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"I am a voice."—John the Baptist

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LAW AND THE ATONEMENT: ITS REQUIREMENTS

The law, as used in this study, is not an arbitrary, optional, and extraneous thing that harnesses the movements of God; it is the human designation of the divine expression of the mind of God, the will that governs human conduct, and the tangible manifestation of the righteousness of God. It arises from what God is and is not imposed from without. Much false speculation would never arise if this truth were understood and accepted.

What are the Scriptural requirements for atonement? Who can render acceptable atonement? In what relation must he act? What must be his attitude in this work? What obligations devolve upon him? What must he do to make his work acceptable to God and efficacious to man? No one is prepared to study the atonement until he knows what was required of Jesus and what He assumed to do in His atoning work.

I. Who could make atonement?

We have already seen that atonement was needful and necessary to salvation. Who could meet the human need? Who could satisfy the divine requirement? Man, as we saw, is wholly unable to render atonement. No one can know the truth on the atonement until he dismisses forever the hope that sinful man can in any wise satisfy the claims of justice.

In mediation between men, as we know it, the mediator must "possess the nature of each party." No lawyer can plead a case if he does not know both the case of need and the law of judgment; he must be acceptable to both the judge and the one to be judged. When, therefore, men and God are the parties at variance, the mediator must have the nature of each party; he must both understand and be acceptable to both God and the sinner.

1. He must be God.

"There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," I Timothy 2:5. "Unto the Son He saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy Kingdom,'" Hebrews 1:8. "My Lord and My God" confessed the once doubting Thomas. These and a multitude of other passages prove con-

clusively the Deity of the man Christ Jesus. The question of requirement is not one of mere divinity but of Deity, Godhood. "Salvation depends on what He is, as well as on what He does; for what He is able to do depends on what He is," Pendleton.

The rights of God could be laid only on one fully able to care for and vindicate them. No mere creature could be accepted on the part of God. "The line of demarcation between created being and Creator must be" drawn here. "A created being is necessarily a dependent being . . . In the atonement Christ stands out as the Contrast of His people. Every one of them needs atonement. He needs none," Heward. To no one short of Deity could this stupendous and all important question of the honor and integrity of the divine government be delegated.

Any theory that denies the Deity of Christ weakens the claims of justice and logically carves the heart out of the atonement. A merely social or ethical gospel leads sooner or later to the denial of His Deity. An unscriptural view of the demerit of sin and the rights of justice may accept atonement from one who is less than Deity. But the honor of God could never be sustained by one less than God the Son. "Deity is wrapped up in the thought of atonement" Heward.

2. He must be man.

He who would atone for the sins of man must know his sufferings and temptations; he must know how to sympathize with man, assume his responsibilities, and even die in his stead. He must be able to lay his hands on both God and man if he would bring them together.

Thus the atonement made necessary the incarnation. "The Word became flesh," John 1:14. A man, even if a perfect one could have been found, could not have become God. But God did become man. This is a revelation for faith; reason shatters itself in vain efforts to explain the glorious mystery. Here is the difference in Christianity and all other religions: God came down to man; other religions have man vainly striving to get up to God.

As God, Jesus Christ was wholly free from the obligations of obedience to the law. His incarnation made Him sub-

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ject to the law, not for Himself, not that He personally owed or could owe it anything, but that He might obey the law for the disobedient. The Lawmaker Himself could not be obligated to obey the law of the creature nor for the creature unless He voluntarily chose to do it. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," Galatians 4:4-5.

3. He must be a perfect man.

He Himself must be free from law; He must have no debts of His Own. If He had been a sinner, He must have met His Own obligations and could not have obeyed for others. He was the innocent One, the sinless One, the "Lamb without spot and without blemish," "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself," Hebrews 7:26-27.

The Virgin Birth is vitally related to the atonement as well as to the righteousness and holiness of God. He was virgin born as a safeguard of His righteousness and holiness against human depravity. His immaculate purity must be preserved. He must be kept free from sin if He would bear the sins of others.

Some claim that Jesus was the victim of current errors, even misunderstanding the nature of His death when He declared His blood a ransom for many. If Jesus believed any error of the Jews of His day, He was an ignorant man; if He is not to be trusted on all that He taught, how shall we know when to trust Him? Modernism acclaims Him as the Perfect Teacher, and such He was, but it turns around and denies His teachings when they contravene its theories. Modernists select what they like of His teachings; we trust unreservedly all that He

says. All these modern theories strike at the atoning work of Jesus. If He had been subject to the slightest error, He was wholly unable to assume the obligations of others. The only view of the life of Jesus that makes Him capable of atonement is that He was spotlessly pure and absolutely sinless.

4. He must be made perfect as the Captain of salvation.

"But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," Hebrews 2:9-10. His sufferings perfected Him officially and mediatorially, not personally. This was the capstone. To leave out of the atonement the Suffering One is to leave out the climax and heart of His gracious work.

II. What must be the attitude of the one who makes atonement?

If undeserved punishment is forced on anyone, it is manifestly and admittedly unjust. It is wrong to make a wicked man suffer more than he deserves, unless perchance he chooses to do it; how much more a good man? One can be held for all he owes, but he cannot justly be forced to pay one farthing more or the debt of another. Some shallow thinkers leave the matter just here and try to cut out the justice of substitution. They forget that there is something higher than obligation; it is voluntary mercy.

Voluntariness, or what Pendleton calls "self-disposal," is the only justification of the suffering of the innocent. All punishment inflicted without the desire of the victim calls for the day of judgment. But who will say that there is injustice in voluntary suffering? Is there injustice in one's furnishing blood for a transfusion to save physical life? Was it wrong for Samuel Robbeth to suck up the obstruction in the throat of a child, which killed him in a week? (Clow). Is it cruel for a mother to rush between the enraged rattlesnake and receive its death-dealing poison to save her endangered babe? Was the sacrifice of Dr. Lazear in proving that the Aedes mosquito carries yellow fever unjust? Was the substitutionary death of Jesus for sinners any more wrong?

All of these are laudable to the extreme. Three conditions made all these sacrifices wholly noble and perfectly beautiful: willing sacrifice; worthy purpose; worthy motive. A selfish end pro-

vokes no honor, nor does a motive impelled by anything less than love. How divine was the love that led Jesus to lay down His life that He might take it again! "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again," John 10:17-18.

III. In what relation must He act in atoning? What must He do to make atonement?

1. He must act as man's substitute or representative. What He did or suffered, He did acting on our behalf or in our stead. He must represent both God and man in all His transactions. If this element is taken from the atonement, the benefits to man are nothing.

2. He must meet the demands of the nature and law of God. We may legitimately ask what were the demands. What obligations rested upon the sinner? What demands did He assume to satisfy? Before we can know what legal responsibilities He bore, we must know what the law required.

Reverting to our previous discussion, what was the original design in creation? The glory of God. The law demanded of the man Christ Jesus that its honor be vindicated from the reproach man brought on God. The sinner or his substitute, one fully capable and properly authorized to act for the sinner, must make full restitution or suffer the penalty.

The law did not require an exact equivalent, so much for so much in commercial terms, but a moral equivalent. The law does not require the payment in the same kind. Human laws, the highest approximation to divine laws, demand satisfaction, not necessarily so much for so much. The commercial view of justice and atonement has its weaknesses amidst its many good points. The satisfaction theory meets all the requirements without the implications of the other view. The honor of the law must be upheld, its requirements met, its standards filled.

These requirements fall into two classes, preceptive and penal. Pendleton says, "If penalty as well as precept is a part of God's law, then both are 'holy, and just, and good.'" The commands must be obeyed; the penalty of violated law must be inflicted.

(1). He must meet the preceptive demands of the law in His life. Here again we see that He must have lived sinlessly. "He did not sin."

(2). He must meet the penal demands of the law in His death. "For He hath

made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," II Corinthians 5:21. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Galatians 3:13. Modernists tell us that such terms applied to the death of Christ must be rejected by the modern intelligence. Which needs revising? The eternal word of God or the thoughts of men? We prefer what God said to what any modern satellite may tell us. We know Him and can trust Him; we fear the ratiocinations of a man who wants to be believed at the expense of denying God.

Atonement was both consistent with law and satisfied its claims. His blessed atonement honored and made the law sublimer than if it had never been violated. Pliny said, "Mercy wins the highest praise just when there is the most righteous cause for anger."

He honored the law by giving the one freed from its demands a nature and heart of love to fulfill in life its holiest precepts. This is where salvation and regeneration belong in honoring a righteous and holy God.

Tunbridge Wells wrote:

"Said Justice unto Man: 'I'd fain know what you weigh;
If weight, I spare you; if too light,
I slay'.

Man leapt the scale; it mounted: 'On my word,'

Said Justice, 'where's my sword?'
Mercy the whitest dove that ever flew
From Calvary fetched a twig of crimson hue;

Aloft it sent the scale on the other side;

Man smiled, and Justice owned, 'I'm satisfied.'"

Smith-Brewer

Ruth Smith and Earl Brewer were united in holy matrimony June 12, 1935, by the bride's father, Elder C. A. Smith, in the presence of the prayer meeting of the High Point Baptist Church, Mayfield, Kentucky. She is a former student of the Bible School, and he was graduated last April and is now located at Charleston, Missouri, as a colporter.

STUDENT NEWS

We are anxious to publish news about the students and graduates of the W. K. B. S. Send us any item of interest you may know, as pastorates, meetings, work, marriages, deaths, births.

WEST END HAPPY

West End Baptist Church paid the last on her building debt Sunday evening, June 16. The finals were paid after the evening service. Then we sang "Majestic Sweetness," read Zechariah 4:7, and a dozen or more brethren led us in short prayers of gratitude to God, the Giver, Who enabled us to give. Over and above our budget, we have raised over five hundred dollars since January. The Church plans shortly to dedicate the building, free of debt.

LIVE ISSUES

This issue carries the third in a series on the Atonement. This is a live issue among Southern Baptists when a minority are trying to establish a Social Service Commission for the propagation of a merely social gospel. If you love the truth of the Bible on vicarious atonement, subscribe for this paper. We will be in the fight until the battle is over, if God permits.

The liquor issue in this state will be sifted thoroughly in this paper in the coming months until election time in November. Every dry ought to read this paper and get his friends to read it. The article in this issue is only a sample of what is coming.

LIQUOR IN KENTUCKY

The most important issue in Kentucky just now is whether we will repeal or vindicate both our state law and the local option privilege. The State Legislature in March 1934 started an amendment to our State Constitution upon which we shall vote in November.

Kentucky is living under her fourth state constitution. The dates of their adoption are 1792, 1800, 1850, and 1891. Section 61 of the 1891 constitution give the right of local option on liquor. Later the seventh amendment gave us state prohibition. This amendment was submitted under Act of 1918 and adopted November election 1919. It follows in full:

"After June 30, 1920, the manufacture, sale or transportation of spirituous, vinuous, malt or other intoxicating liquors, except for sacramental, medical, scientific or mechanical purposes, in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, is hereby prohibited. All the sections or parts thereof of the constitution, insofar as they may be inconsistent with this Section are hereby repealed and nullified. The General Assembly shall enforce this section by appropriate legislation."

Bear in mind that the crisis in November will decide for or against both section 61 on the local option privilege and amendment seven on state prohibition. That will mean that you cannot have local option anywhere in the State of Kentucky.

The Kentucky Legislature on March 17, 1934, passed what they deceptively called "emergency" legislation to override this amendment until they could, if possible, repeal all our state dry laws. The Legislature is wholly untrue to the Constitution. They were dominated by wet leadership and sold out to the wets in plain and unmistakable opposition to laws by which they were to abide.

Reread this sentence from the seventh amendment. "The General Assembly shall enforce this section by appropriate legislation." Instead of that, they overrode "shall enforce" and substituted so-called "emergency legislation" for "appropriate legislation." Such juggling with the will of the people. Was bolshevism and anarchy ever more evident? Did crookedness ever reign more deceptively and boldly in our State Legislature?

Will Kentuckians let this go unchallenged? All the liquor enactments of the March 1934 Legislature are plainly unconstitutional. Are we going to continue to smile at or be indifferent toward such unbridled crookedness? Every "licensed" "saloon" (or call it what you will) in Kentucky is illegal. We have been hoodwinked and continue to permit it. Every place in our cities and towns that sells liquor under "license" is unlawful. They call it "medicinal" permits. Will a God-fearing State stand for such? God help us to awake.

SCHOOL OPENS SEPTEMBER 24

The West Kentucky Bible School will open its fifteenth session September 24, 1935. Every indication points to the best year yet for the School.

August and September issues will carry full outlines of the course of study. Send us names of prospects for the School. Work for subscribers for the Voice. Anyone who would like to work on commission in getting subscriptions should write us.

For full information of the School write the Editor, 2530 Ohio Street Paducah.

The Amazon Valley Mission Board will meet in Murray July 9, at ten o'clock.

"My ability to preach is limited to the field over which I have been in my study," Tull.