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14 Seth Erlandsson, "Is there Ever Biblical Research Without Presuppositions?" *Themelios,* 7 (1978): 24.
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Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 1/1 (1990): 57-89.

TOWARD UNDERSTANDING THE ATONEMENT

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Karl Runia once observed, "To write a book on the subject of the Atonement is a hazardous enterprise, to write an article is even more hazardous."[1] This is due to several reasons,[2] including the fact that the atonement is unfathomable in this life,[3] or in eternity. For, as Ellen G. White has noted,

> The mysteries of redemption, embracing Christ's divine-human character, His incarnation, His atonement for sin, could employ the pens and the highest mental powers of the wisest men from now until Christ shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory. But though these men should seek with all their power to give a representation of Christ and His work, the representation would fall far short of the reality. . . . The theme of redemption will employ the minds and tongues of the redeemed through everlasting ages.[4]

Theories of the atonement abound. However, the Christian church has never taken an official stand on the atonement as it has on Christology[5] and the Trinity. There is an orthodox position on the person of Christ but not on the work of Christ. As Gerhard Forde notes, "The church in America is sorely split between the children of Anselm (the 'satisfaction theory') and the children of Abelard (the 'moral influence theory')."[6]

Different Perspectives

Athanasius considered Christ's incarnation the key to the atonement, for, he said, what is "unassumed is unredeemed."[7] Some

theologians look to the incarnation as the beginning of the atonement, with the person and work of Jesus contributing to it as well as His death.[8] John Calvin considered Christ's one "office" from the Father to be prophet and king and also priest, His present intercession being vital.[9] Some consider the death and intercession as two aspects of the atonement,[10] and the sending of the Spirit as a vital component.[11] For some "salvation, resides in the total fact of Christ" rather than in being "made to hinge in an exclusive manner on one element, such as his birth or his death."[12] Early Christians focused on the "being" of Christ, the Reformers on the "work" of Christ, and Karl Barth on His being and work together as a double movement within the divine and human natures of Christ. For Barth, atonement included the going into the far country of the divine Son of God so that concurrently there could be a homecoming of humanity within Him.[13] Others have seen Calvary as central to the atonement.[14]

Is this open season? Can we choose at whim, or are there vital matters at stake? Leon Morris warns, "The atonement is the crucial doctrine of the faith. Unless we are right here it matters little, or so it seems to me, what we are like elsewhere."[15] Ellen White has observed, "The atonement of Christ" is "the grand, central theme for consideration."[16] In every educational institution, "the atonement of Christ should be the great substance, the central truth."[17]

Our understanding of the atonement impacts on the rest of our theology, for the atonement is the very heart of theology.[18] It is the center around which all other theological truths cohere. It has to do with the study of God, man, sin, Christ, and salvation. It involves the reason Christ became man and died: did He do so out of a necessity in God or in man? Theologians have battled for theoretical victories while too often losing out experientially. They have argued for a theory of atonement while the "at-one-ment between them" lay in shreds.

In fact, every leading atonement theory has been taken to an extreme. Proponents have been carried away by their own logic. But we must never lose the sense of majesty and mystery involved. God cannot be encapsulated in neat formulas, His actions reduced to mere human terms. Nor should we read our attitudes, purposes, and methods into God's.[19] As H. R. Mackintosh reminds us, "The

wise man will look with suspicion on theories of atonement which are only too complete. . . . If atonement be the act of God, it has in it the unfathomable quality of God Himself."[20]

With this introduction, we will now (1) consider some of the major theories, (2) ask why there are so many, (3) examine two of them, and (4) reflect on the contribution that the historic Adventist theory of the atonement makes to the debate.

Major Theories

In this section we will take up some of the major atonement theories.[21] There are many classifications.[22] We will follow Erickson's arrangement and arguments.

THE SOCINIAN THEORY: ATONEMENT AS EXAMPLE. For Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) and his uncle, Laelius Socinus (1525-1562), Christ's death was merely an extension of His teaching—an example He presented to mankind. The Socinians minimized the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man.

THE MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY: ATONEMENT AS DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S LOVE. For Peter Abelard (1079-1142) the death of Christ provided a moral influence to do right. Christ did not come to die, but He died because He came. Horace Bushnell (1802-1876) and Hastings Rashdall (1858-1924) were later exponents of this view. Again, both the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man were minimized.

THE GOVERNMENTAL THEORY: ATONEMENT AS DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S JUSTICE. For Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), a lawyer, the law was vital, and hence sin, or law-breaking, was taken seriously. This was an advance over the two theories we've looked at so far. Whereas those two theories were relatively subjective in nature (aimed at producing a change in man), the governmental theory was both subjective and objective. Christ's death was seen as satisfying the justice of God (objective) and as a deterrent to prevent man from sinning (subjective). Both the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man were kept in view in this theory.

But because Grotius did not believe punishment could be transferred from one person to another, he said Christ did not suffer man's punishment as his Substitute. Rather, he said, Christ suffered to make punishment unnecessary, because the demonstration

he provided was supposed to turn man from sin—and thereby preserve God's government. Thus, Grotius's view was diametrically opposed to the view of Socinus.

THE RANSOM THEORY: ATONEMENT AS VICTORY OVER FORCES OF EVIL. Gustav Aulen (1879-1978) considered God's self-reconciliation[23] to be the classic view.[24] Before the appearance of Aulen's *Christus Victor,* studies on the atonement usually began with Anselm. Aulen's contribution was to focus on the thousand years before Anselm and to present Christ's victory as the theme running through the writings of such persons as Origen (185-254), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-395), and Augustine (354-430).

After the fall of man, Satan was the usurper-ruler of this world. Origen believed that Satan, not God, demanded Christ's death as a ransom for man. Gregory of Nyssa added to Origen's view, stating that Christ's divinity was hidden behind His human flesh so that, in accepting Christ as a ransom, Satan would be like a fish that swallowed the hook with the bait. Gregory saw no problem in such a deception. Augustine could even liken the cross to a mousetrap with Christ's blood as the bait.

Unlike other theories, this one claimed no effect on God or man but only on Satan. As W. J. Wolf has observed, "Aulen has done a service by recovering one of four distinct patristic insights into the nature of salvation and atonement, but he has seriously distorted the case by stressing the *Christus Victor* theme as the 'dominant' one in both the fathers and the New Testament."[25]

THE SATISFACTION THEORY: ATONEMENT AS COMPENSATION FOR THE FATHER. Anselm (1033-1109), sometime archbishop of Canterbury, lived during the feudal period of British history, a time when the idea of satisfaction was popular. In his *Cur Deus Homo (Why Did God Become Man?)* Anselm denied that any ransom at all was paid to Satan. Both man and the devil belong to God, he said. Christ died to satisfy a principle in God Himself.

Anselm's theory was based on a view of sin as failure to render God His due. Man owed God a debt so great that only God could pay it. But man, not God, owed the debt, so man must pay. Why did God become man? So that as a man He could pay man's debt to God.

Summarizing now the major views we've glanced at so far, the ransom-to-the-devil theory was popular in the early church and for

a thousand years. Anselm brought in a change by stating that satisfaction was paid to God, not to the devil, by the human Jesus. Abelard challenged Anselm, saying that God made the payment on the cross and that He did so to change man. Finally, Aulen reconsidered the first thousand years, claiming that the cross was a victory over the devil rather than a ransom to him.

OTHER THEORIES. We will mention a few other theories in passing, just to give an idea of the variety of views propounded. McCleod Campbell's and R. C. Moberley's vicarious penitence, or vicarious repentance[26] theory has Jesus taking our place at Calvary as a penitent.[27] C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* contains a chapter title reflecting this view:[28] "Representation instead of Substitution."[29]

F. W. Dilliston has conceived of Christ's prayer life as a central focus of the atonement.[30]

Henry Clark sees the atonement as restoring the original "life-movement," or Godward movement, of man. The local Christ became universal through death on the cross.[31]

Theories of divine Fatherhood abound,[32] and Robert K. Johnston has suggested the family-life image as particularly relevant for contemporary society.[33]

The acceptilation theories of Duns Scotus, Hugh Grotius, and Limbarch regard God as accepting the death of Christ for man's sin even in the absence of an equivalency between His death and our sin.

Why So Many Theories?

In Scripture atonement is looked at from a variety of perspectives. These are not contradictory but complementary. In the same way that the four Gospels witness to the same Jesus Christ but make their own statements, the Bible offers many ways of looking at the atonement, with different writers making their own contribution. Indeed, a single author can write about the atonement from numerous viewpoints.

The variety of human images used to express the divine truth of atonement give insight into the depths involved and should caution us against any simplistic conclusion. If Scripture uses many images, each one has a function to serve in expressing a dimension

of the atonement that would be lost if it were not included. Within space limitations we will now look at some of these images.

Biblical Images for Atonement

We will consider four word images, propitiation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation. These four words come from four different vocabularies that can be summarized as in the chart below.

Word	*Language Context*	*Meaning*
Propitiation	Temple	Appeasement
Redemption	Commerce	Ransom
Justification	Law	Restored Status
Reconciliation	Home	Restored Relationship

1. PROPITIATION. Greek words that have been translated "propitiation" include *hilasmos,* a noun (1 Jn 2:2: 4:10), *hilasterion,* also a noun (Rom 3:25), and *hilaskomai,* a verb (Lk 8:13: Heb 2:17). As we look at Romans 3:23-26 NIV, we note that even within one short passage several theories of the atonement are presented:

> All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are *justified* freely by his grace through the *redemption* that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a *sacrifice* of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to *demonstrate* his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus.

These three verses from the New International Version (the version used throughout this article) employ four images of atonement (note the emphasized words) and remind us that it is artificial to focus on one image to the exclusion of the others. All are equally inspired, relevant, and authentic.

Central to the debate over "propitiation" is the question, Who is the object of the propitiation, God or man? If Jesus died to appease the wrath of God, was His doing so any different from the pagan sacrifices made to mollify angry gods?

The major contenders in this debate have been C. H. Dodd and Leon Morris. In 1931 Dodd presented his classic study on the use of *hilasmos,* in which he concluded that the word should not be understood as "propitiation" but as "expiation," meaning that God

provided the atonement rather than was appeased by it.[34] But in 1951 Leon Morris called Dodd's findings in question, concluding that *hilasmos* does mean propitiation.[35] Scholars subsequently have sided with one or the other.[36] James Dunn believes that the debate constituted "an unnecessary polarizing of alternatives."[37] F. Büchsel has offered a mediating interpretation, namely, that "hilasmos . . . is the action in which God is propitiated and sin expiated."[38]

Hilasterion occurs 21 times in the Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint, or LXX)—in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. *Kapporeth,* the Hebrew word sometimes translated with the Greek *hilasterion,* is used of the mercy seat as the place of propitiation. *Zara* is used of the rim around the altar of burnt offering (Ez 43:14, 17, 20). The important fact is that both the mercy seat and the altar were provided by God. Therefore, propitiation is not man's appeasement of God but God's provision for man to participate in God's self-propitiation. "God 'did set forth for himself' (middle voice) Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:25).[39] D. A. S. Ravens was right when he said that Christ's "death in no way changed the nature or the attitude of God, as some theories of the atonement seem to imply."[40] God's love was the cause, not the consequence, of the atonement.[41] "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement" (Rom 3:25). God offered the sacrifice rather than being merely its recipient (see Jn 3:16). Christ was priest as well as sacrifice.[42] His death was His self-offering.

2. REDEMPTION. Jesus said, "The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28). The word *lutron,* here translated "ransom," is used, along with its cognates nearly 140 times in the Septuagint, "usually with the thought of deliverance from some sort of bondage in exchange for the payment of compensation or the offering of a substitute."[43]

3. JUSTIFICATION. All "are justified freely by his grace through redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:24). "We have now been justified by his blood" (Rom 5:9). In these verses the death of Christ is presented as having put man in a proper relationship to God's broken law.

4. RECONCILIATION. Sinners have been made one with the Saviour. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the

old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ" (2 Cor 5:17, 18).

Jews and Gentiles have been made one in Christ, who has abolished "in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility" (Eph 2:15, 16).

In these passages the cross is presented as restoring a proper relationship of man to God and of man to fellow man.

In Scripture, the various words used to describe the atonement are as inseparable from that which they attempt to describe as are the various colors of a rainbow from the rainbow itself. It would be just as sensible to describe the atonement exclusively by any one of the images as to paint a rainbow exclusively with a single color.

We now need to evaluate the two major atonement views in the Christian church today, the moral influence theory and the substitutionary theory.

The Moral Influence Theory Evaluated

Those theologians who stress the moral influence theory do so because it expresses an extremely important truth. The cross does have a moral influence on people. It changes lives. No other event affects mankind as does the cross. Calvary is God's incomparable self-revelation. Nothing moves me so much as a steady gaze at my dying Saviour hanging there for me! "God's kindness leads" me "to repentance" (Rom 2:4, cf. KJV). As I look to Christ on the cross, by beholding Him I am becoming changed (2 Cor 3:18).

I heartily endorse all attempts to lift up the cross. Calvary will be forever the science and song of the redeemed.[44] As Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal 6:14). Christ Himself promised, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:32). Those who lift up the cross do what is needed. There is no more momentous focus. It is the supreme revelation of what God is like.

However, my concern about the moral influence theory—considered in isolation as an exclusive theory of the atonement—is that those who hold it as an exclusive theory do not seem to see on

Calvary a Saviour dying for them, bearing their sins, shedding His blood to redeem them, paying the price without which they could never get to heaven. For the fact that Jesus proved His love for humanity by His death is only one part of the truth about God. Another truth is that Jesus loved humanity so much that He died for our sins. His shed blood paid the price for human salvation.

Think of it this way: If we say that God merely allowed Christ to die to change people, with no larger reference to paying our sin-debt, the perception sounds hollow in view of the biblical terms already noted, such as propitiation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation, in addition to revelation

Leon Morris illustrates the weakness of focusing only on revelation without including the need of redemption. He speaks of

> a man who jumps into a rushing stream to show his love for me. If I am in the water in danger of drowning, that is meaningful. But if I am quite safe, sitting on the pier and enjoying the sun, then I cannot but deplore his action and I fail to see how it in fact shows his love. If sinners were in no danger on account of their sin, then why should Jesus have died at all? In that case we need an act of revelation, but not an act of atonement. It seems that no understanding of the cross is going to be satisfactory that does not view the death of Christ as accomplishing something.[45]

If the cross were just a revelation, then why was not Christ's entire life of sacrificial service a sufficient revelation of God? If the cross is a necessary revelation to change people, and only that, then is this not "salvation by knowledge," a kind of Gnosticism?[46] And if the cross is only a revelation, "God would be saying more than He did," says Forsyth.

> We are exposed [Forsyth continues] to the danger there always is when we make revelation a word rather than a deed, something said instead of something done, when we make it manifestation only and not redemption. The work of Christ would be only something educational, or at most impressive. And what happens then? If the work of Christ is only impressively educational, if the need and value of it ceases when we have recognized its meaning, when we have taken God's word for it in Christ that He does really love us, what happens then? Why, as soon as the lesson had been learnt, the work of Christ might be left behind.[47]

T. H. Hughes is right when he maintains that

> God must work in the Atonement itself, as well as in the life that follows. There must, therefore, be an "objective" source of power, and not merely a subjective change in man, before the Atonement can become effective. The degenerations and losses wrought by sin have to be met and conquered, and for this more than knowledge is necessary.[48]

Moral influence proponents believe that the manifestation made at Calvary is sufficient to evoke repentance. But if this is true, why did those Jewish leaders and Roman soldiers around the cross not repent?[49] W. J. Wolf was right when he noted that revelation does not always result in gratitude.[50] If revelation alone were involved we might question its fairness, for it works in an inequitable way, some people being easily moved, others not. Would God work in such a way? he asks.[51] Although revelation was unquestionably involved at the cross, there must have been something much more profound about the cross than merely revelation.

This much more profound dimension has everything to do with (1) the holiness of God and (2) the sinfulness of man. Both depths are overlooked, to some degree, by the moral influence adherents. Consider the holiness of God:

> When that holiness is wounded or defied, could God be content to take us back with a mere censure or other penance and the declaration that He was holy? . . . Sinners would despise a God who would take us back when we wept, and speak thus: "Let us say no more about it. You did very wrong, and you have suffered for it, and I; but let us forget it now that you have come back." We should not respect that. We should go on . . . to take more liberties still. He would be a God who only talked of His holiness and did not put it into force.[52]

Do moral influence proponents realize what love is? Love needs holiness to be love. "Love cannot be exhibited apart from holiness," contends H. O. Wiley.[53] "Holiness," says Mackintosh, "is the austere element in love, preserving it from wrong."[54] Morris agrees, for, he says, "Apart from law, how are we to distinguish love from caprice?"[55] Calvary is no neutral revelation of love. It reveals "the Father's holy love."[56]

This is a crucial insight. Moral influence theories that overlook the fact that there can be no fellowship between God and man except on the plane of holiness are inadequate. Moral influence theories, says J. S. Stewart, overlook "the New Testament's concentration upon the demonic nature of the evil from which the world has to be redeemed."[57] The New Testament presents Christ on Calvary as the sin-bearer, not just as the bearer of God's revelation (Acts 10:43; 1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4; Heb 1:3; 2:17; 9:28: 10:12; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; Rev 1:5).

The moral influence theory, with its denial of a substitutionary atonement, feels comfortable in a world view that denies the authority of Scripture and where historical criticism is acceptable.[58] This is a serious indictment, but Vernon Grounds has laid the matter on the line. "'Back to the Bible!' must be no empty shibboleth," he demands, "but rather an all-controlling principle in our thinking about the atonement."[59] And the Bible reveals that Christ did indeed do more than die for us—He died for our sins (Jn 1:29: 2 Cor 5:21: Heb 9:26).

Denial of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man go hand in hand. As Forde has affirmed, "The cross is not in the first instance a revelation of the love or mercy of God. It is rather the climactic manifestation of God's wrath against sin."[60] It is partly because sin does not provoke our own wrath that we do not believe that sin provokes the wrath of God. A revelation of holy love must expose sin, and with such an exposure of sin must come power to do something about it. Holy love can change a person. Mere revelation of love is not enough to meet human need. "For no other reason than that example without the power to follow it, knowledge without the power to put it into practice, revelation without the power to turn it into life, can bring nothing but bitter frustration."[61] There is no revelation in Scripture apart from redemption.[62]

It comes down to one thing. "If we feel that Christ has really put our sins out of the way, effectively and finally, our view of the faith will be very different from what would be the case if we felt that He had simply given us an example, or had won a spectacular victory which has little regard for the rights of the case."[63]

Given that God is holy love and that man is a needy sinner, then the cross is far more than a revelation. It is evidence of a forgiveness that man can depend upon.[64]

Does Forgiveness Require Christ's Death?

Those who believe exclusively in the moral influence theory point to the prodigal son in Luke 15 and say that in the story "atonement" was accomplished between father and son without any reference to Christ's death on Calvary. However, does not logic demand an admission that the parable makes no mention at all of *Christ?* Are we to infer that we can be reconciled without Jesus?

On the other hand, as Henry Alford once discerned, the sacrifice of Christ "is *presupposed* in the whole parable."[65] N. Geldenhuys agrees,[66] and W. L. Liefeld notes that "it must . . . be kept in mind that this is a parable and thus is intended to portray only one aspect of the gospel—God's willingness to receive 'sinners' and his joy over their return. Elsewhere in Luke's presentation of Christ as Savior, the Cross has its place."[67]

It is those who do not adequately comprehend human sin and divine holiness against sin, who can believe that forgiveness is all that the Father needs to give to prodigals. But humans need far more than forgiveness.[68] If the entire Gospel is in this parable, then why, asks Forsyth, did not the apostles use it in their preaching? Indeed, why didn't Christ conclude His mission and return to heaven right after giving this parable, if it contains the whole Gospel?[69] Christ's mission was more than to give a parable. He went to the cross to become our Substitute (see 2 Cor 5:21).

The Substitutionary Theory Evaluated

Rightly used, the word "substitutionary" in no way connotes that Christ took our place in living a perfect life so that we do not need to be fitted for heaven! It need not connote this anymore than it connotes that He ascended to heaven in our place. The word "substitutionary," properly employed, applies solely to Christ's taking our place at the cross, doing for us what we could never do for ourselves, that is, perish in the second death (Rev 20:6) and still live for eternity. In paying the price for our sins He alone could be our substitute. This is the most glorious good news—the wondrous exchange.

> Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed."[70]

If Calvary defeated Satan's scheme to take the entire human race down with him, then we would expect Satan to hate the truth about the cross. And this is precisely what we find in occult literature. We find sheer hatred for the substitutionary theory. We find this hatred in Spiritualism,[71] in the Theosophical Society,[72] and in the New Age Movement[73] and its "bible," the *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ.*[74] Look at the rendering of John 3:16 in the *Aquarian Gospel:* "For God so loved the world that he sent forth his only son to be raised up that men may see the love of God." Calvary, at best, is reduced to only a moral influence.

But even some good Christians dislike the substitutionary theory. J. R. W. Stott put the problem frankly when he said, "No two words in the theological vocabulary of the cross arouse more criticism than 'satisfaction' and 'substitution.'"[75]

Many thoughtful questions fuel the antipathy to this view. We subsume these under the headings (1) questions about forgiveness and (2) questions about God's attributes.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FORGIVENESS. In the same way that moral influence advocates can be said to have too shallow a view of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man, they can also be described as having too shallow a view of God's responsibility for governance of the universe. There is a distinct difference between forgiving if one is an ordinary citizen, and forgiving if one leads a nation, a world, or the universe. The responsibility of maintaining law and order for the sake of others is involved.[76] "God could not let sin go as if a mere slip. God demanded the atonement and provided it."[77] Restoration of the original plan for mankind takes more than a word of forgiveness. Changing the heart and lifestyle of man is involved, and change can only come when man realizes the horror of sin, what sin has cost God, and how expensive forgiveness really is. When this does happen, a person won't want to sin anymore—and thus God's original plan can be realized.[78]

No deep experience can come from a shallow concept. As John Stott puts it, "We can cry 'Hallelujah' with authenticity only after we have first cried 'Woe is me, for I am lost.'"[79]

QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD'S ATTRIBUTES. Often one-sided atonement theories issue out of a focus on one attribute of God to the exclusion of the others. The Socinians stressed God's will, Luther and Calvin His justice, Anselm His honor, Abelard His benevolence, and Strong his holiness. We have noted that balance requires us to accept all the biblical images for atonement. Likewise, we must accept all biblical insights into the attributes of God. It is conventional wisdom to accept God's attributes of love and mercy and to jettison His attributes of justice and wrath. Such selectivity inevitably results in a distortion of one's view of the atonement. As H. O. Wiley rightly notes, "The tendency to exalt one attribute above another, has been the source of much error in theology."[80]

If moral influence proponents have too shallow a view of human sinfulness and divine holiness, they also have too superficial a view of the profundity of God's attributes. For what God ought to do because He is righteous needs to be understood with what He cannot do because He is love, and vice versa.[81] God as Love (see 1 Jn 4:16) is defined by the sum total of His attributes and not merely by one or a few of them. Consider some of the couplets found in Scripture that indicate this breadth among the attributes of God:

Compassionate and punishing	Ex 34:6, 7
Love and faithfulness	Ps 85:10
Righteousness and peace	Ps 85:10
Righteousness and a Saviour	Isa 45:21
Anger and mercy	Mic. 7:18
Wrath and mercy	Hab 3:2
Grace and truth	Jn 1:14
Justice and forbearance	Rom 3:26
Kindness and sternness	Rom 11:22
Faithfulness and justice	1 Jn 1:9

Wherever God's attributes seem to be opposites, never should they be considered as operating "either-or" but as both together. Forsyth speaks about holy love.[82] Brunner talks about "Divine Holiness."[83] "God is not simply love," he says. "The Nature of God cannot be exhaustively stated in one single word."[84] In the cross

"God makes known His holiness and His love simultaneously, in one event, in an absolute manner."[85] For God

> was unwilling to act in love at the expense of his holiness or in holiness at the expense of his love. So we may say that he satisfied his holy love by himself dying the death and so bearing the judgment which sinners deserved. He both exacted and accepted the penalty for human sin.[86]

Justice and love were both operative at the cross. Justice demanded punishment for sin, love demanded forgiveness for sin. God's love is strong, not sentimental; He paradoxically reveals His love through justice and His compassion through wrath. God's wrath must be seen as an expression of His love (see endnote 87).

God cannot be dissected as if schizophrenic. All of God is present in the use of any one of His attributes. He is fully present in His wrath as He is in His love, and without contradiction.[88]

Furthermore, God's action on the cross was not abstract, only reacting to a broken law or accomplishing some forensic bookkeeping. Far more was involved. Humanity was God's loved one, His bride.[89] Sin had taken His bride hostage. She had divorced Him. She needed far more than just a revelation of God. She needed restoration by God. He still loved her and hated that which took her from Him. On the cross He plunged down to release His hostage bride by dealing a death blow to the hostage taker.[90] He died in love to save while at the same time unleashing His wrath against the criminal. The one act of liberation demonstrates the two sides of love and justice. Our rescue took place at the depths where sin slew God and at the heights where the man Jesus accepted that slaying as substitute for His lover, that He might thereby win her back through revelation of His love and through redemption. Therefore, that act defeated the devil, was a victory for God, and brought reconciliation and redemption to man. All the major theories of the atonement issue out of that one event on Calvary. As Ellen White says,

> God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have

> kissed each other." Ps 85:10. By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love.[91]

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:38, 39). John Murray comments: "That is the security which a perfect atonement secures and it is the perfection of the atonement that secures it."[92]

Calvary and Passover

Evidence that the substitutionary atonement is not man appeasing God but God's own self-sacrifice is seen in the morning and evening sacrifices, the Day of Atonement ministry on behalf of the entire camp or nation, and the annual Passover celebration. In celebrating the Passover, Jesus kept the first Lord's Supper with His disciples (see Mk 14:12-25). As Carey notes, "Jesus himself was the first to unite his death with the Passover in the Words of the Institution at the Last Supper."[93] Paul connected them too, referring to "Christ, our Passover lamb" (1 Cor 5:7).

God provided the offering, the means of escape from death, on that first Passover night back in Egypt. All homes with the blood applied to lintel and doorpost were protected. In such homes the firstborn would live (Ex 12:13, 23). But this was not true for those who neglected the substitutionary sacrifice of the slain lamb (Ex 12:12). The firstborn's escape from death was just as much a gift of God as the whole nation's escape from Egypt. Substitution and Exodus were forever welded in Israel's memory as interrelated acts of God's grace. In fact, as Dillistone mentions, the New Testament passages concerning Christ's blood and redemption point back to the Passover escape from Egypt.[94] For, as Reid put it, "at the heart of the Passover stands the idea of atonement through believing sacrifice."[95] In fact, "there is no propitiatory power of blood known to Scripture unless the blood be that of sacrifice."[96]

It should be noted that the blood was shed to redeem the firstborn from death and not to put life within him. Some today

view Christ's death as a blood transfusion, designed to place life within, making His death sacramental rather than substitutionary.[97] It is true that "the 'blood' of Christ is mentioned in the writings of the New Testament nearly three times as often as 'the Cross' of Christ and five times as frequently as the 'death' of Christ,"[98] but it is never equated with "life-transfusion." Christ's blood always symbolizes His substitutionary death in place of the redeemed, as in the Passover. We have redemption through Christ's blood (see Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:18; Rev 5:9).[99] As Lyon and Toon remind us, "Elsewhere blood may be a symbol of life, but in the sacrificial motif it symbolized death."[100]

A Deeper Look at the Cross

If the cross of Christ will be the study of the redeemed and the unfallen beings throughout eternity,[101] it must be an exhaustless theme.[102] All the atonement theories relate to the cross in one way or other. Some attempt to describe what took place there—why Christ had to die—and others detract from the reality of what happened there. The key fact is that no single theory yet invented can do justice to what took place on the cross, nor can the sum of all known theories exhaust the meaning of what happened there.

It is also true that the cross must be understood within the context of the eternal plan of the Trinity to save mankind. Many theories of the atonement are Binitarian rather than Trinitarian. They speak of the Father and of Christ, leaving out the place and function of the Holy Spirit. But any balanced understanding of the atonement must include all three members of the Godhead.[103] It must grasp the fact that "God could be atoned by no outside party. . . . The Father suffered in His Son even more than the Son did."[104] And so, we must believe, did the Holy Spirit also.

A balanced atonement theory must include three other crucial factors as well: (1) our involvement in crucifying Christ. The cross was not merely a payment offered to God (Anselm), a revelation by God (Abelard), or a victory by God (Aulen); (2) the great controversy context which considers the cross as having cosmic significance rather than as being limited to God's doing something for humans (Abelard) or as a human Christ's doing something just for God (Anselm); and (3) a careful study of the dereliction cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46).

We Crucified Christ

Many theories of the atonement look from above, but the real culprit can only be seen from below. "Indeed, the fatal flaw in most thinking about the atoning work of Christ is the tendency to look away from the actual events, translate them into 'eternal truths,' and thus to ignore or obscure what actually happened and our part in it. We interpret Christ's death as though it were an idea, a necessary part of a logical scheme of some sort, as though God were tied to a scheme of honor or justice making *him* the obstacle to our reconciliation. We exonerate ourselves, so to speak, by blaming the necessity for the cross on God."[105]

An element missing or inadequately treated in the three major views of the atonement (Anselm's, Abelard's, and Aulen's) is the fact that *we* crucified Christ. Abelard at most touched on it when he asked Anselm, If Adam's sin had to be "satisfied" (as Anselm insisted), how much more satisfaction was needed for those who crucified Christ?[106] Without detracting from our involvement in Christ's crucifixion, the answer to how much more satisfaction was needed is found in the truth that Calvary is God's self-sacrifice made with a cosmic scope and an eternal depth measurable only in the great controversy world view and the dereliction cry.

The Great Controversy World View

Many theories of the atonement concern only man and God. Anselm focused on what man in Christ can do to restore God's honor, whereas Abelard focused on what God can do to restore man. Grotius looked beyond to God's government, and Aulen to His victory over the devil. In broadening their focus, Grotius and Aulen began to open up the issues involved in the great controversy. This broader world view is essential in order to understand what happened at the cross, because the cross had to do with more than human salvation. It had to do with divine vindication, something that involves the universe. Satan had charged God with being unjust.[107] It was necessary that the justice of God be clearly manifested. Because Satan charged that no created being could keep the law, Christ had to come and live the law, showing that obedience to God would take Him even to death—actually the second death. Calvary was the ultimate demonstration of an obedient, law-keeping human life, a revelation of perfect man.

Calvary also revealed a perfect God. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor 5:19 KJV). This is crucial to our understanding. God's self-sacrifice revealed the depth of His love for the lost. Calvary also utterly exposed Satan. "Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds."[108] "By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings."[109]

Calvary was a revelation of "the law of self-renouncing love."[110] This law was broken when Satan originated self-seeking. Satan "misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. . . . Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving."[111]

For Ellen White, the great controversy concept of the atonement included Christ's life as well as His death.

> By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken.[112]

Atonement even includes the present ministry of Christ in heaven. Whereas the atonement sacrifice was completed on Calvary, the atoning ministry has unfolded the benefits of that sacrifice ever since in a Godward intercession[113] and a manward outpouring of the Spirit.[114] (We'll return to these aspects later.)

If Calvary was the completed atonement sacrifice that exposed Satan and revealed God to a depth never comprehended before, why was it not the final moment of human history? Why did the second advent not take place right away? One answer is that

> the angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. And for the sake of man, Satan's existence must be continued. Man as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. He must choose whom he will serve.[115]

The cross is like a mountain. Up close one cannot take in the entire mountain or view its full context. But from a vantage point at a distance one can readily see it for what it is. The passing of time has no more added to the cross than walking to a distant vantage point adds anything to a mountain. But the passing of time has brought into clearer focus what really took place at the cross. All eternity will serve to continue its clarification. Neither one atonement theory nor the sum of all atonement theories can match its profound depths.

The Dereliction Cry

If Calvary is in general inexhaustibly profound, Christ's cry of dereliction (Matt 27:46) is doubly so. God suffered at the cross. The Father and the Spirit endured the agonies of Calvary with Christ. Calvary was the self-giving of the entire Godhead.

In a church in Italy (George Buttrick tells us) hangs a painting which, at first glance, seems like any other painting of the crucifixion. But look more closely and you'll see "a vast and shadowy Figure behind the figure of Jesus. The nail that pierces the hand of Jesus goes through to the hand of God. The spear thrust into the side of Jesus goes through into God's."[116] The Holy Spirit needs also to be included.

Balthasar notes that on Calvary "the Son had placed himself at the disposal of the Father so as to guarantee the goodness of the world by his unconditional sacrifice unto the cross . . . that such willingness on the part of the Son must have affected the Father to the depths of his heart? That it must have required from the Father as great and as selfless a love to accept this offer without mitigation as from the Son who consummated it and from the Holy Spirit who sustained this mutual abandonment of Father and Son and had to endure it himself."[117]

What we have here is more than the Son's dying to satisfy God, His law, and His honor or to reveal His love. We have the entire Godhead plunging into the depths of self-abnegation. Each goes to the limit to reveal "the law of self-renouncing love"—which is the "law of life for earth and heaven,"[118] for the entire Trinity is like this. Christ came to reveal what God is like (Jn 14:9), and He did so in an unequaled way at the cross.

We see clearly, then, that there is no dualism in the Godhead anymore than there is a division among the attributes of God. The entire Godhead is involved in self-sacrifice and self-satisfaction, in which their holiness and love, their justice and mercy are all active. All members of the Godhead, in the plurality of their attributes, remain true to themselves in the act of saving man and defeating that which caused him to become lost. Revelation and restoration, self-abnegation and judgment, reconciliation and victory all were present in Christ's death.

There is a decisive difference between the death of Christ and that of a martyr. For example, Huss and Jerome "both bore themselves with constant mind when their last hour approached. They prepared for the fire as if they were going to a marriage feast. They uttered no cry of pain. When the flames rose, they began to sing hymns; and scarce could the vehemency of the fire stop their singing."[119] Huss and Jerome experienced the promise that not even death can separate a follower from His Lord (see Rom 8:38, 39). But death separated Christ from His Father (see Matt 27:46). Socrates faced death with joy compared to Christ's utter terror.[120] If Christ's death was merely to reveal God's love, why did He plunge into abject horror, consternation, loathing, and agony?[121] Becoming sin for us was infinitely more than revelation. It was redemption.

In a very real sense Jesus died for *us*, not for God. In becoming "sin for us," Forsyth has suggested, Jesus was "treated as sin (though not as a sinner)." He "experienced sin as God does, while he experienced its effects as man does. He felt sin with God, and sin's judgment with men. He realized, as God, how real sin was, how radical, how malignant, how deadly to the Holy One's very being." He died "at sin's hands," for holiness and sin cannot co-exist.[122] Christ allowed Himself to be put to death by the sins of the planet (see Jn 10:15, 18; 15:13).

Within this context we are now ready to consider the dereliction cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46). These words are dismissed by some as if they were merely put into the mouth of Jesus by the church (one explanation of why they were written in two languages).[123] Some even suggest that this was a normal cry after suffering and loss of blood.[124] Such observations miss the depths involved.

"It is better to take the words at face value," says D. A. Carson. "Jesus is conscious of being abandoned by his Father. For one who knew the intimacy of Matthew 11:27, such abandonment must have been agony; and for the same reason it is inadequate to hypothesize that Jesus felt abandoned but was not truly abandoned. . . . In this cry of dereliction, the horror of the world's sin and the cost of our salvation are revealed."[125]

It is crucial to try to understand the overwhelming agony Jesus endured. The sins of a world caused an agony of bloody sweat, the abandonment of hell, and the crushing out of His life. No wonder He cried out to God. The Greek word for "cried" is *anaboao* (Matt 27:46), used only here in the New Testament. This "is a strong verb indicating powerful emotion or appeal to God." This is "the only time in the Synoptic Gospels where Jesus addresses God without calling him Father."[126]

The man Jesus had come to the brink—where He needed God the most. Yet precisely at this time when He needed God the most, He felt utterly abandoned. It is impossible to comprehend the utter horror of that dark period. The entire Godhead suffered through that self-sacrifice of Jesus.

W. Barclay appropriately calls this cry "the most staggering sentence in the gospel record. . . . That is a saying before which we must bow in reverence, and yet at the same time we must try to understand."[127]

Ellen White gazes into the depths of Christ's trauma:

> Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.

> Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.[128]

Where was God when that terrible cry rent the air?

> God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed. Had His glory flashed forth from the cloud, every human beholder would have been destroyed. And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence. He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.[129]

Although Christ had previously spoken of His resurrection (Matt 16:21) and even of his return at the second advent (Matt 16:27), during the darkest hour on the cross He could not see through the darkness to His resurrection and second advent. When He became our sin-bearing Substitute, He saw no way out. He felt abandoned by God, just as the lost will feel after the millennium. He faced hell itself—eternal separation from His Father. It was as if He said, "My God, my God, if it means eternal separation from You, the One I love so much, that these human children can be with You in My place, then I'll plunge into that abyss."

"Ah," says one, "didn't Moses ask God to blot out his name if Israel could not be forgiven (Ex 32:32)? Was not Moses, thus, as willing to give up heaven as was Christ?"

"Not so," comes the reply. "The matter is much deeper than that. Moses did not know what he was giving up, but Jesus did. Christ had lived in heaven with the Father and the Spirit for eternity. He knew very well what He was giving up. He was giving up that eternal past as well as the eternal future. He was willing to give up being with those who are the dearest to Him in order that rebellious mankind could be taken to be with the Father and Spirit in His place. This is substitution at its deepest depth."

The Adventist Atonement View—A Broader Perspective[130]

We have already noted that Aulen and Grotius broadened the focus beyond that offered by Anselm and Abelard. Yet it must be acknowledged that all four of their atonement theories were confined to the cross. Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the atonement, though cross-centered, involves much more than the cross. Paul said, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor 15:17). It is the *risen* Christ who "ever lives to intercede" for the race (Heb 7:25). "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved *through his life!*" (Rom 5:10).

Ellen White cogently observes, "It was not alone His betrayal in the garden or His agony upon the cross that constituted the atonement. The humiliation of which His poverty formed a part was included in His great sacrifice. The whole series of sorrows which compassed humanity Christ bore upon His divine soul."[131] And concerning Christ's present ministry, she said, "All need to become more intelligent in regard to the work of atonement, which is going on in the sanctuary above."[132] Obviously atonement embraces Christ's work before and after Calvary too.

"Completion" and "continuance" are two sides of the atonement process that must be held together. Completion involves the fact that "the gulf that was made by sin has been spanned by the cross."[133] "The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient."[134] "He has given us the advantage of his victory."[135] Because of this completion, the atonement process can continue in the subsequent sanctuary ministration, both Godwards and manwards.

So, although the cross is central and crucial, atonement is far broader than one event. Properly understood, *Christ Himself* (rather than the cross or anything else) is the atonement provided by God for man.[136] This is true all along the journey from His departure from heaven, His incarnation, His human life, His death, resurrection, high priestly ministry, preadvent judgment, return, millennial and postmillennial judgments—until sin and sinners are no more, and man is finally in a relationship of at-one-ment with God. The ancient day of atonement proleptically celebrated Calvary, the most holy place ministry, and the ultimate sending of the scapegoat into the wilderness (Lev 16). So atonement embraced events from Christ's sacrifice to Satan's demise. Therefore, atonement is a comprehensive term that includes everything Christ has done, is doing, and will do, to remedy the separation of man from God caused by sin.

Within this broad salvific context, Christ as "sacrifice" and "priest" must be held together as two important aspects of atonement. Along the "atonement continuum," the cross is the completed payment but not the finished atonement. The sacrifice is sufficient as sacrifice. But now this sacrifice is being mediated. And the work of atonement will not be completed until God and man are together on the new earth. The Old Testament types, taken in their totality, prefigured both Christ's sacrifice and His sanctuary/temple ministry. The sacrifices were ministered within the sanctuary/temple. To focus on one to the exclusion of the other is to fail to grasp the breadth of the atonement. "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross."[137]

"What He did on the cross was for *all men* (1 Jn 2:2). What He does in the sanctuary is for those only who *accept* His great salvation."[138] Redemption's sacrifice was given on the cross, but representation takes place in heaven.[139] Properly understood, "redemption-representation" are two preadvent (i.e, pre-second-advent) stages of atonement for Christians. Christ's sacrifice gives Him the right to minister as our priest, for none can minister without a sacrifice (Heb 8:3). But the ministry adds nothing to the cross, as if to say that the cross was insufficient or incomplete in and of itself (Heb 9:24-28). Rather, the sanctuary ministry makes the cross effective for us by bringing the benefits of Calvary to us.[140] Ellen White put it well, "The cross must occupy the central place because it is the means of man's atonement."[141] So though atonement involves a process, the cross occupies the central place in that process.

Christ entered the "sanctuary ministry" with the blood of His own sacrifice. He is today engaged in a Godward and manward ministry. (1) Only in and through Christ can man approach God, for Christ is man's representative. (2) Only through Christ can man receive God's blessings, for Christ is God's representative. Thus

Christ's high priestly ministry is a two-way mediation between God and man. Calvary is the fulcrum upon which this priestly ministry turns. Both the Godward and the manward ministry function because of Calvary.

At His ascension, Christ began his priestly ministry and "entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking . . . his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12 RSV). There He "has entered on our behalf" (Heb 6:20). Through Him in His status as the second Adam (Rom 5:12-21), we can "approach the throne of grace with confidence" (Heb 4:16). Without Him, even the praise and prayers of true worshipers are unacceptable, because they pass through "the corrupt channels of humanity."[142] This is a part of the Godward part of the present atonement ministry.

Scripture describes the setting. "Behind the second curtain," in "a room called the most holy place," is the ark. There, between the cherubim, is "the place of atonement" (Heb 9:3-5). Christ's "second apartment" ministry began in 1844 (Dan 8:14), when "the hour of his judgment" arrived (Rev 14:6, 7). The "first apartment" ministry continues to run with it. The judgment aspect of His second apartment ministry was prefigured in the annual Day of Atonement (Lev 16), when "only the high priest entered the inner room . . . and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance" (Heb 9:7). We are today in the antitypical Day of Atonement.

In His present Day-of-Atonement ministry,[143] Christ may be described as making the "final atonement."[144] The manward part of this present work of atonement has at least two aspects: (1) cleansing from sin (Lev 16) and (2) deliverance from the little horn (Dan 8:14; 7:8-10, 20-22, 24-27). The preadvent judgment provides for the deliverance of God's people and the destruction of their enemies. A climax will be reached when Satan is confined to the wilderness of this earth during the millennium—prefigured on the annual Day of Atonement when the scapegoat was "presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert" (Lev 16:10).

When the saints are delivered at the second coming, and when sinners are destroyed and the earth is made new at the end of the millennium, the cross will have reached its goal. Christ's death will

be seen to have meant deliverance for man, and death for Satan and all the rest of God's enemies. And although the entire contribution of Christ, from incarnation to the postmillennial executive judgment, are included in the scope of the atonement, Calvary will always be viewed as the foundational self-sacrifice of the Godhead which assured the atonement's ultimate realization.

Conclusion

We must hold onto a balanced understanding of the atonement, one that is seen to involve (1) each member of the Trinity, (2) every attribute of God, (3) both divine vindication and human salvation, (4) Christ's being both Sacrifice and Priest, and (5) the entire contribution of Christ from His incarnation to His recreation of the earth. All these elements met at the cross, the central, culminating self-sacrifice and self-revelation of the Trinity. The cross exposed Satan, rescued man, and defeated our enemy. The life and work of Christ either lead up to or issue from Calvary. Of the cross Ellen White said, "The great contest that had been so long in progress in this world was now decided, and Christ was conqueror. His death had answered the question whether the Father and the Son had sufficient love for man to exercise self-denial and a spirit of sacrifice."[145]

The cross answered the question, "Why did Christ have to die?"

> Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds through the vast realms of space, the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore—humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father's face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart and crushed out His life on Calvary's cross. That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe. . . . "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His own most precious blood!"
>
> The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power.

While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, "Our Father."[146]

It will take the whole of eternity for man to understand the plan of redemption [atonement]. It will open to him line upon line; here a little there a little.[147]

How awesome!

Hallelujah!

Endnotes

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14 Leon Morris, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 97; John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 17; cf. F. W. Dillistone, *Jesus Christ and His Cross: Studies on the Saving Work of Christ* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 11; Vernon C. Grounds, *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1960), p. 71.

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16 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church,* 9 vols. (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1948), 8: 77.

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20 H. R. Mackintosh, *The Experience of Forgiveness* (London: Nisbet and Co., 1944), p. 195.

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24 Aulen, *Christus Victor,* pp. 4-7.

25 Wolf, *No Cross, No Crown,* p. 100.

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30 Dillistone, *Jesus Christ and His Cross,* pp. 60-62.

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40 D. A. S. Ravens, "St. Luke and Atonement," *Expository Times,* 97/10 (1986): 294.

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42 Ellen G. White, in *Questions on Doctrine,* p. 667.

43 Erickson, *Christian Theology,* p. 807.

44 White, *Desire,* pp. 19, 20.

45 Leon Morris, *The Cross of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), p. 21.

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48 T. H. Hughes, *The Atonement* (London: George Allen and Unwin and Co., 1949), pp. 205, 206.

49 Cf. the postmillennial experience described by Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1911). pp. 666, 667.

50 Wolf, *No Cross, No Crown,* p. 120.

51 See T. H. Hughes, *The Atonement,* pp. 204,205.

52 Forsyth, *The Work of Christ,* pp. 131, 132.

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69 Forsyth, *The Work of Christ,* p. 106.

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72 Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Philosophy,* ed. and abbr., Joy Mills (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, n.d.), p.131; Alice A.Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis, 1957), pp. 542-543.

73 Elliot Miller, *A Crash Course on the New Age Movement* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1989), p. 28.

74 Throughout Levi, *The Aquarian Gospel* (Marina Del Rey, Calif.: DeVorss and Co., Publishers, 1987) there is a hatred of any substitutionary sacrifice for human sin. For example, see 13: 13-20 (pp. 29, 30), 18: 2-4, 12, 13 (p. 35).

75 Stott, *The Cross,* p. 111; cf. G. O. Forde, "Caught in the Act: Reflections on the Work of Christ," *Word and World,* 3 (Winter 1983): 23.

76 M. Green, *The Empty Cross of Jesus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1984), p. 73.

77 A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament,* 6 vols. (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1930-1933; repr. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House), 4: 348.

78 Cf. H. W. Clark, *The Cross and the Eternal Order* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1944), p. 21.

79 Stott, *The Cross,* p. 109.

80 Wiley, *Christian Theology,* 2: 285.

81 Cf. Forsyth, *The Work of Christ,* p. 118.

82 Ibid., p. 135.

83 Brunner, *The Mediator,* p. 518.

84 Ibid., pp. 281, 282.

85 Ibid., p. 450.

86 Stott, *The Cross,* p. 152.

87 The Bible says God is slow to anger (Ex 34:6) but does reveal anger against sin (Rom 1:18). Note the balance between wrath and mercy. "He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us" (Hos 6:1, 2).

88 "Love and wrath are not contradictory; love and hatred are." J. Murray, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1962), p. 15).

89 Although Scripture only mentions His followers as His bride (Isa 62:5, Matt 9:15), potentially all mankind were included, just as Christ potentially died for the whole world.

90 The cross was an attack against sin. It also constituted the death knell for Satan, the originator of sin.

91 White, *Desire,* p. 762.

92 Murray, *Redemption,*p. 78.

93 G. L. Carey, "The Lamb of God and Atonement Theories," *Tyndale Bulletin,* 32 (1981), p. 119.

94 F. W. Dillistone, *Jesus Christ and His Cross,* p. 88.

95 W. S. Reid, in G.W. Bromiley, ed, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 1: 353.

96 J. Denney, Romans, *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* p. 611.

97 Vincent Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London: The MacMillan Co., 1939), pp. 63, 64.

98 A. M. Stibbs, *The Meaning of the Word "Blood" in Scripture* (London: Tyndale Press, 1947), p. 3.

99 Cf. Ladd, *A Theology,* p. 426; J. Behm, in Kittell, *Theological Dictionary,* 1: 173; Wiley, *Christian Theology,* p. 231.

100 R. W. Lyon and Peter Toon, in *Baker's Encyclopedia of the Bible,* 1: 232.

101 White, *Great Controversy,* p. 651.

102 White, *Desire,* pp. 19, 20.

103 One "general feature of Western thought on the atonement" is that it is "essentially binitarian." Keith W. Clements, "Atonement and the Holy Spirit," *Expository Times,* 95/6 (1984): 169.

104 P. T. Forsyth, *The Justification of God,* p. 174.

105 Forde, "Caught in the Act," p. 23.

106 Peter Abelard, "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans," in Eugene R. Fairweather, ed. and trans., *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham,* vol. 10, in J. Baillie, gen. ed., The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), pp.282-283.

107 See Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1890, 1913) pp. 37,42; White, *Desire,* pp. 26, 762.

108 White, *Desire,* p. 758.

109 Ibid., p. 761.

110 Ibid., p. 20.

111 Ibid., pp. 21, 22.

112 Ibid., p. 25.

113 See White, *Great Controversy,* pp. 421, 489.

114 Christ returned to earth at Pentecost through the Spirit (Jn 14:16-18) and remains with His people till the second coming (Matt 28:20; Heb 13:5).

115 Ibid., p. 761.

116 Stott, *The Cross,* p. 158; Glenn W. Olsen, "Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Rehabilitation of St. Anselm's Doctrine of the Atonement," *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 34/1 (1981): 60, 61.

117 Olsen, ibid.

118 White, *Desire,* p. 20.

119 White, *Great Controversy,* p. 110.

120 See Oscar Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* (London: Epworth Press, 1964), pp. 19-27.

121 For a description of Christ's agony, see Stott, *The Cross,* pp. 73,74.

122 P. T. Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1909), pp. 101,102.

123 A. B. Bruce, *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* 1: 331, 332.

124 W.F. Halliday, *Reconciliation,* p. 192.

125 D. A. Carson, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary,* 8: 579.

126 R. T. France, Matthew, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), p. 398.

127 W. Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 2: 368.

128 White, *Desire,* p. 753.

129 Ibid., pp. 753,754.

130 Seventh-day Adventists are not alone in holding a broader view of the atonement. For example, the importance of the resurrection is given by Theodore R. Clark, *Saved By His Life* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1959), pp.70-93. The same concern, cited by Clark (pp. 40,41), is found in G. R. Beasley- Murray, *Christ is Alive* (London: The Lutterworth Press, 1947), p. 12, and Hugh T. Kerr, "Theological Table Talk," *Theology Today,* 14/1 (April 1957): 107-108; cf. Wolf, *No Cross, No Crown,* p.107.

131 Ellen G. White, MS 12, 1900, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* 6: 1103.

132 White, *Testimonies,* 5: 575.

133 Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald* (hereafter *RH*), July 1, 1890, p. 408

134 Ellen G. White, *RH,* Aug 19, 1890, p. 419.

135 Ellen G. White, *RH,* Sep 23, 1890, p. 426.

136 In the narrower sense, the chasm between God and man, caused by sin, was bridged by Christ in the incarnation. Cf. White, *Desire,* p.25).

137 White, *Great Controversy,* p. 489.

138 *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions,* pp. 353, 354.

139 Representation includes Christ's work as our advocate against the charges of Satan (Zech 3), keeping in mind that He never needs to plead to get the Father to love us (Jn 3:16; 16:26,27).

140 Even the preadvent judgment is not merely an investigation of human works, but an observation of human response to Christ's work on Calvary. All judgments (preadvent, [advent,] millennial, postmillennial) are cross centered. See Norman R. Gulley, "A Deeper Look at the Investigative Judgment," *Adventist Perspectives,* 3/3 (1989): 33-40.

141 White, *Testimonies,* 6: 236.

142 Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages,* 3 vols. (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1958-1980), 1: 344.

143 The present work of Christ is referred to as atonement many times by Ellen G. White; eg., in *Great Controversy,* pp.421, 480, and in *Patriarchs and Prophets,* pp. 357-358.

144 With His blood Christ obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb 6:19, 20; 9:12).

145 White, *Patriarchs and Prophets,* p. 70.

146 White, *Great Controversy,* pp. 651, 652.

147 Ellen G. White, MS 21, 1895, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* 6: 1115. Parenthesis supplied.