

The Atonement.

#1. Wherein the choice of the word "Atonement" in the A.V. of Rom. v. 11 is examined, and fully justified. pp. 108 - 111

The primary object of those responsible for *The Berean Expositor* is a testimony to "The dispensation of the Mystery" and the principle of "right division". This does not, however, imply any narrowness of outlook or any neglect of the teaching of all Scripture, and a glance through the "Contents" of Volumes I-XXXIII will reveal a lively interest in all the great fundamental doctrines of the faith. Among such doctrines, that must always occupy a prominent place, is the fundamental one of the Sacrifice of Sin. At recurring intervals, articles bearing upon this theme have appeared in these pages, and we sincerely hope that, until the day comes when we lay down our pen for the last time, this most moving and precious doctrine of the Scripture will find a prominent place in our ministry.

The present series of articles will not traverse the ground already covered, but is intended rather to focus attention upon one aspect only of the finished work of Christ. There have been quite a number of "theories of the atonement" put forward, many of them widely different from one another, yet all propounded by sincere believers, and all based upon some one or more aspects of the truth, or upon some one or more key-words of the Old or New Testaments.

"The difficulties in the way of a solution in the case of the doctrine of the Atonement are at least threefold—exegetical, theological and spiritual: and due effect must be given to each of them" (*Dr. J. Scott-Lidgett*).

The exegetical difficulty lies in the problem of interpreting the terms used.

"It was impossible for all these requirements to be met and their difficulties to be overcome when Hebrew teacher was interpreted by Greek philosopher or Latin schoolman, prophet and priest by jurist, ancient seer by modern theologian, with little or no historical and critical sense or apparatus. And many of the most erratic explanations of the Atonement are due primarily to the misunderstandings, incongruities, and faults of proportion of such unequipped and faulty exegesis" (*Dr. J. Scott-Lidgett*).

The theological difficulties in the way of a satisfactory theory of the Atonement have been equally serious. These concern the Person of Christ, His relation to God, the relation of God and Christ to man, and the nature and consequences of sin. And finally, we must not forget that a spiritual apprehension of the revelation of God in Christ is most necessary if we are to arrive at a correct exegesis or a satisfactory theology.

"A comprehensive and painstaking intellect is insufficient. Mental defects are harmful, but still more faults of heart. Yet until the truth of Christ has by a living experience pervaded every faculty, and brought at last the intellect of man into full accord with itself, agreement in a complete doctrine of the Atonement is impossible" (*Dr. J. Scott-Lidgett*).

These are weighty words, and will, we believe, receive the assent of all our readers.

In this series we are not attempting the impossible; we have but one item of truth to examine, and this we must begin to consider in this opening article. The question, then, before us is: Should the word “atonement” be removed from Rom. v. 11? Is it not true that “atonement” means “covering”, and that nowhere in the N.T. do we read that Christ made a “covering” for sin, but rather that He “took away”, or “put away” sin, which it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to do? Should not the word “atonement”, therefore, be reserved for the O.T. sacrifices, and not be used of the one offering of Christ?

The reader will perceive that much is involved in this question, not only the translation offered in the A.V. but the very use of the word “atonement” in connection with the sacrifice of Christ. It will also be observed that in all this there is a desire to honour the Lord, and acknowledge the completeness of His one offering. In fact, it is this that is partly responsible for the objection to the word “atonement” as being too limited. We shall discover eventually that the whole problem revolves around the intention of the Scriptural writers when they used the word *kaphar*, which primarily meant “to cover”, whether we understand this “covering” to be a mere O.T. expedient or regard it as foreshadowed, though never provided, by the O.T. sacrifices, and eventually fully accomplished by Christ. In other words, Does *kaphar* mean “to cover up” or “to atone” and “propitiate”? And is the sacrifice of Christ greater than the O.T. types, or different from them? This most important question will be approached, in this series, in the following sequence:

- (1) An examination of the translation “atonement” in the A.V. of Rom. v. 11
- (2) An examination of the idea expressed by the “covering” of sin.
- (3) An examination of the Septuagint translation of the Hebrews word *kaphar*.
- (4) The bearing upon the subject of “type”, “shadow”, “figure” and “pattern”.

Following this sequence, let us devote the space available in the present article to a consideration of Rom. v. 11: “By Whom we have now received the atonement.” The marginal note indicates that the word could be rendered “reconciliation” and refers to verse 10. It is therefore evident that the A.V. translators were perfectly familiar with the word “reconciliation”, and yet deliberately used the word “atonement”. It would be easy to sweep this rendering aside, but such an attitude would hardly do justice to the fact that the A.V. is the crown of many earlier translations, nor would it exhibit that becoming modesty, that would attribute to these translators *at least* as much common sense and understanding as we ourselves possess. The fact is that the word “atonement” means “reconciliation”, and was in common use at the time of the A.V. translation. It was selected with deliberate intent, and shows that these translators, rightly or wrongly, intended the reader to link this one great “reconciling” sacrifice of Rom. v. with the “atoning” sacrifices of the Levitical law. To the translators of the A.V. the word “atonement” meant no mere “covering”, but “reconciliation”—a fact that even a superficial acquaintance with Elizabethan English makes clear. Surely then we must not set aside the considered testimony of these translators because they used the language of

their own day, or blame them because that language has changed during the three hundred years since. Shall we not rather regret that we cannot to-day use so homely a word as “at one” (written *aton*) to represent concord, friendship, reconciliation, and harmony?

The verb “to atone”, meaning “to reconcile” or “to make one”, is used by Shakespeare as follows:

“He desires to make atonement
Between the Duke of Gloster and your brothers” (*Richard III. i. 3*).

“He and Aufidus can no more atone
Than violentest contrariety” (*Cor. iv. 6*).

“Since we cannot atone you, we shall see
Justice design the victor’s chivalry” (*Richard II. i. 1*).

“I was glad I did atone my countrymen and you” (*Cym. i. 5*).

And by Philpot: “What atonement is there between light and darkness?”

The word “onement” has now dropped out of use, but is found in Wyclif’s writings, and was employed, according to the Oxford Dictionary, in the year 1598 for “atonement”.

The A.V. translators were perfectly right to render the word *katallage* by the, at that time, common word “atonement”, as they were also right to render the same word in Rom. xi. 15 “reconciling”, and in II Cor. v. 18, 19 “reconciliation”. In the same way we find Shakespeare using the word “reconcile” on occasion, whereas in other plays he uses the word “atone”.

“Let it be mine honour that I have reconciled your friends and you.”

The translators of the A.V. would have been perfectly within their rights and have been fully understood by their own generation if they had written:

“For if the casting away of them be the *atonement* of the world” (Rom. xi. 15).

“And all things are of God, Who hath *atoned* us to Himself and hath given us the ministry of the *atonement*, to wit, that God was in Christ *atonement* the world to Himself” (II Cor. v. 18, 19).

Such a rendering only sounds stranger to our ears because we have lost the word that was in common use at that time, but if the A.V. translators had proceeded in this way, the apparent intrusion of the word in Rom. v. 11 would never have been questioned. It is *we*, and not the A.V. translators, who need to be adjusted and rectified.

When the Revisers in 1881 undertook to produce a new version, they substituted for the archaic one a modern word “in equally good use at the time the A.V. was made, and expressing all that the archaism was intended to convey, but more familiar to the modern reader”. They therefore adopted “reconciliation” in Rom. v. 11, but left the sense unaltered. “Atonement” and “reconciliation” are synonymous, the only difference being that “atonement” is English in origin, and “reconcile” Latin.

As things stand, therefore, we incline to the belief that the word “atonement”, so consistently employed in the A.V. to translated the Hebrew word *kaphar*, is used with intention, as meaning “to make one”, “to reconcile”, and that instead of condemning the A.V. translators for introducing the word into Rom. v. 11, we should rather be grateful for the link that they have established between the O.T. types and the N.T. reality.

In our next article we must consider the idea the *kaphar* may mean merely a “covering”, and that the “covering” of sin is a conception far removed from N.T. reality.

**#2. The “Blessedness” of “Covered Sin” (Psa. xxxii. 1).
(With a note on the difference between the etymology
and the usage of words).
pp. 150 - 153**

We have examined Rom. v. 11 as translated by the A.V., we have weighed that translation in the balances of the sanctuary, and we have found it to be justified. Any needed adjustment or rectification must be regarded as necessitated by modern ignorance, the growth and change of language, and not to any failure or fault of those who, in their great work of translating the scriptures over three hundred years ago, used their mother tongue with understanding. We now come to the suggestions, that the word translated “To make atonement”, the Hebrew word *Kaphar*, should always be translated “make a covering”, that such an idea as the “covering” of sin must be kept exclusively to the O.T., that Christ did not “cover” sin, but, “put it away”; and that therefore it is wrong to use the word “atonement” of the one great offering of Christ; that He did something infinitely greater, and entirely different. Once again, the reader will be conscious that very vital issues are at stake. First, let us be factual. Putting aside all theories let us seek an answer to the question; is there a single example in the whole of the O.T. where *Kaphar* is translated “cover”? for it is maintained that

g, yet, somehow, throughout the whole range of the O.T. scriptures, the idea of “covering” anything never occurs. Every reader will know that this hypothetical statement is entirely false. So varied is the idea of “covering” in the O.T. that in the A.V. no less than twenty-three different words, besides their variants and derivations, are translated “cover”. It may nevertheless be objected, that the idea of covering dishes, or heads, or nakedness, or by outstretched wings, or by ashes, or by robes or with gold, etc., would not necessitate the use of *kaphar*; that only such an idea as “covering sin” would meet the case. This is untrue. The first occurrence of *kaphar* and *kopher* mean nothing else than coating planks of wood with pitch (Gen. vi. 14), and if the principle be true that this first occurrence in Genesis settles the sense in all other occurrences, we should naturally assume that the second and only other occurrence of

kaphar in this same book of Genesis, (and consequently before the giving of the law), would be employed in strict accord with this initial meaning.

Let us consider what such a principle of interpretation would lead to. Could we translate Gen. xxxii. 20—the only other occurrence of *kaphar* in the book—by “I will cover his face”, in the same sense in which it was used where covering with pitch was concerned? Surely it is patent to all that between the days of Noah, when *kaphar* was used in its primitive meaning, and the days of Jacob, the word had dropped its initial idea of a mere “covering” and taken upon itself the new meaning, “to appease”, as with a gift. At any rate to this modified meaning the whole of the subsequent books of the O.T. canon conform. The slightest acquaintance with the behaviour of language and the changes that come in the course of time, should have prevented so crude an idea as that a word must always rigidly retain its primary meaning. Many instances of this change in language will occur to every reader. One that has come before our notice at the time of writing will illustrate our meaning. A Dutch correspondent referred to Paul as the one who gave us “the *mere* doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ”. For the moment, this puzzled us, for it was evident from the context that our correspondent intended to convey the idea, that of all the writers in the Bible, Paul was the one who gave us the most complete statement of this doctrine. Yet, we use the word “mere” in a depreciatory sense, and say “a mere trifle” or a “mere covering”. Yet the fact is that the Dutch correspondent was using the word in its Dictionary and Etymological sense, whereas, to-day that is obsolete, its meaning, by usage, being the very reverse. The Oxford Dictionary gives the meaning of “mere” as “pure, unmixed, undiluted”, and “absolute, entire, sheer, perfect”, and only in the last definition does it give “barely” or “only”. Shakespeare uses the word in the primitive sense when he makes the herald announce that, upon the arrival of the tidings of “the *mere* perdition of the Turkish fleet”, bonfires, sports and revels should mark the welcome news. To-day the news of “the mere” perdition of an enemy fleet would lead to no such confidence. Thus it will be seen that the attempt to compel the word *kaphar* never to grow as other words grow; to confine its meaning to its primitive, etymological root, instead of allowing it the expansion of its usage and fruit, is just as unscientific and bad as to compel every modern Englishman to use the word “mere” as did the Dutchman, whose acquaintance with the language was after all at second-hand. In the next place, we must be aware of the fact that there is no aversion in the O.T. or N.T. Scriptures to using, with good intent, the expression “to cover sin”. The phrase does occur, and *kaphar* is avoided, an entirely different word, from an entirely different root, being used. In Lev. xvii. 11 the words “to make atonement” occur twice, and twice they are the rendering of the Hebrew *kaphar*. Now if “covering” be actually the meaning of this word, what an opportunity was missed in the thirteenth verse of the same chapter, to demonstrate the fact once and for ever.

“He shall even pour out the blood, and COVER it with dust, for it is the life of all flesh” (Lev. xviii. 13, 14).

Moses could have so interlinked this “covering” with the “atonement” of verse 11, as to establish, beyond dispute, the idea that “atonement” means a mere covering—*yet he did not do so*. We have said “Moses” did not do this; we have said “What an opportunity was lost”, but the reader will readily understand that we speak after the manner of men.

What we really affirm is, that the Holy Ghost, Who inspired Moses, avoided such a usage of set purpose. *And so must we.* If the very idea of “covering” sin is to be reckoned as an intrusion into Christian doctrine, how can we account for David’s pronouncement of blessing on such a fact and its endorsement by Paul? In Psalm xxxii. David is not limiting his remarks to the sacrifices of the Levitical law; he looks forward, as the companion Psalm (Psa. li.) reveals, to a cleansing that washes “whiter than snow”, yet he does not hesitate to speak of that greater Sacrifice as providing a covering for sin, and as there is no other sacrifice that is conceivably greater than the Levitical sacrifices, except the one offering of the Lord Himself, then David must be credited with ascribing to the Sacrifice of Christ this effect of covering sin.

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven
Whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity
And in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psa. xxxii. 1, 2).

The genius of Hebrew poetry places “the forgiveness of transgressions” over against “the covering of sin”, and pronounces a blessing on both. It has been maintained that the O.T. word “atonement” means “to cover”, as over against the N.T. word “take away”. Unfortunately for this theory, but blessedly for us all, the very word “forgiven” in Psalm xxxii. 1 is the Hebrew *Nasa*, which is translated “Take (away or up)” 116 times in the A.V. of the O.T. Here, therefore, in the estimate of David, “lifted up” or “taken away” transgression, was the same as “covered” sin, and this is what we maintain is the teaching of scripture. If we continue in Psalm xxxii. we shall discover that he who could rejoice in the blessedness of “covered” sin, nevertheless declared, “mine iniquity have I NOT HID” (Psa. xxxii. 5), although, before the Psalm is finished, he says of the Lord “Thou art my hiding place”. This apparent contradiction is found in the Proverbs.

“He that covereth transgression, seeketh love” (Prov. xvii. 9).
“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper” (Prov. xxviii. 13).

The difference between Prov. xvii. 9 and xxviii. 13 is the difference between sins righteously dealt with by God, and the covering by the sinner of his own sins. So in Psalm xxxii. it was a blessed thing to have sins covered by God, but a wrong thing to attempt to hide them from God. All this, however, is still within the limits of the O.T. We must take the matter one stage further, and show that the Apostle Paul, knowingly and of purpose, introduced this passage into the N.T. Paul quotes Psalm xxxii. 1, 2 in Rom. iv. Now if Paul knew that the O.T. sacrifices simply atoned for and “covered” sin, in contrast with the offering of Christ, which “put away” sin, why did he introduce so disturbing a verse as Psalm xxxii. 1? Rom. iv. deals with the doctrine of imputation, and Paul could easily have passed over Psalm xxxii. 1 and quoted verse 2,

“Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.”

Yet it will soon be evident, that this verse, as it stands, would not have served Paul’s purpose. He wrote:

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted (imputed) for righteousness, EVEN AS David also describeth the

blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying:"
(Rom. iv. 5, 6).

To quote Psalm xxxii. 2, saying, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord IMPUTETH NOT iniquity", would not be sufficient proof of expiation. Paul therefore includes the reference to the "covering of sin" and in that "covering" he finds the equivalent of the positive imputation of righteousness.

From what we have seen, it is evident that except in Gen. vi. 14, *kaphar*, "to atone", is never used in its primitive sense. It is also evident that the idea of "covering" sin is abhorrent neither to the doctrine of the Old Testament nor the New. In our next article we must endeavour to show how *kaphar* is employed, and how the idea of a real, true covering, as distinct from a "mere covering", is imbedded in the instincts of man at the beginning, and endorsed by God Himself.

**#3. Showing that, since the "confusion of tongues",
Kaphar has no other meaning than "to propitiate".
pp. 215 - 218**

We have seen that the word Atonement is a synonym for Reconciliation, and that the Hebrew word *kaphar* is never translated "cover" in any of its forms. We have however seen that, instead of rejecting the idea of "covering" sin, both the Old Testament and the New acknowledge the blessedness of the man whose transgressions are forgiven, or taken away, and whose sins are "covered".

"By one man sin entered into the world", and the record of that fall is found in Gen. iii. While the word *kaphar* is not used in that chapter, and while the word "cover" is not found in the English translation, the *idea* is there in a double sense. In the first, and wrong, sense Adam and his wife sought to "cover" their transgressions by the aprons which they made of leaves, and by hiding from the presence of the Lord. We have scripture for it that the idea of "covering" is intended, for Job said "if I have covered my transgression as Adam" (Job xxxi. 33). This was the covering condemned in Prov. xxviii. 13. That the word "cover", used by Job, aptly applies to the attempt made by Adam, the use of the word in Gen. ix. 23 will show, for there, as in Gen. iii., the thought is the covering of "nakedness". Just as in Proverbs the covering by the sinner of his own sin is condemned, while the covering of sin by God is praised, so in Genesis, for while action of Adam there is rebuked, the principle that sin must be covered is maintained.

"And unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. iii. 21).

The sense of need expressed by the making of aprons was right, but the attempt to provide a covering of their own devising was wrong. Aprons made of leaves omitted the

essential element of shed blood. Coats made of skins cannot be provided apart from the death of animals, and so in the Garden of Eden the question of the right and wrong covering of sin was worked out in symbol and type. There is an allusion to this use of the skin in the law of the burnt offering, for the offering must be “flayed” i.e. skinned (Lev. i. 6). The tabernacle, too, with its cherubim and furniture, was “covered” with skins (Exod. xxv. 5). When Isaiah uses the figure of “clothing”, saying, “He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness”, he was but amplifying the significance of the act of the Lord in the Garden of Eden.

We have already indicated, in the last article, that in the next outstanding type of Redemption, the two words *kaphar* and *kopher* occur together in connection with the ark (Gen. vi. 14); and that when we next meet with the Hebrew *kaphar* it has acquired the meaning that is consistently adopted throughout the remainder of the O.T. Now this is too important a fact to pass by without further attention and we shall therefore observe this critical passage more closely. Jacob said,

“I will appease him with the present” (Gen. xxxii. 20). Esau, had been wronged by his brother, and felt it so deeply, that he comforted himself, “purposing to kill” Jacob upon Isaac’s death (Gen. xxvii. 41, 42). We must remember Esau’s “great and exceeding bitter cry” when he learned that Jacob’s subtilty had deprived him of his blessing (Gen. xxvii. 34).

Many years passed before Jacob again met his brother, and although, so far as we can gather, the early hatred had died down, Jacob may not have been aware of it, and, being apprehensive, arranged the circumstances of the reunion so that his brother’s hatred might be turned away, and reconciliation effected. Let us note his procedure.

First he sent messengers before him and, through them, addressed his brother as “My lord Esau”, calling himself “thy servant Jacob” (Gen. xxxii. 3). We learn next the purpose of this embassy: “I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight” (Gen. xxxii. 5). Upon their return the messengers report that “he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him” (Gen. xxxii. 6). “Greatly afraid and distressed”, Jacob at once proceeded to make provision for the safety of his family and possessions, and, at the same time, if possible, to avert the threatened wrath of Esau. First he divided his people, his flocks and his herds into two bands, saying, “If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape” (Gen. xxxii. 8). He then turned to God in prayer, confessing his unworthiness and praying for deliverance from the hand of his brother Esau. Following this he took from his flocks and herds, two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and twenty bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. These he divided into separate droves, instructing each servant to say to Esau, “They be thy servant Jacob’s; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and behold, also he is behind us” (Gen. xxxii. 20).

When at last Esau saw his brother Jacob, he “ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept”, and Jacob said, “If now I have found

grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me” (Gen. xxxiii. 8-11).

Here is the scriptural basis for interpreting the meaning of *kaphar* in the Levitical law.

Would any reader tolerate the argument that, because in the days of King Alfred the Great a certain word had a certain meaning, that that meaning must adhere to the word to-day? Could we ignore the revolution in language caused by the Norman Conquest, to say nothing of the changes that must naturally come with the passage of time?

The use of the word *kaphar* in the record of the flood is separated from the record of Gen. xxxii. by an interval of seven hundred years. Besides this, we have a revolution in language that puts that of the Norman Conquest into the shade,

“Because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth” (Gen. xi. 9).

The Semitic speaking people adopted the word *kaphar*, but evidently dropped its primitive meaning of “covering” as with pitch, for Moses was under no obligation to append a note of explanation to the record of the use of the word by Jacob, and his subsequent adherence to one meaning, and to this meaning only, throughout the whole of the books of the law, is sufficient proof of the established meaning of the word. Apart from the preservation of the book of the generations of Noah by Moses, no one either in Israel’s day or in our own would ever have had the slightest reason to speak of Atonement as other than a Propitiation. It is strange that we should use Moses (Gen. vi.) to confound Moses (Gen. xxxii.).

In everyone of its occurrences the word *kapporeth*, a feminine word formed from *kaphar*, is translated “Mercy Seat”. Seeing that *kaphar* originally meant “to cover” it has been assumed that the word “Mercy Seat” should be removed from our Bibles, and the more prosaic “cover”, or even “lid”, substituted. The Septuagint translate *kapporeth* by *exilasmos*, “a propitiatory”, (I Chron. xxviii. 11); *Thusiasterion*, (in some versions) “An altar”, “A place of Sacrifice”, and *hilasterion* “A propitiatory”.

In Exod. xxv. 17 *epithema* is added, a word which was in use amongst the Pagan Greeks to indicate the “lid” of a chest. It is no revelation to any reader acquainted with the story of the tabernacle to learn that, as to its material, the “Mercy-Seat” was made of gold, and as to its shape and purpose, a lid. But this fact has no reference to the word *hilasterion*, which in no possible circumstances can mean “a lid”. It can only mean “a propitiatory”, and this fact is recognized by the Septuagint translators by the *adding* of the word *epithema*, so that a true translation of that version would read, “a propitiatory lid”, leaving the word *hilasterion* untouched.

For the sake of clearness, and because the subject is so important, let us approach it afresh.

The ark was a chest, made of wood and covered with gold. A golden lid was made of exactly the same measurements, and this lid is, in the Greek, called *epithema*. It was

“placed above upon the ark”, *epitithemi anothēn*. Now this tells us the material of which the article was made, “gold”, the purpose it served, “a lid”, and where it was placed, “above upon” the ark. So far so good. We now enquire, Did this article of furniture have any spiritual significance? The answer is “Yes, the golden lid is explained to be ‘a propitiatory’, a place where atonement or propitiation could be made”. This “lid” is therefore explained in the Septuagint to be an “*hilasterion*”. But how from this data anyone can say that the term “Mercy-seat” should be removed and the word “lid” substituted passes comprehension. Further, the N.T. sets its seal upon the essential purpose of the Mercy Seat, for in Heb. ix. we read concerning the furniture of the tabernacle, “And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing”, not the *epithema*, the mere “lid”, but the “mercy seat”, *hilasterion* (Heb. ix. 5). The apostle could have selected from his Greek Bible the word *epithema*, enforcing upon us the fact that all we had here was a golden lid but he passes this word by, and enforces its symbolic purpose; it was a propitiatory. That he most certainly meant a propitiatory, or a propitiation, is proved by his one other use of *hilasterion* where he speaks of the sacrifice offered by Christ as “a propitiation through faith in His blood” (Rom. iii. 25).

Now it has been suggested that in Rom. iii. we could read, “set forth a mercy seat through faith in His blood”, and this would do no violence to faith or sense, but the possibility of suggesting that we could substitute the word “lid” in Rom. iii. 25 is beyond consideration.

Having thus said, the fact remains that the word *epithema*, used by the Greek translators, is *an addition* to the Hebrew they were translating, no equivalent Hebrew word being used in the original. It is therefore without authority, and must not be used as a basis for doctrinal teaching.

We have considered two aspects of the subject before us:

- (1) That the idea of “covering” for sin is scriptural; the only reservation being that *God* must provide the covering, and that by means of sacrifice.
- (2) That, apart from the ancient use of *kaphar*, preserved for us in Gen. vi. 14, and used *before* the confusion of tongues, the established use of *kaphar* by Moses and the Prophets upon every occasion that it is employed is “propitiation”. This also is the meaning of the word translated “mercy seat” and is entirely independent of whether it also be a “lid”, or made of “gold”, or whether it be of the same size as the ark, or not.