

**SUBSTITUTION: A
TREATISE ON
THE ATONEMENT**

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Substitution: a treatise on the atonement by Marshall Randles

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MARSHALL RANGLES

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P R E F A C E .

ALL human goodness and blessing stand in vital relation to the mediatorial government of God. So far as theology faithfully reveals God and His ways towards man, it presents the highest standard and motives of duty, and unveils the rich provisions of grace. To repudiate it, therefore, is to remove the most fitting basis of human virtue and happiness. History abounds with evidence that pure doctrine is the true seed of high morality and spiritual peace.

A man, or a people, abandoning belief of the fundamental truths of Christianity, or allowing them to die out as of no practical use, may retain for a time something of the morality and reverent spirit which they produce; but the natural tendency will be to depravation of moral tone and principle. The material of pure theology is religious truth, losing which the light becomes darkness, and pious emotion degenerates into morbid sentiment, or fanatical superstition, from which infidelity and impiety are the frequent rebound.

Of all Christian doctrines, none holds a more central relation to the rest, or has a more practical bearing on the character and conduct of men than that of the atonement. By its relations to God and man, the atonement interweaves itself with the attributes and

rule of the one, and the obligations, privileges, powers, and destiny of the other. It is the ground of mutual approach between God and man, and the very pith of the Mediator's work. Here, if anywhere, perspicuity of doctrine is of the utmost value. Erroneous doctrine here is a misrepresentation of God in His most stupendous doings, and a misdirection to man in his profoundest interests. If we start wrong at this centre, we take a false touchstone into the whole scheme of Christian verity.

In accordance with these thoughts, the subject discussed in the following pages has an intrinsic importance coeval with the religion of the Bible. This and the present state of the controversy, earnest, many-sided, and widespread, furnish ample apology for a sincere endeavour to contribute, in however small a degree, to the elucidation of the subject.

The formulation of Christian dogma is generally the outcome of theological conflict. Discussion on the Trinity, and Person of Christ, early absorbed the attention of the Church, and consequently, its results were early thrown into the form of confessions of faith. The keen contests about soteriology came later, and hence definition and dogma thereupon, which have found their way into the Churches of modern Christendom, belong to a later date.

In the logic of Anselm, and the rationalism of Abelard; in the reply of Grotius to Socinus, of Crellius to Grotius, and Stillingfleet to Crellius; in the trumpet-tongued teaching of Luther and the Reformers, the naked predestinarianism of Calvin, Owen, and Edwards, and the

modifications of Amyraldus and Baxter; in the audacious attacks of Priestley and his school, the chilling neology of Germany, the able defences of Magee, Gilbert, and Jerram, and the ferment of opinion manifest in the works of later authors, such as Robertson, Campbell, Maurice, Hodge, Jowett, Young, Bushnell, Smeaton, Crawford, and Dale—the war on the nature of the atonement, with its assaults and retreats, its flanks and counter-flanks, its gains and losses, has been waged mainly between what, for convenience, may be called evangelical and rationalistic views, of which one of the most crucial questions is the substitution of Christ in His sufferings and death for man.

The design of this treatise is to supplement rather than supersede others of kindred views. It affects not to deal with every phase of adverse theories, but those more especially which have been recently broached, or the grounds on which they are built.

The shape and texture of the following chapters have been considerably influenced by a conviction that in the present state of the controversy one great *desideratum* is a clear re-statement of the doctrine in question. With this view, the vital element of substitution has been made the pole-star to determine the general course of the investigation.

The plan adopted involves the repeated citation of certain texts, which the superficial reader might mistake for mere tautology, but which, from differences of connection, it is hoped, closer scrutiny will see to be only the same weapons wielded against different foes, or the same shield turned about to protect different sides of the truth.