**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 3; CHAPTER 6. AT-ONE-MENT BY PROPITIATION**

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The importance of the subject is obvious. The Atonement is Christianity in epitome. It is the heart of Christianity as a system; it is the distinguishing mark of the Christian religion. For Christianity is more than a revelation; it is more than an ethic. Christianity is uniquely a religion of redemption. At the outset we take the ground that no one can clearly apprehend this great theme who is not prepared to take Scripture as it stands, and to treat it as the final and authoritative source of Christian knowledge, and the test of every theological theory. Any statement of the atonement, to satisfy completely the truly intelligent Christian, must not antagonize any of the Biblical viewpoints. And further; to approach fairly the subject, one must receive with a certain degree of reservation the somewhat exaggerated representations of what some modern writers conceive to be the views of orthodoxy. We cannot deduce Scriptural views of the atonement from non-Biblical conceptions of the Person of Christ; and the ideas that Christ died because God was insulted and must punish somebody, or that the atonement was the propitiation of an angry Monarch-God who let off the rogue while He tortured the innocent, and such like travesties of the truth, are simply the misrepresentations of that revamped Socinianism, which is so widely leavening the theology of many of the outstanding thought-leaders of today in German, British, and American theology.

The subject will be dealt with from four viewpoints: the Scriptural, the Historical, the Evangelico-Ecclesiastical, the Practical.

**I. THE ATONEMENT FROM THE SCRIPTURAL VIEWPOINT**

**THE OLD TESTAMENT WITNESS**

As we study the Old Testament we are struck with the fact that in the Old Testament system, without an atoning sacrifice there could be no access for sinful men into the presence of the Holy God. The heart and center of the Divinely revealed religious system of God's ancient people was that without a propitiatory sacrifice there could be no acceptable approach to God. There must be acceptance before there is worship; there must be atonement before there is acceptance. This atonement consisted in the shedding of blood. The blood-shedding was the effusion of life; for the life of the flesh is in the blood - a dictum which the modern science of physiology abundantly confirms (Lev. 17:11-14). The blood shed was the blood of a victim which was to be ceremonially blemishless (Ex. 12:5; 1 Pet. 1:19); and the victim that was slain was a vicarious or substitutionary representative of the worshipper (Lev. 1:4; 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 15, 24, 29; 16:21, etc.). The death of the victim was an acknowledgment of the guilt of sin, and its exponent.

In one word: the whole system was designed to teach the holiness and righteousness of God, the sinfulness of men, and the guilt of sin; and, above all, to show that it was God's will that forgiveness should be secured, not on account of any works of the sinner or anything that he could do, any act of repentance or exhibition of penitence, or performance of expiatory or restitutionary works, but solely on account of the undeserved grace of God through the death of a victim guilty of no offence against the Divine law, whose shed blood represented the substitution of an innocent for a guilty life. (See "Lux Mundi," p. 237. The idea, in p. 232, that sacrifice is essentially the expression of unfallen love, is suggestive, but it would perhaps be better to use the word "also" instead of "essentially." See also, the extremely suggestive treatment in Gibson's "Mosaic Era," of the Ritual of the Altar, p. 146.) It is obvious that the whole system was transitory and imperfect, as the eighth chapter of Hebrews shows. Not because it was revolting as the modern mind objects, for God intended them thereby to learn how revolting sin was and how deserving of death; but because in its essence it was typical, and prophetical, and intended to familiarize God's people with the great idea of atonement, and at the same time to prepare for the sublime revelation of Him who was to come, the despised and rejected of men Who was to be smitten of God and afflicted, Who was to be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, Whose soul was to be made an offering for sin (Isa. 53:5, 8, 10, 12).

**THE NEW TESTAMENT WITNESS**

When we come to the New Testament we are struck with three things:

**First.** The unique prominence given to the death of Christ in the four Gospels. This is unparalleled. It is without analogy, not only in Scripture, but in history, the most curious thing about it being that there was no precedent for it in the Old Testament (Dale, "Atonement," p. 51). No particular value or benefit is attached to the death of anybody in the Old Testament; nor is there the remotest trace of anybody's death having an expiatory or humanizing or regenerative effect. There were plenty of martyrs and national heroes in Hebrew history, and many of them were stoned and sawn asunder, were tortured and slain with the sword, but no Jewish writer attributes any ethical or regenerative importance to their death, or to the shedding of their blood.

**Second.** It is evident to the impartial reader of the New Testament that the death of Christ was the object of His incarnation. His crucifixion was the main purport of His coming. While His glorious life was and is the inspiration of humanity, after all, His death was the reason of His life. His mission was mainly to die. Beyond thinking of death as the terminus or the inevitable climax of life, the average man rarely alludes to or thinks of death. In all biography it is accepted as the inevitable. But with Christ, His death was the purpose for which He came down from heaven: "For this cause came I to this hour" (John 12:27). From the outset of His career it was the overshadowing event. It was distinctly foreseen. It was voluntarily undergone, and, in Mark 10:45, He says: "The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many." We are not in the habit of paying ransoms, and the metaphor nowadays is unfamiliar. But, to the Jew, ransom was an everyday custom. It was what was given in exchange for the life of the first-born. It was the price which every man paid for his life. It was the underlying thought of the Mosaic and prophetical writings (Lev. 25:25, 48; Num. 18:15; Psa. 49:7; Isa. 35:10; 51:11; 43:14; Ex. 13:13; 30:12, 16; 34:20; Hos. 13:14; etc., etc.); and so, when Christ made the statement, it was a concept which would be immediately grasped. He came to give His life a ransom, that through the shedding of His blood we might receive redemption, or emancipation, both from the guilt and from the power of sin. (The modernists endeavor to evacuate this saying of Christ of all meaning. The text, unfortunately for them, is stubborn, but the German mind is never at a loss for a theory; so it is asserted that they are indications that Peter has been Paulinized, so reluctant is the rationalizer to take Scripture as it stands, and to accept Christ's words in their obvious meaning, when they oppose his theological aversions.)

**Third.** The object of the death of Christ was the forgiveness of sins. The final cause of His manifestation was remission. It would be impossible to summarize all the teaching of the New Testament on this subject. (The student is referred to Crawford, who gives 160 pages to the texts in the New Testament, and Dale's "Summary," pp. 443-458.)

It is clear, though, that, to our Saviour's thought, His cross and passion was not the incidental consequence of His opposition to the degraded religious standards of His day, and that He did not die as a martyr because death was preferable to apostasy. His death was the means whereby men should obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life (John 3:14, 16; Matt. 26:28). The consentient testimony of the New Testament writers, both in the Acts and in the Epistles, is that Christ died no accidental death, but suffered according to the will of God, His own volition, and the predictions of the prophets, and that His death was substitutionary, sacrificial, atoning, reconciling and redeeming (John 10:18; Acts 2:23; Rom. 3:25; 5:6, 9; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:15, 19, 21; Heb. 9:14, 26, etc., etc.). In proof, it will be sufficient to take the inspired testimony of the three outstanding writers, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Paul.

**ST. PETER'S WITNESS.**

To St. Peter's mind, the death of Jesus was the central fact of revelation and the mystery, as well as the climax, of the Incarnation. The shedding of His blood was sacrificial; it was covenanting; it was sin-covering; it was redeeming; it was ransoming; it was the blood of the Immaculate Lamb, which emancipates from sin (1 Pet. 1:2, 11, 18, 19). In all his post-Pentecostal deliverances he magnifies the crucifixion as a revelation of the enormity of human sin, never as a revelation of the infinitude of the Divine love (Dale, p. 115). His death was not merely an example; it was substitutionary. It was the death of the sin-bearer. "Christ also suffered for us," "He bare our sins," meaning that He took their penalty and their consequence (Lev. 5:17; 24;15; Num. 9:13; 14:32, 34; Ezek. 18:19, 20). His death was the substitutionary, the vicarious work of the innocent on behalf of, in the place of, and instead of, the guilty (1 Pet. 3:18). (It is surely an evidence of the bias of modernism to interpret this as bearing them in sympathy merely.)

**ST. JOHN'S WITNESS**

According to St. John, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was propitiatory, substitutionary, purificatory. It was the Hilasmos; the objective ground for the remission of our sins.

The narrow and superficial treatment of modernism, which, if it does not deny the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel and the Revelation, at least insinuates that the death of Christ has no parallel place in the writings of St. John to that which it has in the writings of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the other New Testament authors, is entirely contradicted by the plain statements of the Word itself.

The glory of the world to come is the sacrificed Lamb. The glory of heaven is not the risen or ascended Lord, but the Lamb that was slaughtered (Rev. 5:6-12; 7:10; 21:23, etc.). The foremost figure in the Johannine Gospel is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, who lifts the sin-burden by expiating it as the Sin-Bearer. The center of the Johannine evangel is not the teaching Christ, but the uplifted Christ, whose death is to draw as a magnet the hearts of mankind, and whose life as the Good Shepherd is laid down for the sheep. (John 12:32; 10:11-15).

No one who fairly faces the text could deny that the objective ground for the forgiveness of sins, in the mind of St. John, is the death of Christ, and that the most fundamental conception of sacrifice and expiation is found in the writings of him who wrote by the Spirit of God, "He is the propitiation of our sins, and not for ours only" (1 John 2:2). "Hereby perceive we the love of God because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3: 16). "Herein is love," etc. (1 John 4: 10).

The propitiatory character of the blood, the substitutionary character of the atonement, and, above all, the expiating character of the work of Christ on Calvary, clearly are most indubitably set forth in the three-foldness of the historic, didactic, and prophetic writings of St. John.

**ST. PAUL'S WITNESS**

St. Paul became, in the province of God, the constructive genius of Christianity. His place in history, through the Spirit, was that of the elucidator of the salient facts of Christianity, and especially of that one great subject which Christ left in a measure unexplained - His own death (Stalker's "St. Paul," p. 13). That great subject, its cause, its meaning, its result, became the very fundamentum of his Gospel. It was the commencement, center, and consummation of his theology. It was the elemental truth of his creed. He began with it. It pervaded his life. He gloried in it to the last. The sinner is dead, enslaved, guilty, and hopeless, without the atoning death of Jesus Christ. But Christ died for him, in his stead, became a curse for him, became sin for him, gave Himself for him, was an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for him, redeemed him, justified him, saved him from wrath, purchased him by His blood, reconciled him by His death, etc. To talk of Paul using the language he did as an accommodation to Jewish prejudices, or to humor the adherents of a current theology, is not only, as Dale says, an insult to the understanding of the founders of the Jewish faith, it is an insult to the understanding of any man with sense today. Christ's death was a death for sin; Christ died for our sins; that is, on behalf of, instead of, our sins. There was something in sin that made His death a Divine necessity. His death was a propitiatory, substitutionary, sacrificial, vicarious death. Its object was to annul sin; to propitiate Divine justice, to procure for us God's righteousness; to ransom us, and to reconcile us. Christ's death was conciliating, in that by it men are reconciled to God, and sin's curse and the sinner's slavery and liability to death, and incapability of returning to God, are overcome by the death of the Lamb who was slaughtered as a victim and immolated as a sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7). To Paul the life of the Christian emerged from the death of Christ. All love, all regeneration, all sanctification, all liberty, all joy, all power, circles around the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, and did for us objectively something that man could never do, and who wrought that incredible, that impossible thing, salvation by the substitution of His life in the place of the guilty.

**THE BIBLE SUMMARY**

To epitomize, then, the presentment of the Bible: The root of the idea of At-one-ment is estrangement. Sin, as iniquity and transgression, had the added element of egoistic rebellion and positive defiance of God (1 John 3:4; Rom. 5:15, 19). The horror of sin is that it wrenched the race from God. It dashed God from His throne and placed self thereupon. It reversed the relationship of man and God. Its blight and its passion have alienated mankind, enslaved it, condemned it, doomed it to death, exposed it to wrath. The sacrifice of the cross is the explanation of the enormity of sin, and the measure of the love of the redeeming Trinity. Surely it is ignorance that says God loves because Christ died. Christ died because God loves. Propitiation does not awaken love; it is love that provides expiation. To cancel the curse, to lift the ban, to inoculate the anti-toxin of grace, to restore life, to purchase pardon, to ransom the enslaved, to defeat Satan's work; in one word, to reconcile and restore a lost race; for this, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Son of Man, came into this world and offered up His Divine-human Person, body and soul.

Christ's death upon the cross, both as a substitute and as the federal representative of humanity, voluntary, altruistic, vicarious, sinless, sacrificial, purposed not accidental, from the standpoint of humanity unconscionably brutal, but from the standpoint of love indescribably glorious, not only satisfied all the demands of the Divine righteousness, but offered the most powerful incentive to repentance, morality, and self-sacrifice. The Scripture in its completeness thus sets forth the substance of the two great theories, the moral and the vicarious, and we find in the rotundity or all-ness of the Scriptural presentment no mere partial or antagonistic segments of truth, but the completeness of the spiritual, moral, altruistic and atoning aspects of the death of Christ. (Hodge on the "Atonement," pp. 292-320, and Workman, "At-one-ment and Reconciliation with God," may in different ways be taken as representative of a one-sided way of treating a great subject. The Socinian view that Christ's death was mainly, if not exclusively, to produce a reconciling influence upon the heart of mankind, which Workman espouses, is as narrow, if not narrower, and as partial as Hodge's advocacy of the theory that Christ died for the elect only).

**II. THE HISTORICAL**

We will discuss this aspect of the subject in four brief sections: The Primitive, the Mediaeval, the Reformational, the Modern.

**THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH WITNESS**

With regard to the writers and writings of the primitive church in the Ante-Nicene and the Post-Nicene era, it may be said, broadly speaking, that the atonement is presented by them as a fact, with its saving and regenerative effects. The consciousness of the primitive church did not seem to be alive to the necessity of the formation of any particular theory of the atonement. It follows the Apostle's Creed, which makes no reference whatever to the miraculous words or marvellous works of Jesus, but significantly passes by them all to focus the confession of the Church upon the great purpose and achievement of the Incarnation; His suffering as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. As regards the writers of the post-apostolic age, Clement of Rome, Origen, and Athanasius, may be referred to as outstanding exponents of the Church's thought in the first four centuries. Of the first and third it may be said that they simply amplified the language of the New Testament. There is no trace of the attitude of the modernist, with its brilliant attempts to explain away the obvious. Their doctrine of the atonement is entirely free, as has been said, from the incrusting difficulties of spurious explanation. There were no attempts at philosophy or sophistry, though, as was to be expected, there was more or less of the embroidery of the oriental imagination, and a plethora of metaphor. (Justin Martyr, Chrysostom, and Augustine, may be mentioned also here.)

Origen, following possibly Irenaeus, is accredited with the theory that the atonement was a ransom paid to Satan. This was the theory of Gregory of Nyssa, Leo Magnus, and Gregory the Great. It was a weird theory, involving some strange conclusions, and evoked the antagonism of Gregory Nazianzen and John of Damascus.

**THE MEDIAEVAL VIEW**

As we pass into the mediaeval period (broadly speaking, from 500 to 1500 A.D.), we find that, with one or two exceptions, the ransom-paid-to-the-devil hypothesis held sway. It was not a thinking era, and the imprisonment of the Bible meant the reign of ignorance.

In the eleventh century, Anselm appeared. He was an Italian by birth, a Norman by training, and Archbishop of Canterbury by office. Anselm's Cur Deus Homo is probably the greatest work on the atonement that has ever been written. The work is great because it contains great conceptions of God, and great conceptions of sin. Sin is not to render to God His due, and the sinner is bound to pay back the honor of which he has robbed God. It is a debt we are obliged to pay, and failing to do it, we must die. As sin is debt, there are only two ways in which man can be righted with God; either by incurring no debt, or by paying the debt. But this, man cannot do, and herein comes the glory of the Gospel of the atonement, securing at once the honor of God and the salvation of the sinners. No one ought to make satisfaction for the sin of man except man, and no one can make satisfaction except God Himself. He who makes the satisfaction for human sin must, therefore, be man and God; and so in wondrous love, the God-Man of His own accord offered to the Father what He could not have been compelled to lose, and paid for our sins what He did not owe for Himself.

The Anselmic conceptions of God, of sin, of man, and of the soul are so transcendent that they are altogether too strong and too high for this age. His theory seems fantastic, his reasoning preposterous to the modern mind, Yet, after all, Anselm has never been surpassed. His mind was filled with the august greatness of God, the just penalty of sin, the impossibility of human atonement, and the atoning work of Christ, because of the Person who did the deed, outweighed the sins of all mankind, and bound mankind to the suffering Son of God by bonds of love that eternity will not sever.

Anselm swayed his own and has swayed every succeeding age. The counter theories of Abelard and Duns Scotus (Moberly, p. 372; Dale, p. 285), in which the modern mind is much more interested, and with which it is much more sympathetic, may be regarded as the foregleams of modern Unitarianism.

**THE REFORMATION ERA**

When we pass to the Reformation era, we find that the Pauline-Augustinian presentment of the subject is almost universal. The reformers, Lutheran and Calvinistic, were practically agreed in representing the death of Christ as an atoning death. Both the Lutheran and the Reformed systems of theology alike, the latter, of course, including all the Anglican reformers, held the forensic idea of the death of Christ, which is so obviously manifest in the Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine presentments of the truth.

Turretin, the most distinguished writer on the subject of the atonement of the Reformation era; Mastricht, a half century later, and Hugo Grotius, the antagonist of Socinius (whose Defensio fidei Catholicae de satisfactione Christi appeared in 1617); all of them, with various divergences, held the sacrificial, representative, vicarious theory of atonement (Dale, pp. 290-297; Hodge, Sys, Theol. II., 573-575).

**THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

As we pass into the modern world of theology, three outstanding names in the nineteenth century may be selected as the representatives of the so-called orthodox, and three as representatives of the broader school of theology. The works of Crawford of Edinburgh, of Dale of Birmingham, and of Denney of Glasgow, are probably the finest expositions of the subject from the Scriptural and spiritual standpoint. All of them try to set forth the doctrine of the atonement in the language of the New Testament, and according to the mind of the inspired writers, and take their stand upon the vicarious, substitutionary character of the atonement. Professor A. A. Hodge's work is also most able and most scholarly. It is the strongest thing ever written on the subject from the Calvinistic standpoint. Bushnell, the American; Jowett, the Anglican; and McLeod Campbell, the Scotchman; may be taken as representatives of the broader school. All of them are inclined to select a number of the texts which unquestionably favor their theory, and to minimize almost to the point of explaining away those statements of the Old Testament, and of the New, which emphasize the gravity of the guilt of sin and the necessity of sacrifice as the objective ground of its forgiveness. They all of them incline to represent the sufferings of Christ as sympathetic, rather than vicarious; and, with the Swedenborgians, make the atonement to consist not in what Christ did or offered by dying in our stead, so much as what He accomplished for us in His reconciling love. The atonement was the Incarnation. That was the revelation of God's love; and the sufferings of Christ were not a substitute for the penalty of sin, but Christ's expiatory-penitential confession of the sins of humanity. McLeod Campbell, who is followed by Moberly, held the theory that the repentance of Christ, or the penitence of Christ, had in it atoning worth, and was the proper expiation of sin (Moberly, 129, 401; "The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought," p. 375; Clow, 160; Stalker, 135). (This theory, by the way, is becoming very popular nowadays.)

In one word; the object of the death of Christ was the production of a moral impression, the subduement of a revolted world-heart by the exhibition of dying love. This is practically also the Ritschlian view, which, after all, is a re-statement of the old Socinian theory, of the distrust-removing and confidence-re-establishing effect of the cross.

Frederick Maurice and Robertson of Brighton (the noblest spirit of them all) may also be referred to as leaders in this the broader school (Crawford, 303, 348). They were followed by such Church writers as Farrar, Moberly, Freemantle, and by Cave, Adeney, Horton, R. J. Campbell, in the Old Country, and in the United States by Lyman Abbott, Washington Gladden, Munger, and a host of others.

**MODERNISM**

When we come to the most daring of the present day theories with regard to the atonement, as set forth, for instance, in Sabatier, or the latest work of American modernism, "The Atonement, by Three Chicago Professors of Theology," we are startled with the advance. A very broad space of rationalism intervenes between the broad school of today and the broad school of half a century ago. The present day liberal theology may be traced to two streams of influence:

**First.** The influence of German rationalism, pre-eminently the Ritschlian theology, and the critical theories of Wellhausen, Kuenen and their school.

**Second.** The widespread acceptance of the theory of evolution.

To the first may be traced the free and easy way of the modernists of dealing with the Scriptures; and to the second, the revolutionized attitude of theologians with regard to sin, its source, its penalty, and its atonement. Albrecht Ritschl, Professor of Theology at Gottingen, whose magnum opus, "Justification and Reconciliation," was published in 1870, is par excellence, the ruling influence of continental theology.

What Germany thought yesterday, America and Scotland think today, and England will think tomorrow. It is an epigram that has more than a grain of truth in it. The Germanic way of accepting or rejecting what it pleases of the Bible, and opposing its knowledge to the authority of the apostles, is becoming more and more the custom of the leading theologians of the three ruling nations of today, British, American, and German. If a text is inconvenient, modernism disputes it; if a passage is antagonistic, it dismisses it as Pauline or Petrine, not Christian.

Suppose a Christian of the old days was to enter for the first time the class room of one of the extremer modernist professors, addressing a representative body of theologians from Germany, Britain, or the United States. He would be amazed to hear the rankest Socinianism taught. The question the professor would propose would not be the vicarious or the moral theory of the sacrifice of Christ, but did Christ really die, and was there any need of the atoning death? He would state, in the coolest possible manner, that the supposition of God's displeasure or wrath at sin is an archaic concept; that sin is not guilt as traditional theology conceives, nor does it need any propitiation, and that there is no need of salvation, for there never was a fall. (A God who thinks of poor, hard-worked people as miserable sinners, who must account themselves fortunate to be forgiven for Christ's sake, says one of the foremost British modernists, is no God at all. The theologian may call Him a God of love, but in practice He is spiteful and silly!) The doctrine of evolution has washed out of the Bible the existence of such a man as Adam, and biology has taught that death is not due to sin. He would then probably hear the professor going on to show that nobody nowadays thinks of sin as Paul did; that it is impossible for the man of today, familiarized with the doctrine of evolution and the researches of Biblical scholarship, to think of sin as a debt that is due to God; that the God of the Bible is, after all, only the God of traditional theology. In one word, he would hear that what this age not only demands, but requires, is a reconstructed Bible, a re-interpreted Biblical theology, and a presentment of apostolic conceptions in accordance with the modern mind.

But a theology which begins with accepting or rejecting according to its caprice such sections of the Word of God as it pleases, and substituting its own fancies for the New Testament conceptions of sin, of guilt, of wrath, and death, and the idea of punishment, naturally tends to the climax of repudiating the Deity of our Saviour and the teaching of His inspired apostles! A Pelagian hamartology invariably leads to a Socinian Christology; and a Socinian Christology invariably goes hand in hand with a rationalistic soteriology. If there is no objective Deity, there can be no sin. If man is God, there can be no guilt; and if there was no fall, and if it is the rise, not the fall of man with which the study of history makes us acquainted, there is, of course, no need for redemption; and if there is no need for redemption, there could, of course, be no ransom, or Redeemer, and an atonement is theologically and philosophically absurd. If there is no special creation, and man is a mere evolution from some frog or horse or anthropoid, why, of course, there can be no talk of atonement. If there is no storm and nobody is drowning, why on earth should anyone launch a lifeboat! If the wages of sin is not death, what evangel is there in the death of Christ for sin and sinners?

After reading, with every attempt to be sympathetic, the works of the modern theological thought leaders in Great Britain and the United States, we seriously conclude that modernism is in essence the sophism of which Paul speaks in 1 Cor. 1:19-22; Rom. 1:22; Col. 2:8, and 1 Tim. 6:20.

**III. THE EVANGELICO-ECCLESIASTICAL**

**THE CONSENSUS OF ALL THE CHURCHES**

When we turn to this subject as set forth in the standards of the representatives of the leading Protestant churches, it is refreshing to find what substantial unity there is among them. In all the Creeds and Church Confessions the death of Christ is set forth as the central fact of Christianity; for it ought to be remembered that the Reformed Churches accepted equally with the Roman Church the historic platform of the three great creeds, and that in all these creeds that subject stands pre-eminent. In the Apostles' Creed, for instance, there is not the slightest mention of Christ's glorious example as a man, or of the works and words of His marvelous life. All is passed over, in order that the faith of the Church in all ages may at once be focused upon His sufferings and His death. And as to the various doctrinal standards, a reference to the Articles of the Church of England, or the Westminster Confession of Faith, or the Methodist, or Baptist formularies of belief, at once shows that the atonement is treated as one of the fundamentals of the faith. It may be stated in language that a modern theologian finds difficult to accept and would gladly explain away; but it is unquestionably asserted to be no mere at-one-ment in the Ritschlian sense, but a real vicarious offering; a redemptive death; a reconciling death; a sin-bearing death; a sacrificial death for the guilt and sins of men. His death was the death of the Divine Victim. It was a satisfaction for man's guilt. It propitiated God. It satisfied the justice of the Father. The modern mind sees only one side to reconciliation. It looks at truth from only one standpoint. It fails to take into account the fact of the wrath of God, and that 1 John 2:1, and Rom. 3:25 teach that Christ's death does something that can only be expressed as "propitiating." The modern theory ignores one side of the truth, and antagonizes the two complementary sides, and is, therefore, not to be trusted. The Church standards simply set forth, of course, in necessarily imperfect language, the truth as it is in the Scriptures of God. Perhaps no finer summary of their teaching could be found than the language of the Anglican communion service: "Jesus Christ, God's only Son, suffered death upon the cross for our redemption, and made there, by His one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

**IV. THE PRACTICAL**

**THE POWER OF HIS DEATH**

We finally consider the atonement in its actual power. As we glance through the vistas of history we see it exemplified in innumerable lives. Paul, Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Luther, Latimer, with a myriad myriad of the sinful, struggling, weary, despondent, and sin-sick sons of men, laden with the sin-weight, haunted with the guilt-fear, struggling with the sin-force, tormented with the sin-pain, have found in Him who died their peace. "The atonement," said the great scientist, Sir David Brewster, "Oh, it is everything to me! It meets my reason, it satisfies my conscience, it fills my heart." (See also that fine passage in Drummond, the "Ideal Life," p. 187.)

Or, take our hymns. We want no better theology and no better religion than are set forth in these hymns, says a great theologian (Hodge, Syst. Theol., ii: 591), which voice the triumph, and the confidence, and the gratitude, and the loyalty of the soul, such as:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in Thee."

"My faith looks up to Thee,

Thou Lamb of Calvary."

"When I survey the wondrous cross,

On which the Prince of glory died."

Or take the preacher's power. It must be built upon reality as real as life itself; on what the Son of God has done for him. One of the greatest of the nineteenth century preachers said, "Looking back upon all the chequered way, I have to say that the only preaching that has done me good is the preaching of a Saviour who bore my sins in His own body on the tree, and the only preaching by which God has enabled me to do good to others is the preaching in which I have held up my Saviour, not as a sublime example, but as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!" And the work of Christ did not end with His death upon the cross. As the risen and ascended One, He continues it. The Crucified is still drawing souls to Himself. He is still applying His healing blood to the wounded conscience. We do not preach a Christ who was alive and is dead; we preach the Christ who was dead and is alive. It is not the extension of the Incarnation merely; it is the perpetuation of the crucifixion that is the vital nerve of Christianity.

But orthodoxy must not be dissevered from orthopraxy. Maclaren, of Manchester, tells us, in one of his charming volumes, that he once heard of a man who was of a very shady character, but was sound on the atonement. But what on earth is the good of being sound on the atonement if the atonement does not make you sound? Anyone who reads his New Testament or understands the essence of apostolic Christianity must understand that a mere theoretic acceptance of the atonement, unaccompanied by a penetration of the life and character of the principles of Jesus Christ, is of no value whatever. The atonement is not a mere formula for assent; it is a life principle for realization. In that we agree with Goldwin Smith. But is it not a fact that, wherever the atonement is truly received, it generates love to God, and love to man; evokes a hatred and horror of sin; and offers not only the highest incentive to self-sacrifice, but the most powerful dynamic for the life of righteousness?

To the soul that beholds the Lamb of God, and finds peace through the blood of the cross, there comes a sense of joyous relief, a consciousness of deep satisfaction, that is newness of life.

Yes, a Christianity that is merely a system of morals, and the best only of natural religions, is not worth preserving. A Christianity without a Christ Divine, an atonement vicarious, and a Bible inspired, will never carry power. A devitalized Gospel, a diluted Gospel, an attenuated Gospel, will conceive no splendid program, inspire no splendid effort. It never did produce a martyr; it never will. It never inspired a reformer, and it never will. The two religious poverties of the day, a lost sense of sin, and a lost sense of God, are simply the result of this attenuated Socinianism that is becoming so prevalent. No minister of Christ has any right to smooth off the corners of the cross. At the same time, a Christianity that is merely orthodoxy, or an orthodoxy clasped in the dead hand of a moribund Christianity, is one of the greatest of curses. A Church that is only the custodian of the great tradition of the past, and not the expression of a forceful spiritual life; a Christian who is simply conserving a traditional creed, and not exemplifying the life of the living God, is a cumberer of the ground. A dead Church can never be the exponent of the living God, and a dead Church-man can never be the exponent of a living Church, for the test of every religious, political or educational system, after all, as Amiel says, is the man it forms (Amiel, p. 27).

(The chief works on the atonement which have been referred to are the following: Hodge, Dale, Denney, Crawford, Stalker, Van Dyke, Moberly, Clow, Simpson, Sabatier, Champion, Armour, Workman, Cunningham, Van Oosterzee, Ritschl, and Anselm.)