

**ATONEMENT**

**AND**

**THE CROSS**

**by**

**OCTAVIUS WINSLOW**

**TENTMAKER PUBLICATIONS**

**1998**



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“The Atonement”  
and  
“The Foot of the Cross”

# THE ATONEMENT

VIEWED

EXPERIMENTALLY AND PRACTICALLY

BY

OCTAVIUS WINSLOW, D.D.

Previously published in London, 1856  
by John Farquhar Shaw.

This edition completely re-typeset by  
Tentmaker Publications.

**THIS VOLUME**

IS RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

TO MY BELOVED AND REVEREND

**MOTHER,**

THROUGH WHOSE EARLY INSTRUCTION AND PRAYERS,

**I am indebted under God,**

FOR MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH,

AND FOR MANY OF MY MATURER VIEWS OF,

THE GREAT DOCTRINE, WHICH IT IS AN HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TO UNFOLD,

BY HER AFFECTIONATE AND DUTIFUL

**SON,**

**THE AUTHOR.**

## Preface

THIS unpretending little volume forms the commencement of a series of similar works, which it is the Author's design, should the Lord permit, to publish upon the important subject of experimental religion, under the general title of "THE INQUIRER DIRECTED TO AN EXPERIMENTAL AND PRACTICAL VIEW OF DIVINE TRUTH." Various considerations, to one or two of which he may be permitted to allude, suggested the undertaking, and pleaded for its execution. The first that may be mentioned was, the vast and solemn *importance* of the subject.

The religion of the Lord Jesus is valuable only as its power is experienced in the heart. In this respect, and in this only, it may be compared to the physical sciences, which, however ingenious in structure, or beautiful in theory, yet, if not reduced or reducible to purposes of practical use, are of little worth. It is so with the truth of Jesus. The man of mere taste may applaud its external beauty—the philosopher may admire its ethics, the orator its eloquence, and the poet its sublimity, but if the Spirit of God take not his own truth, and impress it upon the heart, as to the great design of its revelation, it avails nothing. What numbers there are who rest in the mere theory of Christianity. As a practical principle they know nothing of it. As a thing experienced in the heart, it is a hidden mystery to them. They speak well of it as a religious system; believe its Divinity, and even defend its doctrines and extol its precepts; yet make no approaches towards a personal and practical obedience to its claims. In a word, they know nothing of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. It will surely appear to a spiritually-enlightened mind, a subject of vast and solemn moment that this delusion should be exposed—that this foundation of sand should be undermined, and the absolute necessity of experimental religion, as necessary to an

admission within the kingdom of glory, be strenuously and scripturally enforced.

Another consideration which had its weight with the Author's mind was, the conviction that the state of the church demanded a more spiritual, experimental, and practical exhibition of Divine Truth. To those who have been silent, though sad, spectators of the recent history of the Christian church, it is known that controversies of an alarming character have, for a lengthened period, existed in her bosom. They have seen and deplored the divisions that have rent her—the party feeling that has been engendered, the alienation and distance that have existed among those who, holding one Head, should therefore “love as brethren.” To mitigate this alarming evil, to heal these divisions, and to draw the different sections of the church more closely together, various able disquisitions have been written, many ingenious plans have been proposed, and many affecting appeals have been made. But, it is the Author's honest conviction, that the first and the chief step towards the accomplishment of an end so earnestly to be sought, and so fervently to be prayed for, is to *deepen the spirituality* of the churches of each evangelical denomination. Nothing short of this will bring it about. Vain will be all expectation of returning to an apostolic union—fruitless will be every plan for a coalition of sects, while the *spirituality* of the church is at so low an ebb. But, augment the true piety of the churches—hold up a more elevated standard of holiness—let them be deeply baptized in the reviving and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and these controversies will all terminate, these divisions will all be healed, and the din and the strife of party interests will speedily be hushed. Christians will not hold less firmly, and defend less zealously their conscientious views of truth, but they will hold and speak the truth *in love*. In order then thus to strengthen the tone of spirituality among the churches, *experimental* and *practical* religion must be more frequently and earnestly insisted upon. There cannot possibly exist genuine piety apart from experimental truth, and in proportion to the deep experience of the truth, will be the depth of spirituality.

It will suffice to mention but one other consideration which influenced the Author in the preparation of these works, and that was, the demand which the church herself has made for writings of

this class. The church is wearied with controversy. There is a restlessness, a growing desire for publications of a less polemical and more spiritual and experimental character, which it is important should be met. There are those, and the number is increasing, who are hungering and thirsting for the simple truth of God, broken up and presented to them unmixed with the bitter herbs of controversy and discussion. They want God's truth as it is. They want it so opened and explained as to meet the daily experience of the Christian life.—The inward and the outward conflicts—the struggling of inbred sin—the deep affliction—the heavy cross, all of which demand an experimental unfolding of the doctrines and truths of the Bible. And there is a sweetness and preciousness in Divine Truth thus exhibited, which controversy tends much to impair. The father of the inductive philosophy truly and beautifully remarks, "As those wines which flow from the first treading out of the grapes, are sweeter and better than those forced out of the press, which gives the roughness of the husk and of the stone; so are those doctrines best and wholesomest which flow from a gentle crush of the Scriptures, and are not wrung into controversies."\*

To meet in some degree this demand, has been the humble attempt of the Author. How far he has proved successful, the experienced believer must decide. He has commenced with the doctrine of the Atonement of Christ, it being the central truth of the Bible, on which all others are based, and around which they all entwine. The second volume in the series will embrace "EXPERIMENTAL AND PRACTICAL VIEWS OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT," and will appear, should the Author's life and health be preserved, early in the ensuing autumn. Should the Lord, in a solitary instance, condescend to bless the perusal of this Work, let all the praise and the glory redound to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the triune Jehovah, to whom it alone belongs.

O. W.

*London, April, 1839.*

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\* Bacon.

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# Introduction

## THE PROVINCE OF REASON IN THE INVESTIGATION OF SPIRITUAL AND EXPERIMENTAL TRUTH.

*“The world by wisdom knew not God.”*—1 COR. i. 21.

**I**N a few observations, intended mainly as introductory to this series of works, we wish to explain what we believe to be the legitimate province of Natural Reason in the investigation of revealed truth. We feel the more impelled to this—perhaps otherwise unnecessary—task, lest in the views we may advance on experimental religion, we shall be suspected of abrogating entirely the exercise of the intellectual faculties in the study and experience of God’s truth, thus turning away from a most important instrument which He has given us for the purpose of weighing and sifting the evidence of its validity.

The two extremes towards which writers on Christianity have verged, have been, the opponents of the system on the one hand, descanting upon the power and sufficiency of reason, as though all the light which we possess of the invisible world and its sublime realities were owing to its discoveries, and to no other source: and on the other, the advocates of the system, abdicating almost entirely the employment of our mental faculties—setting aside the use of reason, assigning to it no office, and awarding to it no distinction. Both, we believe to be in error; each extreme of opinion untenable. The one, in elevating reason too high, the other, in depressing it too low. The one, in investing us with the prerogative of God, the other, in robbing us of the dignity of man. We feel it important then, briefly and in simple terms, to state what province should be assigned to human reason in prosecuting our researches in revealed and experimental truth. And

that the reader may have the subject clearly before him, we shall first show what is *not*, and then what *is*, the proper use of reason in matters of religious faith.

*First*, It is not the province of human reason to *discover* spiritual truth. This far transcends the power of the highest created reason, unenlightened by the Spirit of God. We do not say that the mind taught of God can discover nothing of the glory of his character, the excellence and loveliness of Jesus, and the spirituality and fitness of his truth. By no means would we assert this. The mind divinely illuminated can penetrate deeply into the vast domain of faith, and discover the glories there revealed. But without this teaching, aside from this divine illumination it cannot advance a step. All is dark—all mysterious. And just what the telescope is to the eye of the astronomer, as when with a glance he sweeps the firmament of nature in search of new and undiscovered worlds, faith is to the eye of reason, as it ranges the firmament of revelation in search of the glorious truths of God. But unenlightened by the Holy Spirit, it can discover nothing. Take, for example, the existence, perfections, and moral government of Jehovah; what can human reason discover here? What light can it throw upon the fundamental article of our belief—the being of a God? Our *senses* may assure us that we exist: that we form but a moiety of human existence is equally certain. That we have existed but a short time, *memory* testifies;—and that we are not self-created, but that there must be a First Cause, from which all creation originated, is all that we can deduce from these obvious facts. This is the utmost limit to the discoveries of reason. “*Who* is this First Cause?” “*What* is He?” “*Where* is He?” “In what relation does He stand to me?” “How may I propitiate his regard, and be admitted to communion with Him?” are momentous questions on which reason may *conjecture*, but on which it can pronounce with no authority.

Let the reader glance but for a moment at the *results* to which reason has come in its investigation of religious truth. What are they?—where is the evidence of its mighty powers?—where is the scribe?—where is the philosopher?—where is the disputer of this world?—let them produce the amount of their researches. What discoveries have they made of God?—what light have they reflected upon his moral attributes? How far have they penetrated into the dark and deep abyss