and changed men. At first, it almost looked as though they had succeeded. There was a tremendous outburst of idealism among young people, and for a time nobody dared to try any dirty work. But in practice it does not last. The old Adam cannot be kept down, in spite of violent efforts to do so. Corruption is beginning to appear again in various small ways, and so disillusion begins to come in.

Those are a few parallels to Christian ideas of the atonement in Communist practice. I am not going to attempt to assess their theoretical significance, or speculate about their origins ; some are obviously more important than others. But there is one practical point I want to emphasize in conclusion.

The Communists are utterly cynical about truth, and past masters at propaganda. The fact that they use these ideas and phrases shows not that they necessarily believe in them, for some of them are quite out of the line of Marxist doctrine, but that they find in practice that they have an effect and find a response in men's hearts. Of course, when men find out that they are empty words with no reality, then disillusionment comes, but by that time they have done their work, and the Communists have their grip. That means for us in practice that we need not be too apologetic about the doctrine of the atonement, and go to men saying that it is really rather difficult and hard to understand. We can go to them proclaiming it in confident expectation of getting a response, because in the souls of men there are longings which respond to these ideas. " Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Finally, we have the overwhelming advantage over the Communist propagandist of really believing that these ideas are true, and of knowing that no man who sincerely turns to the Cross of Christ seeking atonement and salvation can ever be disappointed or disillusioned.

James Denney's Doctrine of the Atonement

By The Rev. Douglas Webster, M.A.

THE evangelical understanding of the atonement owes much to three great books : *The Atonement* by R. W. Dale (1875), *The Death of Christ* by James Denney (1902), and *The Work of Christ* by P. T. Forsyth (1910). The first of these is usually available, the last has been reprinted recently by the Independent Press with many of Forsyth's other works, and the second has now been republished by the Tyndale Press (associated with the Inter-Varsity Fellowship) and costs 9/6. Like all the productions of the I.V.F. it is characterized by a high standard of printing, binding and accuracy. Such a book at such a price will earn the gratitude of a very wide circle.

James Denney (1856-1917) has been described by J. K. Mozley as

" one of those teachers and leaders whom no label fits ". He wrote *The Death of Christ* while professor in the United Free Church College at Glasgow, where in 1915 he succeeded T. M. Lindsay as principal. He held a substitutionary doctrine of the atonement and he states this view at its best. The purpose of this article is purely to draw attention to the reappearance of his book on the atonement and to summarize its teaching. It is important, however, to note that the book has also been revised. Prof. R. V. G. Tasker, who has been responsible for this, explains his purpose in a preface : " In order to make the book simpler and more suitable for the general reader as well as for the theological student, I have omitted some passages where the exegesis of a particular text is unusually technical and detailed, and others where Denney pauses to deal critically, and sometimes at considerable length, with the arguments of individual contemporary scholars, many of whose works have long since been out of print ". This raises a question to which we shall have to return later. Some of Denney's more difficult sentences have been simplified and his lengthy paragraphs broken up. The original book was later enlarged to include the writer's subsequent work *The Atonement and the Modern Mind*, but only the last of its three chapters is included in this new edition.

I

Denney begins by defending the essential unity of the New Testament books. " The books did not come together by chance. They are not held together simply by the art of the book-binder. It would be truer to say that they gravitated toward each other in the course of the first century of the Church's life, and imposed their unity on the Christian mind, than that the Church imposed on them a unity to which they were inwardly strange by statute." He criticizes the tendency, fashionable in his day, to exaggerate the distinction between the historical and dogmatic approach, and the distinction between matter and form. " The higher the reality with which we deal, the less the distinction of matter and form holds. If Christianity brings us into contact with the ultimate truth and reality, we may find that the ' form ' into which it was cast at first is more essential to the matter than we had supposed." The main question to ask of biblical or philosophical theology is whether it is true.

The author examines the New Testament strand by strand in a way that will be quite familiar to those who have been brought up on Vincent Taylor. And he begins with the Synoptic Gospels. Our Lord did not identify Himself with men in such a way as to obscure the difference between His life and ours. Denney sets out to emphasize the difference rather than the identity, and for that reason prefers the word ' substitute ' to ' representative '. The Passion sayings are examined in turn, and the significance of the Baptism and Temptation of Jesus, implying His double role as both Messiah and Suffering Servant, is fully recognized. The word from heaven at His Baptism was indeed the true index of His life. That is why from the outset Christ sees the two paths that lie before Him and chooses the one " which He knows will set Him in irreconcilable antagonism to the hopes and expectations of those to whom He is to appeal ". That

there was a divine 'must' about His career is increasingly evident as the gospel narratives proceed, and this 'must' included death. Messiahship as He unfolded it spelt death. "This was the first and last thing He taught about it, the first and last thing He wished His disciples to learn." It is the very soul of His vocation. Our Lord's thought dwells constantly in that circle of ideas to be found in the Old Testament concept of sacrifice and supremely in Isaiah liii. This culminates in the Last Supper. What Jesus does and says there is "the focus of revelation, in which the Old Testament and the New are one". The meaning of His death as propitiation is demonstrated there, "for propitiation is merely a mode of mediation, a mode of it, no doubt, which brings home to us acutely what we owe to the Mediator, and makes us feel that, though forgiveness is free to us, it does not cost Him nothing".

There follows a chapter on the earliest Christian preaching, in which the commission to baptize and to proclaim forgiveness of sins is shown to have meaning only in relation to Christ's death. Both baptism and remission of sins were two forms of the same thing and inseparably linked. Our Lord's death is everywhere interpreted in terms of Isaiah liii. and the Sacraments (than which, says Denney, "there is nothing in Christianity more primitive") are witnesses to the connection between the Cross and forgiveness. The First Epistle of St. Peter, naturally associated with the Petrine speeches in Acts, is found to contain similar testimony. There Christ's death is seen as moral power, liberating and recreating the soul. He bore our sins, i.e. He bore their consequences, the punishment they involve. "He made our responsibilities, as sin had fixed them, His own . . . His death and His bearing of our sins, are not two things, but one." And to say this is to imply substitution, and "to say substitution is to say something which involves an immeasurable obligation to Christ, and has therefore in it an incalculable motive power". It is here that Denney finds his answer to those who would regard the idea of substitution as immoral. It is this sense of debt which prevents the believer from continuing in sin; "it is so strong that it extinguishes and creates at the same time".

Turning to St. Paul we find Denney's exposition at its best. In his introduction Prof. Tasker tells how Denney once said, "I haven't the faintest interest in a theology which does not help us to evangelize". Neither had St. Paul, as he admirably illustrates. And that is why St. Paul could not help being intolerant (Gal. i. 8, 9). "If God has really done something in Christ on which the salvation of the world depends, and if He has made it known, then it is a Christian duty to be intolerant of everything which ignores, denies, or explains it away. The man who perverts it is the worst enemy of God and men." St. Paul's gospel is addressed to "a nature of which reason, imagination, emotion, conscience, are the elements"—and in this sense the word of the cross is always rational. And St. Paul, contrary to some Protestant theology, will not isolate the cross from the resurrection. "There can be no salvation from sin unless there is a living Saviour. . . . But the living One can be a Saviour only because He has died." St. Paul's epistles are examined in the old chronological order, beginning

with Thessalonians. In Denney's discussion the following points stand out.

1. His interpretation of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians v. " When reconciliation is spoken of in St. Paul, the subject is always God, and the object is always man. The work of reconciliation is one in which the initiative is taken by God, and the cost borne by Him ; men are reconciled in the passive, or allow themselves to be reconciled, or receive the reconciliation. We never read that God has been reconciled." Moreover, this work of reconciliation is a finished work, and it was finished before the gospel was ever preached. It is something to be received by the sinner, and by this personal appropriation becomes personally effective. Apart from this message of Christ's finished work, says Denney, we have no real gospel for sinful men at all.

2. In dealing with Galatians Denney examines the relation of the atonement to morality and law. Christ was born " under the law ". In His death He became a curse for us. But " to describe Him as accursed of God would be absurd. . . . Death is the curse of the law. It is the experience by which the final repulsion of evil by God is decisively expressed ; and Christ died. In His death everything was made His that sin had made ours—everything in sin except its sinfulness ". The obedience of Jesus is of a kind which transcends morality ; it is a miracle. But it creates in the Christian genuine and victorious morality and makes it actual.

3. In Romans Denney interprets the righteousness of God in a double sense : it is both His own self-consistent, inviolable character, which had to be vindicated, and it is that which comes from God in justifying the sinner. The sin of the world created a problem for God, the only solution to which is the recognition of Christ's death as ἱλαστήμιον. " Christ died for our sins because it is in death that the divine judgment on sin is finally expressed." It is this which makes it possible for God to be righteous in both senses. It is because Christ's death is vicarious that it is *not* irrational. It would, however, be wholly irrational if it were merely a proof of God's love. A man does not jump into the sea and get drowned to show how much he loves his friend sitting comfortably on the pier. Such an action is only rational if his friend is drowning. So Denney insists that there must be " an intelligible relation between the sacrifice which love made and the necessity from which it redeemed ".

4. The writer's antipathy to the expression ' mystical union ' is not disguised ; the sinner's union with Christ is a moral one, and its basis is faith. Christ's death " evokes the faith by which we become right with God ", and this faith " has a death in it ". In a man's experience of faith he dies to sin and becomes alive to God. This death has to be morally realized in daily living, and thus the law is fulfilled in the believer.

II

This article is meant to be an exposition of Denney, not a criticism. It should be noted, however, that Denney's slender appreciation of the mystical side of St. Paul, the doctrine of the Second Adam and the

New Humanity, so deeply rooted in St. Paul (and brilliantly expounded by P. T. Forsyth) does detract from the richness of his theory at this point. Nor does he relate the atonement very fully to the doctrines of the Spirit and the Church, though the former is briefly referred to. When he turns to the Prison epistles his treatment is much briefer and less impressive. The relevant passages in Ephesians ii, Philippians ii and Colossians ii, which for a balanced picture of St. Paul's doctrine need to be put beside and held with the earlier passages, receive very scant treatment, and the idea of cosmic atonement is rejected.

The chapter devoted to Hebrews is short but illuminating. Westcott comes in for a good deal of criticism in his interpretation of the incarnation as part of God's original plan for the world, irrespective of man's sin. Christ is to be known in His work as high priest. Unlike Quick and Vincent Taylor, Denney sees the death of Christ in this epistle as defined by relation to God's love, though he hardly justifies this assertion. He suggests that this epistle's use of ἁγιάζειν is virtually equivalent to the Pauline δικαιοῦν. Sanctification, so far as this writer is concerned, is not to be taken in the sense generally accepted in Protestant theology. " The people were sanctified, not when they were raised to moral perfection . . . but when, through the annulling of their sin by sacrifice, they had been constituted into a people of God and, in the person of their representative, had access to His presence." The immediate effect of Christ's death, therefore, is religious rather than ethical; it alters their relation to God, and only on the basis of this does it eventually alter their character. Christ's sacrifice, unlike all its Old Testament types, has an inward efficacy reaching right down to a man's conscience; it is final and complete and unrepeatable, " whether any soul responds to it or not ". The atoning thing was not His obedience but His sinlessness, and following out the thought of ix. 14, where His offering is seen to be " through eternal spirit ", it appears to have an absolute or ideal character.

The biblical exposition ends with the Johannine writings where the same general viewpoint is seen to have firm support. In his chapter on " The Death of Christ in Preaching and Theology " Denney writes with passion and persuasion. " The propagation of Christianity and its interpretation by intelligence—in other words preaching and theology—should never be divorced. At the vital point they coincide." This is the Cross. He pleads for a return to the gospel as John Wesley preached it, namely *full salvation now*. Only this kind of preaching holds out any promise of revival. And with it must go the doctrine of assurance. Denney's treatment of this is quite masterly. Hesitation here throws doubt on Christ's finished work. Roman Catholicism protects the morality of the atonement and avoids presumption by making justification and the new life identical. But here " the security is too good. An absolute justification is needed to give the sinner a start. He must have the certainty of ' no condemnation ' . . . before he can begin to live the new life ". But within the Protestant tradition too the doctrine of assurance has been distorted by being preached as a duty, " by laying stress on the proper kind of faith ". Thus the German Pietists stressed the need of *penitent* faith. But, says Denney, " Christ did not die for those who were sufficiently

penitent ". " To try to take some preliminary security for the sinner's future morality before you make the gospel available for him is not only to strike at the root of assurance, it is to pay a very poor tribute to the power of the gospel. The truth is that morality is best guaranteed by Christ and not by any precautions we can take before Christ gets a chance or by any virtue that is in faith except as it unites the soul to Him." The mercy of God is free, and it " can never foster either immorality or presumption ".

Denney concludes by reminding us of the ultimate issues of life or death, salvation or perdition, with which the Cross confronts men, and a stern insistence that in the New Testament the doctrine of the atonement, not the incarnation, must have central place, for Calvary, not Bethlehem, is the focus of revelation.

There are other themes that receive their share of attention, and throughout the book there are scattered fine and powerful phrases. Referring to the death of Christ he adds, " To trust it wholly and solely is the only right thing a man can do when confronted with it. And when he does so trust it he is completely, finally, and divinely right " (p. 89). Faith (in Hebrews) " is to the invisible world what sight is to the visible " (p. 133). " Redemption, it may be said, springs from love, yet love is a word of which we do not know the meaning until it is interpreted for us by redemption " (p. 135). " If our gospel does not inspire thought, and if our theology does not inspire preaching, there is no Christianity in either " (p. 157).

III

One is reluctant to end on a critical note, though this is not of Denney but of the way in which his book has been revised. It is one thing to omit difficult passages no longer of general interest. It is another thing to exclude—often, it would seem, quite deliberately—all references to a critical view of the Bible not acceptable, presumably, to the publishers. One is left with the impression that the book has not been merely simplified but censored so as to merit the tacit imprimatur of a body known (and, of course, respected) for its conservative views on the Bible. In his article on Denney in the Dictionary of National Biography Prof. A. S. Peake describes him thus : " He was liberal in his views of inspiration, and fully recognized the legitimacy of criticism, though his position on the New Testament problems was on the whole conservative ". Here, however, are certain passages from the 1911 edition which have been omitted from the revision. " When we pass from the gospels to the earliest period of the Church's life we are again immersed in critical difficulties " (p. 53). " The First Epistle of Peter shows traces of dependence upon one or perhaps more than one epistle of Paul " (p. 61). " It is not possible to base anything on the Second Epistle ascribed to Peter " (p. 76). " Isaiah 24. 21, a late passage " (p. 141) has the last three words omitted. " St. Paul was inspired, but the writer of these (the pastoral) epistles is sometimes only orthodox " (p. 147). On p. 229 there is a discussion on inspiration, surely still of considerable value. " Usually those who are perplexed about the inspiration of the Bible discuss their difficulties with no consideration of what the Bible means as a whole ;

and yet it is only as a whole that we can attach any meaning to its being inspired. There is no sense in saying that every separate sentence is inspired: we know that every separate sentence is not. There are utterances of bad men in the Bible, and suggestions of the devil. Neither is there any sense in going through the Bible with a blue pencil, and striking out what is not inspired that we may stand by the rest. . . . No doubt it is a task for the historian to trace the gradual progress of revelation and to indicate its stages, but the historian would be the first to acknowledge that the questions so often raised about the inspiration of persons or books or sentences or arguments are mostly unreal. We will never know what inspiration is until Scripture has resolved itself for us into a unity." This is all omitted. Whether it is being quite fair to James Denney to do so we must leave the reader to judge. Most living authors, one imagines, would not be very happy in thinking that their writings might be liable to this kind of treatment at the well-meaning hands of a future generation.

Denney himself usually refers to the apostles as St. Paul, St. John, etc. This edition of his work, however, prefers to drop the customary prefix throughout. This is a pity. There is a reverence due to the apostles which the traditional mode of referring to them helps to preserve. There are many Pauls; there is only one St. Paul.

The Biblical Doctrine of the State

By The Rev. Philip E. Hughes, M.A., B.D.

THE question of the relations between Church and State is one of outstanding significance for the present time, and it is therefore a subject deserving of the most careful consideration. In many respects it is a difficult and complicated subject in connection with which many divergent and ill-considered opinions have been expressed, insufficiently related to scriptural principles. Such principles should be both the starting-point and the setting of all Christian thinking.

I

The first and all-pervading scriptural principle is that of *the universal sovereignty of God*—over all creation and, consequently, over *all men*. This sovereignty, it should be noted, is not confined to *godfearing* men, who willingly acknowledge it; it covers no less really those who rebel against it. Man in revolt does not dissolve the rule of God over him, as the biblical testimony to God's judgment and punishment of sinners makes plain. No matter what men or nations may desire or presume, they are still subject to the divine rule, wrath, and judgment. God is not helpless before rebellious man. "The kingdom is the Lord's, and