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A Discussion of Some Theological Questions

Recently a man came to me with a problem what was worrying him. He said, that "As ~~xx~~ I pray and go over the sins I have committed, and ask the Lord for forgiveness for them, and to help me to avoid them in the future" he said, "I remember the verse that God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." Now," he said, "does this mean that my son, when he grows up, he said, "will my son have to suffer when he grows up because of the sins that I have committed?"

This raises a very important matter in the Christian life. God does not want us to handle the matter of sin as a sort of bookkeeping operation. It is true that with the unsaved person it is somewhat in that category, yet the one who does not know Christ as Saviour already deserves eternal punishment for his sin. Even if one were to leave out of consideration altogether the matter of his complicity in Adam's sin, and the matter of his - - - - the matter of original sin, still the sin that is committed by the ordinary person is enough to sentence him to eternal death. In view of the terrible nature of sin it is really very mild when the Lord says that he visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. However, we have to consider the source in connection with the next one which says that He shows loving kindness to those that love Him, to thousands of generations. Here we have a sharp differentiation. There are two classes of people: there are those who are still in their sin, they who have the penalty of sin to pay ~~and the sin~~ and the sin continues upon succeeding generations, and there are those who have been saved, those who love the Lord, those to whom He says He shows mercy to them for thousands of generations.

Thus the whole matter of the relation of sin and guilt ~~ix~~ cannot be one of bookkeeping if one has believed on Christ. In such a case all his sins, past, present and future, have been borne by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, and we are entirely free from them. We have of course the duty to