

The Greatest Theme in the World

by

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CHAPTER ONE

THE MEANING OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

The Atonement as such, is only mentioned once in the New Testament. "We have now received the Atonement" (Romans 5:11), and here the word means reconciliation, and is so rendered in II Corinthians 5:18, 19. The word "Atonement" is an Old Testament word, therefore it is to the Old Testament we turn to find its meaning; for while we have the truth of the Gospel in the New Testament, its roots are found in the Old Testament.

Every Bible student recognizes the importance of understanding the words of the HOLY SPIRIT, for if we would know the mind of the Spirit, we must understand the words of the Spirit.

"Words . . . which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (I Corinthians 2:13) is what the Lord says.

Words are the medium by which He communicates His thoughts, hence, the importance of rightly apprehending the words He uses in His Word.

We read of the seven lamps in the Tabernacle, that they gave "**light over against the candlestick**" (Numbers 8:2). The lamps not only lighted up the Holy Place, but revealed the beauty of the lampstand too. So the light of the truth reveals the truth of the light. The Spirit and the Word are inseparable.

When men apart from the Word try to understand the Word "**Atonement**," they divide it into its syllables and spell it *at-one-ment*, which signifies reconciliation, that is, to make two parties at variance, one. This is a result of the Atonement, and not the Atonement itself. Tyndale makes this mistake when he says, "Atonement - to set at one."

A safe rule to follow is to find out the first time a word [21] is used, and invariably the context will explain its meaning.

The Hebrew word "*Capfar*," a primary root, first occurs in Genesis 6:14, in speaking of the ark, when GOD said to Noah, "**Pitch it within and without with pitch.**" Literally, it is "**Thou shalt**

caphar it within and without with a copher." Thus both the verb and the noun are used. We might freely paraphrase the sentence, "Thou shalt atone the ark within and without with an atonement." At once the meaning is obvious, namely, "Cover the ark with a covering."

Thus the word Atonement means to cover.

Dr. A. A. Hodge, in his "*Outlines of Theology*," has finely put it, he says, "The Hebrew word *caphar* - *to cover by an expiatory sacrifice* . . . Its proper meaning is **to make moral and legal reparation for a fault or injury**. In its Old Testament and proper theological usage, it expresses not the reconciliation effected by CHRIST, but the legal satisfaction which is the ground of that reconciliation."

Atonement, therefore, expresses what CHRIST gave to GOD on our behalf, and hence, He does not see us, as the Irish boy said - "GOD cannot see my sins through the Blood of CHRIST."

Girdlestone calls attention to the fact that the preposition which is used in connection with atonement expresses a covering. He says, "The Hebrew prepositions rendered by the word '**for**' in connection with the doctrine of acceptance and atonement do not mean *instead of*, but *because of*, or *on account of*. The preposition which means substitution is never used in connection with the word *caphar*. To make an atonement for a sin is literally to cover over the sin, the preposition being constantly used with verbs signifying *to cover*, e.g., in Habbakuk 2:14 - "**As the waters cover the sea.**"

Let us call to mind a few Scriptures by way of illustration, [22] where the word to cover occurs.

The Flood covering the mountains
"**All the high hills were covered**" (Genesis 7:19).

The mountains were "*covered*" (Genesis 7:20). The flood of CHRIST's atoning death covers the mountains of our guilt. "**Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.**" Not a mountain of our sin can be seen. The far-reachingness of His atonement covers all.

The Red Sea covering the Egyptians
"**The waters covered all the host**" (Exodus 14:28).
"**The depths have covered them**" (Exodus 15:5).

The sin which once gripped us and pursued us, is annihilated as an active antagonizing force in the Red Sea of His death. Sin is a dead thing to those who know they are crucified with CHRIST.

The Seraphs covering themselves
"**Six wings, with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet**" (Isaiah 6:2).

The covering wings of His expiation covers all the activities of our service. The covered face of our love can see better, and the covered feet of our service run swifter, because we are in CHRIST.

The cloud of incense covering the mercy seat

"Cloud of the incense may cover" (Leviticus 16:13).

The sweet perfume of CHRIST's atonement makes the golden perfection of all that relates to the Lord the more beautiful and bright.

Rebekah covering herself with her veil
"Therefore she took a veil and covered herself" (Genesis 24:65).

The beauty of Rebekah's graces needs to be hidden in the presence of the Divine Isaac. We can look at Him better when covered with the veil of His humiliating death.

GOD's grace regarding Israel
"Covered thy nakedness . . . Covered thee with silk" (Ezekiel 16:8, 10).

The covering with which He hides our sin and shame is no common one, it is **"silk."** Beautiful, costly, soft, and pure. The best robe which covers us was woven in the loom of [23] Calvary and purchased with Heaven's Blood. His atonement is our adornment.

GOD's glory in the heavens
"His glory covered the heavens" (Habbakuk 3:3).

The garnishing of our Heaven is glorious with the sun which was obliterated at the cross, with the Star of Bethlehem, and the blue of GOD's grace.

Remembering the association of this word, has it not a new meaning when we read such passages as these?

"Blessed is the man whose sin. is covered" (Psalm 32:1).

"Thou hast covered all their sin" (Psalm 85:2).

"Love covereth all sin" (Proverbs 10:12).

Let us now return to the word **"atonement,"** and ponder some of its usages. The verb is rendered **"appease," "pitch," "pacified," "purged," "disannulled," "put off,"** and **"make an atonement."**

"PITCH"

In order that the waters of judgment might be kept out of the ark, and those who were inside might be protected, it was covered within and without with pitch. **"Pitch it within,"** &c. (Genesis 6:14).

Newberry renders, "Pitch, to cover, to make atonement."

Rotherham's commentary has, "Cover within and without with pitch."

As there was. a double covering for those in the ark, a covering of atonement without and a covering within, so CHRIST covers us without from the judgment due to our sin by His death, and covers our sin within. Thus CHRIST's Atonement covers what we are, and keeps from us what we deserve, for as the judgment of water fell upon the pitch, so CHRIST endured what was

due to us.

Spurgeon says, "CHRIST's merit covers our demerit."

"**Cover**" is the Old Testament word for expiation and propitiation, and we rejoice in it, notwithstanding the opposition of philosophy, [24] falsely so called. Yet let no man wickedly say that '*imputed righteousness is a clean glove Which covers a foul hand,*' for whom the Lord covers He cleanses."

"APPEASE"
(Genesis 32:20).

When Jacob was about to meet his brother Esau, the consciousness of how he had robbed him of his blessing and birthright filled Jacob with dread. He, therefore, determined to appease his brother's probable anger with a present. The present was a costly one, and consisted of "**two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty milch camels, with their colts, forty kine, ten bulls, twenty she asses and ten foals.**"

We are not left in any doubt as to the intent of the present, for we read, "**I will appease him* with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. So went the present over before him.**" Rotherham comments upon the passage, "I must pacify him with the present that goeth on before me, and after that I will see his face." In a footnote on the word "pacify" he remarks, "Lit., '*cover over his face.*'"

The thought in Jacob's heart was, I will put the present between my brother and myself, that it may cover my offence, that his attention may be diverted from myself to the gift-offering, thus his anger may be pacified.

CHRIST's Atonement is that which has gone before us, which has given satisfaction for us, and now we are completely covered by it, so GOD does not see our past sins, nor the sinner who committed them.

** Dean Payne Smith says, "I will cover his face with the offering that goeth before me. The covering of the face of the offended person, so that he could no longer see the offense, became the usual legal word for atonement."*

"PACIFIED"
(Ezekiel 16:63)

The Lord in promising to bless those to whom Ezekiel is [25] speaking, says, it shall be "**when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.**" Newberry explains, "Pacified on the ground of atonement." Rotherham comments, "I have accepted a *propitiary-covering* for thee as to all that thou hast done."

Many object to the thought that CHRIST gave to GOD His life to pacify Him, because it suggests the heathenish conception that He had to give Him something in order to bless us. But such a thought is foreign to the passage before us, for GOD Himself is the Provider of the

Atonement which gives Him satisfaction. We must never forget that GOD is a righteous Ruler as well as a Holy Father, and while He has a heart of love, He has also a hand of righteousness. He placates His righteousness in the death of His Son, in smiting our sin and us in CHRIST's death, that He might provide for our salvation.

The satisfaction CHRIST and GOD have given to justice is the satisfaction that satisfies our hearts.

Hodge says, "The Atonement was the effect, not the cause of GOD's love. It satisfied His justice, and rendered the exercise of His love consistent with His righteousness."

GOD in CHRIST met a requirement of His own throne, that He might provide a redemption - consistent with His own nature. Therefore we rest "*upon His justice*" for our salvation, as the Scotch body replied, when she was asked what she was resting in for her soul's salvation.

"PURGED"

"And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isaiah 6:7)

"**Thy sin is purged,**" was the assuring word of the Seraph to the prophet.

"Atoned for," or "covered," as Newberry renders it. Rotherham renders it, "This hath touched thy lips, thus shall be taken away thine iniquity, and thy sin by propitiation be covered."

Mark the "*this*" and the [26] "*thus*."

The "*this*" has reference to the live coal from off the altar. What does that live coal signify? Fire which had fed upon the sacrifice, which sacrifice had been accepted by GOD.

The "*thus*" speaks of the application of the accepted sacrifice to the man who had confessed his sin, which took away his actual sin, and the propitiation covered the sinner.

Therefore the sinner is not seen, but the atonement; and the iniquity does not exist, for it is "**taken away,**" or *departed*. The word "**taken away**" is translated "**depart**" in Exodus 8:11, 29, in speaking of the removal of the frogs and flies which plagued Egypt.

"DISANNULLED"

(Isaiah 28:18)

"Your covenant with death shall be disannulled," or "wiped out," as Rotherham explains it.

The reference is to the ancient method of writing covenants. They were engraven on stones, and if a covenant was to be annulled, the stone was smeared with a substance which completely obliterated the words from view. Sin has cut itself into our nature, and written itself large upon our being, the consequence is we are covenanted with death, but the power which disannuls is the death of our Lord, which wipes out all the dread and damning consequence of sin.

The woundprints of the CHRIST of Calvary cover the sin-prints of the engraving of hell.

Old Candace in Mrs. Stowe's book aptly puts it when she is represented as comforting another. She says: "Just leave him in JESUS' hands. Why, honey, dar's de very print o' de nails in His hands now! Look right at JESUS. Don't ask no questions, and don't go to no reasonin's. Jest look at Him hangin' dar, so sweet and patient on de cross. All dey could do couldn't stop His lovin' 'em. He prayed for 'em with all de breath He had. Dar's a GOD [27] to love, a'n't dar? Candace loves Him, poor, ole, foolish, black, wicked Candace, and she knows He loves her."

"PUT OFF"

" . . . mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off . . ." (Isaiah 47:11)

Here the Lord declares the Chaldeans will be unable to appease the mischief which shall come upon them. No help they may summon, nor enchantment they may perform, will shelter them from the punishment which will surely overtake them. What an illustration this is of the sinner's inability to avert the punishment he deserves by any action of his own.

Toplady felt this when he sang -

"Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All far sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone."

Elihu proclaimed this fact to Job long ago. He said to him, "**I have found a Ransom**" (Job 33:24). Newberry explains Ransom as, "Atonement"; for it is the Hebrew word "*copher*." "*Copher*" is rendered "**villages**" in I Samuel 6:18. What is a village? a place where people live. Homes. Shelter. GOD Himself has provided a village, a shelter, a home in the atonement of CHRIST. We cannot put off the punishment our sin deserves; but since our Surety has smarted for us, GOD cannot put any punishment on us.

"MAKE AN ATONEMENT"

This is how the verb "*caphar*" is translated again and again in Leviticus 16. The word occurs sixteen times. Once it is rendered "**reconciling**" (verse 20).

Here again [28] let me take the noun ("*copher*") to illustrate the verb "*caphar*."

Twice the word is translated "**satisfaction**" (Numbers 35:31, 32), and twice "**camphire**" (Song of Solomon 1:14; 4:13).

There were certain offences under the law; for which an atonement could not be given, such as murder. But here there is the same thought underlying, that atonement is, as Girdlestone says, "the doing away with a charge against a person by means of expiation, propitiation, or otherwise, so that the accused may be received into the Divine favour, and be freed from the consequence of wrongdoing. Pacification, propitiation, and such words are by no means adequate for the purpose of conveying the doctrine of atonement. They savour too much of heathenism and

superstition, and lead to the supposition that man pacifies GOD instead of teaching that GOD shelters man; but whatever word is used, the more carefully Scripture is studied, so much the more will the unity, the beauty and the grandeur of GOD's way of mercy commend itself to the soul."

Mark the words, "GOD shelters man," for that is the significance of the word "**camphire**" in the Song of Solomon. The women in the East had a habit of dyeing their lips, hands and cheeks, making them of a saffron, reddish hue. In the British Museum to-day may be seen a mummy's hand so dyed, and with the intimation that it is so coloured by the juice from the henna flower. The women, by applying this stain, got a colouring which made them appear what they were not. The thought is still present, as in every other instance, that "*copher*" and "*capher*" mean *to cover*. Mr. Spurgeon once said, "CHRIST is our [29] Atonement and Adornment." May I alter by saying, "CHRIST's Atonement is our Adornment."

The essential thing to emphasise is, there is only one atonement for sin, and that is by means of death. The one clear word which confirms this is, "**For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul**" (Leviticus 17:11).

Israel was prohibited from eating anything that had the blood in it, on two grounds-

- (1) Because the life was in it;
- (2) because it was the symbol of life substituted for the life of the guilty in atoning sacrifice.

Girdlestone asks the important question, "How was atonement wrought? A spotless victim had to be brought before the Lord to take the place of sinful man. It's death, after the sins of the offerer had been laid upon its head, represented the fact that the innocent must suffer for the guilty. Then came the solemn mystery. The priest, GOD's agent, must take the blood of the victim and scatter it over GOD's altar. This process set forth the truth that GOD and death must be brought into contact through means of Him whom priest and altar typified. The symbol was composite, or many-sided, and its various aspects can only be realised and put together when they are regarded in the light of CHRIST's death upon the cross. It was not His life that made atonement, but His death."

This lecture would not be complete if we did not consider a relative word, because it has a correspondent in the New Testament.

I refer to the word - "**mercy seat**."

The Hebrew word "*Capporeth*" is derived from "*Caphar*," and is rendered "**Mercy Seat**" (Exodus 35:12; 34:35), or "*Propitiation*."

Dr. Bullinger says, "The mercy seat is so [30] called because of the expiation made once a year on the great day of atonement."

The mercy seat was the lid of the ark, and is a remarkable and suggestive type of CHRIST as the Propitiatory. It is mentioned twenty-seven times.

Briefly let us note its description, and, in a sentence, denote its typical import.

Golden Mercy Seat. "**Make a mercy seat of pure gold**" (Exodus 25:17; 37:6). Gold is typical of what is Divine. CHRIST is the God-natured, God-provided, God-fitted mercy seat.

Cherubic Mercy Seat. "**Make cherubim of gold . . . in the two ends of the mercy seat**" (Exodus 25:18; 37:7). Cherubim represent the administrators of GOD's righteousness. CHRIST meets GOD's righteousness in dying for our sin, and the redemption, which is ours in consequence, is justly given.

United Mercy Seat. "**make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end**" (Exodus 25:19; 37:8). CHRIST is the expression of GOD's Holy Love, His righteous mercy, and His pure grace. GOD's attributes harmonize in the CHRIST of Calvary.

Sheltered Mercy Seat. "**the cherubims shall stretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy seat**" (Exodus 25:20; 37:9). After CHRIST had gone beneath the waters of Jordan as a sinner, in type answering for sin, the Spirit, in Dove form, lighted upon Him; so CHRIST's atoning sacrifice is guarded by GOD's righteousness.

Contemplated Mercy Seat. "**Their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be**" (Exodus 25:20; 37:9). The high intelligences of Heaven not only find an object in CHRIST's sacrifice which commands their satisfaction, but one which demands their united contemplation. [31]

Law Meeting Mercy Seat. "**Thou shalt put the mercy seat above up on the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee**" (Exodus 25:21; 40:20). The mercy seat hid the law, and is typical of CHRIST, Who covers the law's claim and the law's sentence for us, for He kept the law in every jot and tittle, and redeems from its curse by dying the death it demanded from the sinner.

Communing Mercy Seat. "**There will I meet with thee and will commune with thee from above the mercy seat**" (Exodus 25:22; 30:6). GOD meets with us in CHRIST, and we have fellowship with the Father in Him. The cleansing blood and the living CHRIST maintain us in this fellowship.

Holy Mercy Seat. "**Thou shalt put the mercy seat . . . in the most holy place**" (Exodus 22:34). Holiness is the habitation of His throne. CHRIST is the living expression of the holy GOD. He not only dwells in the holy place, but is the Holy One, Who makes the place holy. Very significantly is it said in I Chronicles 28:11, that the holy place is "**the place of the mercy seat.**"

God-manifesting Mercy Seat. "**I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat**" (Leviticus 16:2). The only place where GOD is seen is in CHRIST. He is His express image. He is the living expression of the Divine, and Divine in all His expression.

Cloud-covered Mercy Seat. "**Cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat**" (Leviticus

16:13). The cloud would obscure the Shekinah glory. Deity in its Divine purity cannot be seen; but Deity in Divine humanity is "seen, heard and handled," as John declared.

Blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat. "**Sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat . . . seven times**" (Leviticus 16:14, 15). The blood sprinkled once [32] on the mercy seat is typical of CHRIST giving Himself for us once for all, and the blood sprinkled seven times before the mercy seat typifies the fact that by means of His death He brings us into a perfect standing before GOD. He has met GOD's claim, and He meets our need.

When we turn to the pages of the New Testament, there are eight passages where propitiation is stated or indicated.

The corresponding Greek word to the Hebrew one is "*hilasterion*" and is rendered "**propitiation**" in Romans 3:25, and "**mercy seat**" in Hebrews 9:5; it means an *Expiatory* - a place or thing - an atoning victim. As one has said, "The mercy seat is so called because of the expiation made once a year on the great day of Atonement."

"*Hisamos*" is rendered "**propitiation**" in I John 2:2; 4:10; and signifies an *expiator*.

"*Hilaskomai*" means *to conciliate, to be propitious*. It is rendered "**Be merciful**" in Luke 18:13, and "**make reconciliation**" in Hebrews 2:17.

"*Hileos*" means *propitious, be merciful*, as averting some calamity. It is rendered "**be it far**" in Matthew 16:22, and "**merciful**" in Hebrews 8:12.

Let us look at these passages in detail.

GOD and Propitiation

"Whom God set forth to be a Propitiation" (Romans 3:25).

Professor Godet gives a concise comment on the whole topic. He says, "The word '*Propitiatory*' belongs to that host of Greek adjectives whose termination signifies *what serves to*. The meaning, therefore, is: *What serves to render propitious favorable*." That which serves to make GOD act in righteous mercy toward us, is because He has in His merciful righteousness acted for us in CHRIST. He foreordained to act in mercy for us, that He might in righteousness bless us.

Conybeare and Howson explain

[33] the passage thus, "For Him hath GOD set forth, in His blood, to be a propitiatory sacrifice by means of faith, thereby to manifest the righteousness of GOD."

Scripture and Propitiation

"The cherubims of glory overshadowing the mercyseat" (Hebrews 9:5).

The Speaker's Commentary suggests that the meaning of mercy seat here is a "*propitiatory, or atonement*," and, in speaking of the mercy seat in the tabernacle and its associations, adds, "It was the central point of the Divine Presence and manifestations between GOD and the representative of the people. So in CHRIST, is the full manifestation of GOD to man made, and in Him rests . . . the true Shekinah . . . Among all instruments and symbols of atonement this alone was called the propitiatory as being the most eminent. As on it was made a general atonement for the children of Israel once a year; so CHRIST the Lord takes away our sins."

The one scarlet thread that runs through the Old and New Testaments, and binds both of them together is the blood of atonement. From one end to the other rings out the truth, all approach to GOD, and all blessing from Him, is on the ground of sacrifice.

Sins and Propitiation

"He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (I John 2:2).

Sins are here found in connection with two parties - "the sinner and the saint." GOD has made no provision for His people to sin, but if they do sin provision has been made. The same propitiatory sacrifice is needed for them as for the unsaved. There is only one ground upon which sins can be forgiven, and only One Person Who is the ground, and He and it are the atonement of CHRIST. The sins of a believer are more sinful than the sins of a sinner, and CHRIST in His atonement is the Only One Who can answer for both. [34]

Love and Propitiation

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10).

Sin deserves wrath. The wrath of GOD must feed upon us, or upon One instead of us. Love's provision is faith's protection. GOD, in His love, gave CHRIST to be our propitiation, and now He sees not us nor our sins, but Him. He, in the worth of His sacrifice., makes us feel He is worth any sacrifice.

CHRIST and Propitiation

"A merciful and faithful high priest . . . to make reconciliation [propitiation] for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17).

The Speaker's Commentary says, "Only by atoning for sin could He restore man to his proper relation to GOD."

The Old Testament opens with a flaming sword, brought by man's sin to keep him out of Paradise; and the last mention of a sword in the Old Testament is when it awakes against GOD's Fellow, and is sheathed in His heart, to atone for sin, that man may be restored to a better Paradise (Genesis 3:24; Zechariah 13:7). Every believer can say-

"Now sleeps that sword for me."

CHRIST has made reconciliation because He has been made sin. The hand of CHRIST's death has grasped the excalibur of GOD's sword, and sunk it for ever beneath the waters of oblivion, as far as the believer is concerned.

Sinner and Propitiation

"God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

Rotherham, in his commentary, gives it, "O GOD! be propitiated unto me, the sinner." He seems

to say, "See the blood on the Propitiatory and be propitiated towards me, because of Him Who has made propitiation for me." The mercy of GOD is GOD given, blood bought, faith taken and love enjoyed. The mercy [35] of GOD is from the GOD of mercy, and is justly given, since CHRIST has righteously died in our stead.

Israel and Propitiation

"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness" (Hebrews 8:12)

Again, Rotherham, "Because propitious will I be as to their unrighteousness." There is no mercy for anyone apart from the CHRIST of Calvary. When the eyes of Israel are opened they will look upon the pierced One. GOD's propitiousness flows from the propitiatory or CHRIST's sacrifice.

Man and Propitiation

When CHRIST told Peter He must die, Peter, in his mistaken concern, said, "**Be it far from Thee. Lord**"; or, following our understanding of the words "**far from**"; "GOD have mercy on Thee"; or, as Bullinger suggests, "GOD be propitious, or favourable to Thee."

Peter wanted CHRIST to be kept back from such a calamity as the cross, but that would have been the calamity of all calamities for us, for if He had not died we should have died forever.

The calamity of condemnation is far from us, because it was not far from - it came upon - Him.

From all this it will be apprehended what CHRIST is to GOD for us, and what He is from GOD to us.

What CHRIST is to GOD for us.

He has answered, and does answer, in every way for our sins; as Newton says, "Atonement, or appeasement, is a work of the Lord JESUS directed towards GOD, whereby by one oblation finished on the cross, He has satisfied forever (in perpetuity) the claims of Divine government, and procured for all His believing people, not only pardon, but acceptance, and rewardableness according to the value of His own meritorious obedience, which has been presented to GOD, and accepted by GOD for them."

What CHRIST is from GOD to us.

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:25-26)

Romans 3:25, 26, is one of the most comprehensive passages of the gospel. The [36] verses have been called "*the marrow of theology*"; another has said of them, they are "the brief summary of Divine Wisdom"; and Calvin declares, "That there is not probably in the whole Bible a passage which sets forth more profoundly the righteousness of GOD in CHRIST." Godet paraphrases the passage, "Whom He hath established beforehand as the means of propitiation

through faith in His blood, for the demonstration of His righteousness on account of the tolerance shown toward sins that were past, during the forbearance of GOD, for the demonstration of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of JESUS."

When Cowper's eyes lighted on this passage, while under deep conviction of sin, and in the throes of despair, it brought him comfort, and was the means of his salvation. He had contemplated suicide, and was profoundly agitated, walking up and down in his room. At last he seated himself near the window, and took up a Bible. He says, "The passage which met my eye was the 25th verse of the 3rd of Romans. On reading it I immediately received power to believe. The rays of the Sun of Righteousness fell on me in all their fullness; I saw the complete sufficiency of the expiation which CHRIST had wrought for my pardon, and entire justification. In an instant I believed, and received the peace of the gospel."

"If," he adds, "the arm of the Almighty had not supported me, I believe I should have been overwhelmed with gratitude and joy; my eyes filled with tears; transports choked my utterance. I could only look to Heaven in silent fear, overflowing with love and wonder." [37]

~ end of chapter 1 ~
