

THE W. K. B. S. VOICE

"I am a voice."—John the Baptist

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GOD AND THE ATONEMENT: ITS NECESSITY

The parties affected in the atonement of Jesus Christ, as in the sin of man, are two: man and God. The major party is God because of the transcendent excellence of His character and work. Sinful man argues the need of the atonement; the justice and holiness of God press upon us the necessity of the atonement.

The necessity of the atonement concerns only the purpose and method, never the fact of the atonement. This is immeasurably important. Since man is a sinner, there can be no must in the fact of atonement; otherwise, it is not a product of grace. But granting, on the part of God, a purpose to save, Wherein is the necessity?

1. God in no wise owed man atonement; man could make no claim upon God for atonement.

Man by his sin forfeited all creatural right to blessing. Had man obeyed, blessing would have come deservedly. Since man sinned, no blessing could come but rather cursing. God owes sinful man no sort of blessing. Apart from atonement God is just and the condemner of men. If God owed man something, atonement was a debt; if God owed man nothing, atonement is a work of grace.

Every moment of delay is evidence of grace. Nothing but the coming cross could give man a respite in the execution of the penalty. Patience is now exercised on the basis of the cross. Incidentally, the atonement is as universal as the delay in the execution of the penalty.

The love of God richly adopts many expressions to indicate its varied fulness. Mercy is love toward the guilty. Grace is love toward the undeserving. Pity is love toward the miserable. Patience is love toward the stubborn. Patience, longsuffering, and forbearance express one and the same gracious waiting in execution of the penalty.

Does someone object that longsuffering is an attribute of God along with His justice? That is exactly the point that ought to be raised. Among the moral attributes, which is supreme? Are love and justice equal? We quote Strong as representative of conservative theologians, "God must be just; He may be

gracious." Love can be exercised only when it is consistent with justice. Love may be felt but not expressed. Justice must always be satisfied. The expression of love must never bring reproach on the very God it purports to exalt.

The thorny yet interesting subject, the attributes of God and the atonement, needs fuller discussion. Suffice it to say for the present that, when we make justice supreme, we do not make mercy a lower attribute but rather exalt it. If one does what is honorable, that is praiseworthy; if one does what is merciful, that is doubly praiseworthy. If one feeds his family, that is commendable; he must do it if he is a good man. If one feeds his enemy, that is doubly commendable; he does it by free choice, not by constraint of obligation. God must exercise justice to be consistent; He may show mercy, thank God He does in Christ Jesus.

What kind of love looks upon right and wrong, purity and impurity, or justice and injustice with the same approval? Manifestly such would be unworthy of the name love. What kind of love acts consistently with the claims of justice and holiness, with the distinctions between right and wrong? Without doubt the queenliest of love, and this is the love of God in the atonement of Jesus Christ.

2. God's purpose of love demands atonement.

Love, as felt in the heart of God, was the originating cause of the atonement. Love, as expressed to man, is the effect or result of the atonement. The cross is the foundational cause of the atonement. God measured His love for the world by the gift of His Son. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," John 3:16. "God proves His love for us by the fact that Christ died for us when we were still sinners," Romans 5:8 (Goodspeed's translation).

The love of God found no consistent channel of outflow to man but through the cross. All grace toward man, from its milder expression in longsuffering with the human race to its deepest manifestation in individual salvation, is the result of the atonement. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John 1:17. Moffat renders, "Grace and reality are ours through Jesus Christ." It could

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be ours in no other way, for "grace is Christ's property," Findlay. Freely rendered, this verse reads, "Grace and truth through Jesus Christ came into being." The cross did not create in the heart of God what we call love, but the cross did make possible the expression of love as grace, unmerited favor bestowed on hell-deserving sinners through Jesus Christ.

Could Christ have saved without atonement? Gethsemane shows that He could not fulfill the will of His Father in saving men without the atoning work of the cross, Matthew 26:39. "It behoved Christ to suffer," Luke 24:46. He must be lifted up, John 3:14. The word here for "must" expresses moral necessity and divine appointment. The demerit of sin and the claim of divine justice made His cross of lifting up necessary. The Greek has another word for necessity that grows from environment and circumstances. That word would admirably express the view of those who say that He died merely as a martyr. He died as a martyr but, what is infinitely more, He died as the necessary offering for the salvation of sinners.

He was perfected as the Captain of our salvation through suffering, Hebrews 2:10. This was not moral but official and mediatorial perfection. It was only as the Captain of our salvation that He could be and was made perfect.

There was no prerogative in even the Infinite and Omnipotent One that could set aside justice and endow Jesus Christ with ability to save guilty and depraved men irrespective of the cross. Rather, it was the Father's plan for man's redemption. "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him," Isaiah 53:10. Zechariah 13:7.

3. The justice and holiness of God demanded atonement.

Remember, however, that justice could demand atonement only on the condition of an untrammelled purpose of love to save. Otherwise, justice would demand atonement at the expense of the holiness of God and inconsistent with the moral demerit of sin. Justice demanded satisfaction, but it could require it of a sub-

stitute only on the ground of the voluntary plan of the substitute to atone.

This justice is not something foreign to God but the very expression of His righteous character. Nor does this view set the attributes of God against one another; it brings perfect harmony. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other," Psalm 85:10. The context is talking of salvation; this glorious harmony can come only thru the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

Justice demands atonement because man is guilty. Holiness demands atonement because man is depraved.

Some claim that the work of Christ was only one of the many possible plans to soften the hearts of men. The fact is that no other plan could be devised to save man. The way of the cross was the only way. God could not suspend the law nor lighten the penalty; He could not excuse the sinner nor condone his sin. But "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes," Romans 10:4.

Some say that the atonement was necessary because it was divinely selected and purposed as the condition of mercy. But why was it selected? Because it was necessary to mercy. The Father's heart would not have suffered such a wrench if it had not been necessary to the salvation of men. Nor would Jesus have endured such cost unless it was necessary. No other appointment would have brought mercy because no one else but Jesus could satisfy the justice of God, settle for the demerit of sin, and lavish love upon the transgressor. Surely the fact that God appointed the cross for His Son adds weight to it, but He appointed it because there was no other way.

Again, some assert that it was God's right to ignore the claims of justice and remit by prerogative. But what is justice? It is not something unessential or foreign to God but the very character of God Himself. Furthermore, not even God has the right to do wrong; especially, what He Himself has declared to be wrong. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" We may ask that question as pertinently as Abraham did. "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward," Hebrews 2:2.

Thus have we seen that God's purpose of love and His justice made the atonement of Jesus Christ an absolute necessity. His sacrifice was irrelevant, gratuitous, and even a blunder of God if it was not necessary to mercy toward man. Romans 8:32; Galatians 2:21; 3:21.

The necessity was not outward but inward; His heart chose to save and

freely gave Himself for us, John 18:11. His atonement was not optional if He would save, yet it was spontaneous and free. Calvary won the right to enact personal redemption or salvation.

OBITUARY

Theodocia Clementine Beaman was born to W. H. Barton and Rebecca Catherine Orr in Calloway County June 2, 1868, and departed this life May 19, 1935, at six thirty in the morning. At the time of her death she was sixty-six years, eleven months, and sixteen days of age.

She was married to T. A. Beaman November 11, 1886. To this union were born twelve children, one of whom died in infancy. She is survived by her husband and eleven children. These are Jesse and Mrs. Gertie Rogers of Detroit. Roy of Paducah, Mrs. Lola Taylor of Salem, Mrs. Sula Key, Mrs. Letie Hale, Mrs. Jennie Guthrie, Henry, Lewis, Roscoe, and Prentice of Calloway County. There were twenty-two grand-children, twenty-one of whom survive her, and one great-grandchild, who went on before her. She is survived by one brother, Charlie Barton, of near Murray.

She was converted and joined the Murray Baptist Church at about the age of fifteen. Later she joined West Fork, but has been a member at Sinking Spring for the last thirty-one years. She lived a life of service for her God and family, for her church and community.

A TRIBUTE TO OUR MOTHER

She rested under the sheltering blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and often spoke of her desire to be with Him. When pains multiplied through the last thirteen years and more, she would anticipate her release from earthly cares and coming joy in His presence.

She prayed to live to see all her children converted and grown to manhood and womanhood. God did not deny her. Her children were her delight; she wrought untiringly for them. She lives on in us. God grant us grace to think as nobly as she thought, to speak as helpfully as she spoke, and to live as godly as she taught us, both by word of mouth and consistency of life, to live.

Her life was one of marked unselfishness; her home was one of universal hospitality; her words were always words of kindness and encouragement.

She loved the songs of Zion, attendance upon every service of her church, and the Blessed Book. Her undaunted spirit often took her to church when her frailty forbade it. Until her weakness would no longer permit it, she read for many years five chapters a day in her

Bible.

She lived a quiet and unassuming life, and slipped away as quietly as one who was going home, for so it was. The Lord Jesus needed her fellowship and called her to Himself. His will be done.

FIFTEENTH SESSION OPENS SEPTEMBER 24

The West Kentucky Bible School has had a glorious past and the prospects for the future are as bright.

The courses next year will be even more interesting for the hard-working students. Our night class will study the Gospel of John. Our chapel meditations will include the prayers of the New Testament. A special class will study Bible Doctrines. A class in Bible Sermons and Sermonizing will be added. Another in Baptist History from the doctrinal standpoint will be added for advanced students. Later issues of the paper will carry detailed outline of our full four-year course in the whole Bible, or you may write now for this.

(Address the editor at 2530 Ohio Street, Paducah, Kentucky. We shall drive to and from our work in the Bible School next fall. Our move to West End Baptist Church, Paducah, will not affect our work in the School in the least.)

FROM NEWS AND TRUTHS SEPTEMBER 8, 1906

Where the blood is not made the great plea, there is a deficiency of power in prayer.

The reason so many people are harassed with doubts and fears is because they do not lean entirely upon the Savior but rest in part upon their own experience or their own efforts.

What a power the young men of our church would be if they were only consecrated. Young men, if redeemed by the blood of Jesus, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." God wants your strength, your manhood, your talents, your time, your money, yourselves to be given to Him.

Men may as easily be born twice in nature as in grace. There is no second birth in either. Neither is it possible for any man to unborn himself spiritually any more than naturally.

GEORGIA GOES DRY

By a majority of 243 votes Georgia went dry in the recent vote on their state prohibition law.

Kentuckians, take courage. Let the issue be clearly drawn. Vote dry next November.

INTERESTING EPITAPHS

Here lies the body of Mr. Solomon Ashbourn. He died in 1711, and solemnly bequeathed the following verses to his parishoners:—"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." Acts 7:51. "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God," Isaiah 49:4.—Wesley's Journal, volume two, page 513.

The Body of Benjamin Franklin (like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out, and stript of its lettering and gilding), lies here food for worms; yet the work itself shall not be lost, for it will (as he believed) appear once more in a new and more beautiful edition corrected and amended by The Author.

STUDIES ON THE ATONEMENT

The most important issue today is the nature of the Gospel, and the center or the Gospel is the atonement on the cross. Propogandists for a merely social gospel are multiplying, and many sound brethren are being caught unawares. We therefore sound the alarm.

This issue carries the second article of a series on the atonement. This series alone is worth the price of the paper. If you believe in the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ, subscribe now. Just fifty cents a year.

The West Kentucky Bible School believes our preachers should, above all, be straight on the atoning death of our Lord Jesus. Send your young preachers this way. We need more preachers who are not afraid to speak out on distinctive Baptist doctrines.

PRAYERS WORTH PRAYING

Lord, if this light which seems to solve my difficulties is but the ray of reason to salve my spiritual conscience and dim my eyes of faith, shut somehow the door that would let it enter.

Lord, if the object of my desire contravenes Thy will in any wise, permit not the gratification of my longing.

Lord, my deepest desire prefers that my prayer were unanswered if it is not right even though my present desire may heartily crave for it.

Lord, if an apparent opportunity for me would bring hardship to my brother, let me not choose it.

AMAZON VALLEY BOARD MEETING

The A. V. B. F. M. Board will meet in Murray on Tuesday after first Sunday in July, July 9, in its semi-annual meeting. All the members of the Board are urged to be present. Visitors are welcome. Meeting at 10:00 a. m.

THE HALLUM FAMILY

Elder R. P. Hallum, wife, and daughter sailed from Norfolk, Virginia, May 14, on the Aiden of the Booth Lines as missionaries of the Amazon Valley Mission. They will land at Para, Brazil, then go up the Amazon to Peru, where he will locate for mission work. (Thru this paper alone will you be able to hear of their mission work; subscribe for The Voice).

CHURCH RELATIONS

The action of one church should be respected, and members should not be received until due investigation is made. Even then extreme caution must be exercised. Receiving members upon statement should never bespeak the ill feeling of one church for another. This courtesy toward a member was never intended for such purposes. In case of a church's no longer meeting for worship or the loss of this person's name from the roll and such like are the only normally justifiable reasons for receiving members upon statement.

APRIL FINANCES

Receipts

Balance from March	\$ 28.02
Dexter Church	3.41
Moscow Church	1.00
Memorial Church	23.61
Hopewell Church	3.00
Scott's Grove for Hampton	29.29
West End Church	19.97
New Bethel Church	10.00
E. C. B., Missouri50
Total for the month	\$118.80

Disbursements

Janitors	\$ 15.00
Hampton, as designated	29.29
Coal	5.67
Ed. Chandler, student help50
Weaver and Chandler, student aid	6.79
Lights and water	4.76
Sewage rent	5.90
Mrs. H. B. Taylor, for teaching	25.00
W. W. Dickerson, for teaching	10.00
Rowland, student help	6.50
Carl Crosby, student board	10.00
R. O. B.,29
Total paid out for the month	\$118.80
Total paid out for the year	\$990.73

We profoundly thank our Father for His care thru another year. Every goal was reached except \$70.35 on the salary of the president of the School. The School runs no debt. We did our best to keep the record; if we failed in any wise, it was an error of the head, not of the heart. We invite any corrections of our work as Treasurer.

Too many are disputing instead of praying.