

SIN AND THE ATONEMENT.*

BY THE REV. WILLIAM I. SHAW, LL.D.,

Principal Wesleyan Theological College, Montreal.

How fortunate the Church whose scholars have time and opportunity for scientific research and authorship. The older Churches of Protestantism have long enjoyed this privilege. Methodism is approximating, though slowly, to this position, even in Canada with its imperious demands of practical duty, more so in the United States, and most in Great Britain. This matter is worth the serious attention of our college benefactors, so that in various departments of literature and science professors may be able to contribute to the higher work of authorship the quota justly demanded from the largest Protestant Church in Canada.

Chancellor Burwash has had during the past ten years one of the heaviest tasks and weightiest responsibilities in the educational history of Canada, in leading Victoria University into a new policy and into a new relationship surrounded with many difficulties and requiring an unlimited amount of anxious toil. We congratulate him that in addition to his most valuable "Commentary on the Romans" and minor works, he has found time amid his arduous duties to put in shape the lectures constituting his monograph just published on "Sin and the Atonement."

The first lecture is on Probation, and is confined to human conditions and destiny. "Probation is in its very nature temporary," whether it be in the case of Adam in his primitive state, or each member of the race under redemption. Sin as an act and as a state is correctly discussed with corresponding phases of the provisions of grace. We suggest care in predicating sin as a state. The author is clear enough on this point, but since Augustine error has been advanced by want of such care. The results of sin to the individual and to the race are stated with proper recognition of heredity. Conditional Immortality, Post-mortem Probation are rejected on grounds briefly but strongly stated.

*"Sin and the Atonement," by Rev. N. BURWASH, S.T.D., LL.D., Chancellor of Victoria University. Toronto: William Briggs. Price 75 cents.

The Atonement is defined as "that act or work of our Lord Jesus Christ centring in his death, whereby the forgiveness of sins is possible to God, and for man." This definition is safe, for it states results rather than mode. Still the great question, How, is not shirked and the principle is afterwards stated and vindicated that it is "in the nature of God himself, because he is holy and just he cannot forgive sins without atonement." Coming more closely to the centre of the problem, substitution is encountered and treated with vigorous severity. The views of Anselm and the Calvinists are stated and correctly condemned as implying identical equivalence in a commercial sense. The reader may, however, be unable to follow the lecturer in those points of the able discussion in which Scripture passages generally regarded as the strongholds of vicariousness are held to have quite a different meaning, and the statement is risked that Christ suffered not the penalty of either the individual nor of the race nor an equivalent for such penalty, that the only penal suffering he endured was for himself, seeing that "in Adam all die."

While identity of equivalence cannot be maintained, and Calvinism has exaggerated the doctrine of substitution, it may be worth enquiring, in rejecting the commercial idea of *quid pro quo*, whether the vicarious idea of *alind pro quo* may not represent the truth. Indeed, the author reaches this position when he says: "It is not the suffering of an equivalent penalty which cancels sin, but the merit of a work of infinite moral value which at once honours God by loving obedience to the command of His love, and by laying down life at that command, honours law by meeting its every demand on Him as one with the race." This language, "the merit of a work of infinite moral value," strikes us as consonant with Scriptural vicariousness if understood in the light of the precious words, "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree," and "The chastisement of our peace was upon him."

This work contains in small compass a great deal of Christian thought and scholarship of greatest importance.

Prayer moves the hand which moves the world.