

Atonement Sufficiency Examined

Elder Oscar B. Mink
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(Romans 5:11) - “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement”.

Voluminous are the writings of sovereign grace advocates under the heading of limited atonement or particular redemption, and this is as it should be; for in this great truth, God’s attributes of omnipotence and omniscience are gloriously manifested. There is near to perfect accord in the school of sovereign grace as to the salvational effectuality of the atonement, but there is at the same time a disconcerting measure of discord in the ranks of sovereign grace believers as to the extent of the sufficiency of the atonement. Was Christ’s expiatory sacrifice sufficient to remit the sins of mankind, or was it restricted in atonement sufficiency to those chosen of God from the Adamic race? This question poses a dark enigma to many, and has been the basis of much debate throughout the history of Christendom. Nevertheless, our feeble efforts in this treatise shall be expended in an attempt to magnify the truth as relates to the question. If by God’s grace our endeavor is rewarded with a small token of success, a proportionate measure of darkness will be lifted from the question and our efforts amply recompensed.

Some brethren whom I esteem very highly, and whose friendship I am determined to keep in constant repair, espouse what I consider an unorthodox view of the sufficiency of the atonement; namely, atonement sufficiency is equal in extent to human evil, but not in intent. This view is commonly referred to by theological scholars, as, the sufficiency-efficiency view of the atonement, and is today, by far, the most popular view being propagated by Calvinists and Baptist. However, there are today among God’s elect people, as there have always been, and shall ever be, a large and concerned number who take a more conservative view of the atonement of Christ; that view being, all that was wrought in and by the atonement was and is limited to the elect of God. This view magnifies the Majesty of God more than the other, for in it there is no undersigned sufficiency.

The position on atonement sufficiency, which I contend is the Scriptural one, and which I purpose to defend in this writing, can in brief be described thusly: Atonement sufficiency and efficacy are equal in extent and application. This position, some would say, “Allows for deficiency in God, in that He was not able to provide a sufficiency adequate to the Adamic transgression.” Inability and deficiency are incongruous to the nature of God, for with Him all things are possible, and they who would charge us with teaching that God’s throne has a dim shade of insufficiency over it need to learn that it is the “design” of atonement sufficiency we are concerned with; and that the sovereignty of God’s sufficiency has never been questioned by New Testament Baptists. The deficiency in sufficiency supposition is an absurdity that needs no further refutation or consideration.

I will strive vigorously for Scriptural accuracy in this treatise, but it is needful to be understood by all, that the ultimate literary skills this side of Divine inspiration can, only with so great a theme,

develop an abstraction of it. However, an abstraction can be more than the sharing of theory. It can be and should be an enlargement of face, and this is my aim, and by divine enablement, the end which shall be accomplished. So, let us embark henceforth.

To effect the purpose of this treatise, as stated above, the following three sub-headings are prescribed:

1. The design of atonement sufficiency.
2. Scripture typology and atonement sufficiency.
3. A passive or inoperative sufficiency is alien to the attributes of God.

In the following the above order, let us first consider:

Part One

1.) The Design Of Atonement Sufficiency

In introducing this point, I will set down a maxim, i.e., God is the only absolute infinity. Therefore, all things are subject to metamorphosis or transformation except the essential glory of God. God's essential glory is not capable of more or less. Addition and diminution have to do with God's manifestive glory, and not with that glory which is inherent in His nature. All of creation is sovereignly appointed to serve God's intrinsic glory, but some things of creation are designed by Him to declare or display a greater manifestation of His glory than are some others.

The stars of heaven are an infinite host, but God knows **“the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names” (Psalms 147:4)**. The universe is an infinity, but to the dismay of the pantheists, it is not the absolute infinity; for only God is omnipresent and non-dimensional. Atonement efficiency and sufficiency are infinite, but both are limited in design by the covenant of redemption (**Hebrews 13:20**). This covenant knows nothing of sufficient grace that does not suffice.

In the eternal covenant God decreed to save a number of Adam's fallen posterity by the vicarious sufferings of Christ, and the rest He left in their sins to their just condemnation. Seeing that this covenant is eternal, that there can be no new thought with God, and what He does He always determined to do; I ask, “Why would God make Christ's atonement sufficient for those whom He had already passed over in the covenant of eternal favor? What is the purpose of a sufficiency beyond that of Divine satisfaction?” The design of the sacrifice of Christ was to reconcile the elect unto God, and the sufficiency of that glorious and infinite sacrifice was limited to that infinite sum, beloved of the Father and given to the Son in the covenant of redemption.

The value of the blood of Christ is not diminished by what it does not do. It did not procure repentance and faith for all men, it did not stay the retributive justice of God against the non-elect, and it did not provide salvational sufficiency for all men. The preciousness of the work of the Holy Spirit is not lessened because He does not once convict the non-elect of their sins, and does nothing to alter their hatred of God, but leaves them in their utter rebellion against all that is holy, just, and good, which culminates in their eternal suffering.

What is the value of the blood of Christ? Surely, no redeemed person would say it is less than infinite, but it borders on Arminianism to contend that the blood of Christ sufficiently atoned for the sins of mankind. The blood of Christ cannot be overvalued, but in the thinking of finite creatures, its value can be misapplied; and this is precisely what the universal sufficiency theory does. The atonement of Christ cannot be denuded of any of its parts, and neither can it be made to bear more than what omniscience designed for it to bear.

The blood of Christ was shed to satisfy the just demands of the law brought against the elect people of God, and when satisfaction is attained, it asks no more. God's atoning love is equal to the condemnation of His people, and when His justice was satisfied, He had no further quarrel with the elect. God's law is the basis or standard of His judgment, and the demands of the law levied upon the elect have been substitutionarily satisfied by the death of Christ, and the Righteous Judge has taken His legal pen and has written "justified" on their record, (**Romans 8:33**). But the atoning sufficiency of Christ's death was not redundant. It did not exceed what was necessary to satisfy the debt which His people owed to His law, and now Divine justice looks for satisfying sufficiency beyond the covenant of sovereign mercy and finds none, except in merited damnation of the non-elect.

Thus, the equitable and incontestable verdict rendered by the court of Heaven against all who die in their sins reads: "... **I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity**" (**Matthew 7:23**). They were fully known by God's omniscience, but they were total strangers to the covenant of love; and their names being omitted from the Lamb's book of life, no redemptive sufficiency was provided for them by the atoning blood of Christ.

A sufficiency which satisfaction does not require is alien to His Scriptures and to the experience of all rational creatures. So it is, in realizing satisfaction, sufficiency and efficiency are co-extensive; for sufficiency is measured by the effect it renders. The old adage which says: "It is better to have too much than too little" is true in the general sense, but it can never apply to God, for He never has too much or too little; just the perfect measure.

The value of the blood of Christ is infinite, but it is a divinely pre-assigned infinity, and is restricted in its atoning worth and utility to the elect of God. Wherein is the wisdom in purchasing a sufficiency for a people whose sins are inextinguishable and were reprobate before the foundation of the World? Wherein is the wisdom of God in extending the value of the blood to those whom He hated before the ages were born? Wherein is the wisdom of God in subjecting His beloved Son to infinite suffering in order to purchase a sufficiency for a people who would never receive the least benefit from it? Most certainly we would not think of questioning the wisdom of God, but the universal sufficiency view is a mooted one, and raises many questions. God did not, by the shedding of Christ's blood, obtain a universal sufficiency for the curse of sin, but His sacrificial blood was the means of ratifying the covenant of redemption (**Hebrews 13:20**), which covenant beneficially precluded the non-elect.

1. The design and sufficiency of Christ's intercessory prayer is limited to the elect of God (**John 17:9**).

2. The design and sufficiency of Christ's imputed righteousness is limited to the elect of God (**Romans 4:6**).
3. The design and sufficiency of Christ's atoning love is limited to the elect of God (**Jeremiah 31:3; John 17:23; Romans 9:13**).
4. The design and sufficiency of Christ's justification is limited to the elect of God (**Romans 8:33**).
5. The design and sufficiency of Christ's meditorial office is limited to the elect of God (**Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25**).
6. The design and sufficiency of the eternal covenant is limited to the elect of God (**John 5:21, 6:63; II Timothy 1:9**).
7. The design and sufficiency of regenerative grace is limited to the elect of God (**John 17:6; Hebrews 13:20**).
8. The design and sufficiency of Heaven is limited to the elect of God (**I Peter 1:2-4**).

The term "sufficiency" in the eight postulates enumerated above could be replaced with the word "Efficiency" and it would not change the design or results in the least. As defined by Webster, both terms mean adequacy. The primary distinction between the terms is chronological, for sufficiency begets efficiency; but God is the author of both, and He, being omniscient, would not appropriate a sufficiency beyond the suitability of His designs for efficiency.

Jesus bled, suffered, and died as the substitute for His people, and the value of His blood was equal to their sin debt, for the Father would not charge one farthing more than that which was owed. "... **The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin**" (**I John 1:7**). Forgiveness cannot extend beyond the offense; and the blood of Christ, though infinite in value, did not procure a sufficiency beyond that which was equal to the sinfulness of His people. "**Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound**" (**Romans 5:20**), but this abounding grace has not to do with a redemptive sufficiency for the non-elect, but with the bestowal of sonship on the atoned-for ones, whereby they become "**joint-heirs with Christ**" (**Romans 8:17**).

There is no question as to the capability of God. He could have, had He been pleased, provided satisfaction for the devil and his angels; but we know this was not His pleasure. It is the design of God's sovereign grace we are concerned with, and redemptive sufficiency is a product of the omniscient Designer. To talk of atoning sufficiency without forelove runs counter to the tenor of Scripture. Such terms as "uncovenanted mercies," "heathen virtue," and "universal sufficiency," should arouse infinite skepticism in the minds of all who hold the truth of God's sovereign grace.

It was God's eternal design to "**bruise**" His Son (**Isaiah 53:10**) and by His infinite suffering provide atoning sufficiency for all whom He represented in His suffering. Therefore, Peter, in speaking to the elect, says: "**Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy**" (**I Peter 4:13**). Are

the non-elect in any sense or measure partakers of the suffering of Christ? To affirm the universal sufficiency view of the atonement is to say Christ's substitutionary suffering was at least in part for the reprobate world, for there can be no atoning sufficiency apart from the sufferings of Christ.

The atonement of Christ is a very special and infinitely gracious work which is limited to the elect (**John 10:11**), but a general sufficiency which is common to all mankind would destroy the particularistic nature of the atonement, and put a wider dimension on the atonement than is Scripturally warranted.

God's love for His people is infinite, yet it is a fixed love; and it can never be more or less than what it has eternally been (**Jeremiah 31:3; John 13:1; Hebrews 13:8**). God's infallible justice has drawn a demarcation line between the elect and the non-elect, and His love honors the line and limits which He has set for it. God is not divided in Himself. God's love will not manifest itself, even infinitesimally, toward any person whose name is not written in the Lamb's book of life. Why then, I ask, take atoning sufficiency and set it apart from God's love? Why make Christ's atoning sufficiency to go beyond His sufferings, beyond the covenant of redemption, and beyond God's restrictive design for it? The answer is simply because the universal sufficiency doctrine is ill-conceived.

Part Two

2.) Scripture Typology And Atonement Sufficiency

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, ..." (II Timothy 3:16).

This text most assuredly includes the Old Testament and its many and various types, for the New Testament was not yet in existence. A type has been aptly defined as "A Divinely appointed illustration of some spiritual truth." A better definition would be hard to come by and because of the sameness of meaning of type and symbol; I will use them interchangeably in this writing. Typical teaching permeates the Scriptures. Everywhere we turn in the Bible we are confronted with types and they are there for our profit.

A.) First let us look at the Ark of Noah, a vivid type of Christ. **I Peter 3:20-21** is a clear and unmistakable reference to Noah and the Ark passing through the judgmental flood in connection with the atoning death and justifying resurrection of Jesus Christ. The design of the Ark was given to Noah in minute detail by the omniscient Designer and Architect of the universe (**Genesis 5:14-16**). Now the question is, was the ark sufficient in size to accommodate all who were living on the earth at that time? Surely, this question is answered in the asking.

It was not the divine purpose to save all the antediluvian posterity of Adam in the Ark, but only Noah and his family, and seeing there is no negligible quantity in God, all the space and sufficiency sovereignly vested in the ark for flood survival was fully and gloriously utilized. Noah was **"a preacher of righteousness,"** and **"while the ark was a preparing,"** Noah preached Christ by symbol and sermon; for to preach righteousness is to preach Christ, for He is the believer's justifying righteousness (**I Corinthians 1:30**).

No doubt during this exceeding period of one hundred and twenty years of Ark preparation, Noah warned others as he was warned of God (**Hebrews 11:7**). However, only seven believed his report and they were of his own house (**Genesis 7:1**). Then God brought judgment upon the world of the ungodly and they perished in the flood (**II Peter 2:5**). The Noachian family is a type of the household of God (**Ephesians 2:19**), and Christ, the antitype of the Ark (**Acts 4:12**) and Head “**over His own house**” (**Hebrews 3:6**), has made sufficient room for His family and none else. Christ is the Sovereign Sufficer, and having eternally loved His family, He made room for them and them alone in the storm-swept citadel of His grace. The Ark as a type was not given to us in shorthand, but in minute detail, and every detail speaks of Christ.

Atonement sufficiency is anchored in God’s forelove, and Christ loves only those who were given to Him by the Father in the covenant of redemption (**Jeremiah 31:3; John 13:1, 17:6; Romans 8:37**). In the redemptive scheme there is no such thing as uncovenanted love, and hence no universal atonement sufficiency.

The Ark was a divine provision made before the waters of judgment fell from heaven, and in construction of the Ark, Noah followed the heavenly specifications with unvarying exactitude. “**Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he**” (**Genesis 6:22**). There was not one extra cubic inch in the fullness of the Ark, nor was there any unused or wasted space. The sufficiency of the Ark was according to God’s purpose, and His elective purpose was to save only eight souls from the flood (**I Peter 3:20**).

Likewise, Jesus Christ was provided by God before the foundation of the world to deliver His people from the storm of judgment upon sin (**II Timothy 1:9**). Christ’s mission to this earth, as with the Ark, was according in every detail to the need of His people, and not one thing wrought by the atoning death of Christ was extended beyond those for whom He died. The sufficiency and efficiency of Christ’s sacrifice was eternally shut up to the elect of God, and there was no redemptive sufficiency left over. The purpose of atoning sufficiency must be measured by its accomplishments, and it has none beyond “**the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand ...**” (**Psalms 95:7**). To contend otherwise is to argue for an unsure curse upon the sins of the non-elect, for who can say how long a sovereign sufficiency will remain in protraction? The universal sufficiency theory has the rudiment of universal restoration of mankind in it. **BEWARE!**

B.) The second type we want to consider is that of the Passover Lamb of **Exodus 12**. The pure, free, and infinite grace of God provided Israel with the Passover lamb; and in this sacrificial lamb was their redemption and sufficiency. However, let it be clearly understood that the taking of the lamb from the flock, the slaying of it, and the roasting of it with fire was not sufficient to save Israel from the imminent judgment upon Egypt. The blood must be sprinkled upon the posts and lintel of the door of each Israelitish home. God emphatically declared that “**When I see the blood, I will pass over you**” (**Exodus 12:13**). This He said to Israel, and not to Egypt.

It is the common concurrence that Israel in slavery to Egypt is a type of God’s elect in their pre-regenerate state, in which state they “**walked according to the course of this world**” (**Ephesians 2:2**), or like ancient Israel in bondage, walked according to the course of Egypt. It is also uniformly held by students of the Scriptures, that Egypt is a type of this present evil world, a tyrant to whom

man in his native state pays perfect allegiance. However, the powerful tyranny exercised by the world over man does not in any degree lessen his responsibility to denounce the world and come out of it.

Christ said of all who have owned His Lordship over them, “**They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world**” (**John 17:16**). There is no spiritual commonality between the regenerate person and the world, and Divine sufficiency is certainly spiritual. Redemptive sufficiency is a product of God’s love and was purchased by Christ’s sacrificial blood. In view of this glorious truth, I ask, “Does God’s atoning sufficiency extend beyond His love?” Are they not both co-extensive, retrospectively and prospectively, and have as their objects the same number of people, i.e., the elect of God?

The Apostle Paul said, speaking of the antitype of Israel’s Passover lamb, “... **For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us**” (**I Corinthians 5:7**). To universalize the pronoun “us” in this text and make it apply in any sense to the reprobate world is to bedim the glory of the atonement. A sufficiency, the generality of which is such that it makes no distinction whatsoever between the people of God and those of the devil, is far too general for the Scriptures. God does not deal with the non-elect world through sufficient grace, but with sufficient and unadulterated justice, which provides no measure of atoning sufficiency, but eternal and merited suffering.

God’s counsel is eternal and so are all His decrees. Thus, the decree of unpardonableness against the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit is eternal (**Matthew 12:31-32**). Does it not follow then, seeing that contradictory decrees cannot emanate from God, that He would not decree an atoning sufficiency for a sin that He decreed never to forgive? Pharaoh is an unmistakable type of Satan. He was bent on the elimination of Moses, a type of Christ, and on the annihilation of Israel, a type of God’s elect. His reprobation was glaringly manifest, and it was God’s eternal intention to drown him in the Red Sea (**Romans 9:17**); as it is God’s purpose to cast Satan, the antitype of Pharaoh, into the lake of fire (**Revelation 20:10**).

In view of this, I ask, “Did the atoning sufficiency of Israel’s Lamb extend unto Pharaoh?”

“... **The Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel**” (**Exodus 11:7**). This “**difference**” which distinguished Israel from Egypt was the Passover lamb. God did not give Egypt a Passover lamb, and consequently, no atonement sufficiency was provided for Egypt. When atoning blood is denied a people, they are left to themselves, and people left to themselves have never been objects of atonement sufficiency. Sufficiency is a vital part of God’s redemptive purpose for His people, and that purpose and sufficiency corresponds precisely with the number of names eternally registered in the Lamb’s book of life.

Knowledge of the importance and purpose of the lamb was limited to Israel. Sprinkling of the blood of the lamb was limited to Israel. The promise of God, wherein He said, “**When I see the blood I will pass over you,**” was limited to Israel. All redemptive or atoning benefits, including sufficiency, were limited to Israel. Conversely, the death curse of the firstborn was visited upon the household of Pharaoh and all the land of Egypt (**Exodus 12:29**). God’s infinite holiness and inflexible justice sees the non-elect as unatoned for sinners, and has provided for them smiting

rather than sufficiency. The only thing God ever does with sin is smite it, and God's atoning Lamb was not smitten with as much as one stripe for any beyond the limits of His shed blood.

Christ, the antitype of Israel's Passover lamb and antitype of Israel's High Priest (**Hebrews 9:7**), having obtained eternal redemption for His people (**Hebrews 9:11-12**), entered into the tabernacle not made with hands. In the heavenly tabernacle behind the veil, the blood of Christ was sprinkled and accepted to the full satisfaction of the Father for the sins of His covenant children (**Hebrews 6:19, 10:24, 13:20**). Therefore, the guilt of God's elect is forever removed from heaven's court docket and the sovereign verdict now reads, **"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"** (**Hebrews 10:17**).

Peter, speaking of the glorious and exclusive offering of the blood of Christ within the veil of heaven's tabernacle, says **"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: grace unto you, and peace be multiplied"** (**I Peter 1:2**). **"Grace"** and **"peace"** are blessings purchased for the elect by the shed and sprinkled blood of Christ, and every other purchase made by the vicarious sufferings of Christ shall be realized by the elect of God, and by them only; for His intercession on the cross was eternally and sovereignly restricted to them. **"... the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep"** (**John 10:11**). In no sense did He die for the goats.

Every blessing the redeemed of God shall ever experience in time and eternity was procured for them by the sacrificial blood of Christ. On the other hand, all the suffering and grief which the non-elect shall ever know, is owing to their infinite hatred of the blood of God's Lamb (**Hebrews 10:29**), and not to an ill-supposed sufficiency.

What is typically true of the lamb of **Exodus 12** is equally true of all the God ordained animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, for they all were typical of the all-concluding sacrifice which God would make upon Calvary. The institution of animal sacrifices must reach its terminus, for the offended and infinite justice of God could never be satisfied with the blood of a beast as the means of expiation for the sins of utterly depraved men. Every sin is an infinite insult to the honor and holiness of God, and when the offense is infinite, so must the sacrifice be by which the sin is expiated. Hence, the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ. Christ **"... appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"** (**Hebrews 9:26**).

"For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (**Hebrews 10:14**). **"Sanctified"**, i.e., set apart by the covenant of eternal redemption. The saints' perfection is not of personal character, but of legal standing before the bar of God's inflexible and just law. The saints' perfection has not to do with personal righteousness, but with imputed righteousness which was appropriated for them in the covenant of eternal and unconditional election, and merited not by them, but by the precious blood of Christ (**I Peter 1:18-20**).

The justification or declaration of the saints' legal righteousness is eternally anchored in the sovereign, holy, and active love of God. The love of God is infinite, but exclusive. It does not reach all mankind, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Thus it is seen that Christ is God's beloved Son, and the singular channel of His blessings. All the blessings

of the atonement come to the elect of God through Christ, the Mediator of the covenant of grace, and no good thing shall be withheld from them for whom it was purchased.

Most surely, atonement sufficiency is infinitely good, and no good thing wrought by the propitiation of Christ shall ever be voided. Therefore, atonement sufficiency is limited to the elect, and they are made more than conquerors through Him that loved them (**Romans 8:37**). All that was purchased by the atoning blood of Christ will be infallibly applied to all those for whom the purchase was made. To say otherwise is to change God with vanity, and the universal sufficiency view of the atonement gives credence to this baseless allegation. **BEWARE!**

The Passover Lamb of **Exodus 12** is not a picture of universal sufficiency, but of particular protection. Atonement sufficiency equals deliverance from the curse. Christ did not die to provide a sufficiency that would go eternally wanting for a people to protect, but His shed blood has provided a covering for the people of God, and Paul says: “**Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered**” (**Romans 4:7**). It irrevocably follows: all whose sins are not covered, Calvary’s atonement has no value for them.

Part Three

3.) A Passive Or Inoperative Sufficiency Is Alien To The Attributes Of God

“... the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified of them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified ...” (**Leviticus 10:3**)

“... My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.” (**Isaiah 46:10**)

All of God’s purposes and pleasures are rooted and grounded in His determination to glorify Himself. God has never done anything, nor shall He ever do anything that is not subordinated to this one supreme end; that is the manifestation of His personal glory.

God manifests His attributes and in so doing magnifies His person. God is holy; so are all of His works. God is infallible; so are all His designs. God is omniscient; so all of His works are perfectly wrought. God is just; so are all His ends. “If my soul was sent to hell, God’s righteous law approves it well.” God is immutable; so His sufficiency changes not. God is sovereign, and so is His sufficiency.

Maxim: There is no such thing as a powerless power. God has sent forth His sufficiency, not inertly, but with power to achieve His purpose for which it was sent. Salvational sufficiency is a product of Divine love, and God’s love cannot be other than effective. God’s love is sovereign and so is the sufficiency which is sent to manifest that love. There is no such thing as an unpremediated or purposeless sufficiency emanating from God, as would be the case with salvational sufficiency for the non-elect; for it never suffices. Neither God’s love nor His sufficiency can fall into a void, and neither of them know any disturbing influences, but run sovereignly to the goal appointed of Him “**Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will**” (**Ephesians 1:11**).

What worth is atoning sufficiency to a people who were already in hell when the price of it was paid? Abel's lamb had no sufficiency for Cain. Moses' lamb had no sufficiency for Pharaoh, and most certainly the blood of Calvary's Lamb did not provide salvational sufficiency for those who were already in hell when Christ died. To contend for the universal sufficiency view of the atonement is to charge God with designing a sufficiency to no avail, and raises the question: "How can God be just and withhold from any person that which was purchased for them by the precious blood of His own Son?"

The universal sufficiency theory and Christ's words, wherein He said; "... **I pray not for the world ...**" (**John 17:9**) have an element of incongruity in them. This incongruity causes some to wonder why Christ would not pray for those for whom He would suffer the shedding of His blood to provide them with salvational sufficiency, and what the design of that sufficiency is, seeing that the blood purchased sufficiency does not prevail in behalf of all its objects.

The exclusiveness of Christ's mediatorialship, both on the cross and on the throne, was and is solely for the elect of God. Christ's mediation cannot be empty or futile, and all for whom He interceded on the cross, He now intercedes for with the crown of all majesty. There is in God a sufficiency toward the non-elect, but it is one of indignation, and not salvation. God says: "... **Esau have I hated.**" (**Malachi 1:3; Romans 9:13**), and God's hatred knows nothing of salvational sufficiency, but only eternal damnation. If this truth seems harsh, it is not in the least so; for truth cannot adorn itself in any defective robe.

I have often read the following analogy from various sources, and in every instance it is set forth in an effort to support the erroneous doctrine of universal sufficiency of the atonement. The analogy: "The sun necessarily gives off as much heat even if only one plant is to grow, Christ necessarily suffered as much even if only one person was to be saved." This analogy brings honor to God when properly considered, but when used to try to support the contention that the atonement of Christ purchased salvational sufficiency for the non-elect, it breaks down.

The analogy is expounded thereby: Christ would have suffered as much for one of His elect as He did for all of them. He would have also suffered as much for one elect person had his sin been but one (James 2:10). Sin in any measure or nature is an infinite insult to the holiness of God, and therefore an infinite atonement is necessary to reconcile the sinner unto God. If the "plant" of this analogy is one of God's planting, then the grace of God's Son will shine just as brightly as if He was the only one whom the Lord planted. But the truth is: Christ never suffered in any degree or sense for the non-elect, and the salvational sufficiency of the Son has never shined upon any plant the heavenly Father has not planted (**Matthew 15:13**).

The analogy, if applicable at all, must be restricted to God's elect people, for the solar sun does nothing for rocks, but hardens them, and the salvational sufficiency of the Son of God does nothing for spiritually reprobate rocks, but hardens them. The "**stony ground**" hearers of **Matthew 13** were not benefited by the gospel seed, for the simple reason the gospel was not endowed with sufficiency to convict them of their sins, and they were left with their hard and stony hearts. "**Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth**" (**Romans 9:18**). The conviction sufficiency of the gospel is by omniscient design restricted to the elect of God.

Every part and parcel of atonement favor was a ransom paid, i.e., the blood of Christ. Surely it is agreed that sufficiency, as well as efficiency, was purchased by the vicarious punishment of Christ. How then can the non-elect be objects of salvational sufficiency, seeing no ransom was paid for them? Only the sins of the elect were imputed to Christ, and only for the elect “**many**” did He give His life as a ransom (**Matthew 20:28**). Therefore, the ill supposed atonement sufficiency for the non-elect adds up to a universal zero.

There cannot be efficiency without sufficiency, and there can be no atoning sufficiency or efficiency without the suffering of Christ upon the cross. Therefore, it unavoidably follows that the advocates of the universal sufficiency theory of the atonement have Christ suffering for the non-elect on the cross. A most grievous error!

It is readily and gladly admitted that the power of Christ’s blood is greater than all sin, yea, of angels and men. However, we need to remember that His atoning blood is the “**blood of the everlasting covenant**” (**Hebrews 13:20**), and that it is shut up in redemptive exercise to all whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of life (**Revelation 13:8, 21:27**). Surely, none would say that Christ in His atonement purchased salvational sufficiency for the fallen angels, but if not, why not, seeing the power of His blood is greater than all sin? The answer is simply that God never intended to save the fallen angels, nor reprobate men, so He limited the atoning power of Christ’s shed blood to His elect.

To say God’s love is greater than all the fires of hell is to speak the truth, but it does not mean that God loves a single person who is in hell, or that shall ever go there. God’s love for one of His elect is as great as it is for all of His elect, for His love is never less than perfect, and every elect person is as a “**firebrand**” plucked from the burning by the love of God. God’s love is sufficient to quench every infernal blaze, but all who enter those dread gates enter because Christ in His substitutionary and loving death merited no atonement sufficiency for them. The Apostle John, speaking of the atoning death of Christ, says: “... **Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end**” (**John 13:1**).

Christ went to Calvary with infinite love for His people. He suffered their infinite penalty, and in so doing, He purchased for them a sufficiency that is infinitely superior to the infinite condemning power of sin. “... **Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound**” (**Romans 5:20**). The Lord laid upon Him all the iniquity of all His sheep and He, in His death, atoned for their every transgression, but He did not take to Calvary one sin of the infinite sum of the sins of the non-elect, and He suffered not in any sense or measure for the sins of the goats. Consequently, no blessing was purchased for them by the blood of Christ.

Christ made no satisfaction for the sins of the non-elect, so their sins remain; and the atonement sufficiency which some claim for them is of no value to them; and the proponents of the universal atonement sufficiency theory are left with a sovereign and omniscient sufficiency which has lost its way. Perish the thought! Wherever divine efficacy is limited, so is divine sufficiency. Even the thought of a sufficiency which affects not its designs is ridiculous, for sufficiency manifests itself by the fruit it produces. There is no such thing as a fruit without root, and there is no such thing as a sufficiency without fruit.

Over and over in the Scriptures Christ is metaphorically referred to as the “**root**” of His people (**Isaiah 11:10, 53:2; Romans 15:12**). And by inspiration, Paul says: “... **If the root be holy, so are the branches**” (**Romans 11:16**). But of the non-elect, the Lord says: “These have no root” (**Luke 8:13**). Saying they “have no root” is equal to saying “they have no Christ”, and saying this is to say they have no atoning sufficiency, for this sufficiency is of Christ. Paul says to the church at Corinth: “... **Our sufficiency is of God**” (**II Corinthians 3:5**).

There is eternal and perfect harmony between all of God’s attributes. His love never interferes with His holiness, for His love is holy. His justice has no argument with His grace, for it is by His grace the elect are justified (**Titus 3:7**). His sufficiency and His efficiency know no variance. His sufficiency is not more or less than His efficiency and vice versa. They are equal in strength and design. Salvational efficiency makes manifest the trophies of God’s sovereign and sufficient grace, but they travel hand in hand in bringing to pass this glorious end, for where one is, so is the other.

It is a true premise from God’s Word that the expression of one thing excludes all else unless otherwise specified by the Scriptures. Many illustrations could be cited from Scripture which affirm this premise, but I will refer only to the all-important one, and that is blood redemption. The blood of Christ is the Biblically specified remedy for sin. Therefore, every other pretended remedy has been precluded by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and is nothing more than Satanic quackery. Hence, all but the elect of God are excluded from the sufficiency of the atonement, for nowhere in holy Writ is it even inferred that the blood of Christ was shed to make an atonement for the non-elect. So that which follows is not universal atonement sufficiency, but a limited atonement; for God will not provide a sufficiency for sins apart from the shed blood of His Son (**I John 1:7; Hebrews 9:22; Revelation 1:5**).

There are no passive attributes in God. His love is ever reaching forth to bless its objects. His love and His redemptive sufficiency cannot be separated, and His love and redemptive sufficiency infallibly follow the lines set out for them in the covenant of election. Jesus was the personification of I truth. He said “**I am the truth**” (**John 14:6**). However, He said to the reprobate Jews: “... My word hath no place in you” (**John 8:37**). The Lord’s salvational sufficiency cannot be separated from His truth.

The Lord’s inflexible justice never quits its search for satisfaction. Therefore we read: “**Be sure your sin will find you out**” (**Numbers 32:23**). God’s loving sufficiency provided a substitute for His people in the person of Christ (**II Corinthians 5:21**), and His just law, yet looking for satisfaction from all those who were not represented by Christ on the cross, provided hell to serve that end. Salvational sufficiency and condemnatory sufficiency have had, by eternal decree, two classes of people to work with in satisfying God’s justice, i.e., the elect and the reprobate; and these two distinct functions of God’s sufficiency are never frustrated.

God is holy. “**Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts**” (**Isaiah 6:3**). Salvational sufficiency is holy sufficiency, and clothes the people of God with robes of righteousness (**Isaiah 61:10**), but leaves the non-elect destitute of the prescribed garment (**Matthew 22:12**). The military wardrobe of salvational sufficiency has provided every piece of armor the elect shall ever need in their warfare with the world, the flesh and the devil; and makes them more than conquerors through the Captain

of their salvation (**Romans 8:37; Ephesians 6:11; Hebrews 2:10**). However, no salvational sufficiency is provided for those not subject to Holy Spirit conscription (**John 5:40, 6:44; Romans 8:7-8**), and consequently, no protection from the penalty of the just and holy law of God.

As defined by Webster both terms, sufficiency and efficiency mean “adequacy.” The synonymy of the two terms is so exact that a distinction between them is virtually nonexistent, and if a distinction would be allowed, it would be one of chronology rather than design. However, let us remember that God is not subject to chronology as finite men are. He is not such a one as we. God is not subject to the rules of mathematics, and more often than not the equations of men run counter to the omniscient counsel. The chronology of Holy Spirit regeneration comes under the heading of language accommodation, for with God there are no prerequisite functions in bringing to pass the new birth of His people.

In the eternal mind, atonement sufficiency and efficiency have never known a distinction in design, function, or results. God is the sovereign and omniscient author of both, and He would not appropriate a sufficiency beyond the suitability of His designs for efficiency. The universal sufficiency theory does not as much as produce one straw of mercy upon the infinite ocean of God’s everlasting judgment, but this lack of favor toward the non-elect does not in any wise vitiate the sufficiency of God, for it is immune to negation.

Let me reiterate. Every person whom God intended to be saved by the atonement shall be saved. So it follows by inevitable deduction, that God never meant the infinite power of the atonement would prevail for or provide a propitiatory sufficiency for the non-elect, seeing, none of them are ever saved. Both the unlimited power and design of the atonement are seen by the fact that some of every kindred, tongue, and people are saved.

All the elect are made willing by the power of God (**Psalms 110:3**), but all who are left to their own will are eternally beyond the scope of God’s atonement designs. God is the sovereign discriminator, and the difference He has put between His people and those of the devil (**John 8:44**) is manifested by atonement sufficiency and efficiency. This divinely placed difference allows for no spiritual communion between the saved person and the world, for there is no communion between light and darkness (**II Corinthians 6:14**). And atonement sufficiency being spiritual, it cannot be held in common by all mankind; for all are not included in the covenant wherein atonement sufficiency is mandated.

Abraham’s lamb (**Genesis 22:13**) had no atoning sufficiency for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, for they had already perished under the fiery indignation of God (**Luke 17:29**). Did Israel’s typical sacrifices picture a general sufficiency which included the pagan nations round about Israel? If so, it was a vain sufficiency, for they perished in their own ways (**Acts 14:16**).

What good is the digging of a sixty foot well, when the same measure and quality of water may be had at thirty feet? The answer of course is, none. God is infinitely wiser than the wisest of His creatures, and He would not send forth a universal atonement sufficiency when a particular sufficiency would accomplish the same end.

What good is a belt and buckle that never meet? What good is an atonement sufficiency for a people who are never benefited by it? Are reprobates divinely appointed to both eternal wrath and eternal sufficiency? Or could it be the sufficiency purchased for them by the atoning death of Christ finally exhausts itself? Perhaps this atonement sufficiency loses interest in some of the people for whom Christ died in order to procure it for them, and finally enters an abeyance that can never be broken. Atonement sufficiency is a benevolent work of God, and there is not nor shall ever be such a thing as a disinterested benevolence emanating from God.

I do not mean to satirize, nor to try to rationalize the Scriptures, and would never knowingly tamper with the Word of God. But it is my purpose and aim to alert the reader of this treatise to the fact that in many cases what we want to believe is not necessarily the truth. Where is the one among us who does not love broad and spacious theological horizons? Is not the doctrine of the universality of the gospel appealing? Surely it is, and rightfully so.

Is not the doctrine of the universality of God's family appealing? Surely it is, and rightfully so. Is not the doctrine of the universal sovereignty of God appealing? Surely it is, and rightfully so. But where is the one among us who will not say that the doctrine of the universal sufficiency of the atonement that does not suffice for all whom Christ died to provide it is appalling? Surely none, for so it is.

The atonement sufficiency of Christ is definite and absolute; and it is limited in its designs, operations, and effects. To say this is not to question the sovereignty of God's sufficiency, nor is it to question His omniscience from which the redemptive scheme was formulated. But it is said to magnify both God's sovereignty and omniscience; for a sufficiency which is particular, and infallibly accomplishes all of its designs, is more honoring to God than an atonement sufficiency which leaves part of the people for whom it was purchased to perish in their sins.

No doubt what I have said herein will become grist for the mills of theological controversy, and some polemicists may seem to turn it to their advantage but that disturbs me not. It might be at the mercy seat of Christ, I will say: "I wish I had not written that." But until I look upon the face of Him who atoned for my sins upon the tree of Calvary, I am confident I shall be contented with the position contended for in this treatise. One thing for sure, the sending forth of this writing has for now erased all the wonder as to whether I should have written it or not.

Either way, I am convinced that the disturbance of theological quiet, is more honoring unto God, than what some dear brethren refer to as: "Respectful Silence."