordant to the announcement to Abraham, furnish little concerning the making of atonement. The times of Moses bring fresh activity and large advance. Moses was a son of the house of Levi, from which the later priestly line was given Israel. To him was assigned by Jehovah in signal manner the task of leading the chosen people out of bondage to the Promised Land. The institution of the Passover was a far step in the exhibit of the purpose to provide redemption for man.

Through Moses the head of each Hebrew house received an order to slay a lamb, mark the doorpost and lintel with its blood, and in the solemn night gather his family at the table, eat the slain lamb, roasted with bitter herbs, while all were robed and girded for flight. In the darkness of that night a destroying angel smote the first-born of all Egyptian homes not having the blood tokens at the entrance. Jehovah ruled in Egypt that memorable night. He protected his people and sought to prepare them for greater things.

Inasmuch as the Passover lamb was thus recognized as a substitute for the firstborn of the Hebrew theologians, deeming substitution an essential element of atonement, magnify the teaching of this central matter of Passover observances. Unduly, perhaps. There are other elements receiving more immediate accent by the Father whose *love* is the really central thing of atonement for sin.

This hurried review of earlier times may well move more leisurely as observation of the Tabernacle ceremonies, sacrifices, and usages is attempted. Within the Tent of Meeting mystery had abiding. Priests ministered constantly in accord with instructions given Moses in the Mount. Ceremonials, varied offerings, multiplied sacrifices, were renewed day by day, or year after year. Once a year on a divinely appointed day the High Priest,

fully robed and mitred, duly supplied with blood of a goat and a bullock, went alone within the second veil to make atonement for his own sins and for the sins of the people. Returning from that solemnity he imposed his hands on the head of a second goat, known as a scapegoat, confessing over the devoted animal the sins and iniquities of all the children of Israel sending the burdened beast to the wilderness by the hand of a designated man. All this was an annual observance strictly guarded, immediately grave, impressive, and disciplinary; there was withal a suggestion of adumbration, inefficiency, of valued prophecy.

The disciplinary values of the Tabernacle observances may well detain a little. The Temple, of a latter day, continued the cult with yet more impressive environment and procedures. Continually the people were obligated to bring the best of their flocks and herds for the daily sacrifices, and especially for the annual Day of Atonement. The poor had relief by permission in certain cases to offer birds rather than beasts beyond their means. The continual offerings of the people, the devotement to the service of God of their best made a continuity of instruction in right conduct, awakened apprehension of their ethical relations, and thus Israel had exaltation above other and surrounding peoples in their concepts of righteousness, duty, and God. The Hebrews were constantly reminded of the holiness of their God and of the abiding distinction between right and wrong.

Notwithstanding, the children of the covenant were often thoughtless, nay, were rebellious, and by transgression and sin put distance between themselves and Jehovah who was ever caring for them, seeking to uplift and save. In further effort he supplemented the teaching of the Tabernacle services by sending selected, especially endowed and empowered men, known as seers and prophets. These men were to aid clarity of

common vision, to reprove, rebuke, instruct, and stimulate right conduct. They were fearless, virile, God-like men, with now and then a woman of like values. Apparently they maintained closer relations with Jehovah than did the priests. Priests and kings feared them and trembled at their bold, fiery speech, their unsparing re-proofs. Public thought and service, righteousness and honor had uplift by their faithful ministry. Sometimes, aye, often, their bold, unshrinking, vigorous criticisms aroused antagonisms, persecutions, and the record is marred, yet illumined, by their martyrdom. These severities could not, did not, break their hold on the thought-life of their day, and though their solemn voices long since were stilled in death their messages are yet potent wherever the Bible is read, and that includes most of the world's peoples. The Hebrew prophets are of the ethical forces that move mankind. Persecution, however severe, is powerless to still the vibrations of voices that send the majestic truths of God and man into the fields of human endeavor. The righteous are held in everlasting remembrance.

Some even earlier prophetic notes are worthy of reverent attention, are pertinent to the study in hand. As Jacob in Egypt was about to die he called his sons to his couch and delivered to them suggestive charges, messages, anent his estimate of each; these were given place in "the imperishable record" of Scripture. A portion of the striking deliverance to Judah has pertinence indeed.

Judah is a lion's whelp!

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
 Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet
 Until Shiloh come;
 And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.

History shows the tribe bearing his name the apparent and dominant one at the opening of the Christian era.

The tribe of Benjamin had been absorbed by Judah; the priestly class alone represented the tribe of Levi; all others of Israel were dispersed. Palestine was Judea. In the Apocalypse, Saint John was bidden stay his weeping over the lack of one competent to take and open the seven-sealed book held in the right hand of Him who was throned in the wondrous vision, inasmuch as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, had prevailed, was able, to loose the seals and open the book! The vision also included the standing of a lamb as having been slain in the midst of the throne, the elders and the four living creatures; the Lamb took and opened the book and a majesty of ascription and praise followed the mystic movement. Jesus was the Christ, the Root of David, the Lion of Judah, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world!

The great prophets later sent to the chosen people while speaking most directly and forcefully to the Hebrew folk of their own times, giving reproof and instruction had more or less to say of a Messiah, a Deliverer. Mainly, perhaps, their task was preparative for the advent of a Messiah, of One able to redeem and save. At times, indeed, their messages had wideness of thought and apprehension of things surpassing their understanding. Saint Peter wrote of these prophets as diligently searching what manner of times the spirit of Christ who was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. The Spirit impelled mystic messages in familiar language but so freighted the common words as to compel a waiting of their fulfillment for the interpretation thereof. The mighty impulsions magnified the prophetic office and service while leaving the men burdened with longing to know the will and purpose of Jehovah.

The breadth and depth of many prophetic deliver-

ances impel recognition and use of an important canon in interpretation. Passages in the writings awakening thought and expectancy of a Messiah, a Redeemer, are often mystic in form and content; while they may have immediate pertinency to the times and conditions at the date of deliverance they may also have a far outlook with accordant breadth, depth, and significance. A reverent and thoughtful reading of the Seventy-second Psalm will impel recognition of its dual burden. Its melodious chant magnifies the dignity and splendor of a great ruler, Solomon—probably—but the fine, far-
visioned imagery of the Psalm carries the reader over all the Solomonic glory to some Ruler more imposing, to "Great David's Greater Son." Of the Messianic future alone can some of the sunbursts of the songful lines be really affirmed. One is subjoined as indicating the claim in mind:

He will have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River unto the ends of the earth!

The comment of Professor Delitzsch on this Psalm is virile and pertinent to the study in hand: "The words of the Psalm were all fulfilled in him (Solomon) with the exception of one thing; the universal dominion that is desired for him." Delitzsch notes the Old Testament concept: the Redeemer is Jahve, and gives what he styles a "parable" as illustrating the manner in which the Old Testament proclamation of salvation is gradually developed:

"In relation to the day of the New Testament the Old Testament is night. During this night there mount up two stars of promise in opposite directions. The one describes its path from above downwards; it is the promise of Jahve who is about to come. The other describes its path from below upwards; it is the hope which is reposed in the seed of David, the prophecy of the Son of David, which is at first altogether human and earthly. These two

stars meet at last, they blend together into one constellation; the night vanishes into day. This one constellation is Jesus Christ, Jahve and David's son in one person, the King of Israel and at the same time the Redeemer of the world; in one word, the God-man."

Chapter LIII of Isaiah is the most pathetic, most inclusive, of the sacred writings having the Messianic vision and burden. Yet, at once, Psalm XXII lifts itself above the limitation indicated and makes its own intense appeal. The reading of either of these marvels of Scripture moves the deeps of being. Poetic fire, pathos, beauty, power, in both reach far, lofty levels. Both sublimely chant of One having surpassing experiences of pain and grief and as ever affluent in ability to save. As it is always profitable to read the best literatures the great Messianic movement of Isaiah's thought in the passages named is given in full; a fair beginning includes verse 13ff. of Chapter LII, as well as Chapter LIII.

"Behold, my servant will deal wisely, he will be exalted and lifted up, and will be very high. Like as many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men) so will he sprinkle many nations; kings will shut their mouths at him; for that which hath not been told them will they see; and that which they had not heard will they understand.

"Who hath believed that which we have heard? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground; he hath no form or comeliness; and when we see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

"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

his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him—made to light on him—the iniquity of us all.

“He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? Or this—cut off out of the land of the living? For the transgression of my people was he stricken. And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence neither was any deceit in his mouth.

“Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he will see his seed, he will prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in his hand. He will see of the travail of his soul and will be satisfied; by the knowledge of himself will my righteous servant justify many—make many righteous; and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great and he will divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul—life—unto death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bare the stain of many and made—maketh—intercession for the transgressors.”

If Isaiah had any other servant of such high grade in mind, other than Jesus the Christ, if the impelling Spirit had such pressures for any other as this marvelous Old Testament Scripture was inspired and penned—Scripture of measureless moment, gravity, pathos, and appeal, of far vision and arresting vigor and beauty holding all readers as it did the African to whom Philip the evangelist was imperatively sent—that other is unknown; if any other has known the full burden, sorrow, chastisement, bruise, and pouring out of affluent life unto death, so wonderfully pre-visionsed and boldly outlined in the prophecy, the record of that other has escaped all chroniclers. Jesus did pass through the awful valley of these vast shadows, these marvels of testing experiences; he, only, suffered in completeness the mis-

apprehension, indifference, coldness, antagonism, ignominy, and the fearful bitterness of malignity and hate. Pharisee, priest, scribe, elder, not only failed to discern in him their long-desired, long-expected Messiah, they deemed him an enemy, a malefactor, though the common people heard him gladly as one who went about doing good, a healer of the sick, a sharer of common burdens, who spake as never man spake, carrying also the griefs and sorrows of humanity. A day came when even the indifference of all was manifest and Jesus was alone amid hovering shadows and the dark.

He had, withal, clarity and force for discerning and appreciating the breadth and depth of the great prophecies. He discerned the values of the mystic sentences the prophets must have penned with dimness of vision; he knew increasingly the profound of pain and sorrow, the vast burden of temptation and sin humanity was bearing, felt in himself the heartbreak of these crushed by tyranny, the miseries imposed by wild ambition, and utter disregard of the widow and orphan, the lament of the crazed and broken, the despair of the many sin-bruised having no consciousness of any one able to save and give rest and peace, able to deliver from the clutch and downpull of sin; he, only, passed to fullness of personal experience of being wounded for man's transgressions, of being bruised for human iniquities, of chastisement for man's relief and the reception of stripes for healing the hurt of sin. The depth of the valley of pain and death through which it pleased Jehovah to send him and to be bruised therein, aye, to die for all therein, none but Jesus has known, or can know.

Psalm XXII has perhaps a more striking outline of the tragic experiences of the Christ at the culmination of his life of compassion and service of man. On the cross the cruel mockings, biting scorn, which the psalmist in his measure received and endured, of which he had

bitter memories as his pen moved, Jesus bore in fullness as throngs shouted abuse and deriding priests voiced taunts and exhibited shameless disregard of pain and anguish as they stood within the shadow of the tree to which he had been lifted by their envy and hate. The priests and their sympathetic following used the very words of their own Scriptures apparently with unconsciousness of reaction upon themselves, phrasings from this prophetic psalm, their own treasured Messianic assurance. Alas, iniquity and sin have evil fruitage, stupidity, blindness, hardness of heart, and wild perversion of words most reverent, true, and precious. Strangely enough even the Roman soldiers serving and attending this wickedness of purpose and deed helped to fill out the historic accomplishment of events long pre-visionsed and committed to record: "They parted my garments among them and upon my vesture did they cast lots!" Ah, that seamless robe!

Yet more noteworthy, out of the far-spreading, mid-day darkness came the anguished voice of the Crucified in solemn, aye, awful resonance, repeating the opening words of this twenty-second Psalm:

"My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

With both these great Messianic portions of Holy Writ, Jesus doubtless was very familiar by frequent reading and sober meditation over their gravity, solemnity of phrasing, and wondrous freight of thought. Their unsounded depths challenged and impelled study, just as they still do. It is every way probable that he had a more accurate and worthy estimate of their teaching than had any of the house of Israel, than any of the leaders of the people, and yet in Gethsemane and at Calvary he, mayhap, discerned with pain and grief an unfathomed and rayless deep as it pleased his Father to bruise him, let him down to chastisement, stripes, and augmented acquaintance with sorrow, as more than the hiding of human faces brought severe testing.

The loss of the Father must have been a very brief matter. That is indicated also by the last, low whisper: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!"

However profound the mystery of that veiling of the face of the Father in the trying hour at Calvary, it may not be allowed to lead away from the central, the everlasting truth that the Christ was accomplishing the eternal purpose of God, the atonement for sin, the redemption of mankind. God was immediately involved in all the tragic events and movements finding their climactic at the cross, peradventure in the mortal pain of the human. Man was made in the image and likeness of his Maker. God cannot fail the knowing and sharing, the affliction and distress, of the human, for the capacity for suffering is his endowment. God gives of his own plentitude of qualities. Nothing can push man far from the observation and knowing of the omnipresent, all-knowing, One. Nothing can push man so far as to make love divine powerless; the moral chasm sin opened and ever opens, is bridged, great as it is, by love proffering a remedy for sin.

Readers of the New Testament are familiar with the thought of a lonely Savior, the Man of the olive trees and the cross. Indeed, Jesus knew what it is to be alone. Praying amid the shadows of trees and night, his friends sleeping nearby, he was alone. Hanging on the dreadful tree, his Father's face averted, he was alone! But who knows aught of the loneliness of the Father as he withdrew his presence for a little from his obedient, faithful, loving Son? "It pleased Jehovah to bruise him," saith the august prophecy. Did the Father escape all bruising? The fathers of men and women know pain and sorrow—Let David's lament for Absalom, sinning Absalom, bear witness. All paternity is of God, from him all human fatherhood derives. The lament and pain of the human man furnish no measure for the divine suffering, the

anguish of the Father as the Son was left alone in the climactic hour of making atonement for sin. Father and Son were at one in the mighty work of redemption. Here are filial words that carry far: "The Father loveth the Son!" "I and my Father are one!" "I am in the Father and the Father in me!"

Another phase of this great movement in the interest of humanity merits brief attention. All are accustomed to think of the Christ as a sufferer. It has been said that an artist exhibited a painting of Jesus as Victor, in accord with certain concepts of the New Testament. The painting utterly failed to please the people of the city where it was exhibited. Many looked without indication of interest and many openly proffered criticism. Pondering, the artist withdrew the picture, resumed work upon it. Having changed certain lines of the face so that grief and pain were apparent and accented he exposed it afresh to the public. Direct approval was manifest, for all saw the face as that of the Man of Sorrows.

Yet Scriptures having other content have value. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews urges looking unto Jesus who for the joy set before him endured the cross despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Thus the author, captain, and perfecter of faith is declared a victor receiving vast reward. Saint Peter recognizes this joyousness as inseparably joined with the pain and grief, and bids his readers rejoice inasmuch as they are sharers in the sufferings of Christ that, in turn, they may have exultation at the revelation of his glory. Recognition of this paradox as a part of the life of Jesus opens a way for the idea that the advent of the Messiah was for him a welcome and delightful adventure. His affluent enthusiasm may have helped greatly to bear obloquy and shame, antagonism and indifference; in all he was pleasing his Father and lifting the burden of the world;

both must have ministered delight. This idea illumines the Beatitude: "Blessed are you when men shall hate you and exclude you from their society and insult you and spurn your very names as evil things for the Son of Man's sake. Be glad at such a time and dance for joy for your reward is great in heaven; for that is just the way their forefathers behaved to the prophets!"

Again let it be said, at the very heart of the great redemptive movement God may be found. The prophecies of a Redeemer, predictions concerning a Messiah, have this divine majesty; God is in them, impels writing, voicing. The New Testament record of fulfillment, of accomplishment, has like supremacy; God is ever present. The Bible is a very human book; yet it is much more fully, intensely, a divine book. It is spiritually dynamic and its dynamic quality is supplied by the Eternal One. Thus, "For never did any prophecy come by human will but men sent by God spoke as they were impelled—driven by the Holy Spirit." At the opening of the fourth Gospel blazing words are freighted with reactions to divine influences. Not there only, but finest exhibits of thought and diction are there, as these:

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God! The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life! and the life was the light of men! And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness overcame it not! . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as one of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth!"

The New Testament magnifies the incarnation, advent, ministry, and passion of Jesus the Christ, magnifies his vicarious, sacrificial suffering and death. While prominence is thus given that phase there is in the words

of Jesus, in his teaching, in multiplied allusions to his intimate relations, indeed, his unity, with the Father, the constant affirmation of the love of God as the source and impulse of all the majestic movement for reconciliation. Love in the Everlasting Father dowered humanity with a Redeemer, even Jesus the Christ.

Again, at the heart of reconciliation, of atonement, and in the development and exhibit of its plentitude and efficiency, God ever is! Adequate apprehension of the immensity of love divine for all mankind, the rich and poor, the bond and free, black, white, brown, yellow, whatever coloring and shading, with all the grades mental and moral, may be esteemed a superhuman task. Well may all sing with the saintly Faber:

"It is God: His love looks might,
But is mightier than it seems!

For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

Out of the majesty and mightiness of love in God, out of its everlasting glory, streams manward a measureless tide. The swelling tide is affluent, dynamic! Thereby are fashioned faithful, competent, shepherds. Shepherds like to one mirrored in the teaching of Jesus, a shepherd who left the ninety and nine in safe folding to seek one wandering lost sheep, seeking despite severe, cumulative perils until the lost was found, and brought back with tender ministry and rejoicings. What an adumbration of the one Good Shepherd who laid down his life for all mankind however gone astray and imperiled!

Theologies sometimes, too often indeed, have promoted the dark rather than the splendor of the light that shines for aye in the face of the Christ. Not inten-

tionally by any means. In the interest of systematic statements of Biblical truths, logical processes have carried discussions to uncertain affirmations, to undue magnifying of severities—the supposed severities of divine justice—while also failing to magnify in their writings the eternal compassion of the All-Father. A fruitage of such theological thought and accordant teaching is apparent in the prayer of a Scotch grandmother as given by George Macdonald in his "Robert Falconer"—a midnight outpour of trouble and heartache, of anguish and tender pleading, a passion-tide of mother-love and intercession for a sinning, wandering son whose face she had not seen in many wearying years. The broad Scotch phrasing is far from being a blemish. Her grandson innocently became a listener after the beginning of the outpour and the following portion burned itself a lodgement in Robert's very being:

Och hone! I've a sair, sair hert, I've a sair hert i' my breist, O Lord! thou knowest. My ain Andrew! To think o' my bairnie that I carriet, an' leuch i' my face—to think o' 's being' a reprobate! O Lord! cudna he be elekit yet? Is there nae turnin' o' thy decrees? Na, na; that wadna do at a'. But while ther's life ther's houp. But wha kens whether he be alive or no? Naebody can tell. Gladly wad I luik upon 's deid face gin I cud believe that his sowl wasna amang the lost. But eh! The torments o' that place! and the reek that gangs up forever and ever, smotherin' the stars! And my Andrew doon i' the hert o' 't cryin'! An' me no able to win tell him! O Lord! I canna say thy will be dune. But dinna lay't to my chairge; for gin ye was a nither yersel' ye wadna pit me there. O Lord I'm verra ill-fashioned. I beg yer pardon. I'm near oot o' my mind. Forgie me O Lord! for I hardly ken what I'm sayin'. He was my ain babe, my ain Andrew, an' ye gar him to me yersel'. An' noo he's for the finger o' scorn to pint at; an ootcast an' a wamarer frae his ain country and durna come within sicht o' 't for them 'at would tak' the law o' 'im. An' it's drink—drink an' ill compay! He wad hae dune weel eneneh gin they had laten 'im be. What for mair men be aye drink—drinkin' at somethin' or i'her! I never want it.

Eh! gin I war young as when he was born, I wad be up an' awa' this verra nicht to luik for 'im. But it's nae use me trin' it. O God! ance mair I pray thee to turn 'im frae the error o' 's ways afore he gaes hence an' isna mair! An' oh! dinna lat Robert gang efter 'm as he's like eneuch to do. Gie me grace to haud 'm tight, that he may be to the praise o' thy glory forever and ever. Amen.

The audacities of petition that so frightened the aged, burdened Scotch mother as she opened the deeps of her being unto him who made her a mother were impelled by a love that spurned boundaries, a love stronger than death. Reminding the All-Father that gave her a son, the son who had strayed afar and that if he were a mother himself he would not put a son, a tempted, wandering, broken son in the pit whose "reek gangs up forever smothering the stars" was indeed an audacity. Yet something normal was in the audacious suggestion with which the Great Maker of mothers must have been in sympathy, for the capacity for material suffering is his gift. He knoweth the frame maternal and the possible intensity for prayer over a wayward son. In the story, filial love, warmed by sacred fires persists, and ultimately Robert takes to his grandmother her "ain Andrew" clothed in his right mind.

Evidence that atonement is of God is cumulative in the Bible. Early and late it is shown that God is willing in himself to forgive sin. A great message of Jehovah was given to Moses his servant. That weighty message has value at this point. The extremely sinful conduct of the people during an absence of their leader in the awe-inspiring mount puts the deliverance of a great message of divine compassion in a splendor of light.

"And Jehovah descended in the cloud and stood with him (Moses) there and proclaimed the name of Jehovah (the marginal reading merits recognition; and he stood with him there and called upon the Name of Jehovah). And Jehovah

passed by before him and proclaimed; Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness and truth; keeping loving kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear *the guilty*—visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children upon the third and upon the fourth generation."

According to the august deliverance forgiveness of sin is normal action with God. Here is indication that the love of the Father enspheres all other excellences, attributes, powers of personality. The immense values of atonement are more ancient than the New Testament. The later Scripture sets forth Jesus the Christ as the Lamb of God that beareth the sin of the world, the lamb who has been offered in sacrifice ever since the creation of the world!

Jehovah gave Moses, gave Israel, gave mankind the great message concerning the forgiveness of sin out of the plentitude of his justice, out of his beneficent fullness of Fatherhood, out of the tidal flow of his mighty love. The message above openly recognizes essential conditions! Pardon waits upon penitence.

That the penalizing extends to the children of sinning father even unto the far-removed fourth generation is an intensity that may not be overlooked. Sin poisons, mars, introduces disintegrating forces insuring deterioration and, when the drift is completed, death closes the scene. The fourth generation does not appear in every evil case! These penal sequences are not arbitrarily imposed; they are simply the normal fruitage of sin!

The early proclamation of forgiveness for sin was firmly based; the Proclaimer voiced his own unpurchased mercy, graciousness, slow movement of anger, and abundance of lovingkindness and truth. Here is an adumbrative manifestation of the glory of the Eternal

Father. The proclamation glows with its majestic burden and with Him who voiced it! In the making of the Bible the majestic chant gathers sacred fire and this is written of the voicing of multitudes: Trust ye in Jehovah forever; for in Jehovah is the Rock of Ages!

Reflecting, it is not too much to aver that Jehovah received in himself the primal thrust of sin and then out of his fatherliness, his abounding lovingkindness and truth, gave the troubled sinners of the beginning the early promise with such pertinency of phrasing as proffered sympathy to the woman who first yielded to the tempter, pertinency also to the far-off climactic by which Satan would be bruised and cast out. If that primal impact of sin bruised the Divine Nature has there not been a continuous bruising of that Nature by the sin of mankind in the ages? If that be admitted is it not inevitable to think, to believe, the Father suffered as really as his well-beloved Son when that Son was in agony in the Garden and when bruised by scourging and crucifixion?

Other queries rise. Does not disregard of the rule trouble the Giver of it? Does not fratricidal strife grieve, hurt the Father of all? Do not the eager, brutal contests in the mart, the industrial centers, trouble him? When each seeks his own, ruthlessly and refuses consideration of others, fails of brotherliness, and ventures advance of personal interest by warlike acts with guns, stones, brickbats, clubs, is he not wounded who loves all the children of men? Is it any less distressing with Jehovah now for the selfish trafficker in strong drink, in toxic poisons, wholesale manufacturers and dealers, bootleggers, tempters with home-brewed liquors, to urge temptations on the weak, on those whose thirst is morbid and abnormal, than when Habakkuk was impelled to voice a woe to him that putteth a bottle to his neighbor's lips and maketh him drunken also?

Nay, it is forever true that God will by no means clear the guilty; he will hold men responsible for their doings in accordance with the light given, and will compel accountability.

The main thought is reaffirmed: God is ever at the very center of all atoning purpose and effort. All exhibits of such purpose and movement by ancient promise and prophecy, ceremonials, offerings, types, and adumbrations, the tragedy at Calvary itself, were antedated in the thought of God. Yet did his Son rightfully have the preëminence the New Testament declares, but always in unity with his Father and directly doing the will of the Father. Jesus openly said, "I do always the things that please my Father!" Jesus is presented in the prologue of the fourth Gospel as the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of his Father. In the passion prayer Jesus said, "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Thus he shared from the beginning the majestic task of human redemption, a continuous work, as continuous as the probationary life of man. He hath an unchangeable priesthood. His intercessions cease not. His ministry of reconciliation is ever active and efficient; he welcomes saved men and women to that wonderful ministry and hides its blessedness and power in their being.

Some pregnant passages of the New Testament concerning atonement for sin have been cited and more await recognition. In Romans, the following arrests the reader:

"On the ground of obedience to law no man living will be declared righteous before him (God). Law simply brings a sure knowledge of Sin."

"But now a righteousness coming from God has been brought to light apart from law, both law and prophets bearing witness to it—a righteousness coming from God,

which depends on faith in Jesus Christ and extends to all who believe. No distinction is made; for all alike have sinned, and all consciously come short of the Glory of God, gaining acquittal from guilt by his free, unpurchased grace through the deliverance which is found in Christ Jesus. He it is whom God put forward as a mercy seat, rendered efficacious through faith in his blood, in order to demonstrate his righteousness—because of the passing over, in God's forbearance, of the sins previously committed,—with a view to demonstrating, at the present time, his righteousness, that he may be shown to be righteous himself, and the Giver of righteousness to those who believe in Jesus."

The Scripture recognizes the All-Father as providing by salvation, through faith in the Son, a way of righteousness, a new and living way. In preparing that way God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. High, yes, highest place was given that Delivered One in the imperishable record yet he is ever the "Sent of God" and in all things he did that which advanced the purpose and work of redemption, ever manifesting the Father, and with full obedience. Wherefore it was written that God had highly exalted him and given him a name, the name above all other names! This passage is in beautiful harmony with the Jehovistic word to Moses. Both exhibit the mercy and grace of God and both gave the luminous declaration of divine love and kindness, of their bountifulness as manifesting the riches of the Infinite One. At the same time the apostolic solicitude for the righteousness of God has ever led the thoughtful to declare special interest in the problem of moral government as surely involved in redemptive purpose and activity. Surely, the importance of moral rule is immense. Right and justice are imperatives in all governments. It is unthinkable that the Most High is ever disrespectful of these imperatives. They are

abiding pillars of his throne. They are of his very being, his personality. In the majesty they assure he appeared to Moses for the giving of the law, also for the more intimate affirmation of his readiness to forgive sin. God is without variation, or shadow of turning, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever! A psalm affirms: "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and thy law is the truth."

Something should be said of propitiation. The term appears only three times in the New Testament—once in Romans and twice in John I. The Greek in Romans is *hilastarion*. The same Greek word is used by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in naming the appointments for the temple services and the A. V. and R. V. both have the *mercy seat* as the English equivalent. Saint John uses a kindred word, the noun *hilasmos*; the English versions have propitiation—Weymouth, however, giving the variant *atonement sacrifice*. But really, propitiation is more a pagan than a Christian term and thought. It is suggestive of pagan usages and ideas; their gods were deemed wrathful, and propitiatory offerings and sacrifices were made as efforts for appeasing the angry deities. The Father of our Lord and Master, the Father of all men, is not appeased by propitiatory offerings, neither have his children occasion to fear his anger save as they refuse his proffers of grace and persist in wrongdoing and sin. The Penitential Psalm chants most truthfully:

"O Lord, open Thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise. For Thou desireth not sacrifice; else would I give it; Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise!"

That sweet singer of Israel knew the Tabernacle cult, the priests, the sacrificial offerings and sobering ceremonials, including the great Day of Atonement with

its solemnities. Yet in his heartbreak for his sin and painful brooding over the pungent reproof of Nathan the prophet and the deeper probing of the Holy Spirit, David found himself face to face with his Maker, the Holy One of Israel, and with confession of guilt and sin sought forgiveness directly, apparently without thought of priests and sacrifices until pardon and inner cleansing made him a new man. Penitence, turning from sin, humility, contrition, pleading, a volcanic outpour of prayer to God, was sufficient. Then the king was eager to speak of even whole burnt offerings. They evinced adoration and praise rather than propitiatory values.

Redemption is a term of large import and interest. Its kinsmen, redeem, Redeemer, are of like honor and worth. The three have luminous values in the Sacred writing. Blood by symbolic use is of like rank. These make holy resonance in the Bible. In Apocalyptic vision glorious Saint John heard the celestial company singing a new song:

"Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: For Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests!"

Clarified vision of the teaching of Jesus concerning this sacred matter of redemption may be advanced by thoughtful study of his peerless story of the Prodigal Son. Wondrously it exhibits the Father's love for man by setting forth luminously the character and behavior under severe testing of one of the fathers of men—a father whose son went astray. The youth left home as the urge for self-direction pressed, left the inestimable benefits of kinship and home interest, left all with eagerness, with slight regard for wise conduct of life, and without the personal balance needful; minus, indeed, the vantage experience alone can assure. Sane thinking is a fruitage

of more years and larger contact with affairs and people; sobering often comes by testing, failures, losses.

In the far country—a region where God is not, or where none recognize him or his governance, a region often shadowed by want and despair—there came a day when the Prodigal, having wasted his patrimony, was in the stress of want, was famishing, was homesick and nigh to despair; then he recalled his father's house and its plentiful supplies and desire stirred within, fruiting presently in determination of immediate return with open confession and penitent outcry, "Father, I have sinned!" Thus he left the far country, his confession and accordant plea burning heart and lips. But while he was yet afar off his father saw him and was moved with compassion and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him! Kissed him with tenderness! Nevertheless, the heavy-laden son began voicing his penitential grief, his humble pleading: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." The father, all aglow with love and joy, permitted no more humiliation, abasement, and prayer, but holding his son in loving embrace bade the servants bring the best raiment and adornment of the home and put the house in array for jubilation and banqueting.

Apparently the father was untroubled by thoughts of the moral government of his home. Nothing is in the record of penal sequences save those the Prodigal knew in bitterness afar from the light and beneficence of home. The elder son alone suggested aught of such matters. He, with haughtiness and severity, reproved his father for hastily and with lavish display welcoming a son of the home who had dishonored it, and had beggared and disgraced himself by living riotously with bad people in a bad land. That jealous, angered son is, in the story, left to his self-righteousness in maleficent shadow as he refused the urgent plea of fatherhood: "It was meet to

make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again! was lost, and is found!"

The story has nothing of comment by the Teller indicative of the need for naming supports for moral government or of other penalties for wrongdoing and sin than those painfully, pungently experienced by the Prodigal as the fruit of his own doings. Retribution appeared swiftly; every day brings judgment, doom, penalty. There is direct accent on repentance, on forsaking vice and sin, on penitent confession and humble prayer for pardon and renewal. Full accent also on the unfailing compassion and love of the divine fatherhood. The story has immortality.

In another brief story Jesus magnified repentance and its sure acceptance on high. The joy of the shepherd who sought a wandering sheep, lost in the dark of the mountains, until he found it, and bearing it gently, returned to ask friend and neighbor to rejoice with him is uplifted mightily by a most memorable affirmation.

These things are in harmony with the earlier revelations and are assurances of the eternal purpose and work of human rescue from sin and its hurt; in full harmony with the great deliverance of the Christ to Nicodemus:

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that Whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved!"

In sum, the eternal purpose and work of God, indicated in early promise and latter prophecy, adumbrated by typical sacrifices, offerings, and ceremonials, and imperfectly set forth in history and literature of the chosen people, attained their supreme climactic in the life, passion, and death of Jesus the Christ. However christocentric the New Testament Scriptures may be they also declare the majestic mysticism that God was

in Christ Jesus working out and accomplishing his everlasting purpose, the redemption of man! The full climactic includes the Garden stress of sorrow of agonized prayer, the betrayal, the mockery of trial, the submission of his face, face more marred than any of the sons of men, that bruised face to shame and spitting, the cheeks to those plucking off the hair, his back to the smiters, the flagellum, the cross, the laying down of his life, the appealing cry to his Father, whose face was then unseen, the glorious return from the rock-hewn tomb, the ascension, the resumption of his heavenly seat, the sending of the promise of the Father for empowerment of his disciples making them dynamic for the high ministry of reconciliation.

In all the love of God was manifested, the mighty venture of love and faith for man, in patient, continued effort to seek and save the lost, the sinning.

Sublimity is ever present in this divine work of redemption. Atonement, reconciliation, is a sublimity! The mystic unity of Father and Son dominates the work. The Holy Spirit hovers over it and assumes the burden of making all ministers of the reconciliation dynamic. The entire movement is mystic, glorious, magnificent!

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost! As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end! Amen!

II.

This brief study of Atonement has been advanced with such clarity and adequacy as was at command. Inadequacy and lack of clearness and vigor is lamented. The greatness of the divine movement for the rescue of humanity from the hurt of sin, from sin itself, the mysticisms involved in promise, prophecy, and the life and service of Jesus the Christ, his revealing of God as the All-Father and as manifest in his Son, in the transfer of a divine purity and vigor of life to men and women on the basis of repentance and faith so making saints of sinners, made more, much more, demand than could be met. The only recourse is to leave what has been typed as an humble effort with thankfulness for all stimuli received for the venture.

The task of a fair exhibit of the obligation imposed on all human life by the divine proffer of salvation from sin through penitence and faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, remains. The obligation is actual, inescapable. The task now assayed may not be overlooked or wholly left to others. None may lessen the obligation indicated. It abides for all mankind, for all time. The following musical lines by Richard Chevenix Tranch are pertinent and pungent:

I say to thee, do thou repeat,
To the first man thou mayest meet
In lane, highway, or open street—

That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love,
As broad as the blue sky above;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain
And anguish, all are shadows vain,
That death itself shall not remain;

That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth may thread,
Through dark ways underground be led;

Yet, if we will one Guide obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way
Shall issue out in heavenly day;

And we, on divers shores now cast,
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past
All in our Father's house at last.

And ere thou leave him, say thou this,
Yet one word more: they only miss
The winning of that fatal bliss

Who will not count it true, that love,
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
And that in it we live and move.

And one thing further make him know,
That to believe these things are so,
This firm faith never to forego,

Despite of all which seems at strife
With blessing, all with curses rife,
That this is blessing, this is life.

The thought of an unlimited atonement exhibits the inclusiveness of the divine ideal. Few thinkers, if any, will now give place to a less inclusive scheme of redemption. "Whosoever will," is the attractive call; it alone has winning charm. If redeeming love has such largeness, such wideness of truth and appeal, then all mankind have burden as the measure of knowledge.

Jesus has been drawing all mankind, all human interests, into the circle of his dominance. He is central in the thoughts of many. The circle of his attraction is constantly being enlarged. Thinkers everywhere find it essential to recognize him, his teachings; they may wish to put him aside, but find it impossible. They may remain skeptical concerning his right to

rule, but cannot escape him or his words. As he said, his words are spirit, are life. The world and its peoples he bought with a price and none can bar him out of his rightful heritage. Industry, business, trade and commerce, world-wide enterprise feel his presence, admit his high pressures. Christian ideas and ideals are recognized in the mart, in the industrial centers. Men may be timid over ventures to embody his thoughts in actual affairs; bolder advocates do appear. Timidity in this matter is not unduly strange. Self-interest has long been the dominant thing in world affairs, in business, in statecraft; it has been such a mighty compelling force that direct abandonment thereof is far from being a facile matter. Railways across continents, linking cities, girding broad prairies, joining valleys and plains, communities, states; steamships of colossal size and capacity serving humanity on lakes, rivers, and oceans; vast movements in promotion by agriculture and manufacture, also in distribution of products as imposing; these and more have been built up and augmented in the centuries by the strong and have been based in self-interest.

Society has had scant room for Jesus and his ideals. Informally, if not more directly and positively, society has banned his words and refused him courtesy. Notwithstanding, his radical, revolutionary teachings, his actual though unseen presence and spiritual impact have been, and are impelling, finer usages and are exalting truth, honor, purity. Social forms, characteristic, improve with the advancing generations; Christian ideals are increasingly permeative in the circles of modern life. In the prefatory work of Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe's memorable indictment of American Slavery the following bit of optimism appears:

Another and better day is dawning; every influence of literature, of poetry, and art, is becoming more and more in unison with the great master chord of Christianity, good-will to men.'

The poet, the painter, and the artist now seek out and embellish the common and gentler humanities of life, and, under the allurements of fiction, breathe a humanizing and subduing influence, favorable to the development of the great principles of Christian brotherhood.

Much advance has been assured since the reading of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" so mightily stirred millions of people. Meantime war has repeatedly imposed its awfulness on many, on fighting folk with and without personal enmity, on the nations, on everybody. The more recent, more terrible war-storm was so widely inclusive in its protracted and destructive inflictions as to make its record a surpassing one in the annals of war. Recklessly, blatantly, its imperial instigators sought to make sure for indefinite time that might is right, that Christian idealism is inimical to the state, whatever may be its values with neighborly groups of people. The objective thus madly, wickedly sought by imperialists, sought with outrageous disregard and defiance of Christian ideas, was not attained: The Christ, the Great White Companion of men, barred the way! Inestimable injury was inflicted, the social, industrial, and economic values of all Europe, and beyond its geographic limits, cannot recover from the bruising and wreckage for many, many years.

All this severity of wrongdoing, this vast wreckage of treasured values, this fury of antagonism to the teachings and standards of the Gospel, this wanton display of imperial greed and madness, has not driven the cross from the open field of its struggle and partial triumph, has not stayed the forward venture of those bearing aloft its white banner; its "far-beaming blaze of majesty" is as radiant as in the times of peace. Rather its intensity of light has been enhanced. Accordingly, in the stress of battle, amid the hurts and injuries of war, social forces advancing from homes where the Christ had love and worship, from communities made thought-

ful, noble, by service in Jesus's name, carried amelioration, impelled army uplift and high morale, assured manifold comfort to the maimed and mangled, the dying. A new, untiring energy of hallowing ministries appeared; soldiers in muddy trenches, in "No man's land," in all the rude, harsh involvings of the long, dreary, death-dealing conflict, were aided and comforted. As if meeting the bold challenge given wildly that Christianity by its failue had precipitated the war upon a peaceful world its adherents, men and women, made worthy exhibit of service more impressive, more potent than all the massive output of materialistic and imperial power. Nations have gained clarity of vision and a larger dread of the rude clash of arms as a means of adjusting differences; vision also of a better world, one unvexed by war.

None may overlook the truth that all reforms of real worth and promise are but wholesome reactions of persons, communities, nations, to the pressures the work of redemption constantly applies. Redemption is a vital, impelling force, ceaseless, cumulative. It is of God, and puissant. Its dynamic He supplies, and it is limited alone by human indifference and willfulness. The sin of man thus manifests its virus and hinders the work of God.

If human nature had had no impairment in the ages, if no handicap now existed, the situation would be less grave. Existing tendencies to lawless conduct, to vice and crime enlarge common perils. Sinfulness is present. But, redemption is correlated with sin. The Bible is an open book as this truth is recognized. Atonement has significance for sinners; it was provided for sinners; it has potency for sinners. Sinful folk have better moments when desire for freedom from the bondage of sin is present. Redemption proffers gracious liberty. The self-will of many hinders their advance. Self-will is a

native endowment of real value. It may be devoted to misuse—and that is sin. Selfishness is readily developed; and sin is a fruit of selfishness. Continuance in sin augments selfishness and effectually bars the way to submission to Him who saves from sin.

The essential matter abides; the atonement for sin, the redemption of man by the Christ who was ever in unity with the Father, in the mighty task. That sacrificial service of man imposes obligation on all mankind. Here is nothing harsh or arbitrary. Love provided the remedy for sin. *Love is atonement.* All men ought to love God supremely, for God first loved man, now loves all mankind, with an everlasting love. This the Gospel affirms. This the Spirit reveals in those who believe.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love.

In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

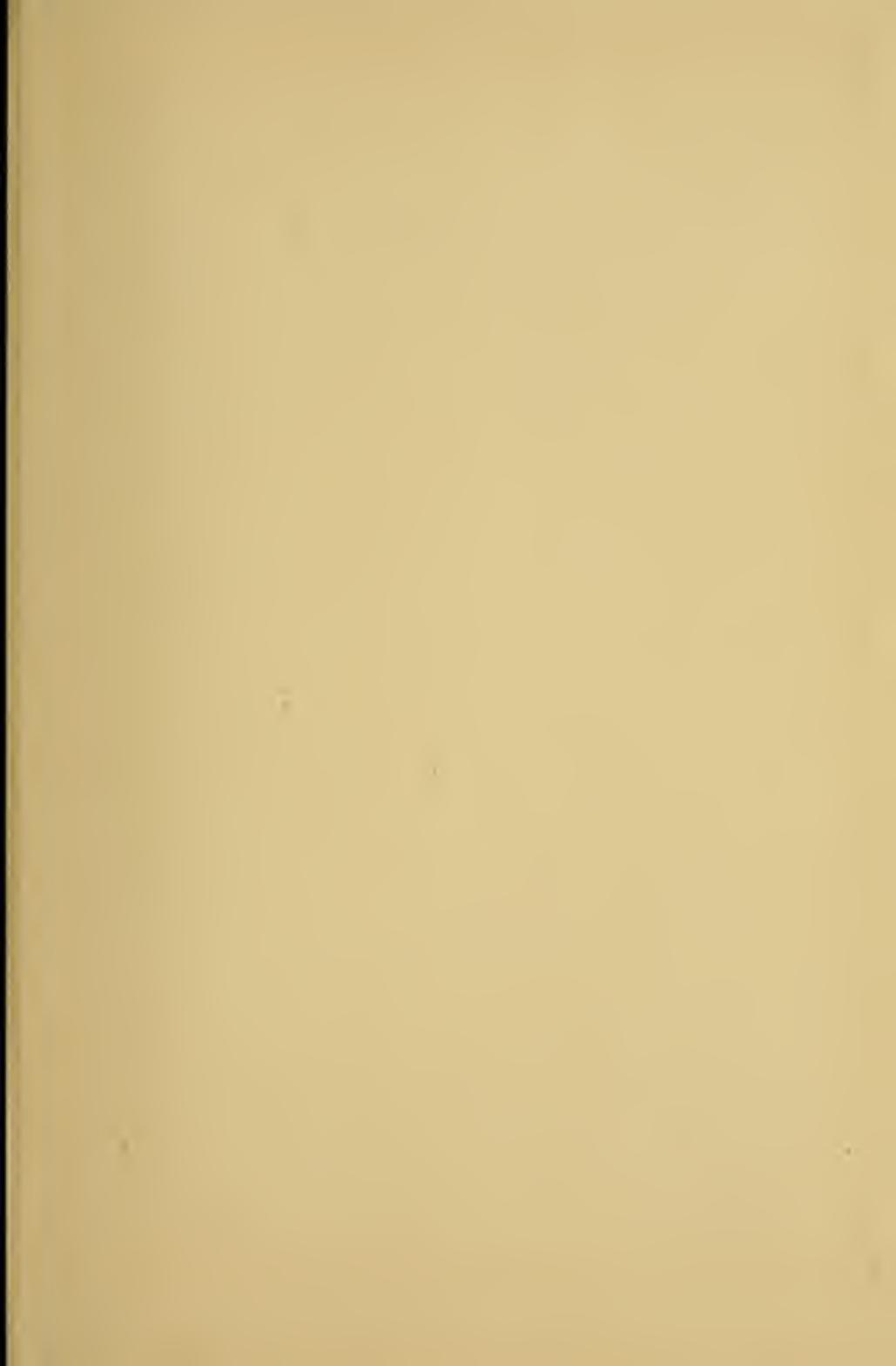
Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."



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