

## A SOLEMN FACT

“ . . . No man’s sin is ever done with until it has come through this process of forgiveness. . . I think this is about the solemnest fact in human life.

Do not take it from me as a Christian preacher, as though this were especially Christian, or even especially religious. It is universally human. Go back to Aeschylus, hundreds of years before Christ and read his story of Orestes, who sinned and was driven by the Furies over all the earth, finding no peace until he had persuaded a jury of his fellow countrymen at Athens to vote forgiveness. Leap the centuries and come down to America. . . Go to one of the greatest novels yet written in America, THE SCARLET LETTER. See Arthur Dimmesdale, with his unconfessed, unforgiven sin. How shall he be rid of it? He is a man of intellect; he will absorb himself in thought. But

that is no way out. He is a minister; he will preach sermons and save souls. But that is no way out. He is a servant and will go from door to door, humbly helping people. But that is no way out. There is only one way—penitence, confession, and forgiveness.

Go even to the psychiatrists, who in more ways than this are saying what Christianity has been saying for centuries. . . Either your sin has been forgiven or it is still in you as sin. We know that most clearly when we are at our best. We have gross, brutal hours, when we forget our unforgiven sins, lock them in the hold, let the roar of the world fill our ears until conscience cannot be heard; but ever and again the finer hours return, when we know that unforgiven sin is here because unforgiven.

-H. E. Fosdick. *The Greatness of God*. P. 92