

been said that there is no hint of a doctrine of Atonement in the story of the prodigal son. But there is more than a hint of atonement here in the shepherd's redeeming work. And because it is here it does not need to be there. When the great Teacher put it here He established it in the forefront of His doctrine of salvation. It is loudly affirmed to-day that when we get "back to Jesus" we get away from any suggestion of atonement by blood. But all the chemistry of criticism cannot extract the crimson from the footprints of the good shepherd. "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep." "I am the good Shepherd; and I lay down My life for the sheep . . . Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from My Father." In these illuminating words we find the red cord of the doctrine of Atonement which runs through from the story of the recovered sheep into that of the re-born son. To get back to Jesus is to find ourselves in the shadow of the atoning cross.