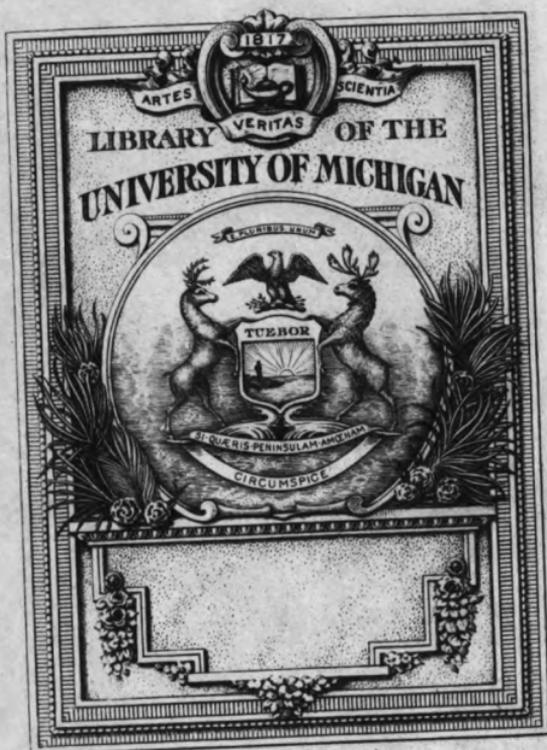


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THE

SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE

OF

THE ATONEMENT

ILLUSTRATED AND DEFENDED.

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THE ATONEMENT.

THE Atonement of Jesus Christ is a subject of deep and vital importance. It forms the basis of our holy religion; it lies at the foundation of a sinner's hopes for eternity. It constitutes the grand and distinguishing peculiarity of Christianity. Such a subject deserves our solemn and deliberate consideration. We should approach it with humble and candid minds; desirous of discovering the truth, and fearful of being deluded by error.

Let us, then, in humble reliance on Divine assistance, look at the *nature*, the *extent*, and the *necessity* of the atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ.

From human reason we may learn something of the necessity of a satisfaction for sin; but from divine revelation alone can we learn the true nature and the real extent of Christ's atonement. Metaphysical speculation and refinement must not approach this sacred subject; they serve only to obscure, darken, and distort this precious doctrine. To be seen in its just proportions and native beauty, it must be viewed in the pure and steady light of inspiration. Inspired prophets and apostles, not proud philosophers, are to be our teachers. We are to bow, not to the dictates of erring human reason, but to the authoritative statements of the word of God. Our anxiety should be to know what the Lord has been pleased to reveal in relation to this subject, so interesting to fallen, ruined man.

That Jesus Christ died and was buried, are facts disputed by none. That he was the Son of God, God over all, blessed forever; that he condescended to become the mediator between heaven and earth; that, having assumed human nature into a personal union with his divine nature, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; that, in this manner, he made atonement for the sins of men; and that being now alive from the dead, he ever lives to intercede for his people; are truths so plainly taught in Holy Scripture, as to be universally admitted and believed, by all who are worthy to be acknowledged as Christians.

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THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.

But, when it is asked, why did Christ die? what is the nature of his atonement for sin? a question is proposed that divides Christians into two distinct classes, who embrace two distinct and very different theories on this momentous subject. The one class contend for an *indefinite*, the other for a *definite* atonement. Let us examine both theories, and see which will bear the test of Scripture.

The first class maintain, that Jesus Christ has made atonement for the sins of all mankind, as well for the sins of the damned as for the sins of the saved; and that his atonement consists in making a *display* of the evil of sin, and in satisfying the *rectoral* justice of God. Affirming that Christ only suffered for sin, and denying that he was charged with the sins of his people, or bore for them the penalty of the violated law, they contend, that the atonement merely opened the way of salvation for sinners, and that it secures salvation to none.

This scheme is, in our view, at once unscriptural and inconsistent with itself. By this scheme the penalty of God's law is abandoned; its claims remain forever unsatisfied. Jehovah had solemnly threatened that sin should certainly be punished: but, notwithstanding this solemn and positive threatening of infinite truth, sin escapes merited punishment. Neither the sinner saved, nor any one in his place, is punished. The divine law is of course dishonoured; it lies prostrate in the dust.

But our opponents will insist, that in the sufferings of Christ, the evil of sin has been conspicuously displayed, and that God has proclaimed his abhorrence of sin. That they are mistaken in this view of the subject, and that according to their theory, no such results follow, will be shown. But before this is attempted, let us notice a previous question. If the atonement consisted merely in making a display of the evil of sin, what necessity existed for the sufferings of our Redeemer? By the miseries of this fallen world, and the tremendous judgments inflicted upon ungodly sinners, the evil of sin had been exhibited in a fearful manner. It has been shown in the destruction of the old world by the waters of the flood; and in the overwhelming of the cities of the plain with a deluge of fire. It has been written in the blood of slaughtered millions of our race, read in the light of burning cities, and proclaimed in the history of fallen kingdoms and empires. The agonies of dying infants, the ashes of

mouldering generations, war, famine, and pestilence, are awful testimonies to the dreadful evil of sin. In the fall and ruin of angels it may be seen; and when, in the day of judgment, impenitent millions of men, the devil, and his rebellious associates, shall be driven from the presence of Christ, into everlasting fire, it will be seen in a still more striking manner. The flames and torments of hell will forever exhibit the horrible evil of sin, and proclaim God's abhorrence of it, in tones of thunder to the universe of intelligent beings.

Is not this atonement enough? Will not all this suffering of millions of immortal beings, extended through eternal ages, be a sufficient display of the hateful nature and dreadful evil of sin? Is it affirmed that a more awful and striking display of this evil was required for the good of the universe, and that this is seen in the sufferings and death of the Son of God? According to the definite scheme of atonement, such results will be found to follow; but not according to the indefinite scheme. In fact, on the principles of the latter theory, no display of the evil of sin can be seen in the Saviour's sufferings. In the misery of fallen men and fallen angels, it may be seen; because, being sinners, they are justly punished for their sins. . . But let us suppose a holy angel, whose heart glows with love, and burns with zeal, while he serves his God, subject to dreadful torments; would such a spectacle in heaven of a pure and innocent creature thus suffering, exhibit to an intelligent universe the evil of sin? How could the sufferings of a creature entirely free from sin, both *personal* and *imputed*, display its evil? But suppose the place of immolation to be changed, and this sinful world, and not heaven, to be selected as the theatre of his sufferings; would this change of circumstances produce a different impression on the minds of intelligent creatures, in viewing such a transaction? Certainly not. It would be an awful spectacle; it would inspire dread; but it could make no discovery of the evil of sin.

Jesus Christ, the Lord of angels, submitted to the deepest humiliation, and endured the bitterest agonies both in soul and body. He was, it is agreed, perfectly holy and free from all *personal* sin; and consequently could not suffer for *personal* guilt: and if, as the theory we oppose affirms, he was free from all *imputed* sin, he could not suffer for sin at all; and consequently the evil of sin could not be seen in sufferings not inflicted as punishment for sin.

Nor can there be, according to the scheme we consider, in the death of Christ, any *satisfaction* to God's *rectoral justice*.

Suppose a distinguished citizen of the United States, who had done great service to his country, and had committed no offence, were seized by the president, thrown into prison, subjected to bitter sufferings, and finally deprived of life, when no law required such treatment, could any satisfaction to public justice be perceived in such a flagrant transaction of arbitrary power? Would not every man of common sense exclaim against it as an odious exhibition of great injustice? The law of God, it is admitted by the advocates of the indefinite scheme, did not demand the death of Christ; nor did he die on account either of personal or of imputed sin. How then could the justice of God, as moral governor, require the Saviour's death? and if justice did not demand his sufferings, how could there be in them either a display of justice, or satisfaction to its claims? If, under the government of Jehovah, it were possible for the occurrence of such a spectacle, as we have supposed; if it were possible for a creature perfectly holy, free entirely both from personal and from imputed guilt, to be subjected to sufferings the most intense and dreadful, such as were endured by our blessed Lord, there might be exhibited a revolting exhibition of divine *sovereignty*; but no display of God's rectoral justice, nor satisfaction to its claims, could be seen in a spectacle so terrible.

On juster principles are the sufferings of the Redeemer accounted for by the advocates of a definite atonement. Christ, according to their theory, stood, as the *substitute* of his people, *charged* with their sins, and consequently he was justly required to bear the penalty due to them; and, in this way, made *ample satisfaction* to divine justice, and procured for them the blessings of salvation. Now, all the particulars contained in this brief statement are plainly taught in the Scriptures. If this can be made to appear, it will clearly follow that the definite plan is true and scriptural. Let us examine.

I. CHRIST WAS THE SUBSTITUTE OF HIS PEOPLE.

As the Son of God, the Redeemer was subject to no law; and when he assumed human nature, he was in that nature, by its personal union to his divine nature, entitled to the highest possible honours. Yet it is expressly stated, that Christ "was made under the law." He came under obligation to obey the law, both moral and ceremonial. Accordingly he was, on the eighth day, circumcised; he attended the Jewish feasts, and observed the Mosaic ritual; and he

yielded a willing obedience to the moral law. How is this fact to be accounted for? Why did the Son of God come under this obligation? The same inspired writer whom we have just quoted, and who has taught us this wonderful fact, assigns the reason of it immediately after stating it; for he goes on to say, "That he might redeem them that were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons." Not for himself, but for us, Christ became subject to the law, and obeyed all its requisitions. He assumed our obligation, and yielded that obedience which we failed to yield.

That, in doing this, our blessed Lord acted as the *substitute* of his people seems obvious from the nature of the case. If he were not their substitute, how could he become subject to the law and obey it for them? Is additional proof demanded? We are able to meet the demand. Two propositions are used by the inspired writers, when speaking of Christ's sufferings, which, in the Greek language, plainly denote substitution. "The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom *for* (*anti, in the place of*) many." (Matt. xx. 28.) So spake our Lord himself. In like manner his apostle speaks: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died *for* (*anti, in the room, or in the stead of*) the ungodly." (Rom. v. 6.) Indeed the context will not admit of a different interpretation; for when the inspired writer says, in the seventh verse, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die;" it is perfectly plain that he intends *substitution*; that is, one dying in the place of a good man, to save his life. Now, if substitution is exhibited in the comparison by which he illustrates his subject, substitution must be found in the subject, Christ dying for the ungodly; which he exalts above every display of benevolence to be found in the history of human transactions; "But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us. Much more being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. v.)

Besides, let it be remembered that Christ is expressly denominated a *surety*; that is, one who stipulates to meet the engagement of another, and to pay his debt. "By so much," says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "was Jesus made a **SURETY** of a better testament." (Heb. vii. 22.) "And

for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." (Heb. ix. 15.)

II. CHRIST, AS THE SUBSTITUTE OF HIS PEOPLE, WAS CHARGED WITH THEIR SINS.

Imputation of sin is by some, who pride themselves on their discoveries in theological science, ridiculed as a novel and absurd idea. But were they to reflect that imputation of sin depends on a principle interwoven with the very framework of civil society, and essential to some of its most important transactions; and that it was for ages before the Christian dispensation, daily exhibited to the Jewish church in the sacrifices offered for sin, their sneers would be repressed by a conviction of their own ignorance. Were imputation to involve a transfer of moral character, so as to represent Christ as actually a sinner, and sinners as actually innocent, it would be absurd enough. But this idea we reject; and we think our opponents ought to possess intelligence sufficient to see that it has no connexion with the doctrine we advocate.

The acts of an attorney are imputed to his client; the acts of a woman to her husband; the acts of a representative to his constituents; the acts of an ambassador to the nation from whom he has received his commission. Did any one ever dream, that these transactions in human affairs and of daily occurrence, involved the transfer of moral character? Is it not easily understood and well known, that imputation in all these cases depends on the *union* of the parties. Union is the principle on which imputation is founded. The acts of one human being are never imputed to another, unless some union exists between them. This is the very ground on which sin is imputed to Christ. He and his people are united. The Father gave them to him to be redeemed; and he stipulated to become their surety, to stand in their place, to be responsible for their sins. Thus a sufficient union was constituted between the Saviour and his people, for the imputation of their sins to him.

Opposed as it is by some writers and some preachers, imputation of sin has, in every age, been exhibited to the church, by the God of truth. It was incorporated in the whole system of Levitical sacrifices, which were divinely instituted to show forth the good things to come under the gospel dispensation. The worshipper, having brought to

the altar a victim, and laid his hands on its head, confessed over it his sins. The victim was then slain. What was the meaning of this symbolical transaction? Did it not signify that the offerer wished his sins to be transferred from himself to the victim; which was slain as his substitute, and symbolically bore his punishment? Is not imputation seen in these sacrificial acts? Could it be taught with greater plainness in symbols, than it was on the great day of expiation? "And Aaron shall lay both his hands on 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." (Lev. xvi. 21, 22.) Was not imputation of sin exhibited in this memorable transaction? Could any Jew contemplate the solemn scene, and not see this idea held up to his view in the clearest light?

The law was a shadowy representation of gospel realities. All the sacrifices under the law prefigured the grand sacrifice of Christ. To the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, they all pointed and directed the faith and hope of God's ancient Church. This is most plainly and particularly taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Jews, in celebrating the passover, were commanded not to break a bone of the lamb on which they feasted; and that this was intended to be typical of what occurred at the death of our Saviour, we are expressly taught by an evangelist to believe; for, after noticing the fact that the bones of Christ were not broken, although the bones of his fellow sufferers were, he states; "These things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." (John xix. 36.) Now, if so minute a circumstance in the Mosaical institutions was fulfilled in the history of our Lord, can a doubt be entertained whether the important and leading idea, of the imputation of sin, so distinctly exhibited in the ancient sacrifices, was realized in the great sacrifice offered up to God by Christ? He gave "himself," says the apostle, "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." (Eph. v. 2. Heb. x. 4.) "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix 14.) But how could he take away sins, unless

they were laid upon him, or imputed to him, as they were symbolically laid upon, or imputed to, the animal victims, divinely appointed under the law to be types of him and his great sacrifice?

In accordance with this reasoning, we find plain scriptural statements. "He hath made him to be *sin for us*, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) How strong this language! Does it not carry the idea of imputed sin? Some, I am aware, interpret the passage simply to mean, that Christ was made a *sin-offering* for us. But how could he have been made a *sin-offering*, if no sin had been imputed to him? Thousands of animals were slain in Judea, and in dying suffered as much pain as animals slain at the altar; yet they were not *sin-offerings*, because they were not qualified for so important a service. For an animal to become a *sin-offering*, it was requisite that the sins of the offerer should be laid upon it before it was slain. In like manner for Christ to become a *sin-offering*, it was requisite that the sins of his people should be laid upon him, or imputed to him, previously to his sufferings and death. Thus, bearing their sins, and in no other way, could he be slain as a sacrifice to God, and become a *sin-offering* for our race.

This great and vital truth is inculcated by the evangelical prophet. Speaking of Christ, Isaiah says, "The Lord hath *laid* on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. liii. 6.) And with the prophet agrees the apostle Peter, who, in testifying of the Redeemer, represents him as bearing the same heavy burden: "Who his own self bare our sins, in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) But how could Christ bear our sins, or have them laid upon him, except by imputation? Sins are not *tangible* substances that can be removed from one person and laid on another. They are criminal acts, that may be imputed to another person than the offender, so as to render him responsible for them and liable to their punishment.

III. JESUS CHRIST, BEING CHARGED WITH THE SINS OF HIS PEOPLE, BORE THE PUNISHMENT DUE TO THEM.

This is affirmed to be impossible; and if assertion be allowed to go for proof, and the right of making definitions be resigned to our opponents, the controversy must be yielded to them. "Punishment," says a writer of some note, "is natural evil inflicted for *personal* sin." Admit

this definition to be complete, and it will follow that Christ could not endure our punishment. But correct the definition, by adding two or three words, and you deprive the weapon of its edge, and render it harmless. Let punishment be, as it ought to be defined, natural evil inflicted for *personal*, or for *IMPUTED* sin; and it will operate in our favour.

Christ, certainly, was not subject to spiritual death; for had he been a sinner, he could not have made satisfaction for sin, nor have saved any of our sinful race. "Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." All men are subject to one and the same penalty; yet it operates, on different men, in ten thousand different ways; and although spiritual death must necessarily seize on the transgressor, yet the law did not require the infliction of this part of the penalty on the surety of sinners. The reparation of its insulted honour demanded only, that he should submit to that humiliation, pain, shame, and anguish, both in body and in soul, which constitute the essence of its penalty.

Another point of difference between the punishment inflicted on a sinner and that inflicted on the Redeemer, is seen in their duration. The punishment of a sinful creature must necessarily be protracted through eternal ages; because he is unable to bear it in a limited period. But the Divine Saviour was able, in consequence of his almighty power, to bear, in a given time, any amount of suffering; and could, by the infinite dignity of his person, impart to his sufferings an infinite value: so that the law derived from the infliction of its penalty on the great Mediator, during the few years of his humiliation and sufferings, more honour than it would have derived from the infliction of the penalty on the whole human race, during the ages of eternity.

That our blessed Redeemer really endured the penalty of the violated law of God, seems plain from the history of his life. He submitted to deep humiliation; he led a life of poverty and sorrow; he felt not only the bitterness of death, which consists in the separation of the soul from the body, but the bitter agonies of what may be denominated the death of the soul. While suffering inconceivable anguish in the garden of Gethsemane, and trembling with horror and amazement of mind, he said to his disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

In this light inspired writers place the Redeemer's sufferings. They teach, if not in identical, yet in *equivalent* terms, the same doctrine we teach, that he endured the pe-

nalty of the law. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being *made a curse* for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. iii. 13.) The curse of the law, from which Christ has redeemed us, is its *penalty*. And what can his being "made a curse for us," mean, but his enduring the curse or penalty of the law for us. The attempt to explain away the force of this text, by representing it as importing no more, than that Christ was hung upon a tree, is degrading to his sufferings. He suffered unutterably more than the pains of crucifixion. He endured the wrath of God. His *soul* was made an offering for sin. Compared with his mental agonies, his bodily pains were a mere trifle. The curse was vastly more than crucifixion or hanging on a tree. The quotation at the close of the text, shows the wisdom of Divine Providence, which so ordered the circumstances of Christ's death, that he died *visibly*, and he did *in reality* die, under a curse. In fulfilment of typical representations of his sufferings, our Saviour submitted to crucifixion or hanging on a tree; which mode of punishment had, in reference to this very event, been, under the law, pronounced accursed.

The same character is assigned to our Redeemer's sufferings by the evangelical Isaiah. "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the *chastisement* of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord hath LAID ON HIM *the iniquity of us all.*" Here the prophet states a *fact*, the sufferings of Christ; and then assigns the *cause* of these sufferings, our sins. First, iniquity is laid upon him, imputed to him, charged to his account; and then, the Lord, as a righteous judge, wounds him for our transgressions, and bruises him for our iniquities. Chastisement is *penal*. The original word signifies *exemplary punishment*. How plain and full the proof! And can it, in the face of such scriptural testimonies, be denied that our blessed Lord endured the penalty of the law? Let pre-judice bow to inspired teaching.

IV. JESUS CHRIST HAS MADE AMPLE SATISFACTION TO DIVINE JUSTICE FOR THE SINS OF MEN.

Obscurity has been cast on this part of our subject, and error introduced, by a distinction made between God's justice and his *rectoral* justice. In human affairs we distinguish between a man and his office. He may derive dignity from

his office, while he imparts no dignity to his office. He may be offended *officially*, and not *personally*. To criminals a judge may say: "You have offended, not me, but the law; and I subject you to punishment, not to do away any dishonour done to myself, but to do away the dishonour done to the law." But this distinction will not apply to the Sovereign of the universe, nor would such language become his infinite majesty. Jehovah receives his right to reign from none. All his authority comes from himself. Having made the universe, he possesses an inherent right to govern all his creatures. Infinite majesty imparts dignity to office; office can impart no dignity to infinite majesty. It is condescension in God to hold the reins of universal empire. Through his office of moral Ruler, he displays his glory; but from his office he receives no real increase of glory. **HE** is offended, when his law is violated; and *He* punishes, not merely to uphold His law, but to vindicate His *own insulted majesty*. To the sinner *He* cannot say, you have not offended me: you have broken the law. In the day of judgment he will take care of his own glory. He will deny and condemn the ungodly, because "He cannot *deny HIMSELF*." The Judge will indeed come to save his people; but the ultimate end of the final transactions will be to *glorify HIMSELF*.

In its injurious effects on creatures, the evil of sin is indeed seen; but its unutterable evil can be seen only in the insult it offers to infinite majesty. This view of sin is essential to true repentance; and until a sinner gets this view of it, he is no true penitent. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight," was the language of David; and it is the language of every contrite heart. A penitent grieves for the hurtful effects of his sinful conduct on himself and others; but he grieves especially for the dishonour he has done to God. It is on this account chiefly that sin deserves punishment. It offends the infinite majesty of Jehovah; and if there were but one intelligent creature in existence, and he a sinner, he would deserve to be punished, and would be accursed of God.

Divine justice or God's justice demands the punishment of sin; and this is the reason why Jesus Christ submitted to the penalty of the law. Consequently, by enduring the punishment which divine justice demanded, He made a *real and proper SATISFACTION for sin*. He bore what Jehovah deemed requisite to vindicate, not merely the honour of his law, but the honour of his own infinite majesty. So is the

matter represented in sacred Scripture. "For it *became Him, for whom* are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation *perfect through sufferings.*" (Heb. ii. 10.) Here the reason of Christ's sufferings is assigned. What is it? A regard for the divine law? Certainly this was a reason; but it is not the reason here assigned. It was Jehovah's regard for HIMSELF. The inspired writer refers not to his *official* but to his *personal* honour. He does not say, it became the Ruler of the universe; but "it became HIM, for *whom*, and by whom are all things;" that glorious Being who made all things *for his own glory*. The glory of God, and not simply his honour as moral governor, required the Saviour's sufferings. The particular attribute that demanded satisfaction for sin, was his *justice*. In this light, inspiration places the truth. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 25.) Here we have stated the following truths; 1. Christ became a propitiation (*πρασηνικω*) by the shedding of his blood: 2. He became a propitiation in proof of God's righteousness in passing by sins committed in past ages: 3. Had not Christ shed his blood or suffered, God could not have been just, while he justified sinners. From all this it follows conclusively, that Divine justice demanded a satisfaction for sin, that salvation might be extended to sinful man, in a way consistent with the claims of this glorious attribute of a holy God; and consequently that as God, without disparaging his adorable justice, and while he appears upon the mercy-seat as a JUST God, does, from a regard to Christ's blood, justify all who believe in Him, a *real and proper SATISFACTION* to his *justice* must have been made by the Redeemer.

V. FINALLY, ON THIS PART OF THE SUBJECT: IT IS TO BE PROVED, THAT CHRIST PURCHASED FOR HIS PEOPLE ALL THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION.

None will deny that the Redeemer purchased his people; for such a denial would contradict the express testimony of inspiration. Paul affirms, "Ye were bought with a price;" and Peter, "Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your

vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot." But why did Christ purchase his people ? Was it to make them his *own property* ? They were his own property by the right of creation and preservation. Why then did he pay his precious blood as a price for them ? It was, Peter tells us, to "redeem them from their vain conversation ;" from a sinful nature, which leads to a sinful life : it was to bring them into a new and peculiar relation to himself ; it was that he might, in a manner consistent with the claims of Divine justice, deliver them from all the miseries of their apostacy, and elevate them to the enjoyment of future and eternal happiness. If then they were purchased with the blood of Christ for this purpose, it will follow, that all the blessings conferred on them were bought with the same invaluable price. Accordingly we find in Holy Scripture, all these blessings exhibited in close connexion with the death of Christ, and represented as the fruits of his merits. Here by plain texts of Scripture, it might be shown that forgiveness, reconciliation, justification, sanctification, peace with God, adoption, and the eternal inheritance, were bought with the Saviour's blood. But we need not go into this detail. If the assertion in reference to the first and the last mentioned blessings be proved, it will be sufficient. Relative to the first, Paul says, "In whom we have *redemption through His BLOOD*, the *forgiveness of sins*, according to the *riches of his grace*:" and in regard to the last ; "And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that, by *MEANS OF DEATH*, for the *redemption* of transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called *might receive the ETERNAL INHERITANCE*." (Eph. i. 7. Heb. ix. 15.)

Such, according to scriptural statements, is the *true nature* of Christ's atonement. In making it, inspired writers exhibit him as his people's *substitute*, *charged* with their sins, and bearing their *punishment* : and in this way, *satisfying* Divine justice, and *purchasing* for sinners, salvation with eternal glory.

THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

If the view given of the nature of the Atonement be adopted, one can hardly go aside from the truth in regard to its extent : or if on this point, he were to differ from us, we should feel little disposition to dispute the matter with him. All he could say would be this : "Christ in a certain sense

died for others besides his chosen people ;” which, on examination, would be found to be a mere verbal difference.

Not so the advocates of indefinite atonement. They affirm that Christ died for all and every man ; and that he made atonement as much for Judas who perished, as for Peter who was saved. This we cannot believe. It militates with what we have seen to be the true nature of the Atonement.

That the value of our Lord’s satisfaction is, in itself, considered infinite ; sufficient, if applied, to save the whole of Adam’s fallen race ; and that had it been God’s intention to save all mankind, our Saviour’s obedience and sufferings would have been amply meritorious ; and no addition to the depth of his humiliation, or to the purity of his life, or to the intensity of his agonies would have been required by Divine justice : all this we fully believe. In saving his chosen people, our Redeemer did and suffered all that would have been demanded, if the number given to Him to be redeemed, had been indefinitely increased. This conclusion follows from the *nature* of his work, from the *infinite dignity* of his person, and from the effect of the *representative principle* on which he acted.

Nor do we hesitate to admit, that all mankind, as well as those who live under the gospel’s light, have been benefited by the Redeemer’s death. Blessings have flowed from this precious fountain of mercy to our sinful world, that would, if Christ had not died, have been withheld. But when the question is proposed, what is the extent of our Saviour’s atonement ? for whom did he satisfy Divine justice ? in whose place did he lay down his precious life ? we answer ; for all to whom his atonement shall be applied ; for all believers ; for all who shall be saved ; for all whom his Father gave him to redeem. Hear his own language ; “ I lay down my life for the *sheep*.” “ I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine.” (John x. 15 ; xvii. 9.) “ All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me : and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John vii. 37 —40.) Had it been the *intention* of God to save all, and the

intention of Christ to satisfy for the sins of all, all would certainly be saved. But all will not be saved. Millions will perish in their guilt. But how could any perish, if Christ really died with the intention of saving all, unless his purpose could be frustrated? His purpose can never be frustrated. He will do all his pleasure.

The texts adduced from Scripture that seem to militate against this statement, are easily explained. The universal terms found in them, are to be restrained in their meaning; as is necessary in many other portions of the Scriptures. For example, in these texts, the term *all* must be restricted; "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and *all* Judea, and *all* the region round about." "And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee, beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and *all men* come to him." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all men* unto me." The term *all* in each of these passages does not denote absolute universality; it necessarily requires limitation. And why do we restrict the term? Because facts demand the restriction. And for a reason equally good, do we restrict the import of universal terms in those texts that are cited by our opponents. The true scriptural nature of the Atonement demands the restriction.

THE NECESSITY OF AN ATONEMENT.

The necessity of an Atonement has appeared already in the explanation of its nature. But let us look at this point more distinctly.

Impressions of the necessity of an Atonement have rested on the human mind, in every age, and in every part of the world. The painful inquiry, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" has suited the feelings of convinced sinners, even in heathen lands. Hence the numerous altars erected, in all parts of the world; and hence the streams of blood that have flowed from those altars. Hence, in times of great distress, the immolation of children. Sacrifices originated in infinite wisdom; but the universal prevalence of them among heathen nations, who had lost the knowledge of their design;

resulted from strong impressions on the human mind, that a satisfaction for sin was necessary to propitiate Heaven.

The truth, that an Atonement was indispensably requisite, appears, with conclusive evidence, from the fact, that an Atonement full and perfect has been made by the Son of God in human nature. That this transcendently glorious person, so infinitely dear to his eternal Father, could have been subjected to such deep humiliation, such overwhelming shame, such agonizing pains, to the wrath of God, and to the curse of a violated law, when there was no real necessity for a satisfaction for sin, is incredible. The Saviour's unanswered prayer in the garden, that the cup might, *if possible*, pass from Him, was full proof, that the Father's will to save sinners could not be accomplished, unless their Surety drank the bitter cup of Divine wrath. "Without the shedding of the blood" of this great sacrifice there could be "no remission" of sin.

But whence, it may be inquired, did this necessity arise? It arose from the claims of Jehovah's perfections; which would have been dishonoured, if sinful man had been saved, without a satisfaction for sin.

The *holiness* of God could not permit man to be taken into favour and fellowship, without a full and public expression of Divine abhorrence of sin; to convince all intelligent beings, that God was not like sinners, but perfectly free from all moral defilement.

The justice of God demanded full satisfaction for the dishonour done by the transgressor to his law, to his government, and to his own infinite majesty. It could admit a substitute; but it could not dispense with punishment. Either man, or his surety, must bear the penalty of a violated law. In confirmation of this, we refer the reader to remarks previously made on two passages of Scripture.*

The *truth* of God demanded satisfaction for sin. He had sanctioned his law by a fearful penalty denounced against disobedience.

Thus his truth was concerned in the infliction of punishment. That a transfer of the penalty from the original offender to his surety, is consistent with Divine truth, God himself hath decided: and by the same convincing fact, the death of his own Son in man's stead, he has decided, that his truth could not allow sin to be pardoned, without the execution of his threatenings against sin. In justification

* See pages 13, 14.

the believer is pronounced righteous ; but how could such a sentence be pronounced by the God of truth, if the justified sinner were not rendered righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ ? “ Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” “ Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.” (Rom. x. 4.—iii. 22.)

OBJECTIONS.

Against the doctrine maintained, serious objections are urged.

1. It is pronounced *unjust* to punish the innocent for the guilty. So affirm the advocates of indefinite atonement.

That Christ suffered for sinners, is acknowledged by those whose system we reject. He suffered all that pain and shame that infinite wisdom and justice deemed proper to measure out to him, while accomplishing our redemption. All this he suffered for the guilty. The sufferings of our Saviour we denominate *punishment* ; because inspired writers attribute to them this character. Now, it is perfectly plain, that, by thus denominating Christ's sufferings, we do not increase his humiliation, his pain, his sorrow, his shame, his anguish, in the smallest degree. We only call them what Paul and Isaiah called them. If, in the estimation of our opponents, it was not unjust for the Redeemer to endure overwhelming suffering for guilty men, what reason can they assign for affirming it to be unjust for him to endure the same overwhelming sufferings, as a punishment for guilty men ? It has been shown, in explaining the nature of the Atonement, that Jesus Christ was charged with his people's sins ; and that, on this account he did, and could justly, suffer punishment for them. Had he not been their substitute, had not their sins been imputed to him, he could not have suffered for them. So that objectors, by denying his substitution, and his being charged with sin, take away the very ground on which his sufferings can be vindicated. That death is the wages, the penalty, the punishment of sin, they cannot deny ; nor can they deny that our Redeemer suffered death : and it is for them to show, how it was consistent with justice, to inflict *death*, “ the wages of sin,” on one who was not only perfectly free from *personal*, but perfectly free from *imputed* sin ; to treat him as a sinner, and to make him a curse or accursed.

But this objection comes from another quarter. Infidels urge it against the truth of the Gospel. It is a weapon, how-

ever, whose edge is easily turned. Injustice cannot be done, without injuring some one. But who is injured in the great transaction under consideration? Not man; for he is saved from eternal misery, and raised to the enjoyment of eternal happiness. Not God; for he is glorified by the atonement; his law is honoured and magnified; his moral government is vindicated and sustained in all its authority. Not the Saviour; for he had a right to lay down his life, and he did it voluntarily: and having laid it down, he resumed it again, and has gone to receive an infinite reward; being in his human nature exalted above all creatures, and sitting as Mediator on the throne of Jehovah. There he rejoices with exceeding joy, in seeing the fruits of his toils and sufferings, millions of immortal beings saved from ruin, and brought to glory; and the influence of his redemption pervading the universe, and diffusing through the minds of all holy intelligent creatures the most delightful sensations.

True we can find no parallel to this wonderful transaction in human affairs.

But the principle on which it was based, is well known. It is daily acted on in the business of *suretyship*; which often involves individuals and their families in the most distressing calamities. And the reason why it is not applied to cases of a criminal kind, that would occasion the forfeiture of the lives of innocent persons, is, that human government could not render such an application of it productive of good. But let us suppose a case. Several portions of an empire rise in rebellion against government. Civil war is kindled. Desolation marks the progress of the conflicting armies. But after many hard-fought battles, the rebels are subdued. Multitudes are taken with arms in their hands. Justice demands exemplary punishment. The condemned refuse to sue for mercy. At this crisis an illustrious citizen comes forth, and offers to die for them. He has power to raise himself from the dead; and after his resurrection he will possess such an influence over the objects of his benevolence, as will secure their entire submission and convert them into useful and obedient citizens. In such circumstances, if they could exist in human affairs, would it not be wise and just in government to admit substitution in criminal matters, as well as in pecuniary concerns? We need not stay to show how these circumstances meet in the great affair of man's redemption.

2. It is asserted, that the transfer of punishment from the sinner to the Redeemer, was *impossible*; because

the penalty of the law can only be inflicted on the transgressor.

The history of mankind supplies many practical refutations of this bold assertion. How often have men been tried, convicted, condemned, and executed for crimes which they had not committed? A thousand times have penalties of human laws been inflicted on innocent individuals. To assert then that only the guilty can be punished, is to contradict undeniable facts. That punishment inflicted on the innocent is unjust, is certainly true; but the injustice of it cannot be pleaded against the fact, that innocent persons have often been punished, not only through mistake, but wilfully by unjust judges. Inspired writers, we have seen, do, in very plain and strong language, characterize the sufferings of our blessed Lord as partaking strictly of the nature of punishment. Not only were they laid upon him by a righteous judge, and inflicted on account of imputed sin; but they are, in Scripture, denominated a *curse*, a *chastisement*, a *punishment*.

3. It is urged that the views of Atonement advocated in this tract, are incompatible with *free and sovereign grace* in man's salvation.

This objection is based on the supposition, that *grace* and *purchase* cannot coalesce in saving sinners. Now, if fallen man had furnished the price, this would be true: for Paul testifies, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." But it is utterly groundless and false, when applied to the Redeemer's purchase. Redemption was not purchased by man. Man was infinitely too poor to furnish the price of redemption. The inexhaustible treasures of heaven alone could pay the ransom. In the infinite riches of his mercy, God provided the price; he sent his own Son into the world to pay it, by laying down his precious life. Now, when we consider all this; that the plan of our redemption was laid by divine wisdom; that it was executed by the Son of God; that the price of our salvation was furnished by his boundless love; and that the application of the Atonement is the effect of divine grace; are not the infinite riches of God's grace magnified beyond all conception? How surprising that any Christian should found an objection against the freeness of grace, on the very fact, which inspired writers exhibit as the highest demonstration of divine love, and which draws from them the loftiest strains of praise! "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the *propitiation* for our sins." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

4. The last objection to be noticed, is, that in preaching the Gospel, our doctrine does not harmonize with a full and free offer of salvation to every sinner. It involves, it is said, a degree of insincerity, to tender salvation to those for whom Christ has not made satisfaction.

As those from whom this objection comes, believe the doctrine of personal election to everlasting life, it is fair to ask them, whether there is any insincerity in the proffers of salvation to individuals not elected to eternal life. Now, if the doctrine of particular election harmonizes with a full and free offer of saving blessings, why should the doctrine we maintain be supposed at all inconsistent with the same gracious arrangement of divine mercy?

Believing, as we do, that the atonement of Christ, in itself considered, is of infinite value; that God has established an *infallible connexion* between faith and salvation; and that he requires all who hear the Gospel to believe its precious truths, and embrace its proffered grace; we feel no difficulty in delivering our message to all our fellow sinners. We feel authorized to tell every human being to whom we have access, of the Saviour's love in dying for a fallen race; to assure him of his ability and willingness to save every sinner who will apply to him in the appointed way; to tender to him *individually* every blessing of salvation; to declare the solemn truth, that, if he perish, it will be owing, not to any *deficiency* in the value of Christ's Atonement, but to his own *wilful unbelief*; in a word, persuaded that the application of salvation in each case is made by the Spirit of God, we feel free in fulfilling the high commission—"Go ye into all the world, and *preach the gospel to every creature.*" All this is true; and if any complain, and venture to impute to such a message of grace the want of *sincerity*, they will find the Lord, the God of truth, can vindicate his own ways, and confound all who shall dare to dispute with him. "He that believeth not God, hath made him a *liar*; because he hath not believed that record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

REFLECTIONS.

The review of this subject is calculated to awaken deep emotions of gratitude to God, for the all-sufficient Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Had not this wonderful provision of mercy been devised and prepared, what would have been our condition? Divine justice must have exacted the dreadful forfeiture of life on account of sin; and a holy God would have glorified himself in the eternal miseries of a fallen world. On earth not a note of praise would have been heard; and from every dwelling of man, the blasphemies of hell would have resounded. But how different the scene! Through the blood of Atonement, strangers are brought nigh to God; peace is established between rebels and their offended sovereign; the light of life gladdens every believing heart; praise ascends from earth to heaven; salvation and glory to God resound throughout the church. Heaven is receiving to its mansions millions of fallen men, washed in atoning blood, and sanctified by renewing grace. On earth a temple is building for God; in which, when finished and removed to a better world, his glory will shine forever with unutterable majesty and grandeur. Let our hearts overflow with emotions of gratitude and joy. Let us celebrate forever redeeming grace.

2. The Atonement of Christ claims an exalted place in the system of evangelical truth.

To speak of it as only opening a door of hope for sinners; to deny its securing salvation to any; to affirm that notwithstanding the sacrifice of Christ, all might have perished; is not uttering language in accordance with that of inspired men. It is undervaluing the Saviour's blood; it is degrading his propitiatory sacrifice. The Atonement holds in the system of revealed truth the highest place. In fact, it is the *centre*. Like the sun, it imparts light and heat to the whole system. It is the basis of all God's transactions with our fallen world. By inspired men it has always been exhibited as the grand object of faith. It was the substance of the types; the all-absorbing theme of prophecy; and the burden of apostolical preaching. The church before our Saviour's advent looked forward to his cross, with holy anticipation; the church since his coming looks back to his cross, with confidence and joy; and the whole church in heaven will forever contemplate the cross, and there see the price

of their redemption, and the brightest exhibition of divine glory.

The Atonement secures the salvation of no one! Yet inspired writers speak of it as the fountain of every saving blessing; and Paul, who well knew its inestimable value, gave to it his whole heart, and selected it as the sum and substance of his preaching; "God forbid, that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." "For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." (Gal. vi. 14. 1 Cor. ii. 2.)

Reader, dost thou confide in the great Atonement? Thy faith may be orthodox, and thy heart wrong. In speculation thou mayest honour, but in practice dishonour, the sacrifice of Christ. Of what avail to thee will be the knowledge of an unfailing remedy, if it be not applied? The cross is lifted up to the view of all; look to it, and live,

AMEN AND AMEN.

THE END.

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