

## The Scriptural View of Atonement

Cyrus White

*“And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”*

*1 John 2:2*

John, after admonishing the Christians or believers in Christ not to sin, but knowing their natural proneness to err, as expressed, in the latter part of the first chapter, would encourage them by informing them, that if any should sin through the infirmity of the flesh, “we have an advocate with the Father.” And that they may be excited to a speed confession of their sins, with the hope of forgiveness, he brings in the words of the text, “And he is the propitiation for our sins.” That is, for the believer’s sins. And then, lest any should suppose that this propitiation was restricted to the believers, and that sinners under the Gospel dispensation, like the Gentiles under the Ceremonial law, were not allowed to approach the Mercy Seat, he adds, “And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,” that is, for all the unbelievers in the world.

Now propitiation is the act of making propitious—the offering by which propitiousness is obtained; in a word, the Atonement. Our text then may, without injury, be read thus; “And he is the atonement for our sin, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

I shall show 1st-The nature of the Atonement, and 2nd- The extent of the Atonement.

### **1st- The nature of the Atonement.**

As man had violated the divine law, God could not consistently with his justice, and the principles of his moral government, pardon the offender without a sacrifice; because this would be to say, that crime, committed against the highest dignity, deserves no punishment, and consequently would encourage revolt through the Universe. It will be admitted, that to pass by crime without punishment, weakens the laws of any state or kingdom, and they in effect cease to be laws; and thus would GOD’s law have been weakened, if he had pardoned sin without a sacrifice. Hence the door of mercy was as effectually shut against man, as against fallen angels; for without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins.—But “GOD so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Now it is evident, the atonement must be that in its nature, which will render God propitious; or in other words, it must sustain the dignity of the throne of GOD, in venting mercy to the offender. GOD must display his hatred to sin, and this could not be more clearly displayed, than in the punishment of his own son. I know it is argued, that the “SON of GOD” must suffer the exact quantity of punishment which was due to each transgressor. But this is considering the atonement in the light of debt, and I am well assured, would render it impossible, even for the SON of GOD to make such an atonement; for eternal punishment is due to every sin. Then, for the LORD JESUS CHRIST to suffer eternal punishment for every particular or individual sin, committed by all or a part of the human family, is impossible—And it is nowhere hinted in the Bible, that he suffered more for one individual than for another. Yet we know that some men commit double the number of crimes which others do; and for such (if we view the atonement in the light of debt,) he must suffer double as much punishment.

Furthermore; If CHRIST suffered in this way, and paid the debt either for all or a part of the human family then there is no forgiveness of sins with GOD, the debt is fully discharged, and all for whom the payment is made, may claim heaven upon the principles of justice, and not of mercy—neither would sinners be taught, as they are in conviction, by the Divine Spirit, that they are justly condemned, and that if they are saved, it must be by GOD’s mercy alone. But it may be objected to this, that the Father cannot forgive sins, but the Son can and does. In reply, I would observe, this would be to set the person in the trinity at war; for the sinner thus forgiven, would ascribe all the glory of his salvation to the Son, and none to the Father, because the Father has exacted the utmost farthing. Take an illustration. A. is indebted to B. a certain sum which he is altogether unable to pay, and B. casts him into prison, where he must remain until the debt is paid, but C. takes compassion on A. pays the debt, and sets A. at liberty. Now would A. have any just reason to thank B. for his deliverance? Surely not. The thanks would all be due to C.

But we know that in ascriptions of praise to GOD for redemption, as much is due to the Father as to the Son; for we are told that, “God (the Father) so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son,”&c.

The atonement then, was made in view to the law, and is to be considered a full satisfaction of it. It opens the door of mercy to the fallen race of man, and GOD, the Father, being well please with it, (for it was just such as he appointed) can be just and justify everyone that believes in the LORD JESUS CHRIST; or in other words, relies wholly on the atonement made by him.

And here, let it be remembered, that JESUS CHRIST is called a sin-offering. The punishment due to sin was inflicted on him, nor does it matter whether one, or one thousand, or a world is to be atoned for, it is sufficient. There is no necessity for any more to be done for sinners, as it respects the atonement.

### **But 2nd- We consider the extent of the atonement.**

And here a few plain texts of Scripture ought to be thought sufficient. Out of many, we quote the following—John 3:16: “GOD so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 1:29 “Behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 3:17 “For GOD sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”

1 Timothy 2:5-6 “For there is one GOD and one mediator between GOD and men, the man CHRIST JESUS, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—2 Peter 3:9 “The LORD is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Hebrews 2:9 “But we see JESUS 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.” To which we will only add our text, “And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.”

But those who favor the limited scheme will say, that the world in the first text, means only the Elect, including those sheep which JESUS had amongst the Gentiles, as well as those amongst the Jews: Well, let us read it thus; GOD so loved the ELECT, that he gave his only begotten Son to die for the Elect, that whosoever (of the Elect) believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The reader will readily perceive, that such a construction implies, that a part of the Elect will finally perish; of course, he

will prefer the natural meaning, and that is, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to die for the world, that whosoever (of all this sinful world) believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Take if you please John 3:14-15 and read it according to the limited scheme—"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up, that whosoever (of the Elect) believeth in him; should not perish, but have eternal life."—Such a reading, I am persuaded, will not suit the most limited of our Brethren; because it destroys the true meaning of many of the plainest texts in the Bible. Once more, Mark 16:15-16 "And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." But according to the limited scheme, these verses should be read thus: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to all the Elect; He that is atoned for, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that is not atoned for shall be damned." To this reading you will perhaps object, that as the Messengers of CHRIST do not know who the Elect are, they must preach the Gospel indiscriminately to all mankind. But we would have you remember, that he who gave the command, knew who they were, and would he command his servants to publish news of pardoning mercy, to those for whom no atonement has been made? And would he command men for whom he never died, to repent and believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST? No; this would be to require them to believe a lie. To evade the force of this argument, some will say, that the invitations of the Gospel are not to all; they are only to the poor and needy sinners who feel their condemnation. I know the promises of the Gospel fit only such characters; but all men are commanded to repent and believe the Gospel, viz: To trust in the atoning merits of the Saviour.

We now call the attention of the reader to the parable of the supper in Luke 14. Here we discover that the maker of the feast, sends out his servants with express instructions to say to certain individuals, "come, for all things are now ready," "but they all with one consent began to make excuse, and would not come." When the maker of the feast heard of their refusal, he was angry, and made a solemn declaration, that none of them should taste of his supper.

Now according to the limited scheme, the maker of this feast had provided a supper for a few individuals, and either to mock others, or to find a pretext for getting angry with them, that he might destroy them, he sends his servants (shall I say with a lie in their mouths?) to say to those for whom not a crumb was ever provided, "come, for all things are now ready," and because they do not come and partake of provisions which have no existence, he becomes angry and declares they shall never taste of the supper which was never intended for them, and finally destroys them for refusing to come to a feast designed for others, and not for them—Will any person presume to palm such inconsistencies upon the KING of Heaven? Will they say that he is more inconsistent and unjust than man? When man makes feasts, the extent of the invitation is always limited by the quantity of food provided: They do not make a fest for a few individuals in their own neighborhood, and invite a whole country or state to come, for all things are ready. Neither does GOD. There was no lack of provision in the feast; and had not these persons made the most frivolous excuses, they would not only have been welcome, but joyfully received at the table, as the partakers of all the rich provisions prepared by the Maker of the feast. And this is precisely the case with sinners. A rich and costly feast is prepared, or in other words, JESUS has made full satisfaction to law and justice; he has provided everything which the sinner needs, and he is affectionately urged to the feast; but he makes this most frivolous excuses, and will not come.

Now, we argue, that if the provisions, that is, if the atonement be limited, then must the invitations be just as limited; otherwise, your superstructure will be larger than your foundation, and the building will

be in danger of falling. The atonement is the foundation, and the invitations the superstructure; the one is as long as the other, as broad as the other, and as high as the other. JESUS CHRIST has given himself a ransom for all, and for this very reason, we are to pray for all and invite all to come. He has tasted death for every man, and therefore it is the duty of every man to repent and believe in him. "He is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." The reader would do well here to remember that the specialty is here resolved into the application, and not into the atonement.

But it may be asked, did not JESUS CHRIST specially die for the Elect, and just die for the rest of mankind, in such a sense as to procure for them the temporal blessing of this life, and allow them Gospel privileges while in the world? To this I answer; It must be absurd to suppose, that JESUS CHRIST would have a greater regard to the poor perishing bodies of sinners, than to their immortal souls; that he would suffer on the cross, to procure for them blessings in this life, and refuse to suffer to procure for them blessing in a never ending eternity. Besides, this is viewing the atonement in light of the debt, the absurdity of which view has already been shown.

That the Spirit of GOD operates on the hearts of all men is readily proven from the word of GOD. Take the following plain texts; Genesis 6:3 "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Proverbs 29:1 "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." John 16:8 "And when he (the Spirit) is come, he will reprove (or convince) the world of sin and of righteousness, and of Judgment" Many other plain texts might be quoted, but these are sufficient.

Now, I ask, if the limited scheme be correct, whence the necessity of the striving of the Spirit? Why should the world be convinced of sin, if there is no atonement by which it may be taken; and especially of the sin of unbelief, for the SAVIOUR says, they shall be reprov'd of sin because they believe not on him? Why of righteousness, unless it be that they should discover the insufficiency of their own, and the absolute necessity of the righteousness which is by faith in the atoning merits of the Son of God? And why of Judgment, unless it be that they should fly to JESUS as the only refuge from the impending storm which will burst with fury upon the heads of all unbelievers, in the awful day of accounts?

The Gospel is an offer of mercy to all who hear it. But I know this is denied—And of such objectors I would ask, can men reject that which was never offered them? Common sense says they cannot. Then it will be acknowledged that men do reject the Gospel. The Pharisees rejected the counsel of GOD against themselves. The Jews rejected the Gospel, and the Apostles turned to the Gentiles. Now from the fact that mercy is offered to them who reject it, and that GOD calls and men refuse, the fullness of the atonement is plainly inferred; for if the limited scheme were true, then the Spirit of GOD would operate upon the hearts of none but the Elect, nor would any others be called. But God calls, and men refuse—See Proverbs 1:24-26 "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh."

Here notice, that when calamity and fear shall come upon the wicked, if he should ask the reason why GOD is indifferent to his distress, he will be told, that it is because GOD called and he refused to obey the call, and not because there was no provision in the Gospel for him. And in the 32nd verse of the same chapter, it is impracticably stated that, "The turning away of the simple shall slay them." They are not condemned because they were not atoned for, but because they turned away from the Lord, and rejected the atonement.

All sinners are under obligation to obey the Gospel, and because they obey not the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, he will be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them. But if the limited atonement were correct, they would be under no obligation to obey the Gospel. In fact, for them there would be no Gospel, and should they dare believe that JESUS died to save them, they would believe a lie.

Their unbelief, according to this system, should be accounted to them for righteousness, just as much as the faith of the Elect; For if they have believed that JESUS did not die for them, they have believed the truth. They have not rejected the SAVIOUR, for he has never been offered to them. The Saviour says, John 3:18 "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God." But this system says, ye are condemned already, because no atonement has been made for you. I choose to believe the SAVIOUR in preference to any human theory. Our LORD JESUS CHRIST declares, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment, than for the Jews; that the men of Nineveh shall rise with them in the day of judgment and condemn them, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here.

Now, according to the limited scheme, I cannot see how the punishment of the Jews can be more aggravated than that of the Sodomites; for as before stated, according to that system, they have not rejected the Gospel, as for them there was no provision; and they acted just as we might have expected them to act; and indeed just as they were obliged to act. Nor could the men of Nineveh condemn them; for as they were not atoned for, they could not repent. But as their punishment will be more aggravated than that of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and as the men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment and condemn them; it must be because they lived under a brighter display of light, and rejected offered money, while the Ninevites believed the preaching of Jonas with far less testimony than was afforded to them, to prove the truth of the Mission of the Son of GOD and his holy Apostles. And the SAVIOUR positively declares that if the mighty works which were done amongst the Jews, had been done amongst the inhabitants of these devoted cities they would have repented, and have remained unto this day. It appears then, from these and many other plain passages of the Scriptures of truth, that rejecting the Gospel is a very great sin, and that men will not only be punished for disobedience to the law of GOD, but also for refusing to obey the Gospel of the Son of GOD. We come, therefore at once to the conclusion that there was abundant provision in the LORD JESUS CHRIST—that it was offered to them freely, but they most freely rejected it; and hence, it is right that they should suffer more aggravated punishment than those who never enjoyed such light.

The Apostle Paul, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, argues the universality, or fullness of the atonement, from the universality of moral depravity, or death—2 Corinthians 5:14, 15 "For the love of CHRIST constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto them themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." If, therefore, it be true that CHRIST died for all; it is equally true that all were dead; and if it be true that all were dead; it is equally true that CHRIST died for all. In Romans 11:32 the Apostle says: "For God had concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon them all;" that is, all the Jews and all the Gentiles are concluded in unbelief, that GOD might have mercy upon all the Jews and all the Gentiles, who will believe on the SON OF GOD.

I remember, I have often heard an argument of this kind used by those who favor the limited scheme, viz: had there not been a covenant entered into between the Father and the Son, before the fall of man,

Justice could not have rested or slumbered a moment, but man must have been sentenced instantly down to hell, like fallen angels; otherwise justice would have suffered just so long as the execution was delayed. I shall not object to the argument; but if it be a good one, I beg leave to ask them, if the justice of GOD does not equally suffer, while he permits those to live for whom, (according to their scheme,) no atonement has been made, and who, of course, were not included in that covenant? There appears to be just as much propriety in bearing with fallen angels as with them. No more has been for them than for fallen angels; and if GOD, without a sacrifice, bears with the non-Elect, he might, without a sacrifice, bear with the fallen angels. If they should say that GOD lets them live and keeps them out of hell, for the sake of the Elect, who are in their loins; I would further ask—Is it reasonable, or does it comport with the character of a holy, just and merciful GOD, to suppose that he would permit a large portion of the human family to live a number of years in this world, for no purpose but that they might fill up the measure of their iniquity, and so render their punishment more intolerable in hell, than if they had died in infancy, before they had committed actual crimes, and when they would only have suffered because they happened not to be Elected?—But as these questions cannot be answered without destroying their limited plan, they will be silent. But Peter, having less regard to their favorite limited scheme, will tell them plainly, “God is long-suffering to sinners, because he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”—And thus he brings their limited scheme to the ground, and the full atonement is proven beyond a possibility of doubt.

For my own part, I have no hesitancy in believing, that were it not for the atonement and intercession of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the wrath of GOD would be poured out immediately upon every transgressor, as it is upon fallen angels, and their final destiny would at once be fixed, without hope of mercy. But blessed to GOD, while fallen angels are sentenced down to hell, there to remain in hopeless despair unto the Judgment of the great day—no kind messenger ever to visit those dark domains of horror, and call on them to repent; because JESUS CHRIST took not on him the nature of angels, and consequently, for them there is no mercy—He has taken human nature, and in that nature died for the human family; he has risen from the dead, and is now at the right hand of the FATHER, making intercession for the human family, and through his intercession they are spared, and kept out of hell!

But perhaps it will be said, that many sinners were dead and in hell before the SAVIOUR died. Surely you will not say that he died for them in the same sense that he died for others? To this I would reply—there were many of the Saints also, who were dead and in heaven before he died, and how did they get there? You are obliged to say, through the atoning merits of the SON OF GOD, though he had not yet actually made the atonement. They by faith, looked forward to that great sacrifice which was to be made by the Son of GOD for sin, and relied wholly on the righteousness of the Son of God for sin, and relied wholly on the righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The Apostle Paul says that the Gospel was preached unto Abraham, and Abraham believed GOD, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Now, is it more unreasonable to believe that those who were dead and in hell before the death of the SAVIOUR, had mercy offered them, and that they were required to rely on the sacrifice which was to be made by the Son of GOD, than that those who dead and in heaven, did not rely on that sacrifice, and were saved from sin and hell by it? I think not. But we prove that mercy was offered through the atonement, even to the sinners before the flood.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness; not self-righteousness, nor legal righteousness, but the righteousness of faith, as will plainly appear by reference to Hebrews 11:7 “By faith Noah, being warned of GOD of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark, to the saving of righteousness

which is by faith.” GOD offered mercy to the Antediluvians, through the preaching of Noah; he was long suffering to them, bearing with them one hundred and twenty years; his Spirit strove with them. And the Apostle Peter informs us, that it was the same Spirit which quickened the dead body of the SAVIOUR. See 1 Peter 2:18-20: “For CHRIST also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to GOD, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached to the Spirits in prison, which some time were disobedient, when once the long suffering of GOD waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.” Now what can be plainer?—GOD was long suffering to the Antediluvians, not willing that they should perish, but that they should come to repentance and be saved; he sends his Spirit to strive with them, and Noah preaches to them 120 years; but they are disobedient to the calls of God; Noah warns them of the approaching deluge, and urges them to forsake their sins, to repent and believe on the Son of God: The Spirit convinces them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, (as he does sinners in this day.) but they reject that mercy which is offered to them, through the atonement to be made by the Lamb of God, who was considered as a Lamb already slain; but they abuse his long suffering, and force their passage to the flames. Like sinners in this day, they were often reprov'd, but they hardened their necks, and were suddenly destroyed; and that without remedy. Thus we may see (if we do not willfully shut our eyes to the truth, and, to prop our favorite limited scheme, deny it) that the people before the flood, as well as those after it, did not perish for lack of a fullness in the atonement, but because they rejected that atonement.

I know that many of my Brethren think it a dreadful heresy to say there are sinners in hell for whom Christ died; and if we were to view the atonement in the light of debt, viz: That Jesus Christ must suffer a certain quantity of punishment for each particular sin, such an expression might be considered heretical; but when it is remembered that the atonement was made in view to the law, there is nothing shocking, no, nor unscriptural in the assertion.

The Apostle Peter speaks of certain characters, who were bought, and yet destroyed—See 2 Peter 2:1 “But there were false Prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” This text is plain, and without a forced construction, which is unwarrantable, either from the Rules of the language or the Scriptures of truth, cannot be misunderstood. It means what it says, that these characters, like the rest of mankind, were bought by the blood of the Son of God, but “They trampled him under their feet, and counted his blood an unholy thing;” that is, they denied him, they refused to believe on him, like many in this day, and were justly destroyed.

The fullness of the atonement is very clearly proven from our Lord’s declaration to the Jews, John 5:40 “And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” This evidently implied, that if ye will come to me, ye shall have life, but according to the limited scheme, they might have retorted, “If we were to come to thee, we could not have life, for thou hast no life to give, to any but the Elect; & this would have been to give the Saviour the lie; so in order to stop every mouth who dare dispute his fullness, and power to give life to all who would come, he further says, John 6:51 “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” These words are conclusive, and out to set the matter forever at rest. There is life in Jesus Christ for all the world, if they will come unto him.

But the fullness of the atonement is also implied in all the invitations of the Gospel. We will mention a few. Isaiah 55:1 “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters” But it will be said this is only to the sinner that hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is not a general invitation, but if you will read the 2nd verse, you will readily discover, that the invitation is to those who are spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which does not satisfy; that is, they are thirsting after the riches, honors, and pleasures of the world, which can never feed or satisfy the immortal soul, and hence they are invited in the close of the same verse, to hearken diligently unto the Lord, to eat that which is good, and to let their soul delight itself in fatness.” It is therefore clear, that this invitation is to careless sinners; whose hearts are wholly set on the world. And just such characters are also addressed in the 6th and 7th verses of the same chapter— “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteousness of his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

But we will mention one more text, from whence the fullness of the atonement is proven without a possibility of mistake, Revelation 22:17— “And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” To this it will be objected, that men by nature will not come. I know this as well as you; but their unwillingness has nothing to do with the fullness of the atonement, or the extent of the invitation, no more than the excuses of those bidden to the supper, had to do with the provisions of that supper. The term whosoever, is an unlimited term, and must mean just what it says; and that is, no matter who of all Adam’s family is willing to come, he is welcome to come and take of the water of life freely; and he will find no lack, there is a river of it, which is just as full and free as when it first began to flow, and though all Adam’s family were to come, they would not drink it dry, nor even diminish it; for we can say to the worst of sinners, “Millions of Sinners vile as you, have here found life and peace, Come then, and prove its virtues too, And drink, adore, and bless.”

None will pretend to say, that any willing sinner is sent empty away, and that there is not a fullness in Christ for all, if they will believe it; but if they will not believe it, some suppose there is not a fullness; this is as good as to say there is water enough in the river, if you will drink it, but if you will not drink it, the river ceases to flow, and there will not be a drop more than what those who do come shall drink up, --Just to state this argument, is to confute it. The fullness of the atonement no more depends upon the number of those who receive an application of it, than the fullness of the river depends upon the number those who drink of its waters. The belief or unbelief of the world, effects not the atonement; it is like a river or a sea, full, whether they believe it or not.

But if men will not believe the word of God, surely they will not dispute his oath. Then read Ezekiel 33:11 “Say unto them, as I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

Now if no provision is made for a part of the human family, it argues that he has no pleasure in the death of that part, since it was just as easy for him to make provision for all, as a part; or in other words, to make a full atonement as a partial one. But as he has sworn, by his own life, that he has no pleasure in their death, and that he has pleasure in their turning from their sins, we are led at once, not only to believe, but to know, that he has made ample provision for every sinner, and sent his spirit to turn them from their evil ways, that they may live.

By virtue of the resurrection of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, there will be a resurrection of the just and unjust. How could this be, if the limited scheme were correct? Our SAVIOUR would have nothing to do with any but the Elect.—the non-Elect could not rise by virtue of his resurrection, nor could he be their Judge. Take this as an illustration: There are 100 men in bondage to A. For 10 of those men, B pays a ransom, and sets them at liberty, or rather, over these 10 men, B assumes the government and has right to judge them, and acquit or condemn them according to justice; but over the other 90 he has no control, he paid no ransom for them; and he would therefore have nothing to do with them. They are still accountable to A. and must be judged only by him. I argue, that if CHRIST has died for a part, and only a part of the human family, that part, and only that part, will be judged by him; having, paid no ransom for the rest, they are under no obligation to him; they have not offended against him as MEDIATOR, nor can he condemn them. But because I read that “we must all appear at the judgment seat of CHRIST, and give an account for the deeds done in the body,” I fairly infer, that he has paid the ransom price for all, has justly assumed the government of the world, and will judge the world in righteousness.

From all these and many other plain texts in the Bible the atonement appears in its extent to be unlimited, and there is no specialty in it.

But the objector will say, does not CHRIST himself say, “I lay down my life for the sheep?” Is not this a specialty in the atonement? To this and all similar expressions, I would just reply, that if he died for the world, and if the sheep constitute a part of the world, then of course he died for the sheep.

But the objector will say, if CHRIST died for the world, and any part of the world is finally lost so much of his blood as was shed for that part must have been spilt in vain. This objection however vanishes at once, when it is remembered, that the atonement was made in view to the law, and is not to be considered in the light of debt. It may be further asked; do you not deny the doctrine of sin being imputed to our LORD JESUS CHRIST? And if you do, you must also deny the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to the believer. To this I answer—I have already said; that JESUS CHRIST was a sin-offering; and I now say, that every believer views the SAVIOUR in this light, as his sin-offering; and that he, by faith, is enabled to appropriate the righteous merits of the Saviour to himself, by which he is justified before GOD.

But it may be objected, that this view of the atonement is at war with the doctrine of personal Election. By no means. If I have understood Election, it means the sovereign right of GOD to choose whom he will. Now then, we would have the reader carefully remember a weighty truth in the parable of the supper; they all with one consent began to make excuse. And such is the enormity of the human heart, it will not submit to GOD’s government and grace. All men do most freely, most willingly reject the Gospel, and forever will, until the enmity of their heart is slain, and their stubborn wills subdued by sovereign grace. This application of the grace of GOD is made by him to whom he will; his people are made willing in the day of his power, and this is Election. But I would here remark, that there is nothing in all this which destroys the moral agency or accountability of man; nor is there anything in Bible Election, which opposes a barrier to the coming sinner, or hinders any, or all from coming.

This view of the atonement does not favor the doctrine of universal redemption; for the atonement and redemption are just as different as cause and effect; the atonement is the cause, and redemption is the effect; or the atonement is the ransom price, and redemption is the deliverance from bondage. None will be saved but those to whom an application of the atonement is made.

This view of the atonement brings every sinner under the strongest obligation to repent and believe; it leaves the sinner, (as GOD will leave him the day of Judgment) without excuse, since there is no obstacle in the way of his salvation, but his simple unwillingness to be saved. It authorizes the Minister to preach the Gospel to every creature; to say, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And while it ascribes all the glory of salvation to sovereign grace alone, it takes away every subterfuge from the sinner, and assures him, that if he perish, he will be his own destroyer; if he starve, it is in the midst of plenty; it is in a word, because he rejects the Gospel of the Son of GOD. Then be entreated, O sinner, to stop, and no longer persist in a course of rebellion against GOD, but like the prodigal, return and partake of the rich provisions of the Gospel, that angels may rejoice at your return, and that your souls may be made happy forever. But sinner, if you reject the offered mercy, if you despise the Gospel of the SON of God, if you trample upon him, and count his blood an unholy thing; if in despite of all the light which GOD has afforded you, you force your passage to the flame, then prepare to sink far lower in hell than the poor heathens, whom you now hold in contempt; and know assuredly, that in the day of Judgment, GOD's throne will be clear, while you will acknowledge that you have been your own destroyer, and that your damnation is just, because you have rejected offered mercy; and while you linger in eternal pain, the remembrance of all the Gospel sermons which you have slighted; the Godly admonitions of your pious parents or friends, to which you have turned a deaf ear, and the strivings of the Spirit, which you have quenched, with all your broken vows to GOD, will give intolerable stings to the worm that never dies. O! Rocks hide me, mountains cover me, and do not permit me to see the face of those pious friends who will now be witnesses against me, and that JESUS, who once stretched out to me an arm of mercy, but who now has turned a roaring Lion, will be your fruitless cry. Once more, Oh! Sinner, I entreat you to fly to the outstretched arms of a bleeding SAVIOUR, who is kindly inviting you to come and be saved from that dreadful storm of wrath which will then be poured out forever upon sinners that slight the invitations of the Gospel!

By Anthony Thames on Saturday, March 30, 2013 at 8:57am Old Georgia Free Will Baptist,  
during the split from the "Regular" Baptists. View of Atonement

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