

# THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

VOLUME II, No. 9.

ST. JOHN, N. B., MAY 8, 1900.

WHOLE No. 35.

## Propitiation and Substitution.

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Propitiation is atonement from the divine point of view, giving us the Godward aspect of the finished work of Christ. Literally, the word means "to appease and render favorable one who is offended; to conciliate." In theology, it means "the removal of the judicial displeasure of God;" in Scripture, the appeasing of God's wrath by rendering full and adequate satisfaction for sin.

Let it be remembered that the very character of God,—those attributes which are as changeless as the eternal laws, demand this, by far the most important feature of the great work of atonement. The supreme thought in the mind of Christ when redeeming a lost world was not the need of the race, but the glory of God, ever keeping before him the requirements of His triune holy nature. Hence, we find the burnt offering placed first among the types, in which there is no thought of sin, but the love, obedience, and devotion of the Son, told out in language far beyond the range of human intellect; having in it a voice which the Father's heart alone could interpret—the meaning of a surrendered life, a sacrifice which ascended as sweetest fragrance before the throne.

If man is to be redeemed, God must be glorified in it: it must be in keeping with the claims of divine holiness, and inflexible justice. Over every act of his brief human life, the supreme devotion to the will of the Father was written in letters, radiant with his matchless love. In a world where God had been dishonored, there he would "honor the Father." Where His truth had been despised, there he would defend it, even before Pilate; where heaven's authority had been condemned, he would recognize it in every thought and act; where God's law was broken, there he would keep the law, and "fulfill all righteousness;" where His character had been traduced, he would defend it, even unto death.

The death of Christ is nowhere interpreted to us in all its bearings, as in the offerings on the Great Day of Atonement. The two goats will bring before us with divine precision, the two important features of Christ's work—atonement Godward, and atonement manward. The goat on which "the Lord's lot fell" was slain and the blood sprinkled seven times before and on the mercy-seat; the other, called the scape goat was "made sin" for Israel by the laying on of hands, and then led away into a place not inhabited.

"The Lord's lot" was the slain sacrifice with the sprinkled blood "inside the veil," which reveals the portion God has in the death of Christ—a portion which would hold eternally good, even though man should reap no benefit from it.

The "sprinkled blood" was for the eye and heart of God, and has not in it the thought of reconciliation. That has man for its object, this has God; for propitiation has to do alone with God. It is not sin nor the sinner, but God's attitude toward both, that gives it its true meaning.

Atonement in this sense was a necessity; eternal justice demanded it; divine holiness required it. Righteousness and judgment are the establishment of that throne from which the wide universe is ruled. The maintenance of that throne was an important feature of Christ's atoning work. The rebellion against the divine will, and the breaking of those laws which embody the basic principles of God's governmental ways, is called transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. Thus, every claim of heaven's throne was vindicated, and justice could demand no more, now allowing. Mercy to hand out to the sinner a full pardon on the point of the sword of justice. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Transgression is forgiven, but sin must be covered; and this leads us to consider another phase of this truth. Atonement in the Old Covenant meant "to cover; to cover up." The inspired Greek, while sustaining this, adds to it a deeper meaning. The "Ark of the Covenant" was over-laid with a plate of gold, called the

mercy-seat, which covered the Ark and its contents—the Book of the Law; the Pot of Manna; and Aaron's Rod that budded.

The plate of gold, because of its typical significance, was called Kopporeth—a lid, place of covering (sin). The Holy Spirit's interpretation of this type in Hebrew ix:5, is most instructive. He calls it the "Propitiatory," combining the thought of covering and the kind of covering—such that God is propitiated by it. Sin must be covered in a way that will hide from divine holiness, which as a "consuming fire" must, from its very nature, destroy everything touched by the "flesh." The Scripture abundantly illustrates this important truth. In the case of Korah's rebellion, when the people murmured against Moses and Aaron they were threatened with sudden destruction, when Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire thereon from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun." And Aaron ran into the midst of the people, put on incense and made an atonement, and the plague was staid. Here it was not man's need, but God's nature that called for atonement—the appeasing of God's wrath, which also secured their redemption.

Again, when David numbered Israel and the angel with drawn sword threatened the destruction of Jerusalem, an altar was built on the threshing floor of Ornan where David, in obedience to the divine command, offered sacrifice and the angel's hand was staid.

The Publican who were up to the temple to worship, seemed to understand the meaning of this essential truth, and its value to a sinful creature in his approach unto the Holy One of Israel; for he prayed, "God be propitiated toward me, the sinner."

In Isaiah we read, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgression and as a cloud thy sins;" in Hebrews, Christ Himself, is seen to be the means of blotting out or covering over of sin—his death for the root of sin, his blood for the fruit of it.

The "mercy-seat" or "Propitiatory" finds fulfillment in Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." But propitiation is not limited by faith. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the whole world." Here this truth is seen to have widest application to the race—to sin as an aggregate, the sin question including root and fruit, which Christ engaged to settle at the cross; and which was settled, not only to the extent of human need, but according to the needs of the divine nature; not according to the standard of human conscience, but divine holiness; reaching not only to the depths of iniquity, but meeting all the demands of God's throne.

When Christ said, "Now is the judgment of this world," he had reference to the question of sin with all its bearings and relation to the nature, and moral government of God. By his death, the career of the "first Adam" was ended, and sin was "judged in the flesh" and put away; and the "last Adam" triumphed over death, and his blood has an infinite value as it speaks before the throne.

Through its power God can accomplish all His eternal counsels of grace. He can redeem the Church and raise it into the highest position of glory and dignity, in spite of the opposing empire of evil. He can fulfill all His promises made to Abraham the father of nations. He can save and bless countless millions of the gentiles; He can restore the wide creation to Edenic beauty and fruitfulness; He can allow the beams of His glory to lighten up the universe forever.

All this He can, and will do; but the one solitary pedestal on which the stupendous fabric of redemption shall rest forever is the "precious blood of Christ" which has been sprinkled "seven times" before the throne.

Substitution is a truth that concerns the believer only. It means salvation conditioned on

the appropriation of Christ as a personal Saviour. It is the human side of redemption, an individual matter, and exists only in the realm of faith.

1. Christ is a "propitiatory" for the whole world; but a substitute only to those who receive him by faith.

2. Propitiation has to do with God; substitution with man.

3. The one has reference to sin as an aggregate; the other, to individual sins.

4. The first secures redemption for the world; the second, the redemption of the individual believer.

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## Voicing a Need.

We know little of the intricacies of administration in the Methodist church, or of the varied utility of their Bishops. But the recent address issued by them to the million members and ministers of their churches on the spiritual condition prevalent among them, illustrates the great advantage of having some recognized leaders to voice the needs of the hour. Their appeal for a week of fasting and prayer will receive a spontaneous response from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and we shall see this great people making common cause at the mercy seat. We trust a turn in the tide of prosperity will soon be seen in this sister denomination, for none of us can do other than mourn when there is depression and decay in any section of our Lord's kingdom. Possibly the condition among the Methodists is not much, if any, worse than in some other denominations, for it is conceded spiritual life has a languor upon it almost everywhere, so much so that many have proclaimed the decadence of Christianity and the defeat of the churches. Every man has his own explanation of this condition. Some say it is because modern preaching does not exalt the Scriptures; others that our views of them are too rigid. Some say that it is because the doctrines are neglected and others because preaching is not in touch with modern ideas and life. There are those who see the explanation in the spread of skepticism or in the worldliness that accompanies advancing civilization. The Bishops enumerate many causes, placing amusements, higher criticism and the vagaries of Christian science in the forefront. No doubt there is some truth in all the explanations, though they seem diverse. The chief question, however, is not the cause but the cure of the debility of the churches. It is small comfort to a sick man to be told how the disease fastened itself upon him. What he wants to know is how to get well. The beginning of better days is the knowledge of the death. A conscience of sin and failure will always lead to repentance and renewal. A church is often nearest revival when it is prostrate in despair. The other adage is frequently true: "When things are at the worse they begin to mend." The church has always had her decline preceding revival. We should be shortsighted indeed if we thought that Methodism is on permanent wane, because for two or three years past, there has been no progress. God uses reverses for the bringing forth of new devotion. It would be a good thing for all our churches to pass through the agony of shame, defeat and despair, if only to test our faith and stir up the slumbering life. Continued prosperity undermines the very life which insures success. A few years back there was a wail heard in the Methodist churches of England. The spirit of Wesley, it was said, had passed away. The leaders over there, as here with us, uttered their jeremiads, but they did more. They prayed, they preached, they sounded the trumpet in Zion, and the depression is passing away. The years that are now passing are bringing them new power and victory. But much of the awakening has been due to a few great spirits who have awakened the churches by their zeal and faith. So it will be here. We need men of inspiration. We need those who have the torch of God to set afire the people who are ready to be rekindled.