

bitter against God, it totally inappropriate, and may even be wicked. God is not to blame for any of the terrible consequences of sin; man is!

6. If it be pointed out that, although God is not the ultimate author of sin and its terrible effects, nevertheless He is in a position to prevent those effects from falling upon an individual and is therefore in some sense responsible for them, then it should also be pointed out that God is under no obligation to prevent any of those effects of man's sin from falling upon him.

Each human being does not begin earthly life with a clean slate and face the probationary test of the Garden of Eden anew; that test has already been taken and failed! And it has been taken and failed by every human being (except the Lord Jesus Christ) in the person of his or her true and perfect representative, Adam.

This is Paul's teaching in Romans 5:12-19. In the person of their true representative Adam, all mankind sinned, lost original righteousness, became guilty, died spiritually, became totally depraved and inclined toward all evil, became physically corrupted, and began to die physically. All sinned and died in Adam, as Paul says in verse 12 – "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." And in verses 18 and 19 Paul says, "the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men," and "through the disobedience of the one man (i.e., Adam) the many were made sinners."

Every human being sinned and died in the person of his or her representative, Adam. Since he was a perfect and true representative, this means that when Adam sinned, I sinned, and when Adam died, I died. Adam's sin is thus my sin! In the person of my true representative I was truly there, I was tempted, I rejected God's Word, I rebelled against God's Law, and thus I fully deserved to fall and to incur all of the terrible effects of sin! It will not do for me to say, "Ah, but if I had been there, I might have responded to the temptation differently!" The truth of the matter is that I was there, in the person of my true representative, and I didn't respond differently! And thus I deserve all of the results of sin. And so does every other human being!

Now if God chooses to prevent any of these effects from falling on a human being, it is a matter of pure grace that He does so. If God operated on the basis of strict justice, untempered by mercy, the whole human race would have been sent to hell! But God, who is rich in mercy, determined to redeem a portion of the human race through the atoning death of His dear Son.

7. For those human beings who believe savingly on Jesus Christ, the atonement of Christ removes not merely some, but all of the terrible results of sin, including all of its related suffering. Some of these results are removed immediately; some are removed gradually, throughout the course of a believer's earthly life; some are removed at physical death; some are removed at Christ's Coming. Not all of these results and their associated suffering are removed at once, the moment we trust in Christ.