

Man alone is responsible for his sin. God is not the author of sin. "Nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away but rather established."

As Francis Schaeffer said, as I quoted him a few days ago, there are those who would make man autonomous--I am the master of my fate. And that does not fit with out experience in life. We are very definitely subject to to many ~~poisons~~ *forces*. We are not autonomous. God has decreed all things that come to pass. On the other hand it is equally wrong to make man a cipher. To make man a zero. Because man has sinned and we cannot blame God for his sin. Man deserves eternal punishment because of his wicked, wilful heart.

Every one of us if we truly know ourselves, know that that is true of us. That is only by God's grace that any of us can be saved. So this is the first aspect that I mention this morning. I won't take more time on it.

The second aspect I have not spoken of specifically of here. It is very important and it is something that I believe that everyone who takes the Bible as the foundation must agree to. The second then is that God the Father sent Jesus Christ to give His life as a substitutionary atonement. The substitutionary atonement is the clear teaching of Scripture. And it is a matter of the utmost importance to everyone who is saved.

Jesus died in my place. He took my place on the cross. That is where I should be. Last week I saw a film about the life of Barabas (made by Bob Jones University some years ago). Of course a great deal of it was imaginary, while a good many elements from the Scriptural story are included. The central idea of the film is that Barabas should have been crucified for his wickedness, his violence, his crime. He fully deserved death, but he was released and Jesus was put in the place where he should have been.

In the film story Barabas eventually comes to understand this and is saved through Christ. We know nothing about Barabas apart from what is told us in Scripture. The rest is purely imaginary but it is purely illustrative of the situation of every one who is saved through Christ. Jesus bore my sin on the cross. He died in my place. His substitutionary atonement is a vital fact of Christianity. It is a vital fact of the Reformed Faith.

Third: eternal life is forever. We do not get eternal life and then lose eternal life, then get it and then lose it. That would be true if it were a matter of our godd resolutions We've all at some time in our lives made good resolutions on Jan. 1 and kept them for 5 or 6 days, and then broken them or perhaps forgotten them. Or maybe we've made them again a little later. In most cases we've waited again until next Jan. 1. We resolve to do good and then fail. We resolve again and we fail. But salvation is not a matter of man's resolution. It is a matter of Jesus having died in his stead, and the Holy Spirit giving him a new life, a new nature.