

WHY THE  
ATONEMENT WAS  
NECESSARY



MARIE T. HYATT

## INTRODUCTION

Having known the Author as a student in the Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tenn., it is with genuine pleasure that I commend to all who read, this message on "Why the Atonement was necessary." It seems to me that the cream of what might be said on this subject is here stated in an interesting manner. I find this message scripturally sound, instructive and inspirational.

It is highly needful in this modern day for new emphasis to be placed upon the fundamentals of our faith. Indeed one of the unique claims of Christianity is that "The life of the flesh is in the blood. . ." and that we are not "Redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,. . .but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot."

May our Saviour who made an atonement for our souls be pleased to bless the ministry of this message.

L. C. Johnson

# PREFACE

In compliance with the request of Mr. Johnson, President of the Free Will Baptist Bible College, that his students in Doctrine write a paper dealing with some fundamental doctrine of the Bible, the author of this work has endeavored to present the need of the atonement. It is hoped that this manuscript will be of value to its reader, and help him to see the necessity of the great doctrine, the atonement.

Marie T. Hyatt

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We wish to thank Mrs. Marie T. Hyatt  
for her diligence in the preparation of this  
work and recommend that all who have the  
opportunity read the booklet earnestly, pray-  
erfully, and with view for a better life for  
Christ.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY is given in the back  
of this booklet showing and acknowledging  
authors quoted and publishers from which  
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Rev. J. C. Griffin, Chairman  
Rev. Mark M. Lewis, Sec.-Treas.

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## WHY THE ATONEMENT WAS NECESSARY

Christianity is a religion of atonement distinctively. The elimination of the doctrine of the death of Christ would mean the surrender of its uniqueness and claim to be the only true religion, the supreme and final revelation from God to the sons of men. It is its redemption feature that distinguishes Christianity from any and all other religions. If you surrender this distinctive Christian doctrine from its creed, then this supreme religion is brought down to the level of many other prevailing religious systems. Christianity is not merely a system of ethics; it is the history of redemption through Jesus Christ, the personal Redeemer.

The atonement is so closely related to Jesus Christ, so allied to His work, as set forth in the Scriptures, that it is absolutely inseparable from it. Christ was not primarily a religious teacher, a philanthropist, and ethical example; He was all these, yea, and much more—He was the first and foremost the worlds Saviour and Redeemer. Other men have been valued for their lives; He, above all, for His death, around which God and man are reconciled. The cross is the magnet which sends the electric current through the telegraph between earth and heaven, and makes both Testaments thrill, through the ages of the past and future, with living, harmonious, and saving truth.

The atonement is the scarlet cord running throughout the entire Bible. By expiration the



whole economy of our Lord's saving intervention is consummated on the cross. On this marvelous event, the whole structure of Christianity rests, and herein lies the secret of the wonderful power of the gospel which transforms the hearts of men. The doctrine of the atonement has been explained as "the chief part of our Salvation, the anchor of Faith, the refuge of Hope, the rule of Charity, the true foundation of the Christian religion, and the richest treasure of the Christian Church." Without this doctrine the Bible is not consistent. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

The atonement of Christ is interpreted by the O. T. sacrificial types. The bloody sacrifice expressed the consciousness that sin involves guilt; that guilt exposes man to the righteous wrath of God; that without atonement of that guilt there is no forgiveness; and that through the suffering of another who shares his life the sinner may expiate his sin. The O. T. sacrifices, when rightly offered, involved a consciousness of sin on the part of the worshiper, the bringing of a victim to atone for the sin, the laying of the hand of the offerer upon the victims head, the confession of sin by the offerer, the slaying of the beast, the sprinkling or pouring out of the blood upon the altar, and the consequent forgiveness of the sin and acceptance of the worshiper.

"And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him."

The mode of worship; for sacrifice, probably accompanied with some words of prayer, is the only stated act of worship by which believers in the earlier ages appear to have given more formal expression to their faith and hope in God. From the time of Abel, downward through the whole course of antediluvian and patriarchal history, it appears that the regular and formal worship of God mainly consisted in the offerings of sacrifice. A sacrifice is not an expression of dependance and thankfulness merely, but it connected with sin and forgiveness, expiatory sacrifice, to have been, as to its foundation, of divine origin. It had its rise in an act of God, done for the express purpose of relieving guilty consciences of their sense of shame and confusion, and from the earliest periods of recorded worship it stands forth to our view as the religious solemnity in which faith had its most peculiar exercise, and for which God bestowed the tokens of His acceptance and blessing.

Under the Mosaic law, the burnt offering typifies Christ offering Himself without spot to God in delight to do His Fathers will even in death. It is atoning because the believer has not had this delight in the will of God and substitutionary because Christ did it in the sinner's stead. The creatures accepted for the burnt offering were five: the bullock which typifies Christ as the patient and enduring Servant "obedient unto death"; the sheep, or lamb, typifies Christ in unresisting self-surrender to the death of the cross; the goat typifies the sinner, and when used sacrificially, Christ, as "numbered with the transgressors"



and "made sin and a curse" as the sinners substitute; and the turtle-dove is a symbol of mourning innocence associated with poverty in Lev. 5:7, and speaks of Him who for our sakes became poor and whose pathway of poverty which began with laying aside "the form of God" ended in the sacrifice through which we became rich. The peace offering typifies the whole work of Christ in relation to the believer's peace. Christ in His own perfections and His affectate devotion is the Father's will is symbolic in the sweet savor offerings. The non-sweet savor offerings typify Christ as bearing the whole demerit of the sinner.

The vicarious suffering is intended in all the Mosaic sacrifices. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for the souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The Levitical offerings "covered" the sins of Israel in anticipation of the cross, but did not take away those sins. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." God's righteousness was never vindicated until, in the Cross, Jesus Christ was "set forth a propitiation." It was the Cross, not the Levitical sacrifices which made atonement. The Old Testament sacrifices enabled God to go with a guilty people because they typified the Cross. Thus, we see the necessity of the atonement. The Mosaic sacrifices showed forth, not Christ himself (his character or his life), but Christ's death. The infinite excellence of the divine law could not be maintained without

the enforcement of its penalty, nor could the Father's supreme love be manifested without showing mercy to mankind; hence the necessity of an atoning sacrifice.

The Scriptures set forth the meaning of atonement in different ways. First, as a ransom. Redemption is connected with man as the beneficiary of the Atonement. This exhibits the work of Christ as the laying down of a ransom, price for the legitimate and effectual deliverance of mankind from the bondage of the law of sin. A ransom is the delivering of a thing or person by paying a price; to buy back a person or thing by paying the price for which it is held in captivity. So sin is like a slave market in which sinners are "sold under sin"; souls are under sentence of death. Christ, by His death, buys sinners out of the market, thereby indicating complete deliverance from the service of sin. He looses the bonds, sets the prisoners free, by paying a price—that price His own precious blood. Christ redeemed us from the curse of a broken law by Himself being made a curse for us. His death was the ransom price paid for our deliverance. "For as—much 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."

The atonement is set forth as a propitiation for our sins. Propitiation means mercy-seat, or covering. The atonement is a covering provided by God for the sinful and guilty soul of man. God's love is not the result of pro-

pitiation, but its cause. His grace is not bought by the Death of Christ; it was His grace which surrendered Christ to death for us sinners and Son of God. God set forth Jesus as a Propitiator to assure man of his gracious disposition towards them and to influence them to exercise pure virtue, sincere piety, and devotion to God. Also to cherish and exhibit love to Him who first loved them. Propitiation furnishes a ground on the basis of which God could set for His righteousness, and yet pardon sinful men. "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." Christ himself is the propitiatory sacrifice. The death of Christ is set forth as the ground on which a righteous God can pardon a guilty and sinful race without in any way compromising His righteousness.

The third meaning of the atonement is reconciliation. "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." Reconciliation defines the finished work as having effected and exhibited the restoration of fellowship between God and man.

Reconciliation has two sides; active and passive. In the active sense we may look upon the death of Christ as removing the enmity existing between God and Man, and which had hitherto been a barrier to fellowship. Man had a carnal mind which was enmity against God. This barrier could only be broken down by God—man was unable to do it. But

He, Christ, has broken down that middle wall of partition.

In the passive sense it may indicate the change of attitude on the part of man toward God, this change being wrought in the heart of man by a vision of the Cross of Christ; a change from enmity to friendship, from alienation to communion. In either of these two ways we see that it is Christ that made the provision of grace for a lost and undone race of people.

God is the Reconciler in the Atonement, as He provides the sacrifice. The Father in the Son was carrying out the purpose of reconciliation. The eternal God was reconciled before Christ came to display His saving grace; He only brought the reconciliation, which we receive. The shedding of the blood of Christ opened the way into the presence of God for any and every sinner, however bad he might be. The cross removed all that was between man and God, making it possible for man to come to God and become a friend. Christ can reckon or impute to the guilty sinner the righteousness of God.

The universal law of substitution is the completion of the general facts constituting the meaning of the atonement. Substitution is one life given in the stead of another. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The story of the Passover lamb illustrates the meaning of substitution. The blood thus applied of itself constituted a perfect protection from judgment. God made Christ to become sin for us; thus He paid the penalty of sin. Substitution in relation to the atonement means



this: something happened to Christ, and because it happened to Christ, it need not happen to us. Christ died for our sins; we need not die for them if we accept His sacrifice." All that sin meant to the sinner as guilt, condemnation, judgment and punishment, was borne by Christ. He took the place of sinners and bore all that was against him, so that sinners believing on Him are fully discharged from their sin and guilt, and become the righteousness of God in Christ. He was condemned that we might be righteous. He bore the curse that the blessings of God be ours. Not the sinless life but the perfect sacrifice (a substitution) constitutes the atonement.

The necessity of the atonement lay in a two-fold fact: The sinfulness of man, and the holiness of God. The doctrine of the atonement is a related subject between God and man. This relationship is a personal one. It is necessary to know this relation and how it is affected by sin.

There is also a sense in which the atonement was necessary in order to the fulfillment of the predictions of the Old Testament—predictions inseparable from the person and work of the Messiah. If Jesus Christ were the true Messiah, then these predictions regarding His sufferings and death must be fulfilled in him. (Psalms 22; 69)

The Mosaic account of the Probation and Fall of Man is an inspired narrative of the origin of sin in the human race. This account records that man was placed in the state of trial, with the consciousness of the possibility of sin; it describes the nature of the temptation from without; and it sets before us the pre-

liminaries, the acts, and the consequences of the first transgression of sin. Viewed apart from the "rising again" in Christ, the Fall was a total descent of mankind from its high destination; involving the very earth in its consequences; and deepening the doom of the chief agent of temptation, not omitting the degradation of the subordinate agent which he had employed. His nature became entirely perverted. Man fell from his destination: that of an eternal progress from glory to glory in sinless fellowship with His creator. He declined into a lower sphere: out of communion with heaven, into a life of external discord and internal misery. He lost his intuitive vision of God, no longer held discourse with His maker through the symbols of nature, and had to begin, he and all that should be his, the very first principles of a spiritual world.

As the result of Adam's transgression, all his posterity are born in the same state into which he fell. The sinfulness of man has been prevalent throughout the ages since the Fall. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Sin is a lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition, or state.

Man is totally depraved; he is devoid of love to God and every faculty is weakened, disordered, and corrupted by the selfish bent of his will. The selfish bent of man's will can be traced back to the apostasy of our first parents; and on account of that departure of the race from God, all men are by nature children of wrath.



Depravity is, on the one hand, the lack of original righteousness, and, on the other the corruption of the moral nature. The sinful nature belongs to man from the first moment of his being; underlies man's consciousness; cannot be changed by man's own power and constitutes him a sinner before God.

There is no part of man's nature which is unaffected by depravity. "There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." His nature is all of a piece, and what affects it at all affects it altogether. Sin involves guilt. R. J. Campbell holds that "to relieve men from their sense of guilt, objective atonement is necessary."

The whole human race, by their apostasy from God, are totally depraved. There is common to all men a total alienation of the soul from God so that no unrenowned man either understands or seeks after God; no such man ever makes God his position, or God's glory the end of his being. The apostasy from God is total or complete.

The extent and depth of the corruption of man's nature is shown by the fruits of depravity. The sins of the flesh of violence, of the heart (pride, envy, malice and etc.), of the tongue (slander and deceit), of in-religion (ingratitude, profanity and blasphemy) are prevalent in the world. Men seemingly live without God. The sinfulness of men is incorrigible. They know that sin is an evil, and that it exposes them to the righteous judgment of God; but they had tried not only to expiate, but also to destroy it. They have tried

resources of philosophy and of moral culture, have subjected themselves to acts of self-denial such as asceticism. Men have been slow to learn that it is impossible to make the fruit good until the tree is good.

The human heart is pronounced deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Without God man is in a state of spiritual death. "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead."

Light and erroneous views of the atonement come from light and erroneous views of sin. If sin is regarded as merely an offence against man, a weakness of human nature, a mere disease, rather than as rebellion, transgression, and enmity against God, and therefore something condemning and punishable, we, shall not, of course, see any necessity of the atonement. We must see sin as the Bible depicts it, as something which brings wrath, condemnation, and eternal ruin in its train. We must see it as guilt that needs expiation. We must see sin as God sees it before we can denounce it as God denounces it. The sinfulness of man constitutes the fact that the atonement is a necessity. The believer's salvation is secured for him by the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus at Calvary when He shed His precious blood for sinners. That is the full significance of the atonement by the blood of Christ.

How can a man hope by a holiness so imperfect, polluted, and stained with sin, to secure the favor and approbation of God, and to escape punishment? To one who feels thus, how desirable and welcome is the assurance, notwithstanding his imperfect holiness, God will still be gracious to him on certain conditions. This assurance is the object of the Christian doctrine of atonement to impart.

The holiness of God constitutes the necessity of the atonement and this is the message of the entire Old Testament. It is the vision of God that we need when the tendency to deny the reality or the awfulness of sin is prevalent. Our view of the necessity of the atonement will depend very largely upon our view of the holiness of God. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place." God's personal name is holy. Holiness is self-affirming purity. God is pure because he wills purity. He is holy in that he is the source and standard of right. Righteousness in God conforms to his own perfect nature. The free moral movement of the Godhead is holiness. God is holy, in that his infinite moral excellence affirms and asserts itself as the highest possible motive and end. The sanctity of God furnishes the guarantee that God's love will not fail to secure its end, and that all things will serve his purpose.

God is absolutely clean and pure and free from all defilement. The construction of the Tabernacle, with its holy and most holy place into which the high priest entered once a

year and the Ten Commandments speak to us in terms as to what is meant by holiness as applied to God. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." God is entirely apart from all that is evil and from all that defiles both in Himself and in relation to all His creatures. There is nothing unholy in God.

God would not be holy if he were not love, and could not be love if he were not holy. Love is an element of holiness. Love is the desire to impart holiness which makes God's character the standard for his creatures. All work of love is work of holiness and all work of holiness is the work of love. "The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." God hates sin, even the very appearance of it. The infinite distance between the sinner and God is because of sin. God's holiness manifests itself in the hatred of sin and the separation of the sinner from himself. The atonement bridges over the awful distance between the sinner and God. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God's love and holiness is manifested in the Cross. God's holiness is seen in that He loves righteousness in His children to such a degree that He gave His only begotten Son to secure it.

Holiness is the fundamental attribute in God which is declared to be the chief subject of rejoicing and adoration in heaven. God's love is not the result of the atonement, but its cause. His grace is not brought by the Death of Christ; it was His grace which surrendered Christ to Death for us sinners and our sal-



vation. The Death of Christ is a complete and final proof of God's love for us.

The doctrine of God's holiness leads us to approach God with "reverence and godly fear." We should have right views of sin when we get right views of God's holiness. Isaiah, the holiest man in all Israel, was cast down at the sight of his own sin after he saw the vision of God's holiness. Our approach to God is through the merits of Christ, and on the ground of a righteousness which is Christ's and which we do not possess. Here lies the need of the atonement. If sinful man is to approach unto God, it must be through the shed blood of the atonement. The holiness of God means that before the sinner can have communion with Him there must be some means of propitiation provided. This means of approach is set forth in the atonement. The atonement then, if a man was to be saved, was necessary, not primarily on man's account, but on God's account. "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." "His righteousness" is God's consistency with His own law and holiness in freely justifying a sinner who believes in Christ. God requires satisfaction because he is holy, but he makes satisfaction because he is love. New and perfect revelation of the holiness and love of God is disclosed in the atonement. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins."

The sinfulness of man and the holiness of God brings forth this question: How is the

mercy of God to be manifested so that His holiness will not be compromised by His assuming a merciful attitude towards sinful men in the granting of forgiveness, pardon, justification? The answer is: The only way is by means of the atonement. Thus, the necessity of the atonement rises from the sinfulness of man and the holiness of God.

The result of the atonement as to God, is the final saving manifestation of His glory; as to God and man, is the reconciliation; as to man more particularly, is redemption. Christ endured death for the whole human race. He removed the whole punishment of sin; his death atoned for all sins.

The two great objects accomplished by the work of Christ are: the removal of the curse under which mankind labored on account of sin; and then restoration to the image and fellowship of God. These objects are essential to salvation. Under the shadow of the Cross the distinctiveness of the churches' faith has been realized.

The atonement is sufficient for all; it is efficient for those who believe in Christ. The atonement itself, so far as it lays the basis for the redemptions dealing of God with all men, is unlimited; the application of the atonement is limited to those who actually believe in Christ.

Christ as **Mediator** exhibits in His own person the Reconciliation between God and mankind, which however required to be wrought out by a **Sacrifice of Obedience** in life and death, such as has **Propitiated** God in respect to

sin, and accomplished a **Redemption** for all men, to be appropriated by the faith of individuals. The doctrine of the atonement lies at the base of the revelation of God to man. Only at the Cross, where the Father accepts for us the sacrifice of His Son, our Representative, is the true God revealed to mankind.

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