

wrote that "Christ took upon himself and suffered the punishment which, by the righteous judgment of God, impended over all sinners, and by this expiation the Father has been satisfied and his wrath appeased."<sup>1</sup> According to this theory Christ became a literal substitute for sinners, who, but for his interposition, would have been consigned to endless perdition.

This theory, also, contains a measure of truth, though the amount in it is very small. The idea of substitution is a Scriptural one, but not in reference to anything that Jesus did. In Genesis 22: 13 Abraham is said to have taken a ram and to have sacrificed him "in the stead of his son"; but the Biblical writers knew that, while substitution is possible in material things, it is impossible in moral matters. One may suffer and die in the stead of another physically, but one can neither suffer nor die in the place of another morally, because neither sin nor guilt nor moral penalty can be transferred. Sin must be expiated, of course, but every man must expiate his own offence, so far as its moral aspect is concerned. There is no such thing as substitutionary moral suffering or substitutionary moral punishment, and the New Testament does not suggest that Christ was a vicarious punishment. It simply represents our Lord as, in loving obedience to the will of the Father, effecting the reconciliation

<sup>1</sup>"Institutes," Bk. II., chapter 16, pars. 3, 4.