

1. The Atonement from the Scriptural Viewpoint.

As the Atonement is exclusively a matter of Revelation, and we have absolutely no means of information on the subject apart from the Holy Scriptures, we will approach it first from the Scriptural viewpoint.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

As we open the Bible and listen to what the Lord saith, 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 centre 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, 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