

I.

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Brother Campbell—

Last evening I returned from Missouri, after an absence from home of five weeks. I see in your Harbinger for February last, a friendly invitation to me to correspond with you on a number of religious subjects, which you have named. The same thing you communicated to me privately some weeks before. I then answered you that I would take the proposal by you under consideration; but suggested to you my fears that, though we might discuss those points in a perfect Christian spirit, yet the minds of the people might be withdrawn from humble piety and devotion, to strife, contention, and division. My friends persuade me that such fears will never be realized. I have consented to comply with your invitation, though I am conscious that years have despoiled me of much of that vigor and strength of mind I may have once possessed.

All the subjects you have proposed are but so many fractions of one common denominator, which I shall call the atonement. To this they all refer.

You “affectionately solicit from me an essay on sin, and sin-offerings, scripturally setting forth the import of these terms in sacred writ.”

1st. With respect to sin. “Sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4. “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17. From these two texts it is plain that sins are of two classes—sins of commission, and sins of omission; into which two classes, it is believed, that all are resolvable. To treat of the tendency, and evil effects, and of the awful

consequences of sin, is another subject, to which reference may hereafter be made in the progress of these numbers.

2dly. Your second inquiry is respecting sin-offerings. With regard to the victims offered for sin, as lambs, bullocks, goats, and the great antitype, the Lamb of God, there can be but one sentiment in the Christian world—and that these victims for sin were offered to God, admits of no doubt. But the purpose, why these offerings were made to God for sin, has been, and yet is variously set forth by good, but erring men. Their discrepant, jarring systems on this subject, has long been the fruitful soil of discord, strife, and division.

Doctor A. Clark, on Lev. 1 describes the purpose, end, or design of sacrifices or offerings for sin, thus: “By the imposition of hands, the person bringing the victim acknowledged, 1st. The sacrifice as his own. 2d. That he offered it as an atonement for his sins. 3d. That he was worthy of death, because he had sinned, having forfeited his life by breaking the law. 4th. That he entreated God to accept the life of the innocent animal in place of his own. 5th. And, all this to be done profitably, must have respect to Him whose life in the fulness of time, should be made a sacrifice for sin.” From the 3d, 4th, and 5th items of this paragraph I must dissent, for the want of evidence, and because they stand in direct opposition to the sacred scriptures. The law admitted no person worthy of death, or who had forfeited his life by breaking the law, to offer a victim for sin. Sins of ignorance, and ceremonial defilement, only admitted of sacrifice for purification. Therefore the death of the victim could not be in the stead of the death of the offerer, seeing his sin did not require his death. But the Doctor says farther, that the offerer, in order to be profited, must have respect to Him whose life in the fulness of time should be made a sacrifice for sin. I know it is a common opinion that the Israelites under the law always looked through their sacrifices to Christ the Lamb of God, who died on Calvary, without which view they could not be profited.—Paul thought differently: he declared that the veil was on their heart, that they could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. Now the thing abolished is sacrifices, and Christ was the end. Did they see this end in their offerings? Did the Jewish nation believe

that Christ was to die? No: for when he taught them this truth, they said, “We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever.” Christ crucified to the Jews was always a stumbling block, and is to this day to that unhappy people. The disciples of Jesus themselves could not believe that Christ was to die and rise again, till the facts proved the truth.

From these remarks it is evident that the Doctor, and all who think as he does, are mistaken. The design of the legal sacrifices was not to deliver from death, but to purify and cleanse the offerer, and thus make an atonement or reconciliation between him and his God and the congregation—before this purification was effected by sacrifice, he was separated by his sin and uncleanness from the fellowship of the congregation, not being permitted to enter the tabernacle and worship with them there.

This perfectly accords with the inspired views of the great commentator on Moses, Heb. 9:22. “And almost all things by the law are purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission.” One exception of the “all things purged with blood” by the law, is, the person guilty of a sin worthy of death he must die without mercy under two or three witnesses—by the law there is no remission without shedding of blood, and as he is debarred by law from an offering for his sin, if he is forgiven, his forgiveness is not by sacrifice, or shedding of blood. Why does my brother Campbell so confidently assert that “without shedding of blood there never was remission of sin”? Christian System, page 37. Was every moral transgressor under the law, and before the law, cut off by death, unforgiven? Though condemned by law to certain death, could not the penitent offender find mercy and forgiveness by the law of faith, as did Abraham the father of us all, and as did many others recorded in the scriptures?

There are others who view the purpose or design of sin-offerings to be for reconciling God to us; so the Methodist Discipline states, that the death of Christ reconciled the Father to us. As this assertion is destitute of all scripture testimony, and as enlightened reason fails to lend her aid in its support, I pass it by as a relic of unauthorized tradition, probably taken from heathen mythology, or pagan customs. The pagans offered human as well

as brute sacrifices for the purpose of appeasing or reconciling their angry gods to them; but this cannot be the design of divine sacrifices, whether under the Old or New Testament.

I am sorry my brother Campbell has very similar views with those just stated. You say, "Sacrifice atones and reconciles. It propitiates God and reconciles man. It is the cause, and these are its effects on heaven and earth, on God and man." *Christian System*, page 36. The sacrifice of Christ then, in your opinion, has an effect on heaven—on God, to propitiate him to man. "To propitiate is to appease one offended, and to render him favorable." Webster. Do, brother Campbell, point us to the scriptures that say that sacrifices either under the Old or New Testament, were ever designed to propitiate God, or that such an effect was ever produced or effected on him. This, to me, would be more convincing than volumes of speculations and philosophic reasoning from uncertain premises. Indeed, I think my brother has advanced a few steps farther than any other system-maker, when you say that "every sin wounds the affection of our heavenly Father," and that the death of Christ "soothes and delights the wounded love of our kind and benignant heavenly Father." *Christian System*, page 48, 49.

This is a strange speech to me; but if this be the doctrine or language of the Bible, do show it to us. Till then I shall be silent.

Others think that Christ by his death or sacrifice "magnified the law and made it honorable." Isaiah 42:21. Whether this text has any reference to Messiah is very doubtful. The context is against the idea. But admitting that the Messiah is intended, is it said that the law was magnified and made honorable by his sacrifice? Is there one hint of this in the text?—in the Bible? I can clearly see how he magnified the law and made it honorable, in his exposition of it in *Matth. 5*. There he shows how spiritual, how extensive it was, extending from the sinful act to the very fountain of sin in the heart—he made it honorable in submitting to be made under it, and fulfilling every jot and tittle of it. Had it been a bad, dishonorable law, he would not have done it such honor. Did he, as the substitute of sinners, suffer the punishment which the violated law required of sinners in their stead, and thus

pay their debts, that pardon might be granted consistently with the honors of law? By what inspired writer is this taught? I cannot find.

I have only hinted at the different theories current on the subject of sin-offerings, none of which can I receive without better testimony than I have yet seen. This I have done to prepare the way to state my own. For another number I must reserve that exposition. My avocations are many, and therefore I may be prevented from sending my communications regularly. Try to exercise patience with me. I have introduced a few sentiments of yours from your Christian System, in order that you may, if possible, establish them by plain scripture, and not in the wisdom of words. If they be found true, I shall joyfully receive them. May the Lord direct your mind and pen to the edification of the saints!

B. W. STONE

* * *

BROTHER STONE,

Dear Sir—I most cordially concur in opinion with those brethren who have persuaded you that your fears were groundless, or would “never be realized,” concerning the discussion of those points which you called for, under date of your letter of November 11, 1839, published page 21st of the current volume. The discussion of any of the grand elementary principles of the remedial or evangelical economy, “in a truly Christian spirit,” never can, in my judgment, “withdraw the minds of the people from humble piety and devotion to strife, contention, and division.” Shall those who love truth and peace fear that this love of peace and of truth, if fully developed, will issue in strife or impiety!

When in your kind epistle of November 11th, you asked me for my definition of a Unitarian, and assured me that you denied the name, though often applied to yourself, and urged me to say whether I “designed to co-operate with Trinitarians against Unitarians,” &c. I felt it my duty to make the proposition alluded

to in your letter of March 30th. I have done so in the full persuasion that the contemplated discussion is not only expedient, but necessary, and that it can be so managed as to disabuse the public mind of injurious prejudices both against you and myself. You have long disavowed Unitarianism, and I have also disavowed Trinitarianism and every other sectarianism in the land; and therefore that morbid state of feeling elicited by these partizan wars about the polemical abstrusities of metaphysical abstractions, which, in its excessive irritability, forbids the scriptural investigation of the great points which have been so often distorted and mangled on the racks and wheels of party discord and proscription, should have no abiding in our minds, much less prohibit a scriptural examination of the facts, and precepts, and promises, on which these unhallowed theories have been reared.

The fear of irritating these old sectarian sores has, I verily opine, kept the minds of many brethren and of the public in suspense, if not in comparative darkness, upon the greatest questions in this earthly world. There is no subject so vital to man as the death of Christ.—The designs of his death are interwoven with all the designs of the universe, and are replete with the temporal, spiritual, and eternal destinies of man. Christ crucified is the most transcendent mystery in the moral dominions of God. Its power is the mainspring of all heavenly impulses, and it is itself the consummation of all divine wisdom and prudence. As all earthly waters arise from the ocean and descend to it, so the deep and the high counsels of God issue in this mysterious fact and emanate from it.

The subjects to which I invited your attention, my venerable brother—viz. “Sin, Sin-offerings, Sacrifice for Sin, Atonement,” &c. you very justly regard as terminating in what is usually called the atonement, or as all summed up in it. True, the doctrine of what is usually called “the atonement” is made to include the whole; but I designed no trite nor common-place examination of this subject, as it issues from the fiery furnace of sectarian zeal and bigoted devotion. I wish to explore the scriptural roots and grounds, the remote and the immediate connexions, bearings, and designs of “the blood of the New Institution.”—I am glad,

therefore, that you have so promptly advanced to the subject, and I most sincerely supplicate the FATHER OF LIGHTS to subdue our spirits and to imbue them with the holy spirit of the gospel of Christ; that, with all piety, benevolence, Christian meekness and mildness, we may examine this great subject—so necessary to right conceptions of God, of Christ, and of ourselves.

You properly begin with sin. Its existence, nature, and tendencies gave birth to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Wrong conceptions of this thing necessarily cast their penumbra over the Bible, and obscure all its golden treasures. I object not to your definition of sin, so far as it goes. You give us the word of the Lord for sin, as a violation of a law, and a neglect of it—commission of wrong, and omission of right. Your quotations are apposite and striking. I will only add a definition in fact. There are definitions by words, and definitions by facts. Sin is the cause of death; or “the wages of sin is death,” is verbal; but when we see Satan lose heaven, Adam lose Eden, and millions of infants lose life, we have a definition in fact, that death follows sin as the shadow follows the substance standing in light. Sin, then, is a mortal thing. Death is in it. “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” I emphasize on this, because of its bearings upon all bloody sacrifices—upon sin-offerings—upon the havoc of life under the Patriarchal and Jewish institutions.

2d. On sin-offerings as presented to God, all cordially harmonize; but, you say, not so on “the purpose” of them. You then review Doctor Adam Clark, and dissent from his conclusions. He is public property, and you have a right to lay on your warrant. I shall not dispute your right. You pronounce three of his conclusions, in your opinion, as in direct opposition to the sacred scriptures. Of course his friends will pronounce your conclusions in these three points, as, in their opinion, in direct opposition to the sacred scriptures; and thence we have Dr. Adam Clark and Dr. B. W. Stone as affirmative and negative; and their friends all take their station accordingly.

But you are led to express some important conclusions which involve some great scriptural facts, of which I am not so sure. These are:—

1. “Sins of ignorance and ceremonial defilement only admitted of sacrifice for purification.” These sins you do not consider as deserving of death; and therefore you conclude that “the death of the victim could not be instead of the death of the offerer”—“seeing,” you add, “his sin did not require his death.” Your view, then, is, that the law made no provision for any sins but those of ignorance or legal defilement—that these were not mortal sins; and consequently the sin-offerings of the law saved no one from death. Nay, you assert that “the law admitted no person worthy of death, or who had forfeited his life by breaking the law to offer a victim for sin.” These are very important propositions, and deeply penetrate the whole subject of sin-offerings.— If legal atonement or expiation was made only for sins of ignorance or legal defilement, then they could not be typical of the death of Christ, else the death of Christ expiates only sins of ignorance. I must then conclude my brother Stone has expressed himself obscurely, or I have misconceived his meaning; for certainly he admits that the legal sacrifices were types of the true; and that the true sacrifice expiates more than sins of ignorance: for surely brother Stone believes that all manner of sins, excepting one, may be forgiven, because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. There is a radical mistake here: I trust it is in my misconception of your meaning.

But is it a fact that the legal sacrifices and offerings expiate sins of ignorance only? Read Leviticus 6:1. “If a soul sin and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep, or in trade, or in a thing taken away by violence, or has deceived his neighbor, or has found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely in any of all these things that a man doeth sinning therein, then it shall be because he has sinned and is guilty; he shall make restitution, add one-fifth to it, and bring his offering to the priest; and the priest shall make an atonement [an expiation] for him; and it shall be forgiven him for any thing that he has done in trespassing therein.” Do you call these “sins of ignorance or legal

impurities?” or do you consider that there was no expiation or atonement made for them? I have been in error for many years if these were sins of ignorance or legal impurities, or if the law had no sin-offerings but for such sins as you have enumerated. I agree with you in differing in some points from Dr. Clark; but I cannot go quite so far as you go in these three items. But I have to do with Moses and Paul, and not with our erudite Doctors living or dead.

There is but one character for whom the law and for whom the gospel makes no purifying sacrifice. This is the man who presumptuously despised Moses and the Holy Spirit, or who renounces either dispensation. One of us may have mistaken this case. You say, “The law admitted no person worthy of death, or who had forfeited his life by breaking the law, to offer a victim for sin.” You might have said, “The gospel admits no person who, under it, has forfeited his life by despising or renouncing it, to any forgiveness through Christ’s sacrifice;” for to such Paul says, “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin;” but the mistake, as it appears to me, consists in making out of a single case, or class of character, a general law against wilful transgressors. Hence you conclude that wilful transgressors of law, or those who sinned wittingly under the law, could find no sin-offering. This would, indeed, be a complete annihilation of the typical character of all the Jewish sin-offerings; and would, so far as it goes, exclude the hope of forgiveness through the antitypical sin-offering every person who had sinned wittingly or wilfully in any matter against God or man. I especially request your views of Lev. 6:1-7., and more especially I call your attention to the great annual and national expiation minutely detailed Lev. 16. In this chapter we are told most unequivocally that when the priest laid his hands upon the scape-goat he was to confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the scape-goat; and again, the goat shall bear upon him “all their iniquities;” and again, “the priest shall make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins.” “This shall be an everlasting statute to you to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year.” But I will not exhaust this subject at one effort, especially as I may have misunderstood you. Your

allusions to, the “Christian System,” and quotations therefrom, shall all be considered in due time. I shall be exceedingly thankful to you, my aged and venerable brother, to examine that work with the utmost care, and to point out to me any ambiguous or erroneous expressions in it, as I may probably soon be called upon to stereotype it. The demand for it is very great, and I have had the most flattering intimations of its usefulness to the public from numerous and eminent quarters of the professing world.¹

Give me leave to add, that I concur most sincerely with you in your objections to the Methodistic notion of sacrifices reconciling God to us. There must be some great obscurity in my style if you could infer from any thing I have ever written, that I entertain such an idea. When I speak of sacrifice as propitiating or pacifying the Divine Father, (a scriptural idea truly,) I intend no more, as I have explained myself, than opening a way in which his favor might shine forth. The opening of a vent for water to flow is making it to flow: so the opening a way for God to be propitious, is making him propitious, in all propriety of language—as appears to yours, most sincerely and affectionately,

A. CAMPBELL

¹ An involuntary misquotation, and consequent misrepresentation of my views, appears in one of your principal quotations from page 49. You put a clause in page 48 with one in page 49, and startled me no little, as no doubt you will have done every other reader. You make me say that “the death of Christ soothes and delights the wounded love of our kind and benignant heavenly Father. p. 48, 49.” Whereas I say, “The death of Christ in bringing many sons to glory, soothes and delights,” &c. A very different idea truly! You make me say of a subject abstractly, what I say of it only in connexion with its consequences. The difference between these two forms of expression would jeopardize any man’s life in many courts civil and ecclesiastic. I am aware you did not intend such a thing. In none of the three instances in which you have quoted the C. S. am I understood as I intended, or, as I think, my language indicates. This I attribute to your writing so immediately after your return from Missouri, before you had time to weigh the periods from which you quoted.

II.

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In my first essay on sin-offerings I stated that the Christian world were divided on the design, end, or purpose of them. The overwhelming majority of Christians have placed their whole effect on God, on his law and justice, and on his government;—on God, to reconcile and propitiate him to sinners—on his law and justice, to satisfy their penal demands against them, in the person of their substitute on his government, to make it honored and respected in the universe.

Others, while they acknowledge these to be the designs of sin-offerings, yet do not confine their effects on God, his law, and government, but also acknowledge that they are designed to produce a moral effect on man, as to reconcile him to God, to purge and cleanse him from sin.

In my first number I said that I could not believe that sin-offerings were ever designed to produce such effects on God, his law, justice, or government, because it was not so declared in the Bible, and I cannot believe any thing as unerring divine truth but what I find there: if sin-offerings are designed to produce these effects, and this doctrine is taught in the Bible, why do not the advocates of it plainly refer us to the book, chapter and verse where it is taught. Let them not substitute vain philosophy, far-fetched inferences and the wisdom of words for the doctrine of God.

I do not, wish to be understood as denying that such effects are produced on God, his law, and government by sin-offerings, but that I cannot believe them for want of divine evidence; and I might add, because this doctrine seems, to me plainly to

contradict many things taught in the Bible, and to be condemned by matters of fact. But of these hereafter.

I will now endeavor to state my own views of sin-offerings, their end, and design. I agree with all Christians that the great design of sin-offerings is to make an atonement. Though the sin-offering itself may be called the atonement, yet it is so called because it is the means of effecting an atonement or reconciliation. More than thirty-seven years ago I defined atonement to be at-one-ment, or reconciliation. The authorities, then adduced, it is believed, have never been seriously impugned, nor denied. Not long since I have seen the same definition given by high authority, as Calmet's Dictionary, enlarged and edited by Robinson, Theological Professor at Andover. On the word they say—

“We have evidently lost the true import of this word, by our present manner of pronouncing it. When it was customary to pronounce the word one as own (as in the time of our translators) then the word atonement was resolvable into its parts, at-one-ment, or the means of being at-one, i. e. reconciled, united, combined in fellowship. This seems to be precisely its idea, Rom, 5:11—Being (to God) reconciled, or at-one-ed, we shall be saved by his (Christ's) life, by whom we have received the at-one-ment, or means of reconciliation. Here it appears the word atonement does not mean a ransom, price, or purchase paid to the receiver, but a restoration of accord, which is, perhaps, the most correct idea we can affix to the term expiation, or atonement, under the Mosaic law.” See also J. Brown's Dic. Bib. on the word.

In order that we may see clearly the application of this definition of atonement, I will introduce a few propositions from the “Address” long since published.

1st. There did exist, and does exist, and will forever exist a close and intimate union between God and all holy beings.

2d. There did exist a close political union under the law between God and Israel, while Israel continued politically holy and ceremonially clean.

3d. Nothing but sin and uncleanness ever broke this moral or political union between God and his creatures. “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.” Isai. 59:2.

4th. Whatever removes the separation between God and his creatures, restores the union between them.

5th. The blood of beasts, slain in sacrifice under the law, removed the political or ceremonial separation between God and Israel, and restored the union between them.

6th. The blood of Christ under the New Testament removes the moral separation between God and believers, and restores the union between them.

7th. God’s holy nature cannot be in union with man’s unholy nature. 2 Cor. 6:14, 16. But when man is cleansed and washed from sin by the blood of Christ, then, and not till then, are God and man united, reconciled, or at-one-ed.

8. The at-one-ment, reconciliation, or union between God and his creatures, either under the law or under the gospel, never took place before the person or thing defiled was cleansed or purged by the blood of a sin-offering.

9. There is an awful separation between God and the fallen world. Man’s sin and wickedness is the cause. God is holy, just, and good—man is unholy, unjust, and wicked;—God is light—mankind is darkness. How can natures so discordant be united? Either God must change into the temper and spirit of man, or man must change into the temper and spirit of God. The first is impossible; therefore man must be changed or lost from God forever. To effect this very end was the Son of God sent by the Father of mercy, who lived, died, and rose again for our justification. His very ministry was that of reconciliation, (or at-one-ment;) “for God was in, or by, Christ reconciling (at-one-ing) the world unto himself”—“God hath reconciled (at-one-ed) all things unto himself by Jesus Christ”—“We are reconciled (at-one-ed) unto God by the death of his Son.”

From the remarks it will be seen that the primary design of the blood of sin-offerings, both under the Old and the New Testament, is, to purge or cleanse from sin and defilement, whether moral, political, or ceremonial; and the proximate effect is at-one-ment.

The Apostle Paul says, “Almost all things are by the law purged with blood.” Heb. 9:22. Let us inquire what those things were which were purged with blood, how they were purged, and what was the effect of this purging.

1. The altar was one of the things purged with blood. Ezek. 43:18-26. “And he said unto me, These are the ordinances of the altar—thou shalt take of the blood thereof (a young bullock) and put it on the four horns thereof (the altar) and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the borders round about. Thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it; and on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats, without blemish, for a sin-offering; and they shall cleanse the altar as they did cleanse it with the bullock. When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, seven days shalt thou purge the altar, and purify it.” Moses describes the same thing in nearly the same language, Lev. 16:18-20. “And he shall go out unto the altar, and make an atonement for it, and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar round about, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. And when he hath made an end of reconciling the altar,” &c.

Dr. J. Taylor, in his Hebrew Concordance, says, “The word atonement is always in the Old Testament, rendered from some tense, or noun derived from the root *kaphar*, nor is there any Hebrew word we translate atonement, but what comes from that root.”

Now with respect to the case of purging the altar, we have remarked that Moses and Ezekiel were describing the same thing in nearly the same words. The altar was defiled by the uncleanness of the children of Israel. It must be cleansed or purged. How? Ezekiel says, “Thus (by the blood of a bullock) shalt thou cleanse and purge (*kaphar*) it.” Moses says, “He shall

make an atonement (*kaphar*) for it.” Again Ezekiel says, “Seven days shall they purge (*kaphar*) the altar.” Moses says, “Seven days shalt thou make an atonement (*kaphar*) for the altar.” Exodus 29:37. Again, Ezekiel says, “When thou hast made an end of cleansing it (the altar).” Moses says, “When thou hast made an end of reconciling (*kaphar*) the altar.” The effect, then, of this blood was to cleanse, to hallow, to sanctify, and to make the altar most holy; or in the language of Paul, it was to purge the altar. As this effect is described by *kaphar*, frequently translated to make atonement, and to reconcile, we conclude that to make atonement, to reconcile, and to purge, are synonymous, all expressed by, or translated from, the same word *kaphar*.

The word *kaphar*, it is believed, is as frequently translated to purge, or cleanse, as to make atonement. Let the attentive reader turn to the following texts, and where he finds cleanse or purge in those texts, they are so translated from the Hebrew *kaphar*. Num. 25:33; 1 Sam. 3:16; Psalm 65:3, and 89:9; Prov. 16:6; Isai. 6:7, and 22:14, and 27:9, and the texts quoted above.

Would it not be better always to translate the verb *kaphar*, when connected with sin, as the New Testament writers have done, by the Greek word *airo*, with its compounds, which is rendered to purge, to cleanse, to take away sin; than by translating it to make atonement, or to reconcile?

2. Another thing cleansed with blood is a leprous house. Lev. 14:52, 53. “And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird; but he shall let go the living bird, and make an atonement (*kaphar*) for the house; and it shall be clean.” How much more intelligibly would it read, “And purge the house, and it shall be clean?” as the Psalmist, 51:7, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.”

3. The tabernacle of the congregation, the holy place, as well as the altar, were cleansed in the same manner. Lev. 16:16, 19, 20. “And he shall make an atonement (*kaphar*) for the holy place; so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation.”—“And when he hath made an end of reconciling (*kaphar*) the holy place, the

tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar.”—“Thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary. And the priest shall take of the sin-offering, and put it upon the posts of the house: so shall ye reconcile (*kaphar*) the house.” How preferable would be the translation of these texts, to substitute the word *purge*, instead of to make an atonement, or to reconcile. This is Paul’s rendering.

Let the reader examine the following texts, and all doubt will be removed. When he reads in these texts, to make atonement, to reconcile, the Hebrew word is *kaphar*. Lev. 6:30, and 16:27, and 8:15; Ezek. 40:15, 17, 20; Dan. 9:24; Lev. 12:7, 8, and 15:15, 30, and 16:30; Num. 8:21; Lev. 9:7; Lev. 14:19, 20, 21, 29, 31.

4. In these texts it will be seen that the people were also cleansed from their sins and uncleanness by their offerings for sin. Forgiveness always accompanies atonement, or purging, if it be not the same thing. Lev. 4:20. “And the priest shall make an atonement (*kaphar*) for them, and it shall be forgiven them.” See also Lev. 4:26, 31, 35, and 5:10, 13, 16, 18, and 19:22; Num. 15:25, 28. So intimately connected are purging and remission, that they are often expressed by the same word *kaphar*. 2 Chron. 30:18, 19. “The good Lord pardon (*kaphar*) every one of them—though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.” See also Psalm 78:38; Jer. 18:23; Deut. 21:8. “Be merciful (*kaphar*), O Lord, unto thy people—And the blood shall be forgiven (*kaphar*) them.” Deut. 32:43. “He will be merciful (*kaphar*) unto his land and people.” To be merciful unto, means to forgive. Heb. 8:12, and 10:18.

Thus have I shown the design of the sin-offering under the law to be purging or cleansing from sin and uncleanness. When the person or thing is thus purged by the Lord through the means of sacrifice, then is God, his law, and government pleased, or reconciled with the person or thing thus cleansed, without any change in himself, his law, or government, because they were always pleased and satisfied with purity. The whole change has taken place in the person defiled. Now the at-one-ment, or reconciliation, is effected between God and man.

In my next number I will write an essay upon the sin-offering of Christ, our great High Priest.

B. W. STONE

* * *

BROTHER STONE:

My dear Sir—Your second epistle, dated April 10th, one week after the first, treats of the design of sacrifices. Sacrifice could, as a matter of course, reach no farther than the sins for which it was offered. If offered only for one class of sins, it could only in its design reach that class. Much, then, depends on forming a correct estimate of the sins for which it was offered. I showed, as I conceive, in my last, that sins of ignorance and legal uncleanness were not the only sins expiated or purified by the Jewish sacrifices; that all the sins of the whole nation of Israel—all their iniquities and transgressions, were annually taken away by sacrifice.

In your first letter you stated that the design of the legal sacrifices was “not to deliver from death, but to purify and cleanse the offerer.” Do you think that there was legal sanctification without legal salvation in the ancient sacrifices? “A man’s sins might be forgiven through sacrifice, provided they deserved not death; but if they merited death there was no sacrifice for them!” Have you not thought, my dear sir, that this looks somewhat like the Romanist classification of sins into venal and mortal. The venal only were pardoned through sacrifice! The mortal were beyond the saving power of the law. Sins of ignorance, therefore, must be considered in the light of venal offences—not as moral guilt. Lev. 5:17. declares that “if a soul sin and commit any of those things which are forbidden to be done by the commandment of the Lord, though he knew it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.” Follows it not, then, that if any of the things forbidden in the commandments of the Lord incurred death, though done ignorantly, the appointed sacrifice obtained forgiveness or release from that penalty? Even in the case of Job’s friends, before the law was given, sacrifice saved

from the wrath of God. The Lord said to Eliphaz, “My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends: therefore, take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job will pray for you: for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly.” They did as commanded, and escaped.

In the case of one only legally polluted by the contact of a dead person, presuming to come into the congregation, death was to be inflicted; but if he had the ashes of the red heifer mingled with water sprinkled upon him, he might, without danger of death, enter the congregation at the time appointed. A still stronger proof that there was atonement in the law saving men from temporal death, is found in Numbers 16:48. “And the Lord spake to Moses, saying, Get you up from this congregation that I may consume them in a moment; and they fell upon their faces. And Moses said to Aaron, Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly and make an atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord: the plague is begun. And they made an atonement for the people, and he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.” The sequel may show the importance I attach to establishing the fact that the atonements of the law did save men from the penalties of that law, even from death, excepting in the single case of a presumptuous violation of the covenant or renunciation of it. And under the Christian economy the sacrifice of Christ extends not as an atonement to any that despise or renounce Christ.

But the Divine explanation of the reason why the Most High commanded blood to be used upon the altar, appears to my mind to banish all ambiguity both from the style of the Mosaic institute and from the Christian mind on the whole subject of atonement as taught both in the law and gospel. Sin is the forfeiture of life; or, what is the same thing, divinely expressed, “death is the wages of sin”—“the soul that sins must die.” Now, says God, “I have given you blood upon my altar to make an atonement for your souls; because THE LIFE is in the blood”—for your life I accept blood, which is the life of the victim. I accept its life instead of yours. To quote his own words—“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 MAKES AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL.” Again he adds, “Blood is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life of it.” Levit. 17:11-14.

If I understand your second letter, you and I agree that atonement is but the means of reconciliation; that atonement is the cause, and reconciliation the effect, though you are not so clear upon the subject as I could wish; but, perhaps, on a fuller explanation of the subject, we may perfectly harmonize on this great topic. I, like you, have all my life, divided the word atonement into three syllables—at-one-ment. But I do not on that account exactly understand you when you make it mean simply reconciliation. At-one-ment is the making, or that which makes at one, those who were not one; and reconciliation is made one. Figuratively we often put the effect for the cause, and the cause for the effect; but when we discuss a subject for the sake of understanding it we come to the literal and leave the figurative. Therefore the atonement and the reconciliation are just as different as the two Greek words *hilasmos* and *katallagee*—the former means atonement as the cause, and the latter means reconciliation as the effect. While I readily own that either reconciliation or atonement may by a metonymy of the effect for the cause, or of the cause for the effect, be used indiscriminately, originally, literally, and properly, atonement (*hilasmos*) is that which makes one, and reconciliation (*katallagee*) is made one. The one is the cause—the other the effect. If this be doubted, we have a superabundance of evidence to offer. I shall, however, suggest only one fact at present, viz.—that things that cannot be reconciled are said to be atoned—such as the tabernacle, the altar, and their furniture. These are susceptible of atonement, but not of reconciliation, in the legal and proper sense of these words, as any one may see by examining only the book of Leviticus, particularly the 16th chapter.

Purification or expiation is also an effect of atonement, as well as reconciliation. In this sense atonement was made for the altar, the sanctuary, and almost all things are by the law purified by blood.

Propitiation or pacification is also an effect of atonement. So we find it applied to God, Ezek. 16:63. “When I am propitiated (*exhilaskesthai*,² common version, pacified) to you for all that you have done, saith the Lord.” So prayed the publican—“God be propitious to me a sinner.” Hence we find the *hilasmos* twice in the first epistle of John applied to Christ’s blood—the propitiation for our sins. Messiah, as foretold by Daniel, will make propitiation for iniquity.

Do I misconceive my brother Stone when I interpret his views of atonement as excluding the idea of propitiating or pacifying our heavenly Father? I know that he repudiates the idea of effecting a change in God—of changing him from an enemy to a friend. So do I. But still I say God repents, is propitiated, and pacified, and even reconciled to us. But the effects of sacrifice, or atonement, so far as the propitiating of God is contemplated, is more appositely set forth in the Bible than in any other book in the world, in the memorable effect of Noah’s sacrifice upon God himself. Let us, Father Stone, turn over and read it:—“And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake.” “The Lord smelled a sweet savor” not before, but while he sacrificed. Such was the effect of Noah’s (the temporal saviour) sacrifice on God. And, in the same style, that learned Hebrew, our Apostle, has spoken of our Saviour. “Christ,” says he, “has given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.” This is what I mean by propitiating God. This sweet smelling savor is to God. It is a sweet and pleasing odor to him, on account of which he can be propitious to us. When then, you, brother Stone, ask me what I mean by sacrifice atoning or propitiating God, I refer you to the effect produced on him by Noah’s sacrifice, by Christ’s sacrifice—appositely, though pleonastically, expressed by Paul, “for a sweet smelling savor.” Christ’s sacrifice Godward, and not manward, was then for a

² I have quoted from the Septuagint; but, by opening your Hebrew Bible, you will find it in your favorite *kaphar*.

sweet smelling savor—pleasing, propitiating, reconciling God to man.

With all your precision and caution, brother Stone, on this subject, I find you come to my conclusions in my very words: for at the close of your second epistle you say, “Then is God, his law, and government pleased or reconciled with the person or thing thus cleansed.” You then place yourself under the reprobation of your own censure when you ask me, letter first, “Do, brother Campbell, point us to the scriptures that say that sacrifices, either under the Old or New Testament, were ever designed to propitiate God, or that such an effect was ever produced or effected on him.” After this you add, that you think I “have advanced a few steps farther than any other system-maker.” Well, I am glad to be in such good company as that of brother Stone, who concludes with me—then, and not till then, of course—“then is God, his law, and government pleased or reconciled with the person,” &c. &c.

You were, my dear sir, driven into hypercriticism—to being righteous overmuch at the time you wrote your address, by the violence of men of that hard-mouthed age which refused bit, and bridle, and curb; you were driven, if not past Jerusalem, a little beyond the beautiful gate of the Temple. You had men of strong prejudices, and not much biblical science, to contend with; and who were determined to drive with a wooden wedge and mallet the barbarous scholastic jargon of old Nicene trinitarianism down your throat; and, therefore, I do not wonder at your conscientious fastidiousness concerning terms and phrases which they may have misapplied. I have felt a good deal of your embarrassment, and know experimentally many of your difficulties. I appreciate fully your critical display of the use of *kaphar* and its derivatives, and see in all that you have said little or nothing from which to dissent. But you strangely in all this seem to overlook the very point in discussion, and which you ultimately have to concede, that sacrifice has an effect upon God. You appear to deny this in the commencement, but you cannot but admit it in the conclusion.

Now methinks the matter can be greatly simplified thus:— Sacrifice is atonement or propitiation as respects God; purification as respects sin; reconciliation as respects the human heart; justification as respects the sinner’s conscience, and redemption as respects his person from all the penal consequences of sin. Atonement is, therefore, a grand cause; of which the prominent effects are, propitiation as respects God; purification as respects sin; reconciliation as respects the sinner; justification as respects his guilt; sanctification as respects his pollution, and redemption as respects his actual personal deliverance from sin in all its consequences. You seem, my dear sir, to labor on one point, as though it were with you a great difficulty. You seem desirous to make sacrifice affect only man. You have no doubt been horrified at some of the representations like that quoted from the Methodistic Discipline about Christ’s reconciling God to man. The more intelligent of that community believe with you that God the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world from his own benevolence, and that the atonement was in the divine nature and judgment necessary to justify God in justifying ungodly men—“that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” It propitiated God in no other way than as it opened a just and honorable way for his grace to be exercised, or as it gave him a justifiable reason to be propitious. No intelligent professor of the faith imagines that God was incorrigible, cruel, antagonistic, full of vengeance, and inimical to fallen man; and that his Son our Lord was more compassionate and merciful, and came to quench the fire of his wrath, to placate his ire. Such Pagan notions are neither the faith nor the opinion of any of those denominated evangelical. A few ultras of former days may have so reasoned; but such spirits are too antique for the nineteenth century.

Your own views of sin-offerings, as detailed in your 2d epistle, are clearly expressed. You say, “The great design of sin-offering is to make atonement.” But you make atonement only equivalent to reconciliation. But it means more in the Bible than the reconciliation of a sinner to God, therefore, until you more fully explain yourself, I object to your definition as defective. The design of sin-offerings is, indeed, to make reconciliation by making a propitiation for our sins, and by making it both just and

merciful on the part of God to forgive us. But I wait your explanation of the various items on which I have commented. As I see you have sometimes misconceived me, it is possible I may have misunderstood you. Meanwhile I remain, as ever, yours in the kingdom of the Messiah,

A. CAMPBELL

This is a sample of the material contained in
Atonement: An Exchange in the Millennial Harbinger (1840-1841)
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