

The Substitution Theory

By Maurice Barnett

The most popular and widespread doctrinal position about the sacrifice of Jesus is called substitution, penal substitution, satisfaction, or like terms. It involves human philosophy more than it does scripture. The position of substitution is stated in the following by Lewis and Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, page 403—

"The concept of substitution is essential to all of the biblical analogies—passover sacrifice, ransom, redemption, propitiation, victory over Satan, and reconciliation. In each aspect of what Christ did, sinners united to him by faith cannot do for themselves. The divine substitute fully provided for sinners' liberation, forgiveness, and reconciliation. 'So substitution is not a theory of the atonement. Nor is it even an additional image to take its place as an option alongside the others. It is rather the essence of each image and the heart of the atonement itself.'"

These authors explain, on page 402, what substitution means by using several illustrations. They tell us of men who volunteered as substitutes for those drafted for military service in the civil war — of the boyfriend who took the place of a young lady, spending three days in jail because of the possession on her person of an unregis-tered gun, a sentence she would have served for herself — of a Catholic monk who stepped in to take the place of a Polish sergeant in a Nazi concentration camp and was executed "in his place" — of the "substitute" on a football team who went into the game in place of another player. These illustrations show an exact one for one dis-placement, a life for a life, equal punishment for punishment, sacrifice for equal sacrifice. However, they cannot hold to that position because on the very next page they admit that what Jesus did was not an equal, exact, substitute for all mankind; Jesus experienced the same "kind" of punishment but not the same quantity. For Jesus it was much, less severe.

The doctrine of substitution has been "read into" the terms listed in *Integrative Theology* and Bible passages are then interpreted accordingly. The evidence for substitution is not so clear cut as the above quotation would lead us to believe. R.E. Davis, in the *Tyndale Biblical Theology Lecture*, 1969, page 71, admits that the doctrine is not universally accepted, having capable objectors—

"This view, however, is not without its critics, and it is often suggested that such an understanding involves a reading into, rather than a reading out of, Scripture. It is said that the New Testament knows nothing of a 'crude transactionalism,' and that even if certain elements which might suggest a vicarious, substitutionary idea appear, this is only one of many ideas which are put forward in the New Testament to explain Christ's death, and should not be made the controlling concept in our understanding of it."

Although the authors of *Integrative Theology* insist that substitution is not a theory, in matter of fact it is but one of several theories. At some time or another, we have all been taught about the "vicarious death" of Jesus. The "substitution theory" says that our sins were literally transferred to Jesus, that He took our place in guilt and punishment, in our place He became a curse

and in our stead took the sufferings due us for our sins. The Roman Pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ, standing in the place of Christ on earth. So, vicarious means to take the place of someone, a substitution, though some writers will incorrectly define vicarious to mean "on behalf of." Substitution is also known as the "penal satisfaction theory." It means that Jesus paid, suffered, bore, the penalty for our sins to satisfy divine justice. This became the predominant theory among Protestant churches generally and its origin is well known. Wiley and Culbertson tell us—

"This is the theory generally held by the Reformed Churches, and is frequently known as the Calvinistic theory," *Introduction To Christian Theology*, page 228.

This should immediately alarm us. Though the seeds of the theory existed long before, it was closely interwoven with Calvinism. Clarke explains—

"Anselm, in the eleventh century, introduced the worthier idea that the ransom or satisfaction was paid by Christ not to Satan but to God. He argued that the enormity of sin required an infinite satisfaction to God if he was to release the sinner; that this satisfaction was due to God from man, and could be justly offered by no other; that nevertheless it could actually be rendered by no one inferior to God himself; and that for this reason God became man, in infinite mercy, in order to enable humanity, in the person of Christ, to satisfy him for its sins. This explanation proceeds upon the analogies of civil law, and views the satisfaction due to God as debt.

"At the Reformation, this doctrine was modified by the introduction of the analogies of criminal law. In this view, the satisfaction that was due to God consisted in punishment. It was now held that Christ actually took the place of sinners in the sight of God, and as their substitute suffered the punishment that was due to them, including, as many of the Reformers taught, the sufferings of hell. Upon him fell all the punishment of all the sins of all the men for whom he died; against them, therefore, penal justice could have no further claim," William Newton Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology*, page 319.

In some circles, this Reformation position has remained virtually unchanged to the present time. There has been, as with the five points of Calvinism, a picking and choosing of various points to the specific exclusion of the others. However, once the substitution theory is accepted, it leads naturally to the rest of the overall theory. James Buchanan, an avowed defender of Calvinism, explained this in 1867—

"Socinians, and others, - who deny the substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty, the imputation of their sins to Him, and the vicarious nature of His sufferings and obedience, as a satisfaction to the law and justice of God, - are the only parties who can consistently reject the imputation of His righteousness as the ground of their pardon and acceptance; indeed, they must do so, for they sweep away the whole ground on which the doctrine of Imputation is based. But those who admit these fundamental truths, cannot consistently refuse this unavoidable inference from them, that what he did, as their substitute and representative, was done for them; and that, to be available for their benefit, it must be, in some way, made over to them, or put down to their account. To this extent, they must all admit the fact of imputation. If they ascribe any efficacy to the work of Christ at all, - considered as a vicarious work accomplished by Him on behalf of His people, which merited or procured anything for them, - His merit must be reckoned to them, if they are to derive any real benefit from it." *The Doctrine of Justification*, page 329f.

As originally formulated, the theory of substitution stands on the two legs of the imputation of our sins to Christ and the imputation of His righteousness to us. As Buchanan points out, once one accepts the "substitution" of Jesus, one must, logically, accept the imputation of righteousness as well; the sinless, completely righteous Christ made that substitution to bring blessings to us and, in that sense, His right-eousness is then imputed to us, the one imputation logically following the other. We are thus made righteous by His righteous act. Even David Lipscomb says—

"The flesh is weak, and the law of sin reigns in our members; so that we fall short of the perfect standard of divine righteousness; but if we trust God implicitly and faithfully endeavor to do his will, he knows our frame, knows our weakness, and as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities our infirmities and weaknesses, and imputes to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So Jesus stands as our justification and our righteousness, and our life is hid with Christ in God," *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles*, volume IV, page 206.

No Scriptural Basis

Inspecting the works of various authors who defend the substitution theory, we are impressed with the number of scriptures that are cast before us to "prove" the theory. Yet, in actual fact, only a very few passages they present have any direct bearing on our subject. Just a sheer volume of scriptures does not establish a theory as truth. The nonscriptural nature of, at least, the peculiar language used is admitted by its advocates. Here is what J. Oliver Buswell says—

"The most satisfactory single term for designating the scriptural doctrine of the atonement for our generation is, I believe, the word substitution. This term indicates that Christ died for our sins in our place as our substitute. The word, vicarious, strictly implies the substitutional view, but the latter term is less likely to be misunderstood. The moral order and the necessity for satisfying its demands, together with the necessity of penalty for the vindication of the moral order, all these considerations are assumed in the substitutionary view," *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 2, page 72.

Notice especially the statement that "all these considerations are assumed in the substitutionary view." An "assumption" is a conclusion reached without evidence. That does not exactly mean that they present no reasons at all for the position, but it does indicate that they understand they must assume a lot of things.

In *The Christ of History and of Experience*, Lecture VI, D.W. Forrest, a defender of penal substitution, says—

"To say that he died our death is a permissible expression, but it is not scriptural; and it may fatally mislead."

Admitting to the unscriptural nature of a position has not kept Calvinist authors from equally insisting on the validity of the position; they are proud of their ability to occupy contradictory positions. No author has been as avid a spokesman for substitution and as exemplary in admitting the unscriptural nature of its terminology while at the same time insisting on the validity of the position, as was the late Scottish Calvinist Dr. Thomas Crawford, Professor of Theology at Edinburgh University. In spite of the number of scriptures that

appear in his book, *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, Crawford admits the following; italicized words are his—

"The sufferings and death of Christ may be properly regarded as a satisfaction for sin, or a satisfaction to divine justice. It is true this mode of designating them is not Scriptural. The word 'satisfaction,' as applied to our Lord's sufferings, nowhere occurs in the authorized English version of the New Testament. But although the word is not there, we are warranted to affirm that the thing which it denotes is there."

"It ought to be remembered that the word 'satisfaction,' as applied to our Lord's sufferings, not being a Scriptural expression, we are not entitled to draw inferences from it, or to found dogmatical conclusions upon it as if it were so; although we may be perfectly warranted to make use of it as fairly and substantially expressing our views of the doctrine of Scripture."

"One of these conclusions is, That our sins were imputed to Jesus Christ. It is true there is no passage to be found in Holy Scripture in which this doctrine is expressly affirmed; but there are many passages in which it seems to be necessarily implied. For, when we read of Christ as 'bearing our sins,' as 'made sin for us,' and 'made a curse for us,' we can hardly fail to recognize in these expressions the substance of what is really intended by all intelligent advocates of the doctrine that 'Our sins were imputed to Jesus Christ,'" pages 181,184, 188.

Notice Crawford states that though there is no passage in scripture that teaches the substitution theory, it is implied from the phrases he lists! We will shortly look at passages, such as Galatians 3:13, and show that those passages do not teach the theory. What Crawford says about the word satisfaction is true for the other terms as well. The phrases listed by Crawford do not support the substitution theory either specifically or by implication.

Crawford also insists that since satisfaction is not scriptural that "we are not entitled to draw inferences from it, or to found dogmatical conclusions upon it as if it were so." Yet, this advice is not followed by him or other advocates of substitution. They are insistent that their conclusions are the only conclusions, their position is the only truth on the subject.

Even the most avid champions of the theory admit that they must assume their position, attempting to establish it on necessary implication. In truth, the theory is naught but, as Barton W. Stone said in *The Christian Messenger*, 1833, Vol. 7, page 208, "a mere speculation, sanctified by antiquity." Though having forged a trail of opposition to denominationalism and sectarianism, Thomas and Alexander Campbell had not abandoned all of their Scottish Presbyterian roots; with slight modifications, they continued to defend substitution, though inconsistently with other positions they held. In No. 7, page 205, of the *Messenger*, Stone wrote to Thomas Campbell, referring to the substitution theory held by the Campbells—

"You appear, when you entered on reformation, to have had your eye so fixt upon a few prominent principles, that you had not time to examine some doctrines you had received before as truth, and therefore have brought them along with you from that vortex in which you had been tossed for years."

Thomas Campbell even took the same position as we have just seen in Calvinist authors in regard to the scripturalness of terms, though he had championed the slogan "speak where the Bible speaks, remain silent where it is silent, call Bible things by Bible names, and do Bible things in Bible ways."

Thomas Campbell replied to Barton Stone in the August, September and November, 1833, issues of the *Millennial Harbinger*. Campbell says in the November issue of his paper—

"And, if so, may not the sum total of his humiliations, sufferings, death, and subsequent imprisonment in the regions of the dead, be justly considered as an equivalent for all the penal consequences of sin, to have been justly inflicted forever upon the guilty creatures, that shall be saved through him?, page 549 ... This, however, you cannot admit, because it implies substitution, and, of course, vicarious sufferings. But, to these terms you object, 'that they are not scriptural.' To speak of Bible subjects in Bible terms, is, I grant, a good and safe rule; and one which I both teach and practise as far as possible, page 551 — Now, if all this does not, to all intents and purposes, declare a substitution, exhibit a substitute, and present us with vicarious sufferings, we know not what language means; or what language could have done it to better purpose. Nevertheless, when, after all that has been said, the obvious sense of the sacred style seems to be misunderstood, we know of no terms in our language less exceptional, or better adapted to express the meaning of the divine oracles upon this all-important subject, than those we have chosen. - For if substitute signifies one put in the stead or room of another, to do or suffer in his place; and if substitution is expressive of so placing a person; and if vicarious signifies his occupancy; - then, most surely, according to the above scriptures, may Jesus Christ be justly called a substitute; his location a substitution; and his sufferings to death, vicarious. Most assuredly, also, do the old philosophical axioms verify this conclusion," page 553.

Campbell sounds just like Crawford. He admits that he was not "calling Bible things by Bible names" in defending substitution. But, look at this— "Most assuredly, also, do the old philosophical axioms verify this conclusion." This is human phi-losophy, not scripture.

As with any erroneous doctrine, one must invent a new vocabulary in order to use it. I will not deny the authority of "necessary implication," rather I will insist upon its use. A "necessary implication" is but a conclusion drawn from premises. But, to have a necessary implication the conclusion must necessarily follow from the premises. Just a reasonable inference will not do.

I will also insist that in explaining the meaning of a text or subject we may say it in several different ways. It helps to get across to others the point of the subject or passage, the very basis of preaching. It is explaining as versus just quoting scripture. Yet, when a theory must rely on non-Biblical words and concepts and human philosophy to establish it, we must be suspicious that it is unbiblical in its doctrine as well.

The Sacrificial System, Was It Substitutionary?

The first sacrifices mentioned in the Bible are those of Abel and Cain. Hebrews 11:4 tells us that by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain's. God had respect to Abel's offering. This fact clearly shows that it wasn't enough just to offer something to God. The attitude and obedience of the worshipper was a necessary ingredient to one's acceptance with God. The later instance of King Saul's failure to carry out the orders of God to utterly destroy the Amalekites is graphic. Saul excused himself by saying the best of the herds and flocks that were kept back from destruction were to be used as sacrifice to God at Gilgal. But, obedience was more important. Samuel said—

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The place and importance of sacrifices has no greater function than in the Law of Moses. Sacrifices were necessary for ceremonial functions and cleansing, acceptability with God, political stability, or for just expressions of joy and gratitude on the part of the one who made the offering. Yet, there are things about the sacrificial system in the Old Law that are not clearly stated. Note the following:

"Nowhere in the Old Testament is the rationale of sacrifice explained. The institution is taken for granted as a divine ordinance, and the only principle laid down is that 'the blood is the life.' This attitude was maintained in Rabbinical Judaism, and only in comparatively modern times have attempts been made to ascertain its underlying idea," Vincent Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, page 49.

Hebrews 7:16 refers to the Old Law as a law of a "carnal commandment." In this instance, it was that which centered, to a great extent, on the flesh. Verse 18 says the Old Law is "weak and unprofitable;" in Galatians 4:9 it is called "weak and beggarly rudiments" in which they were in bondage; in Colossians 2:24, it is that which was contrary and contradictory to us and in Ephesians 2:15, an enmity contained in ordinances.

The Old Law, sacrifices or not, could not bring remission of sins, eternal salvation nor justification. Hebrews 10:4 says it is "impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." Verse 11 says—

"And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins."

Consequently, it could not cleanse the conscience, either, Hebrews 10:1-4. Hebrews 9:9-10 calls it "carnal ordinances" that cannot cleanse the conscience nor make the worshipper perfect—

"which is a figure for the time present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot as touching the conscience, make the worshippers perfect, being only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation."

The prophecy of Jeremiah 31, quoted in Hebrews 8:12, declares the time of the New Covenant would mean that God would "be merciful to their iniquities and their sins will I remember no more." Further, justification could only come by the New Covenant, not the Old, Galatians 2:16, 21. See also, Acts 13:38-39.

When Hebrews 8:6 says that Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant, enacted upon better promises, it states a wondrous truth about the superiority of the New Testament. John 1:17 says the law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:21 says that if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nothing. See Galatians 3:2, 11.

What was promised by the Law, for faithfully keeping it, was temporal. The blessings of living in the land with safety and plenty was the purpose. Leviticus 18:5, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them." This is referred to in Romans 10:5 and

Galatians 3:12. It means that the Jew would live, physically, temporally, in the land with the blessings of God, government, society and access to the temple ceremonies and worship of God. Note—

"Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety," Leviticus 25:18-19.

"Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey," Deuteronomy 6:3.

"And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers," Deuteronomy 6:18.

"And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day," Deuteronomy 6:24.

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee," Deuteronomy 7:12f.

The same things are said in Deuteronomy 8:1, 11:8-25, and other places. This emphasizes the superiority of the new order of Jesus Christ. If righteousness and justification were of the Old Law, then there would have been no need for the sacrifice of Jesus or the New Testament.

A look at the origins of sacrificial practices would be futile. It would involve phi-losophy more than anything else. I am more concerned with the most typical view of the sacrifices of the Old Testament used to underpin the substitution theory. George Barker Stevens, in his book, *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, page 6, states the substitution position regarding the Old Testament sacrifices—

"As the sacrificial animal suffered a vicarious death for the sinner whom he represented, so Christ endured the penalty due to the sins of those whose place he assumed before the divine law, and, as God was pleased to accept the animal's death in substitution for the death of the sinner, so he looks upon the death of Christ as the equivalent of the sinner's punishment whereby the possibility of forgiveness is opened to him."

Thus, the supposed "substitution" of the animal for the sunful Israelite as a sacrifice for sin now becomes an evidence for the substitution theory regarding Jesus. There are a few major arguments that are used attempting to prove this, which we will look at now.

A Substitute For Isaac

Regarding the "sacrifice" of Isaac by his father, Genesis 22:12-13 says—

"And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."

There is no doubt, a ram was sacrificed in the place of Isaac. It is often pointed out by substitution advocates that the Greek preposition, *anti*, meaning *against*, or *in the place of*, is used here in the Septuagint version. This fact is then used to leap to the conclusion that Jesus was slain as a substitute, in our place, just like the ram for Isaac. In the comparison, Isaac represents all sinners, the altar represents the literal cross of Christ, and the ram that was offered represents Jesus. But, such a com-parison is untrue.

Isaac was supposed to have been sacrificed on that altar to begin with; it was a specific directive by God concerning these specific individuals! In the place of sacrificing Isaac, the ram was substituted. But, instead of this being an illustration and authority for the substitution theory, it is the opposite. The reason? Mankind was never scheduled to be offered on the cross or any altar as a sacrifice; God never intended that we undergo what Jesus did! So, Jesus was not substituted for us, did not take our place on the "altar," as the ram was for Isaac. Besides that, for whom was Isaac a "substitute?" Abraham? Was the ram a substitute for a substitute? To ask the questions is to answer them.

The Scapegoat

The sins of the people were "placed" on the scapegoat on the day of atonement and were carried away into the wilderness, Leviticus 16:20-22—

"And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness."

This is supposed to be a type of Christ to show that the sins of mankind were laid on Jesus as our substitute. The error in this should be clearly seen.

First, the scapegoat appears in the scenario after the offering for atonement in the tabernacle that furnishes the shadow of what Jesus did, Hebrews 9. If one should say that the scapegoat was also chosen to "make atonement" as was the other goat, keep in mind that when the poor offered fine flour for a sin-offering it was also referred to as *atonement*, Leviticus 5:11-13; no blood was shed. In fact, the scapegoat, an animal on this occasion, was not slain, its blood was not shed, so it could not have portrayed the death of Christ for our sins.

Second, Jesus is never likened to the scapegoat. The connection made with Jesus is found in the first goat, the one for Jehovah, the one whose blood was sprinkled in the Most Holy Place. This is what Jesus did as High Priest, offering His own blood in the heavenly holy place.

Third, if the scapegoat enters the picture at all in the New Testament order, it would have to be after Jesus ascended into heaven and completed His offering for sin. That means that Jesus could not have corresponded to the scapegoat while on the literal cross. But, the Old Testament scapegoat had nothing to do with the death, burial, resurrection and the offering of His own blood by Jesus in heaven. The scapegoat was but a symbol of the taking away of the sins of the people. If it has any counterpart in the work of Christ, it has to come after the completed offering in heaven and would then only be a symbol of the final and complete removal of sins.

Fourth, as we will see later in the chapter on bearing sin, the literal sins of man were not literally placed on Jesus while He was on the literal cross. Jesus did not "bear" our sins in that sense.

Fifth, if the sins of all of the nation were carried into the wilderness by the Scapegoat, and by the equal figure Jesus carried the sins of the whole world on the cross, then we must accept universal salvation; the sins of the whole world have already been taken away by Jesus.

Laying On Of Hands

It is claimed that by the laying on of their hands, the priests transferred the sins of the one making the offering on to the animal of sacrifice. Thus, the animal was slain as a substitute for the worshipper. However, the laying on of hands was not to transfer sins.

First, laying on of hands had several purposes. (1) the practice symbolized blessings imparted to another, as Jacob did with Ephraim and Manasseh, Genesis 48:14. (2) Witnesses laid their hands on the head of the blasphemer before he was stoned to death, Leviticus 24:14; this was a visible testimony of their witness to hearing the person's blasphemy. (3) All the people laid their hands on the Levites to set them apart to the service of God with the approval and support of the people, Numbers 8:10. (4) Moses laid his hands on Joshua to designate him as the next leader of Israel, Numbers 27:18-23. (5) There are like instances in the New Testament of such laying on of hands for either approval or imparting spiritual gifts. In no instance is there an impartation of evil by such an act, no transference of sins, no curse placed upon another.

Second, in laying hands on a sacrifice, there is no indication that the sins of the offerer were placed on the animal. If that were the case, the animal would then be unholy while we see the contrary is true. The animal was holy and was to be eaten by the priests, Leviticus 10:17. Barton W. Stone correctly explains this point in *Works of Elder B.W. Stone*, pages 94-95—

"The law of the sin-offering was, that the offender should lay his hands on the victim's head. If this signified the confession and imputation of sin, I ask, did every woman after child-birth, who brought her sin-offering, and according to the law laid her hands on the victim's head; did she by this act confess her sin, because she had brought forth a child into the world? No: for in having children in lawful wedlock, she obeyed the institution of heaven. Did the woman who brought her sin-offering for katamena, and laid her hands on the victim's head - did she by this act confess that she had sinned in this? Did the leper, the man with a running issue, by laying their hands on the heads of their sin-offerings, confess that they had sinned in these things? I can not think so."

"But it may be said that the victim was accepted for the offerer, or in his room and stead. I answer: The victim was accepted or favorably received at the hand of the offerer, if it was of that description which the law required, and offered in a right manner. Lev. xxii:23. 'A bullock or lamb which hath any thing superfluous, or lacking in its part, thou mayest offer for a free-will offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted.' Lev. xxii:20,25; Phil.iv:18 ... Should any still insist that accepted for you means in your stead, and therefore the victim was a substitute; I answer: that a sheaf of wheat is said to be accepted for you. Lev. xxii:11, 'And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, and it shall be accepted for him.' Surely the sheaf was not a substitute, nor was sin imputed to it, and it accepted in the stead of the offerer!"

To this I add the following comments from George Barker Stevens that are appropriate—

"The substitutionary theory encounters a further difficulty in the fact that offerings were not accepted in atonement for sins meriting death (Num. 15:30), whereas this would be most natural if the system contemplated the substitution of the victim's death for that of the offerer. In this case also it would seem necessary that the animal should be slain by the priest or God's representative and not, as he was, by the owner. Moreover, we find that all the offerings atone the gift of fine flour (the offering of the poor), as well as the animal sacrifice (Lev. v.11-13). How could such be the case if the notion of a death substituted were the underlying idea of the sin offering" *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, page 12.

Some offerings involved other than animal flesh. What was offered was that which was dedicated to God, just as people were dedicated to Jehovah, viz., Samson and Samuel before their birth or even Jephthah's daughter—

"And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission," Hebrews 9:22.

The word "cleansed," from *katharizo*, means also to purge or purify. This cleansing is indicated in several Old Testament passages that relate to such things as cleansing of a woman after childbirth, etc.: Exodus 29:36-37, Leviticus 12:1-8, 14:52, 15:30. It is used in the New Testament for the cleansing of a leper, Matthew 8:3, 10:8; for meats, and thereby as a figure of people, Mark 7:19, Acts 10:15; for cleansing of God's people from several viewpoints, Acts 15:9, II Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 5:26, Titus 2:14, Hebrews 9:14.

Hebrews 9:19-21 tells us that the blood of calves and goats sanctified and cleansed the book of the covenant, the tabernacle and all the vessels, for almost "all things are cleansed with blood." The word "almost," *skedon*, means just that, nearly or almost, Acts 13:44, 19:26. This no doubt would refer to the poor who were allowed to offer fine flour as a sin-offering; no animal blood was involved. Remember that the offerings for forgiveness, cleansing and the like, were to restore one to social, political and religious acceptability. It was forgiveness of sins *in that sense*. In view of that circumstance, notice now the following from Leviticus 5:11-13—

"But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering. Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord: it is a sin offering. And the priest shall make an

atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat offering."

However, the fact remains that only blood could bring the remission of sins. As Hebrews 9:23 says, that it "was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." The copies were those things specified in the preceding verses of that chapter. Their "cleansing" was by animal blood. But, actual remission of sins came only with the blood of Christ. Yet, under the law of Moses, there were some transgressions that no sacrifice could touch.

Hebrews 10:26 warns of the dire consequences of willful sin. Verse 28 then says that "a man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses." In such instances, there was no mercy, no forgiveness, no sacrifice for the sins, no atonement. The law breaker was put to death. A select list of offenses are given that were punishable in this way. Numbers 15:30-31 records the penalty for such presumptuous or willful sin; death.

Deuteronomy 17:2-7 says that those who worshipped other gods, the sun, moon or stars or any host of heaven would be stoned to death, but only by the word of two or more witnesses. The witnesses cast the first stones and then the congregation completed the stoning unto death. Exodus 21:12 lists murder as a capital offense. Breaking the Sabbath also carried the death penalty, Exodus 35:2. There are a few other acts that also fall into this category. But, we must emphasize again that there was no atonement for these sins.

As Stevens points out, one would think that if there was any classification of sins in the Old Testament that would call for substitution it would be for capital offenses. There it would be life for life, the life of the sacrificial animal in the place of the life of the transgressor.

Third, another class of lawbreaking, such as ignorance and ceremonial unclean-ness, carried a means of forgiveness, Numbers 15:22-29, Hebrews 9:7. Hebrews 9:13 says that the blood of goats and bulls was used for "the cleanness of the flesh," ceremonial cleanness. The blood of bulls and goats could thus sanctify to the cleansing of the flesh, but could not take away sins, Hebrews 10:4.

Fourth, another class of situations did not involve sin but required sacrifices and offerings to be made for atonement, anyway. This had to do with uncleanness due to such things as childbirth, leprosy, a running issue of blood. See Leviticus 12:6-8, 14:18-31, 15:15, Numbers 6:11.

Leviticus 15 especially details the uncleanness from an issue of blood and other items. Such uncleanness is referred to as "separation." It is a separation of the per-son, and the uncleanness, from the rest of the people of Israel. The sacrifice offered for cleansing is then referred to as a separation of the people from their uncleanness so that the tabernacle would not be defiled, verse 31.

We will now proceed to look at some of the major passages and arguments used to establish the substitution theory that are also mentioned by some of the preceding gentlemen.

The First-born Of Egypt

This supposedly teaches that a lamb was substituted for the firstborn of Israel when the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians occurred. Crawford insists that this is the meaning and on the Passover says—

"But the blood, on that occasion, was sprinkled on the lintels and door-posts of every Israelitish dwelling, so as to stand between the firstborn of the families of Israel and the uplifted arm of the angel of the Lord, when he went forth on his dread mission to slay the first-born of man and beast throughout the land. We have no cause to doubt, then, that the Passover is to be regarded as truly and properly an expiatory sacrifice; and hence we must necessarily ascribe the same expiatory character to the sacrifice of Christ which the apostle here compares to it," *op. cit.*, page 97.

To amplify just what this means, Crawford, page 501, quotes from Hengstenberg as follows—

"He who slaughtered the lamb confessed, in a symbolical language, that he also, no less than the Egyptians, the children of this world, had deserved to be an object of the divine wrath. He declared that he could not claim deliverance on the ground of his own worth, or of any other title, but he expected it from the grace of God alone.

According to the divine promise, to accept the blood of the innocent lamb in place of the blood of the sinner, who recognized and felt himself to be such; those who made this confession received the remission of the punishment of their sins."

We will seldom find any greater amplification of error into a larger doctrinal position than in these two quotations. They are works of real imagination.

The following passages state the basic intent of the Passover that began in Egypt and was repeated as a memorial of that one event—

"And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts," Exodus 11:5.

"For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you," Exodus 12:23.

The seven instances, referred to by Crawford, of sacrifice being attached to the Passover, are as follows—

"That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's pass-over, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses," Exodus 12:27.

"Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning," Exodus 23:18.

"Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning," Exodus 34:25.

"Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there," Deuteronomy 16:2.

This also appears in several places in Deuteronomy 16:4-6. The Hebrew word for sacrifice has a primary meaning of a slaying, the flesh of animals, a

victim and, consequently, a sacrifice. It is even used of slaughtering men, Isaiah 34:6, Zephaniah 1:7. But, the emphasis of the word is on a victim. The purpose of such a sacrifice is not inherent in the word. Notice the shift in terms in the following passage—

"Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning," Exodus 23:18.

The first appearance of "sacrifice," *zebach*, emphasizes the victim, the lamb slain. The second appearance of "sacrifice," *ghahg*, means a feast. The two are used synonymously in this passage. This is why *zebach* is used figuratively to refer to a feast, such as Ezekiel 39:17—

"And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood."

However, it is used literally of a feast in Genesis 31:54 when it says—

"Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount."

The instructions about the Passover feast in Exodus gives the purpose of the observance. Some of the blood of the Passover lamb was placed on the door. But, for what purpose? As a substitute, in the sense of the substitution theory? How was that an act performed in the place of the firstborn of Israel?

This was no substitute for the sins of the Israelite firstborn, no penalty for sin was placed on the lamb that was slain, the lamb did not take the place of anyone. Notice that the curse pronounced on the Egyptians included the firstborn of all their animals as well. Exodus 11:7 then says—

"But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."

The firstborn of all the animals of Israel were delivered just as were the firstborn of the Israelites themselves! Whatever the purpose of placing the blood on the doorway for the Israelites, it included shielding their cattle as well. Was the blood of the Passover lamb a "substitute" sacrifice for the "sins" of animals also? Merely to ask such a question is to answer it. "Substitution" was not involved in this instance any more than lifting up the brazen serpent was some years later. The blood on the doorway was for identification and thus protection, not some form of substitution; it was for their good, their benefit. The Passover was a sacrifice in that it was a feast; indeed it is referred to as the feast of Passover.

This now slips into the next argument that Jesus was the Passover lamb substituted for us, made up from the text in I Corinthians 5:7-8—

"Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

However, the lamb slain for the Passover had nothing to do with a substitution or expiation for the sins of Israel. So, no such connection can be made with the sacrifice of Jesus. Just as the Israelites were to remove all

leaven from the household at the time of the observance of the Passover, Christians are to remove all kinds of wickedness from their midst. In this instance it involved a wicked man who had to be removed from the congregation. The "feast" under discussion is neither the Jewish Passover nor the Lord's Supper. It is the union and communion together of the congregation. They were to root out all that would spoil their union together as a people pleasing to God.

Jesus Became Sin

One of the most often referred to texts used as authority for substitution is II Cor-inthians 5:21. It is invoked to prove that Jesus literally took our sins upon Himself on the cross, becoming our substitute—

"Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." ASV

The worst "translation" of this passage that I have seen is *Living Letters*, the Para-phrased N.T.—

"For God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, he poured God's goodness into us."

That is classic Calvinism and clearly states the substitution theory, showing the cross connection between substitution and imputed sin and imputed righteousness. The position is voiced by numerous authors. P.E. Hughes puts it this way—

"God made him sin: that is to say that God the Father made His innocent incarnate Son the object of His wrath and judgment, for our sakes, with the result that in Christ on the cross the sin of the world is judged and taken away Our sin is transferred to Him and His righteousness is transferred to us..." *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, pages 213-214.

The understanding of this passage turns on the word "sin" in the phrase "made to be sin." However, the word "sin" in this passage means sin-sacrifice. A footnote in the NIV gives that as the meaning. It is a figure of speech known as *synecdoche*, meaning a part is given for the whole, one word is given to stand for a larger thought—

"In Lev and Num the noun appears many times alternating in meaning between sin, the reality of disobedience to God, and sin-offering, the means of removing the guilt and penalty of sin before the Lord through the sacrificial system," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, page 278.

In Leviticus alone, this word is translated, rightly, as *sin-offering* over 50 times. Leviticus 6:25 says—

"Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord: it is most holy."

See Leviticus 4:21, 25 as well. In both places in Leviticus 6:25 where sin offering is found, just the word sin is in the original in both Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint.

This is also true concerning trespass and trespass-offering, *asham* in Hebrew. In Isaiah 53:10, it is said that "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Offering for sin is from the single word, *asham*. This word

for "trespass" is appropriately understood to be "trespass-offering," or "offering for sin." Hebrews 10:8 says—

"saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (which are offered according to the Law)."

The word "sacrifices" in "sacrifices for sin" is not in the Greek text. Your Bible will probably have the word in italics to show this. The same is true in Hebrews 10:6 which is a quotation from Psalm 40:6. In the Psalm, the Septuagint also does not have the word "sacrifice" in the text. The word "sin" alone stands for "sacrifice for sin." Romans 8:2-3 says—

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

In the phrase "and for sin," the word "sin" refers to sin sacrifice, which is identified as such in a footnote in the ASV. Other translations do the same. The passage is saying, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and by a sin sacrifice, condemned sin in the flesh." See Bauer's *Lexicon* under *peri*, point 1.g, page 644.

The *Jewish New Testament*, translated by David Stern, translates the passage: "God made this sinless man be a sin offering on our behalf, so that in union with him we might fully share in God's righteousness."

However, objecting to the interpretation of II Corinthians 5:21 given here, Crawford, op.cit., page 42, gives a rambling and ambiguous reply. He admits that it is impossible to understand that Jesus was literally made "SIN." He also insists that Jesus was not made to be a "sinner" for us. He prefers the phrase "one who bears or suffers for sin." However, there is not a whole lot of difference between "one who bears or suffers for sin" and "a sin offering on our behalf" except when the terms of the first phrase are defined according to the substitution theory. But, true to his substitution doctrine, which he cannot stray too far from, Crawford draws from his phrase, "one who bears or suffers for sin"—

"Accordingly, we are shut up to the other interpretation, that Christ was 'made sin for us' in the sense of being divinely appointed to bear the burden or to suffer the penal consequences of our transgressions."

Notice that he means by "bearing the burden" of sin to mean to "suffer the penal consequences of our transgressions." So we are right back to the substitution position that the penalty for our sins was transferred to Jesus, which makes Him sin; it is circular reasoning. Crawford draws his substitution conclusions from his interpretation of the passage and then uses his conclusions as proof that his interpretation is correct. However, he must first prove his substitution theory is scriptural, but even if he did, it would not prove this passage said anything other than "sin-offering. Crawford continues—

"There is, moreover, in this passage, an evident contrast between what 'Christ was made for us' - namely, 'sin' - and what 'we are to be made in Him' - namely, 'the

righteousness of God.' And this contrast would be very much obscured, if not destroyed, by the proposed new translation, 'made a sin-offering for us.'"

However, we have only Crawford's assertion for this. There should be no difficulty in understanding that Jesus became a sin-offering on our behalf that we might, as a result, become the righteousness of God in Him. This is a simple instance of a consequence following directly from a particular act. Crawford goes on in the same context to comment on Galatians 3:13. He makes Galatians 3:13, in some respect, a parallel thought to II Corinthians 5:21.

Every thing about the sin-sacrifices in the Old Testament was most holy to God. The animal itself had to be pure, without blemish. The place where the animal was slain had to be most holy. The priest had to be holy in order to make the offering. Whoever touched the flesh of the sin-offering was holy. It was to be eaten in the Holy Place by the priests. See Leviticus 6:25-29, 7:1f:

"knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things ... but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," I Peter 1:18-19.

As the sin-offerings were most holy to the Lord, offered on behalf of the worshipper, so Jesus was not sin, but a sin-offering. Though II Corinthians 5:21 says Jesus was made to be sin, I Corinthians 1:30 says He was "made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." This was said in the context of discussing the cross and its acceptance or rejection by others, I Corinthians 1:18-31. If Jesus was a blemish free, spotless, most holy and righteous sacrifice, how could He actually and literally be sin or a sinner on the cross?

Further, not only was He a sinless, spotless sacrifice, but as High Priest He was holy, undefiled and separated from sinners! Notice—

"For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heaven ... when he offered up himself," Hebrews 7:26-27.

Under the Old Law, sin-sacrifices were holy offerings, ministered by holy priests on behalf of the offerer. The same is true regarding our high priest and sacrifice, Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:10-13

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

We have just looked at II Corinthians 5:21. There are some similarities between these two passages. II Corinthians 5:21 says that Jesus "was made to be sin on our behalf," and Galatians 3:13 says, "having become a curse for us." The first refers to His being a sin-offering. We will now explore the meaning of Galatians 3:13.

To put this in perspective, we will look at the comments of the well known grammarian, J. Gresham Machen in his notes on *Galatians*, page 181—

"Here we come to the very heart of Paul's teaching. The curse which Christ bore upon the cross was not a curse that wrongly rested upon Him; it was not a curse pronounced upon Him by some wicked human law. No, it was the curse of God's law; it was a curse therefore, - we tremble as we say it, but the Scripture compels us to say it - it was a curse which rightly rested upon Him. But if that be so, there can be no doubt but that the substitutionary atonement is taught in Scripture. The only way in which a curse could rightly rest upon a sinless One is that he was the substitute, in bearing the curse, for those upon whom it did rightly rest. That is the heart of Paul's teaching and the heart of the whole Bible."

Of course, Dr. Machen was an avowed Calvinist, a Professor at Westminster Seminary. We would expect him to take such a position but we will have to disagree with him. For another view, the *Translators Handbook on Galatians* by Arichea and Nida, page 65, says—

"...becoming a curse for us should be understood primarily in the sense that for our sake Jesus Christ suffered on the cross as one who was accused by God, rather than in terms of any particular doctrine of atonement in which the phrase may be thought to defend ... The verb translated redeemed (literally, 'to buy up') has here the primary meaning of 'to effect deliverance' or 'to secure the release of someone,' at some cost to the person who secures it in terms of effort, suffering, or loss. Again, it would seem much more profitable to put primary emphasis on this main component, that is, that by his death Christ has secured our release, or has set us free from the curse of the Law, rather than attempting to draw from this verse support for different doctrines of the atonement, and answers to such questions as 'How much did Christ pay?' and 'To whom did he pay it?'"

This last advice should be well taken. But, let's investigate the facts concerning this verse.

First, The Law of Moses had no provision for absolute forgiveness of sins, as we have seen. That no one could be justified by the law is clearly stated. In order for one to be justified by the law, he would have to keep that law perfectly, which no one ever did. Paul argues in Romans 4 that no one has ever been saved by perfect works, having never committed a transgression. He had said in Romans 3:9 that all are under sin and in verse 23 that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. He says in Romans 9:31-32—

"but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works."

We must keep in mind that when Paul uses the word "works" in these passages in Romans, he is talking about perfect works, keeping the law perfectly, never sinning. On that basis, God would owe a person salvation as a matter of debt, Romans 4:4-8. But, once a person has committed a single transgression, the only way to salvation is forgiveness from God.

As such a system of law, that required perfect obedience to bring righteousness, the Law of Moses had to be removed. Notice the following passages—

"For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins," Hebrews 10:1f.

"And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross," Colossians 2:13-14.

"For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby," Ephesians 2:14-16.

Jesus, by His sacrifice, removed the authority of the Old Law and established a New Testament, a better one, built on better promises. Note—

"But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second," Hebrews 8:6-7.

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," Hebrews 10:9-10.

As long as the Old Law remained in effect, the curse of a system of law remained. So, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law, to do them," Galatians 3:10. We saw in the preceding chapter that Jesus had to ascend into heaven, become our High Priest to complete the sacrifice for sins. We also noted that this change of priesthood was necessary to changing the law, Hebrews 7:12. Thus, the word "Cross" is a synecdoche for everything that was necessary to accomplish God's purpose in Christ. By the "cross," Jesus removed the law that was contrary to us, Colossians 2:14. Galatians 3:10ff says the same thing. Jesus removed the "curse" of the law, "hanging on a tree," by taking away the authority of the law.

Second, the word "curse" in Galatians 3:13 is from *katara*. A related term is *kataromai*. *Katara* means consigning someone to something bad, to be doomed to destruction, a cursing. It is found only in Galatians 3:10, 13, Hebrews 6:8, James 3:10 and II Peter 2:14. When Galatians 3:13 says that Jesus "redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," it points us back to Deuteronomy 21:22-23—

"And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

Here is capital punishment for capital crimes. A criminal hanging on a tree provides a graphic image for all who see him that he is a violator of God's law. Hence, it is obvious that he is cursed because he did not continue to do what God commanded. Joshua 10:26-27 shows an instance of this law being carried out.

It should be evident that Galatians 3:13 cannot be literally applied to Jesus. He was not a sinner, He violated no law of God, He did not take upon Himself

the literal penalty of the law. Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law, as we noted in point one above, in that He took away the authority and power of the Law. In fact, Jesus was not cursed but it appeared to others that He was.

Albert Barnes, in his book, *The Atonement*, pages 295-296, agrees that Jesus' being a curse was only how others perceived the position of Jesus to be—

"But what is its meaning as applied to the Redeemer in the passage now before us? (a.) It cannot mean that he was made a curse in the sense that his work and character were displeasing to God; for, as we have seen, just the contrary doctrine is everywhere taught in the New Testament. (b.) It cannot mean that he was the object of the Divine displeasure, and was therefore abandoned by him to deserved destruction. (c.) It cannot be employed as denoting that he was in any sense ill deserving or blameworthy; for this is equally contrary to the teachings of the Bible. (d.) It cannot mean that he was guilty in the usual and proper meaning of the word, and that therefore he was punished; for this would not be true. (e.) It cannot mean that he bore the literal penalty of the law; for, as we have seen, there are parts of that penalty - remorse of conscience, and eternity of suffering -which he did not, and could not, bear. (f.) It cannot mean that he was sinful, or a sinner, in any sense; for this is equally contrary to all the teachings of the Bible in regard to his character. (g.) There is but one other conceivable meaning that can be attached to the passage, and that is that, though innocent, he was treated in his death AS IF he had been guilty; that is, he was put to death AS IF he had personally deserved it. That this is the meaning is implied in the explanation which the apostle himself gives of his own language: - 'being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' He was suspended on a cross, as if he had been a malefactor. He was numbered with malefactors; he was crucified between them; he was given up by God and man to death as if he had himself been such a malefactor."

Jesus became a curse, in keeping with the visual image of Deuteronomy 21, only as viewed by His enemies but not in a literal sense. Bauer's *Lexicon* (Gingrich & Danker), page 410, amplifies Galatians 3:13 as follows—

"they will be saved by the accursed one himself (i.e. by Christ who, in the minds of those offended by him, is accursed; cf. also Gal. 3:13, katara)."

The Jews treated Him as though He were guilty; they considered him to be a criminal, charged with blasphemy and thus worthy of death. Notice the description in Matthew 27:39-43—

"And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, he saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God."

We have shown in another article on this website that the meaning of the cry of Jesus on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is a quotation of Psalm 22:1. Psalm 22 is a prophecy, in very graphic description, of the scene at the cross. Jesus was not exclaiming that the Father had forsaken Him but rather the opposite. What the cry does show is that it appeared to the Jews who crucified Jesus that God had forsaken Him. He was even hanged between two real criminals as though He were as guilty of a

crime worthy of death as they. Note the following from Psalm 22:6-8 and make the connection with the quotation from Matthew above—

"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, he trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

He went through the false imprisonment, public spectacle, suffering, scorn and torturous death but it was on our behalf, not in our place.

Third, the real point at issue in Galatians 3:13 is the preposition *huper*, translated "for." It is insisted by most substitution advocates that it means "in the place of" in this passage. Crawford, *op.cit.*, page 43 says—

"The chief thing, however, to be noticed in these texts is, that they evidently represent our Lord's sufferings as vicarious. They imply an interchange of parts between Him and us - a laying of our burden upon Him, with the view and to the effect of securing our deliverance from it ... It was 'for us' - that is, probably, 'instead of us,' certainly 'on our behalf' - that He was made so."

Crawford wants to occupy the substitution position here but seems a little tentative with his "probably." A.T. Robertson in his *Word Pictures, Volume 4*, page 294, thinks this is a clear case of *huper* meaning substitution. Others are not so certain of that. *Winer's Grammar*, page 383, in a footnote, says—

"Still in doctrinal passages relating to Christ's death (Gal. iii.13; Rom. v.6,8; xiv.15; I Pet. iii.18, etc.) it is not justifiable to render *huper hemon* and the like rigorously by instead of ..."

The same conclusion on Galatians 3:13, "on behalf of," is indicated by Bauer's (Gingrich & Danker) *Lexicon*, page 417, where it gives the following translation of Galatians 3:13—

"by becoming a curse-offering (or an object of a curse) in our behalf."

As before stated, the substitution theory is without scriptural foundation to begin with and, consequently, such use of *huper* is not valid.

The entire theory of substitution is a complex but vivid imagination popularized by John Calvin. It is vital to the Calvinist five points yet is found in many denominations and even among brethren. It is so engrained that I have found that to question it brings accusations that one is a false teacher and must be censured. We need to be more discerning when reading commentaries and other books written by Calvinists.