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Studies in the atonement by Willard Nathan Tobie

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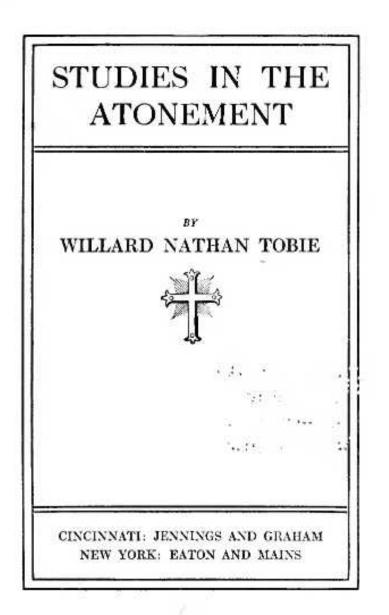
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WILLARD NATHAN TOBIE

STUDIES IN THE ATONEMENT

Trieste



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Introduction

T was with a feeling akin to presumption that these studies on the atonement were undertaken. When so many of the wise and good of ages past have presented their solutions, it seems presumptuous to hope that any further light can be thrown on so profound a subject.

This little book grows out of an intense personal experience—a fact which extenuates the presumption. Nineteen years ago, in college days, the author's mind was torn with doubt and perplexity over the doctrine of the atonement. The books I read, most of them standard works accepted by the Churches, and the sermons I heard, both liberal and orthodox, appealed neither to my reason nor my conscience. In fact, they left me in more hopeless confusion. They only thickened the mists. I well remember the mental despair into which I sank. For some years I avoided all reading on the subject; for

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there had come over me a deep dissatisfaction with the generally accepted views. In the course of years, with little apparent effort on my part, the fog seemed slowly to clear away, and almost before I knew it I found myself in possession of what was to me an intellectually rational and morally satisfactory theory of the subject, Further reading in many lines, deeper knowledge of the New Testament Christ, and more intimate acquaintance with human life, have only confirmed this view. The result of these experiences is embodied in this humble treatise. Complete originality is not elaimed for all the views here expressed: we live too late to be original; but in a very true sense, that is original which is independently evolved out of one's own life, even though others may have had the same experiences and expressed the same ideas. In this sense, all religious experience is original with every soul.

The theory here outlined appears to me rational and morally defensible. If it shall appear so to unprejudiced readers, and shall aid some confused and doubting mind to clearer under-

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standing of Calvary, the reward will be worth the lonely years of intellectual confusion through which the author passed on his way to peace and joy.

WILLARD NATHAN TOBIE.

Lincoln, Illinois, 1913.