

# **At-one-ment and Atonement**

## **Part 1**

This lesson might be thought of as an overview of Volume 5, but the main purpose is to show the consistent and scriptural usage of the two terms: at-one-ment and atonement. These terms are used not only in Volume 5, but in a number of other places as well.

In some respects, Volume 5 could be thought of as having two titles.

I have most often heard it pronounced as “The Atonement Between God and Man” without the hyphens.

The published title is: “The At-one-ment Between God and Man” and this hyphenated word is used more than 150 times in the Harvest Message.

The term “atonement” is used more than 250 times in the Volumes and Tabernacle alone. It is used more than a thousand times in the Original Towers. There is no question that atonement is more important, as it provides the legal basis for at-one-ment. At-one-ment is impossible without atonement first having been secured.

The distinction between these two terms is significant, and during the time before us the objective is to consider both of them in detail, showing that distinction clearly.

An exhaustive consideration of all the places where this terminology occurs is not possible in such a short time, so most of this study will consist of a brief summary of the main points of Volume 5.

In brief, the term atonement has more to do with the *legal* aspects of the Ransom doctrine, while the term at-one-ment has more to do with the *practical* aspects of the Ransom doctrine.

The best place to start is at the beginning of Volume 5: the Flyleaf.

### **The At-one-ment Between God and Man**

*“There is One God, and One Mediator Between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus; Who Gave Himself a Ransom for All, to be Testified in Due Time.” “We Also Joy in God Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom We Have Now Received the Atonement.” 1 Timothy 2:5,6; Romans 5:11*

Each of the Volumes has a paragraph on the Flyleaf page which describes that Volume. Looking carefully at each descriptive paragraph for each of the Volumes is both interesting and informative, as well as being a most valuable study.

Notice the choice of scriptures which follow the Volume 5 title:

1 Tim. 2:5,6 – These verses are about the Ransom in its use to provide mediation, reconciliation, bringing the world of mankind back to God. This *work* is made possible by the Ransom.

The Ransom *price* stands separate from the *work* of reconciliation made possible by the Ransom.

The context (including verse 4 “*Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the [accurate] knowledge of the truth.*”) includes both atonement (“*to be saved*”) and at-one-ment (“*to come unto the knowledge of the truth*”) while maintaining a distinction between the two, and showing the necessity of atonement before at-one-ment is possible.

First all men will be saved (from Adamic death), then they will be brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth.

Salvation focuses on the legal aspects of atonement, while the bringing to an accurate knowledge of the truth is part of the at-one-ment process.

Also cited on the flyleaf page is Rom. 5:11 – This verse applies to the Church of the Firstborn during the Gospel Age. Verse 10 is also important in the context.

“*We have now received the atonement.*” [KJV] However, the Greek word translated atonement is G2643 which means *reconciliation*.

The emphasis in this verse is actually on the at-one-ment. It is the same Greek word that is used in 2 Cor. 5:18 – “*And all things are of God, who hath **reconciled** us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us **the ministry of reconciliation.***” There are two key points to consider in this verse:

1) We were reconciled *to* God *by* Jesus Christ. This word is G2644 and is closely related to G2643. The emphasis is on at-one-ment *to* God *by* Jesus through his death. The same Greek word is used twice in Romans 5:10.

This work of reconciliation for the Church during the Gospel Age is based on the **future value** of the atonement.

From E25 – “Atonement, so far as God is concerned, is a thing of the past.” In the context this is speaking about atonement for the Church, but it is only *reckoned* at the present time.

2) The meaning of 2 Cor. 5:18 being at-one-ment is proven by the fact that “*We have been given **the ministry of reconciliation.***”

It should be abundantly clear that we have nothing to do with atonement. Only Jesus could provide the Ransom which accomplishes atonement: the legal satisfaction for sin.

What we have been given is the opportunity of being partners in the work of at-one-ment – primarily in the future as part of the Mediator.

To summarize: the word translated atonement in the KJV of Rom. 5:11 really means reconciliation, (i.e. at-one-ment) as proven by the usage of the same Greek word in 2 Cor. 5:18.

The importance of the Flyleaf, when properly understood, cannot be overemphasized. That is why a disproportionate amount of time has been given to analyzing it.

## The 1916 Foreword

The same title is repeated: “The At-one-ment Between God and Man.” The first few paragraphs discuss the Ransom in some detail.

Then on [Eii] Brother Russell makes an important statement: “He [i.e. Jesus] finished this work of laying down His life, surrendering it, sacrificing it, permitting it to be taken from Him, when He on the cross cried: ‘It is finished!’ Nothing more could be laid down than was there laid down—a Ransom, a corresponding price, for Father Adam. But it was not paid over as a price in settlement of Adam's account, else Adam and the entire sinner race would then and there have been turned over to Jesus. The price was merely laid in the hands of Divine Justice as a deposit, to the credit of the One who had died, that He might apply it later in harmony with the Divine Plan.”

This matter is clarified further on the next page. [Eiii] “Jesus had used as an *imputation* the Ransom merit which He had deposited in the Father's hands; but He did not *give* it to His disciples.” This refers to what took place on the day of Pentecost. The word *imputation* is emphasized by the Pastor. This is in complete harmony with previous comments.

Also from [Eiii] “The time for giving the results of the Ransom, viz., Restitution to Adam and his race, is after our Lord's Second Advent, when He shall set up His Kingdom, designed for the very purpose of bringing back the rebellious race into full fellowship with the Father and to eternal life—as many as will.”

Notice the careful wording here: “...the *results* of the Ransom [that is] restitution...”

The shift of focus is on the *results* of the Ransom which include at-one-ment – for the purpose of “bringing back the rebellious race into full fellowship with the Father.”

[Eiv] “When this Ransom-price shall have been formally delivered over to Justice in the end of this Age, it will no longer be a *deposit* at the command of the Savior but will have been exchanged for Adam and his race, all of whom will be immediately transferred by the Father to the Son, that His Millennial Kingdom may begin and all the families of the earth be subjected to the Redeemer, that He may uplift them out of sin and death conditions to all that was lost in Adam—to all for which Jesus died to regain for man.”

The Ransom-price is used to purchase Adam and his race. Only Jesus can pay this over to the Father. That is atonement: the legal satisfaction for sin.

The work that follows is uplifting the human race, restoring all that was lost in Adam. That is the grand privilege we will have if faithful, working together with Jesus in the work of at-one-ment.

Study 1  
**THE FACT AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE ATONEMENT**

This chapter starts with two *incorrect* views:

- (1) The Orthodox view focuses only on the satisfaction of Justice – atonement.
- (2) The Unorthodox view presents the view that at-one-ment is possible without the necessity for Justice to be satisfied.

The correct view (3) follows on the next several pages, containing a list of 13 points. This list will be referred to a number of times.

- (a) Man fell and came under the sentence of death – wrath. (Eph. 2:3)
- (b) God’s Love arranged a substitute for Adam that would satisfy Justice. (Rom. 3:26)
- (c) This is the program of atonement – the Ransom.
- (d) Jesus’ sacrifice does not complete the *work* of atonement.
- (e) The first step will be to annul the death sentence.
- (f) The next step will be to place the fallen race beyond the reach of Divine Justice.
- (g) The vast majority of the human race are deluded by the Adversary at the present time and do not see or accept the message of grace and forgiveness.
- (h) The ultimate objective is at-one-ment for “all men.”
- (i) Only the Church benefit from the atonement, and that only *indirectly*, at the present time. During the Millennial Age they, together with Jesus, will accomplish the work of at-one-ment for “all the families of the earth.”
- (j) The Church have received the atonement, but only in the sense of accepting the opportunity which the grace of God has provided. The rest of mankind are blinded.
- (k) The next step will be the binding of Satan, followed by filling the whole earth with the knowledge of God, and thus *all men will be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.* (1 Tim. 2:4)
- (l) The atonement program has two phases: (1) The satisfaction of Justice [atonement], and (2) bringing mankind back into harmony with God (at-one-ment). Those who willingly reject Divine favor will be destroyed in the second death.
- (m) This point focuses on what will have been achieved by the time the great work of atonement is complete: “...all things in heaven and in earth will be found in harmony with God, praising him for all his munificence and grace through Christ; and there shall be no more dying and no more sighing, no more pain there, because the former things shall have passed away” [E20] This point closes with a repetition of the two phases from the previous point – (1) The propitiation of Justice, and (2) the full reconciliation of all found worthy of eternal life.

These 13 points provide an overview of the entire Volume, and of the entire Plan of God. Succeeding chapters go into detailed discussions of point and counterpoint on the foregoing fundamental concepts. Note that Brother Russell makes a clear distinction between atonement and at-one-ment in several of these key points. These 13 points will be referred to as list 1.

The conflict between the Bible and Evolution is presented next: "...no harmony is possible between the Scripture teaching and the teaching of Evolution..." Then follow arguments proving point (a) regarding the fall.

The promise to Abraham is shown to be the first glimmer of hope regarding point (b). Jesus and the Apostles expanded on this promise.

The Apostle Paul in particular explained the work of atonement, the Ransom, point (c).

On [E27] the distinction emphasized several times already is repeated: "These two features of the atonement, (1) the righting of the wrong, and (2) the bringing of the separated ones into accord, are shown in the Divine proposition of a New Covenant..." The context touches on various other points, starting with point (d) from list 1.

[E28] "Reconciliation with God, at-one-ment with him, was impossible until, first, the redemption had been secured with the precious blood, that the one seeking at-one-ment might approach God, through the mediator of the New Covenant..." Notice the consistency of this statement, showing the clear distinction between at-one-ment and "the redemption secured with the precious blood" – the Ransom price which secures atonement. Atonement must take place before at-one-ment is possible.

[E29] After explaining the purpose of the Mediatorial Kingdom, the matter is summed up with this statement: "Thus eventually the Mediator's work will result in an *actual at-one-ment* between God and those whom the Mediator shall restore to perfection."

These statements are clear and logical, showing the distinction between atonement and at-one-ment.

Another list of four points is presented on [E30-31], regarding what will have been accomplished by the end of the Mediatorial Kingdom. This relates to point (m) on list 1:

- (1) Sealing the New Covenant with the precious blood of Jesus.
- (2) The reconciliation of the Church beforehand to serve as joint-heirs with Jesus in the work of mediation, or at-one-ment.
- (3) The reconciliation of all the willing and obedient of the world of mankind by bringing them to perfection, thus making it possible for them to be turned over to the Father.
- (4) The destruction of the unwilling.

[E32] Contains another list, this one having five points, on the range of topics to be covered in the succeeding chapters:

- (1) Concerning Jehovah, the author of the plan of atonement. [Chapter 2]
- (2) Concerning the Mediator. [Chapters 3 to 7]
- (3) Concerning the holy spirit. [Chapters 8 to 11]

(4) Respecting mankind. [Chapters 12 to 14]

(5) Respecting the Ransom. [Chapter 15]

Chapter 16 stands alone. It is entitled: “The Ministry of Reconciliation or At-one-ment” and presents important details concerning the “Royal Priesthood” explaining its role in the work of at-one-ment and how this arrangement is made possible.

How does this last list relate to the first one presented in Chapter 1?

The list of 13 points on pages 17 to 20 shows the *sequence* of events from the fall of man to the end of the Millennium. As already stated, this will be referred to as *list 1*.

The list of 5 points on page 32 divides the same material *by topic*, but the sequence is different.

We will examine each succeeding chapter and see what connections can be made with *list 1*. Briefly stated, the first 10 chapters of Volume 5 present extensive details regarding God, Jesus, and the holy spirit (i.e. the power of God), and the role played by each one in the Divine program. The remaining chapters consider various aspects and scriptural arguments regarding atonement and at-one-ment.

Study II  
**THE AUTHOR OF THE ATONEMENT**

God is the author of the atonement.

A correct understanding of this topic is essential before any other aspects of the plan of atonement can be understood. That is why this chapter is presented at the beginning.

Knowing that God is the Author of the atonement, and what this means, demonstrates His character. This relates to point (b) on *list 1*.

Extensive scriptural proofs are given to support the fact that God is the author, that He is the One God, and that the Divine program is accomplished through His only-begotten son.

The correct understanding of the Nature of God as presented in this chapter is another necessary prerequisite to understanding the remainder of the book.

The trinity doctrine is wholly antagonistic to the Scriptural views of both atonement and at-one-ment. Once again, extensive scriptural proofs are given to support these concepts.

Because of the vast number of Scriptures cited, the overview of this chapter is very brief. A personal study of Volume 5 is extremely important.

The main point of this chapter: God is the author of the atonement.

Study III  
**THE MEDIATOR OF THE ATONEMENT**  
**THE ONLY BEGOTTEN ONE**

Jesus is a created being, God's firstborn.

This chapter begins with a list of seven points:

- (1) Jesus was a spirit being before becoming a man.
- (2) Jesus was "a god" – a mighty one. His titles included: the Archangel, the Logos and Michael.
- (3) The Logos was God's firstborn, and the only direct creation of God. He was God's representative in the creation of all things.
- (4) He voluntarily took on the human nature in order to be mankind's redeemer. This ties in with point (c) on *list 1*.
- (5) This condition was temporary, for the purpose of giving the ransom or corresponding price for Adam and all his descendants.
- (6) As a reward for his faithfulness he was raised to the Divine nature.
- (7) It is this "Great One" that we honor and serve as a being who is in complete harmony with God, his Father.

Just as chapter 2 presented a correct understanding of the nature of God, so this chapter presents a correct understanding of the nature of Jesus, the Logos.

The relationship of God as the Father and Jesus as the Son further demonstrates the incompatibility of the false doctrine of the trinity.

The *pre-existence* of Jesus as the Logos is also dealt with because the denial of his pre-existence is an error in an opposite direction from the trinity.

In harmony with the foregoing, the wrong view of "incarnation" is also shown to be unscriptural.

The closing paragraphs of this chapter touch on additional aspects of point (c) on *list 1*.

The main point of this chapter: Jesus, the mediator of the atonement, is God's firstborn.



Study IV  
**THE MEDIATOR OF THE ATONEMENT**  
**THE UNDEFILED ONE**

The man Christ Jesus was a perfect man.

This chapter considers Jesus' humanity.

The Doctrine of the atonement revolves around Jesus as a Ransom for Adam. This chapter proves two basic Truths:

- 1) Jesus was related to the human race through Mary, and was therefore human. He had to be human in order to redeem Adam. (Rom. 5:12-19)
- 2) However, he also had to be *perfect* in order to be a Ransom. So it was necessary that he be free from sin and the curse that was common to the rest of the human race. (Heb. 7:26)

This chapter goes on to give additional Scriptural evidence to support these two Truths, and provides the details of how this was accomplished.

God was the Father of Jesus. Joseph was specially chosen, but he was *not* Jesus' father. Mary was Jesus' mother, and was chosen because of her lineage tracing back to David, and for her character.

The main point of this chapter: The man Christ Jesus was a perfect man, uncontaminated by sin, and therefore not under the Adamic curse.

Study V  
**THE MEDIATOR OF THE ATONEMENT**  
**“MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN”**  
**AND “TOUCHED WITH A FEELING**  
**OF OUR INFIRMITIES”**

Although Jesus was a perfect man, his experiences allowed him to sympathize with fallen men.

This chapter focuses on the perfection of Jesus from a practical standpoint.

He was made “like unto his Brethren” (Heb. 2:17) in two ways:

(1) An important part of this “likeness” was the fact that he was a human being, yet not in any way contaminated with sin. (Heb. 4:15)

(2) The only ones who could be considered Jesus’ “brethren” in the complete sense of the word are those who are spirit-begotten New Creatures. This is another part of being “like unto his Brethren.”

Jesus’ three temptations recorded in Matthew 4 were as a New Creature.

The first temptation was directed toward the Flesh.

The second temptation was related to the influence of the World.

The third temptation was directly from the Devil.

*We* have these same three sources of temptation. “He was tempted in all points like as *we* are, yet without sin.” (Heb. 4:15 again)

Both aspects (being human and being a New Creature) were important in order for Jesus to be a “sympathetic High Priest” to his “brethren” during the Gospel Age. (Heb. 2:17 again)

Jesus learned from the things he suffered. (Heb. 5:8) [And so do we.]

The lessons that Jesus and his Brethren learn under this discipline is what qualifies them to accomplish at-one-ment for the world of mankind in the Kingdom.

Details related to points (a), (g), (i) and (j) from *list 1* are introduced in this chapter, including: The fall, justification, the fact that the world is blinded, and the qualification of the New Creation to be part of the Mediator.

This chapter also considers teachings which are contradictory to the concept of Jesus’ perfection, and demonstrates their erroneous character.

The main point of this chapter: Jesus was a perfect man, yet, his experiences allowed him to sympathize with fallen men. This qualifies him, in a practical way, to be the mediator.

Study VI  
**THE MEDIATOR OF THE ATONEMENT**  
**DAVID'S SON AND DAVID'S LORD**

The mediator had to be both David's son and David's lord.

This chapter goes into more detail regarding the lineage of Jesus through Mary.

This relationship was necessary to fulfill the promise to Abraham regarding his seed.

This relationship was also necessary to fulfill the promise to David.

The end result is that Jesus was David's son, but as Messiah he is also David's Lord.

Several titles of Jesus are explained, such as "the Second Adam", "the Everlasting Father", etc.

The main point of this chapter is to show from the Scriptures how, and why, Jesus was both David's Son and David's Lord.

Study VII  
**THE MEDIATOR OF THE ATONEMENT**  
**"THE SON OF MAN"**

Jesus was the only perfect son of the man Adam.

This chapter explains the title: "the son of man" (which is used more than 80 times in the New Testament).

This is the fifth chapter relating to Jesus. It provides further proofs that Jesus is the means that God has designed to accomplish both atonement and at-one-ment.

The title "the son of man" is closely linked to the title "the second Adam" considered in chapter 6, and also the title "the everlasting father" in Isaiah 9:6. The significance of all three titles is that of life-giver. This work will be accomplished under the New Covenant.

This chapter proves from yet another standpoint that Jesus was human, of the seed of Adam (through Eve), "the son of man," and the seed of David through Nathan, and therefore not the son of Joseph.

This chapter also shows that this *title* is one that Jesus still has, even though he is now a Divine spirit being. (Matt. 13:41; Matt. 24:27,37; Matt. 25:31; Mark 8:38)

The emphatic nature of this title is manifest in the Greek: "THE son of THE man."

THE man Christ Jesus redeems all that was lost by THE man Adam.

Jesus came legally into possession of this title by humbling himself to become a man and by submitting to the ignominious death on the cross.

This title is thus closely linked to the philosophy of the redemption of Adam's race.

This chapter also covers the many "supposed objections" to the real meaning of this title.

The main point of this chapter: Jesus was the only perfect son of the man Adam.

Study VIII  
**THE CHANNEL OF THE ATONEMENT**  
**THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD**

The holy spirit is the power of God.

This chapter covers the *work* of the holy spirit, or power of God, as it relates to both atonement and at-one-ment. It also shows the *nature* of the holy spirit.

Proofs are given to show clearly that the holy spirit is not a person, and not a part of a trinity of gods. This distinction is necessary to properly understand the doctrines of the atonement and the at-one-ment.

Many scriptures which are misunderstood regarding the holy spirit are explained.

Various terms used in the New Testament are also cited and explained. [E168] “These terms, considered unitedly, represent various features of the character, the disposition, the Spirit of our God, Jehovah, and proportionately the spirit or disposition of all who have received his Spirit, become partakers of his disposition and come into harmony with the Divine mind.”

A detailed consideration of the work of the holy spirit, and the usage of this term in the New Testament occupies a large part of this chapter, including practical aspects that apply to the New Creation.

[E183] contains a short list of items regarding what the holy spirit is, and all are related to the general idea that the holy spirit is the power of God. It can be a life-giving power; a begetting power; and a transforming power upon the mind.

The holy spirit is contrasted with the spirit of the world.

The main point of this chapter: The holy spirit is the power of God which is used in various ways to accomplish both atonement and at-one-ment.

Study IX  
**THE BAPTISM, WITNESS AND SEAL  
OF THE SPIRIT OF AT-ONE-MENT**

All preceding chapter titles used the word atonement. This chapter uses the term at-one-ment.

The main point of this chapter is to show the operation of the holy spirit of God upon the followers of Jesus (1) during the Gospel Age and (2) upon the world of mankind during the Millennial age. This is a work of at-one-ment.

The fact that the holy spirit is the power and influence of God (and not a person) is reiterated several times.

The concept of the “baptism of the spirit” is discussed, starting with Pentecost. This was an important beginning of the spirit-begotten class among the followers of Jesus and was thus marked with special evidences that (1) Jesus’ sacrifice was accepted, and (2) that the waiting disciples who had made a full consecration were also accepted.

Outward manifestations of the three baptisms of the holy spirit are examined: (1) upon our Lord Jesus at Jordan, (2) upon the waiting disciples at Pentecost, and (3) upon Cornelius, to show the acceptance of Gentile converts.

The Apostle Peter had the “keys” to open the “door” first for the Jews and later for the Gentiles.

The Church – the Body of Christ – down through the Gospel Age, comes under the original anointing. (Psa. 133)

There will be a future baptism of the spirit “upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28) during the Millennial Age. This is part of the work of reconciliation (at-one-ment) of bringing the race back into harmony with God. This work is only possible because of the atonement accomplished by Jesus.

Point (f) from list 1 is discussed next, showing the necessity for the fallen race to be placed beyond the reach of Divine Justice, and how this arrangement is possible under the Mediator.

Point (k) from list 1 – the binding of Satan, and its necessity in the Divine program – is also considered briefly.

Differences between the operation of the holy spirit during the Gospel Age and under the Mediator are considered in detail.

Misunderstandings regarding praying for the holy spirit are resolved.

One of the most important aspects of this chapter is the witness of the holy spirit, allowing us to know if we have been spirit-begotten. Many pages are devoted to this subject.

The symbolism of the spiritual Temple is explained and related to at-one-ment or reconciliation. And finally the expressions “filled with the spirit” and “sealed with the spirit” are also explained.

The main purpose of this chapter is to show that the holy spirit is not a person, and to show in detail how it operates upon fallen humans during the Gospel Age and the Millennial Age in the process of at-one-ment.

Study X  
**THE SPIRIT OF A SOUND MIND**

The spirit of a sound mind is a result of the operation of the power of God.

This is the third chapter on the holy spirit. It focuses primarily on how the power or influence of God works in the hearts and minds of His people during the Gospel Age.

That the holy spirit is not a person is once again shown repeatedly.

Many important details are given showing how the holy spirit of God operates.

This operation of God's holy spirit is part of the work of at-one-ment, not only now, but also in the future.

The main point of this chapter: The spirit of a sound mind is a result of the power of God working in the hearts and minds of His people.

Study XI  
**THE HOLY SPIRIT OF AT-ONE-MENT**  
**SUPPOSED OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED**

Notice that the chapter title includes the word at-one-ment.

This is the fourth and final chapter on the holy spirit. *Supposed objections considered* was a regular feature in Brother Russell's writings and manifests an important balance seldom found in other religious philosophies.

This chapter does not treat the doctrines of atonement and at-one-ment directly, but it is important in order to give support to the three chapters preceding, that the holy spirit is the power and influence of God, and not a person.

The main point of this chapter: To resolve any misunderstandings concerning the holy spirit that might be in the minds of some, due to common false teachings and wrong interpretations.



**END OF PART 1**